



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPT OF MUSLIM FRIENDLY HOTEL IN
MALAYSIA***

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MALAYSIA**

By

WAN SAHIDA BINTI WAN ZULKIFLI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

November 2014

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Master Science

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By

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November 2014

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This thesis examines the basic concept of Muslim friendly hotel from the view of key stakeholders in Malaysia include policy makers and hotel practitioners. It aims to understand the concept of Muslim friendly hotel and identify the characteristics of Muslim-friendly services and facilities from the key stakeholder's point of view. A qualitative study using a case study approach was conducted with the aim to understand on the concept of Muslim friendly hotel in Malaysia, due to limited literature and sources in this field of study. In this thesis, a case study was adopted for the exploratory study. Several cases were examined to understand their similarities and differences. Non-participant observation was conducted in selected hotels to identify the facilities and services offered. A total of 8 in-depth interviews were conducted on relevant local authority's bodies, ministries and selected hotel practitioners in Malaysia in order to obtain a clear view on Muslim friendly hotel. The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and coded into raising themes. The study identified 10 themes on the concept of Muslim friendly hotel in Malaysia. The findings showed that providing Halal food and beverage, prayer facilities, Islamic design and decoration, Islamic programs, segregation of facilities between men and women, safety and security, Muslim employees, Islamic floor, appropriate dress code for employee and finance practice accordance to Islamic principles were the major themes for the concept of Muslim friendly hotel. From the themes emerged the researcher categorized it into four main theme; that are operation, services, environment and finance theme. Besides, the policy maker also stressed Muslim friendly hotels should undertake activities compliant to Islamic principles such as provide separate facilities between men and women in the hotel in order to cater the needs for Muslim guests. In addition, hotel practitioners also mention providing Halal food and beverage, and providing Muslim-friendly services and facilities were the most important in developing the concept of Muslim friendly hotel. Views from stakeholders are crucial in order to develop the basic concept of Muslim friendly

hotel in Malaysia and also to develop the standard guidelines in Malaysian tourism industry.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Sarjana Sains

MEWUJUDKAN KONSEP HOTEL MESRA MUSLIM DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Suhaimi Ab Rahman, PhD

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Tesis ini mengkaji konsep hotel mesra Muslim dari pandangan pihak berkepentingan yang utama di Malaysia seperti pembuat dasar serta pihak pengusaha hotel. Ia bertujuan untuk memahami pandangan pihak berkepentingan mengenai konsep hotel Mesra Muslim serta mengenal pasti apakah ciri-ciri perkhidmatan yang mesra Muslim dan kemudahan yang ditawarkan dalam industri hotel di Malaysia. Kajian kualitatif menggunakan pendekatan kajian kes telah dijalankan bertujuan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman berkaitan konsep hotel Mesra Muslim ini daripada pembuat dasar dan pengusaha hotel. Kajian kes diguna pakai untuk kajian penerokaan ini untuk melihat beberapa kes dan memahami persamaan dan perbezaan antara kes. Pemerhatian turut dijalankan di hotel yang dipilih bagi mengenal pasti perkhidmatan mesra bagi pengguna Muslim. Sebanyak 8 temuduga telah dijalankan bersama pihak berkuasa tempatan termasuklah Kementerian serta pengusaha hotel terpilih di Malaysia. Ini bertujuan mendapatkan gambaran yang jelas mengenai hotel mesra Muslim seperti yang diamalkan oleh pengusaha hotel di Malaysia. Temu bual telah direkodkan bagi menyalin dan mengkodkan kepada pengeluaran tema. 10 tema telah dikenal pasti untuk konsep hotel mesra Muslim di Malaysia. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa makanan dan minuman halal, kemudahan solat, reka bentuk dalaman Islam, program Islam, pengasingan kemudahan, keselamatan premis hotel, pekerja Muslim, tingkat yang dikhaskan untuk tetamu Islam, kod pakaian mengikut prinsip Islam dan kewangan mengikut prinsip Islam merupakan tema-tema utama bagi konsep hotel mesra Muslim ini. Dari 10 tema yang telah dikodkan, penyelidik mengkategorikan tema-tema tersebut menjadi kepada empat tema utama iaitu; operasi, perkhidmatan, suasana serta kewangan. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa pembuat dasar menekankan konsep hotel mesra Muslim perlu menjalankan aktiviti-aktiviti yang mematuhi undang-undang Islam dengan mengelakkan segala aktiviti yang bertentangan dengan undang-undang Islam. Pengasingan kemudahan antara lelaki dan wanita di hotel juga sangat penting bagi memenuhi keperluan tetamu yang beragama Islam. Kebanyakan pengusaha hotel menyatakan bahawa menyediakan makanan dan minuman Halal serta menyediakan kemudahan mesra pelanggan Muslim merupakan pemahaman yang paling penting dalam membangunkan konsep hotel mesra Muslim ini. Pemahaman serta pandangan yang jelas tentang konsep hotel mesra Muslim dari

perspektif pembuat dasar dan pengusaha hotel adalah sangat penting kerana kajian berkaitan hotel mesra Muslim di Malaysia in masih lagi terhad. Kesimpulanya pandangan dari pihak berkepentingan ini sangat berguna untuk membangunkan konsep asas hotel mesra Muslim di Malaysia. Justeru itu, kajian dijalankan , diharap berpotensi untuk membangunkan garis panduan berkaitan hotel mesra Muslim dalam industri pelancongan di Malaysia pada masa hadapan.



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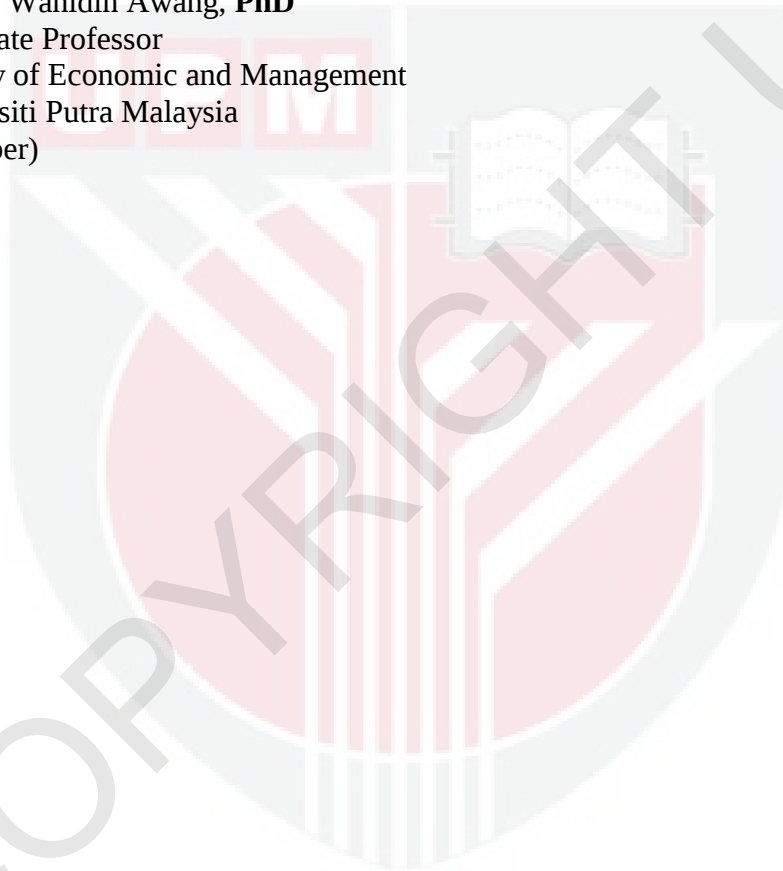
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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DSM	Department of Standard Malaysia
IQS	Islamic Quality Standards
ITC	Islamic Tourism Centre
JAIN	State Islamic Religion Department
JAIS	Selangor Islamic Affairs Department
JAKIM	Department of Islamic Development Malaysia
JAWHAR	Department of Awqaf Zakat and Hajj
MAH	Malaysia Budget Hotel Association
MAIK	Kelantan Islamic Council
MBHA	Malaysian Association of Hotels
MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia
MS	Malaysian Standard
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
TDC	Tourism Development Corporation
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNWTO	United Nation of World Tourism Organisation
UCSC	Universal Crescent Standard Centre
VMY	Visit Malaysia Year
WTO	World Tourism Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the framework of the research study; that is the idea of research topic including the significance of study, research questions, scope of the study and the objective of the study. The study covers about the tourism industry as a whole, tourist arrivals to Malaysia includes Muslim tourists, Halal market, hotel sectors and Muslim friendly hotel.

1.1 Background of Study

Tourism refers to any temporary movement of people to any activities which is away from their home or workplace. It also includes any activities done during the stay and the facilities that are provided to cater to the tourist's needs (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Holloway (1998) defines tourism as one of the forms of recreation, which includes sport activities, hobbies and pastimes, and all activities related to our leisure time. Tourism is also referred to activities that occur when tourists travel. It is described as the “activities of person traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to exercise of any activity remunerated from within the place visited” (World Tourism Organization, 1995, pp- 1).

Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) defined tourism as the processes, activities, and outcome arising from the relationships and interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities, and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors. Tourism is also a composite of activities, services, and industries that deliver a travel experience such as transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking establishments, shops, entertainment, facilities and other hospitality services available for individuals or groups that travel away from home. It can be concluded that tourism is the temporary movement of a person to other destinations outside their own places with specific purposes. It may also create a system which facilitates and provides hospitality service to the person known as a tourist.

The world tourism industry has grown rapidly and become a major economic force in the world today. According to United Nations of World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the international tourist arrival data has shown a strong growth rate for the last several decades. UNWTO also states that tourism is the largest world growth industry with the long-term signs being very positive. UNWTO also forecasts that international arrivals will exceed 1 billion by 2010, thus the figure will rise towards 1.6 billion by 2020. In contrast, there is a decrease in number in tourist arrivals in 2003, as a result of recession and the year in which negative factors came together such as Iraq war, terrorism fear, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

According to UNWTO, the international tourist arrivals showed a slight increase from 2009 until 2011. In 2011, the international tourist arrivals recorded grew by 4.4% to a total of 980 million from 940 million in 2010. In 2010 the international arrivals increased by 6.6 % to 940 million compared to 882 million in 2009. In 2010, the international tourist receipts are estimated to reach US\$919 Billion (1 Dollar = RM3.10) worldwide, rising from US\$851 billion which corresponds to an increase of 4.7 % (UNWTO, 2011). Asia Pacific region had the strongest growth in 2010. The international tourist's arrivals were recorded as 204 Million in 2010 compared to 180 Million in 2009. This shows that the receipts grew by 13% to US\$249 billion compared to US\$203 billion in 2009 (Tourism Malaysia, 2010).

In the Malaysian context, the government also recognized that tourism industry would contribute significantly to the economy (Hafiz Ahmed, 1992). Hence, the government granted various facilities to the tourism industry. Due to the significance of the tourism industry, Tourist Development Corporation (TDC) was set up in 1972 as an offshoot of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. After the TDC was set up, the tourism policy was then implemented in 1984. Since the launch of the Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) campaign in 1990, tourism industry in Malaysia has become the third biggest foreign earner (Ching, 2008). With the success of "Visit Year 1990", the government has once again declared 1994 as "Visit Malaysia Year".

Despite, the increasing number of tourist arrivals in 1990, Malaysia experienced a decline in tourist arrivals in 1997 and 1998 due to health and economic issues, which include haze, Asian financial crisis and localized outbreaks. After the decreasing number of tourist arrivals in 1997 and 1998, there was an increase in the number of tourists in early 2001 with an average of 1 million foreign visitors per month (Ching, 2008). The decline in number of tourist arrivals in 2001 was due to the 11 September 2001 incident involving a terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. However, despite the SARS outbreak in 2003, the demand in the tourism market and tourist arrivals continually showed strong growth.

Fortunately, in 2006 the number of tourist arrivals increased to 17.5 million and in 2007, the number of tourists increased further due to the first official spin of the 60m high 'Eye on Malaysia' ferris wheel which marked the launch of Visit Malaysia 2007. Tourist arrivals to Malaysia were 20.9 million in 2007 and 22.0 million in 2008. From 2009 until 2013, the number of tourist arrivals has also recorded a positive growth. The increasing trend was contributed from the Middle East tourists who choose to visit Malaysia after the tragedy September 11 (Zakiah Samori et. al, 2013). According to the statistic reported by Tourism Malaysia, the growth number of Middle East tourist from Saudi, UAE and Oman had resulted a large spend of the total tourism expenditure to the tourist receipts in Malaysia. In order to maintain the growth of tourist arrivals and receipts to Malaysia, the government had recognized the potential industries to attract more tourists. The government also planned various initiatives and programs to stimulate and sustain the development for particular industries as Malaysia heads towards achieving high-income status by 2020.

Countries derive some benefits from the development of tourism industry (Hafiz Ahmed, 1992). These include an increase in the foreign exchange earning of the country, increase in per capita income, and increase in employment creation as this service industry is labor intensive. In addition, the development of the tourism industry also helps in the development of social and cultural matters, infrastructure and transport industry of the country. If we analyze the tourist arrivals to Malaysia, it clearly shows that the number of tourists visiting Malaysia increased from year to year. The table below shows the tourist arrivals and receipts to Malaysia from 2000 to 2013.

Table 1.1: Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia, 2000 - 2013

Year	Tourist Arrivals (Million)	Receipts (RM Billion)
2000	10.2	17.3
2001	12.7	24.2
2002	13.2	25.8
2003	10.5	21.3
2004	15.7	29.7
2005	16.4	32.0
2006	17.45	36.3
2007	20.9	46.1
2008	22.0	49.6
2009	23.6	53.4
2010	24.6	56.5
2011	24.7	58.3
2012	25.0	60.6
2013	25.72	65.4

Source: Tourism Malaysia, (2014)

In parallel, Malaysia is also listed by UNWTO as the top 10 most visited country in the world whereby Malaysia managed to sustain its ranking as the ninth most visited country in the world for two consecutive years in 2009 and 2010 (Tourism Malaysia, 2010). Malaysia ranked ninth, based on the international tourist arrivals with 24.7 million tourist arrivals in 2011. In 2009, the country recorded 23.6 million tourist arrivals and in 2010 the number increased to 24.6 million, marking an increase of 3.9% of tourist arrivals. The total tourist receipts recorded in 2010 was RM56.5 billion indicating an increase of 5.9% compared to RM53.4 billion in 2009. Furthermore, there is an increase of 1.8% of the average per capita expenditure from RM2,256.9 to RM2,298.60 (Tourism Malaysia, 2010).

There is a huge potential market in developing and promoting Halal products and services for the global market. This is due to the increasing number of Muslim population which is about 1.73 billion and constitute about 20 per cent of the world population. In 2010, the Muslim population was estimated to increase to approximately 1.85 billion (Farah Karuddin, 2009). The global market value for Halal products and services such as Halal foods is estimated to be about US\$547 (1 Dollar = RM3.10) billion a year. For non-food products such as cosmetics, toiletries, hotels and catering services, and health products, the annual contribution is US\$2.1 trillion annually (MITI, 2006).

From the global market value for Halal foods and non-food products, it is clearly shown that the demand for Halal products and services is gradually increasing. This is due to the increasing number of Muslims in the population and also increased purchasing power of people from Muslim countries to support the increasing market value for Halal products and services. The regional Halal market in Asia includes Indonesia, Pakistan, India, China, Singapore, Brunei and Thailand should be the region for developing and promoting Halal products and services, since there is a collective Muslim population in these countries (MITI, 2006).

Recently, the potential market for Halal products and services were for West Asia or Middle East countries. According to Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER), from 1999 to 2003 the number of Muslim tourists from the Middle East to Malaysia rose from 20,000 to more than 800,000 people. Malaysia foresaw that the Middle East and other countries that have an increased number of Muslim population would be the countries that tend to have a potential market for Halal goods and services so that this Halal market can be expanded in future.

The growth of Halal market is also significant with the increasing number of Middle East tourists to Malaysia. This is due to the increased trend of Muslim tourists or Middle East tourists shifting their traveling pattern after the tragedy of September 11 (Razalli et al., 2012). The effect of this tragedy is significant to Malaysia as there are increases in the number of Arab and Muslim tourists who prefer to visit Muslim countries such as Malaysia, Turkey and UAE (Mun, 2013). Malaysia is also known as a Muslim friendly country and considered a safe destination for Muslim tourists. The increased number of tourists from Middle East countries will indirectly increase the total expenditure of these Middle East tourists. Table 1.2 and 1.3 shows the number of Middle East tourists to Malaysia and their total expenditure in Malaysia.

Table1 1. 2: Middle East Tourist Arrivals to Malaysia, 2009 to 2010

Countries	Tourist Arrivals		
	2009	2010	Growth %
Saudi Arabia	77,082	86,771	12.6
United Arab Emirates	22,108	25,645	16.0
Oman	15,280	16,627	8.8
Kuwait	20,170	18,010	-10.7
Iran	101,664	116,252	14.3

Source: Tourism Malaysia, (2010)

Table 1.3: Top Ten Average Per Capita Expenditure 2009-2010

COUNTRIES	2009	2010	GROWTH IN APC (%)
	APC (RM)	APC (RM)	
Saudi Arabia	6,430.80	8,047.10	25.1
Kuwait	N.A	7,174.70	N.C
Oman	6,608.60	6,759.90	2.3
United Arab Emirates	6,264.70	6,370.80	1.7
Australia	4,011.80	4,113.00	2.5
New Zealand	3,144.20	3,198.30	1.7
Netherlands	2,970.20	3,018.20	1.6
Germany	2,886.50	2,966.70	2.8
China	2,729.60	2,768.40	1.4
Japan	2,610.30	2,751.10	5.4

Source: Tourism Malaysia, (2010)

The Muslim tourist market is estimated to be worth about US\$126 billion (RM390 billion) in 2011 or 12.3 % of the world outbound tourism expenditure and worth about US\$1,034 billion as estimated by UNWTO (Global Muslim Lifestyle travel Market, 2012). Therefore Malaysia has to tap this niche market because these Muslim markets, especially from West Asia or Middle East countries, are big spenders and have high purchasing power compared to other countries such as America and European countries. Tourism Malaysia stated that tourists from Saudi Arabia are big spenders with average per capita expenditure of RM8,047.10 followed by Kuwait at RM7,174.70, Oman RM6,759.90 and UAE at RM6,370.80. The average per capita expenditure for West Asia tourists is almost double the expenditure of other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Netherlands, Germany, China and Japan (Profile Market, 2010). Travelers from GCC spend about US\$12 billion annually for leisure activities. UAE tourists spend an average of US\$ 1700 per vacation which is US\$500 higher than the European tourist (www.islamic tourism.com).

In terms of tourist expenditure pattern, accommodation still remained the highest component of total tourist expenditure. Accommodation showed an increase in value in tourist expenditure from 2007- 2010; indirectly it also contributes to the growth of tourism industry in Malaysia. Table 1.4 shows the components of tourist expenditure.

Table 1.4: Components of Tourist Expenditure, 2007-2008

ITEM	2007 (RM MILLION)	2008 (RM MILLION)	GROWTH (%)
Accommodation	14,235.6	15,643.1	8.6
Shopping	12,254.6	13,282.4	8.4
Food & Beverages	8,338.7	8,772.3	5.2
Local Transportation	4,607.0	5,154.4	11.9
Organized Tour	2,027.1	2,032.0	0.2

Source: Tourism Malaysia, (2008)

Table 1.5: Components of Tourist Expenditure, 2009-2010

ITEM	2009 (RM MILLION)	2010 (RM MILL)	GROWTH (%)
Accommodation	16,573.8	17,343.2	4.6
Shopping	15,103.1	16,213.3	7.4
Food & Beverages	9,290.5	9,716.7	4.6
Local Transportation	5,253.1	5,423.3	3.2
Organized Tour	2,271.0	2,429.2	7.0

Source: Tourism Malaysia, (2010)

Table 1.6: Components of Tourist Expenditure, 2011-2012

ITEM	2011 (RM MILLION)	2012 (RM MILL)	GROWTH (%)
Accommodation	17,961.3	18,651.5	3.8
Shopping	17,494.8	18,590.9	6.3
Food & Beverages	9,797.1	9,689.1	-1.1
Local Transportation	4,373.7	4,057.3	-7.2
Organized Tour	2,682.5	2,422.3	-9.7

Source: Tourism Malaysia, (2013)

Based on Table 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6, accommodation showed increased values and remained a major contributor of the tourist expenditure with RM14,235.6 Million in 2007, RM 15,643.1 million in 2008, RM16,573.8 million in 2009 and RM17,343.2 Million in 2010. Other components such as shopping, food and beverages, and local transportation also showed an increase. There is a huge potential for hotel or accommodation sector to be expanded as it remains a major contributor in tourist expenditure.

1.2 Problem Statement

Tourism industry is one of the industries categorized in the service sector. As stated in Industrial Master Plan 3 (2006-2020), the service sector is one of the major contributors to the growth of Malaysian economy. In addition, the services sector is said to play an important intermediary role in supporting trade and business. The tourism industry also classified as a big business that generate significant income to the countries. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism is defined as people who “travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more

than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (World Tourism Organization, 1995, pp- 1).

Tourism and hospitality industry are rapidly growing global industries. This industry generates large income opportunities in many parts of the world and contributes to expansion of the Malaysian economy. This can be seen through the generation of economic development in domestic and international tourism, contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and also employment opportunities.

The development of tourism industry in Malaysia started a few decades ago with government involvement in order to accomplish several objectives, such as to increase foreign exchange earnings, increase employment and income for the local residents, fostering regional development and diversify the economy by offering various tourism products and services in the tourism sector. (Yuhanis, 2007). The development of various tourism products is seen to be vital in order to meet the customer's changing demands (Yuhanis et al., 2009). Many types of tourism products and services can be offered, such as ecotourism, agro tourism, Islamic tourism, medical tourism and also Spa tourism. These products and services have been designed for specific purposes and markets to meet the needs and demand of certain travelers.

Among those tourism products and services stated above, Islamic tourism is one of the niche products that is expanding and becoming one of the major attraction that brings international tourists to Malaysia. The increasing number of East Asia and Muslim tourists to Malaysia has proven that Islamic tourism will encourage the growth of the tourism industry. This can be seen when there was an increasing number of Chinese Muslim tourists to Malaysia, with 50, 000 in 2003 and increasing up to 94,000 in 2008 (Bernama 2009). Besides that, it was also shown that in 2008 Malaysia successfully attracted 264,338 Middle East tourists (Yuhanis et al., 2009). In line with the increasing number of Chinese Muslim tourists and Muslim tourists from Middle East, there was an intention made by the former Malaysia Minister of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC), Datuk Seri Ng Yen Yen¹ to promote Islamic tourism as a niche tourism product in Malaysia.

¹ Former Malaysia Minister of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC), Datuk Seri Ng Yen Yen (2009-2012). On 9 April 2009, she was appointed as Minister of Tourism by Honourable Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak . At 2009 -2012, the Ministry of Tourism was known as Ministry of Tourism Malaysia. During 2013, the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia is known as Ministry of Tourism and Culture (MOTAC). Its current minister is Dato' Sri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

Islamic tourism is also considered a new tourism product which emerged lately after the September 11 attack. Instead of vacationing in European countries, many tourists from East Asia and Muslim countries selected Malaysia as one of their travel destinations. Islamic tourism comprises many activities such as Islamic travel packages, Halal food exhibition, accommodation that operate in accordance to Shariah principles and other activities which comply to Shariah principles. In order to promote Islamic tourism activities, one of the important elements is providing accommodation in accordance to Shariah principles. This is in line to attract and to cater to the needs of Muslim travelers. As stated by Abdullah (2009), there is demand from Arab Muslim tourists who want the hotel or accommodation service operated in accordance to Shariah principles.

The industry player foresees that, there is a need for a hotel operated in accordance to Shariah principles. This is due to the increasing awareness about obtaining the Halal products and services. This market is known as Halal conscious market which search for not only Halal food products but they also search for the services that comply with Shariah principles that is called as Muslim friendly services. These days, Muslims are becoming interested in travelling both for work and leisure. Increased in travelling pattern among Muslim has resulted the industry player wants to cater the needs of Muslim friendly services and facilities in the hotel for Muslim market. As there is a demand from the Muslim market, therefore the hotel operators sees to cater the needs of these market such as providing Halal food, prayer facilities and Muslim friendly atmosphere in the hotel industry (Anonymous, 2014).

It is seen that, there is a need for establishing the new concept of Muslim friendly hotel in Malaysia because there is a huge potential market in developing and promoting Halal products and services to the global. This is due to the increasing number of Muslim population growing which is estimated at 1.84 %. In 2012, the Muslim population is estimated to reach approximately 2013.62 Million which is equivalent to 2.1 Billion (Zakiah et. al., 2013)

In fact, recently Malaysia Budget Hotel Association (MBHA) Selangor cooperated with *Selangor Islamic Affairs* Department (JAIS) with an intention to develop a hotel that comply with Shariah law principles. The main purpose of initiating this type of hotel is to attract the domestic and East Asia travelers to visit Selangor (Abdul Razak, 2011). In order to provide such hotels, there is a need for the industry and regulatory bodies to identify and understand the real concept of this type of hotel. However, the issue arises when there is still unclear concept, understanding and standard guidelines on Muslim friendly hotel in Malaysian hotel industry. Hence there is a need focus, study and fulfill the gaps that arise, so that a clear concept and understanding towards Muslim friendly hotel in Malaysia can be identified. This is essential in order to set up clear guidelines and practice on Muslim friendly hotels that conform to Islamic and industries practices.

1.3 Objectives of Research

The general objective of this study is to understand views and opinions. This can be elucidated as follows:

- a) To understand the concept of Muslim friendly hotel.
- b) To identify the characteristics of Muslim-friendly facilities and services that exist in the Malaysian hotel industry.
- c) To develop a model of Muslim friendly hotel that can be used for hoteliers as a framework.

1.4 Research Questions

- a) What is the concept of Muslim friendly hotel?
- b) What are the characteristics of Muslim-friendly services offered in the Malaysian hotel?
- c) What is a standard that has been established and used in Malaysian tourism industry for Muslim friendly hotel?

1.5 Scope of Research

This study basically explores the understanding and views of policy makers and practitioners on Muslim friendly hotel in Malaysia. The participants involved in the study consist of Muslim experts (Mufti), Officer from Ministry of Tourism, Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), Jabatan Wakaf Zakat & Haji (JAWHAR) and also the hoteliers. The participants selected include those who have the criteria as determined by the researcher and is the best fit for the purpose of the study. The scope of the study lies in the views and understanding regarding the concept of Muslim friendly hotel in Malaysia, the elements of Muslim-friendly services practiced in Malaysian hotel industry and also to develop a model of Muslim friendly hotel.

1.6 Significance of Research

The significance of this research is to get a better understanding of hotel services that conform to Islamic principles. Currently, there is a lack of academic research in Islamic hotel concept in Malaysia. This exploratory research provides some basic fundamentals on Muslim friendly hotel in the Malaysian tourism industry.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five parts. Chapter one is the introduction to the study, its background the current tourism industry and Halal market. Chapter Two reviews previous literature on the concept of Shariah. The review consists information on application of Shariah in Malaysia, *Maqasid al- Shariah*, Halal concept, business in Islam, prohibition of selling Haram goods, Muslim etiquettes, Halal standard, Shariah compliant hotel, tourism from Islamic perspective, the goals achieved in Islamic tourism and the development of Islamic tourism in Malaysia. Chapter Three discusses the methodology employed in this research, including research design, sampling, recruitment of participants and collection of data. This chapter also explains the method of analysis of the data collected. Chapter Four presents the results and interpretations from the industry, policy maker and also practitioner towards the concept of Muslim friendly hotel in Malaysia and the characteristic of Muslim friendly services and facilities identified in hotel industry. Chapter Five discusses and concludes the findings of the study, contribution of the research and recommendation for future research. Following these concluding chapters are several appendices. Finally, the concluding part of this thesis is the bibliography.

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