Islamic Hospitality and the Fight Against Islamophobia: The Essential Role of Sharia-Compliant Hotels

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Abstract

The escalating Israel-Palestine conflict has triggered a surge in Islamophobia and hate crimes against Muslims worldwide. As part of the Islamic hospitality industry, Sharia-compliant hotels play a crucial role in promoting the values of Islamic hospitality to non-Muslim tourists, aiming to reduce Islamophobia. Using a qualitative literature review approach, this study first aims to identify the goods and services offered by Sharia-compliant hotels that can be promoted to non-Muslim tourists. Second, it analyzes how these goods and services can contribute to moderating Islamophobia. This study identifies that Sharia-compliant hotels have at least four promotable goods and services: halal food, the prohibition of alcoholic beverages, protection for female and child tourists, and religion-based preference room services. The findings show that integrating the principles of Islamic hospitality can play a significant role in combating Islamophobia and promoting a more just and welcoming environment for all tourists. Thus, Sharia-compliant hotels not only provide a safe and comfortable place for Muslim tourists to stay but also act as positive agents of change in combating prejudice and discrimination, promoting diversity and inclusivity in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Islamic Hospitality, Islamophobia, Sharia-compliant Hotel, non-Muslim Tourist.

Introduction

Islamophobia is not merely a figment of imagination but rather a real threat to the existence of Muslims worldwide. This phenomenon results in "hate crimes" against Muslims, the frequency of which continues to increase and shows alarming figures. Prior to the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict in early October 2023, several hate crimes based on hatred towards Islam had already occurred. In the context of British society, Islamophobia takes various forms, including attacks, harassment, and violence against Muslims. Additionally, there have been attacks on mosques, Islamic centers, and Muslim cemeteries. Discrimination also occurs in education, employment, and the provision of products and services. All of these reflect a lack of respect for Muslims in public institutions.[1]

Islamophobia has triggered both vertical and horizontal conflicts. Vertical conflicts arise due to repressive policies of non-Muslim states against Muslim minorities within their borders. For instance, in France, the impact of Islamophobia is evident through the closure of 23 mosques suspected of being affiliated with extremism and terrorism.[2] Similar phenomena also occur in Xinjiang, China,[3] where mosques are subjected to demolition and modification as part of the Sinicization policy aimed at assimilating Muslim culture into Chinese culture.[4]

Meanwhile, horizontal conflicts emerge within societies as a result of Islamophobia, manifesting in the form of hate crimes. These horizontal conflicts involve individuals against individuals, individuals against community groups, and inter-community group conflicts. Sadly, these kinds of conflicts often lead to physical violence, even claiming lives among Muslims. An example is the mass shooting at the Christchurch City Mosque in New Zealand, which resulted in the death of 51 worshippers.[5] Anti-

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[1] Marcus L. Stephenson and Nazia Ali, 'Tourism and Islamophobia', in *Tourism in The Muslim World: Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice* (Emerald Group Publishing, 2015), II, 235–51 <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2042-1443(2010)0000002018>.

[2] .www.middleeastmonitor.com, 'France Closes Another Mosque', *Https://Www.Middleeastmonitor.Com/20220929-France-Closes-Another-Mosque/*, 2022, p. 1 <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220929-france-closes-another-mosque/> [accessed 11 October 2022].

[3] www.ig.ft.com, 'How China Is Tearing down Islam', *Ig.Ft.Com*, 2023 <https://ig.ft.com/china-mosques/> [accessed 5 December 2023].

[4] Fauziah Fathil, 'Islam in Imperial China: Sinicization of Minority Muslims and Synthesis of Chinese Philosophy and Islamic Tradition', *Kemanusiaan*, 26 (2019), 167–87 .

[5] Praveen Menon, 'New Zealand Mosque Shooter Considers Appealing Life Sentence', *Www.Reuters.Com*, 2021, p. 1 <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-mosque-shooter-considers-appealing-life-sentence-2021-11-08/>.

Islamic sentiments also manifest in South Korea, where pig heads were placed on small chairs in a dead-end street of a residential area as a form of protest by the local community against the construction of a mosque in the area.[6]

Reports of hate crimes based on Islamophobia have increased since the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict in early October 2023, especially in European and American countries where the majority of the population is non-Muslim. Anti-Islamophobia organizations in the United Kingdom (UK) have recorded a sevenfold increase in reports since October 7, 2023.[7] Apart from the UK, instances of violence have also been documented in the United States. For example, on October 14, 2023, a six-year-old Palestinian-American boy was tragically killed in an attack in Chicago.[8]

Various measures have been implemented to combat Islamophobia, including media interventions, community-based approaches, and the involvement of non-state actors such as the European Organization of Islamic Centers. [9] The Muslim community, particularly those involved in businesses related to halal tourism, might contribute to the fight against Islamophobia by promoting the universal values inherent in Islamic hospitality. This is possible because, a study found that non-Muslim tourists tend to be willing to adhere to Islamic rules when visiting Muslim-majority destinations.[10]

The role of halal tourism industry players in promoting their products to people of other faiths is also in line with the fundamental philosophy of Islam as a religion that advocates tolerance and treats non-Muslims with the utmost respect. The Holy Quran (Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 107) states that the purpose of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) mission as

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[6] Choi Jae-hee, 'Mosque Project Pits Villagers against Muslims in Daegu', *Koreaherald.Com*, 2022 [accessed 22 December 2023].

[7] Indlieb Farazi Saber, '"Seen as Less Human": Why Has Islamophobia Surged amid Israel's Gaza War?', *Https://Www.Aljazeera.Com*, 2023, p. 1 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/21/seen-as-less-human-why-has-islamophobia-surged-amid-israels-gaza-war> [accessed 22 December 2023].

[8] Masood Farivar, '"Backlash Effect": Why the Middle East Conflict Triggers Hate Crimes in the US', *Https://Www.Voanews.Com*, 2023, p. 1 [accessed 22 December 2023].

[9] Samantha L. Moore-Berg and others, 'Reducing Islamophobia: An Assessment of Psychological Mechanisms That Underlie Anti-Islamophobia Media Interventions', *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 26.3 (2023), 555–78 <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302221085832>.

[10] Battour, Mohamed, Mohd Nazari Ismail, Moustafa Battor, and Muhammad Awais. "Islamic tourism: an empirical examination of travel motivation and satisfaction in Malaysia." *Current Issues in Tourism* 20, no. 1 (2017): 50-67.

a messenger is to bring mercy to the world.[11] Indirectly, the verse states that Muslims, as followers of Muhammad, must spread mercy to the whole world, including to followers of religions outside Islam. In the tourism industry, non-Muslims can also enjoy the products and services provided by the Islamic or halal-based tourism industry. The purpose of promoting products in the Islamic hospitality industry to non-Muslims is to demonstrate that Muslims are open to people of other faiths and are capable of being gracious hosts.

The opportunities for stakeholders in the Islamic hospitality industry to assume this role are reinforced by data indicating an increase in visits by non-Muslim tourists to predominantly Muslim countries. For example, the influx of international tourists to Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim country, has experienced a significant rise. In the period of 2023 (as of October), the total foreign visitor arrivals reached 9,492,004, marking a 124.30% increase compared to the 4,231,779 visits in 2022.[12] Among these visits in 2023, the top five countries of origin were dominated by Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, China, and Timor-Leste. It is noteworthy that, with the exception of Malaysia, these countries are predominantly non-Muslim.[13] The visit of non-Muslim tourists to Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia presents an opportunity for Sharia-compliant hotel operators in those countries to promote their hotels to tourists. Consequently, there is significant potential for cross-cultural and interfaith communication to occur.

Taking into consideration the provided data and discussed facts, this study aims to initially identify the Islamic hospitality products and services offered by Sharia-compliant hotels that can be promoted to non-Muslim tourists, furthermore, it seeks to analyze how these products play a role in moderating Islamophobia. The research focuses on Sharia-compliant hotels that can be considered mini-destinations, where tourists not only stay but also spend significant time outside the tourism attraction. As a halal tourism product, this type of hotel faces specific challenges that require resolution, particularly concerning the stigma of non-Muslim tourists. On the other

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[11] Moch. Farich Alfani, 'The Meaning of Rahmatan Lil Alamin in the Contemporary Tafseer of Muhammad Quraish Shihab', *International Journal of Social Science and Religion (IJSSR)*, 2023, 61–76 <https://doi.org/10.53639/ijssr.v4i1.132>.

[12] Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif, 'Statistik Kunjungan Wisatawan Mancanegara Bulan Oktober 2023', *Kemenparekraf.Go.Id*, 2023, p. 1 [accessed 1 January 2024].

[13] Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif.

hand, Sharia-compliant hotels possess significant potential to serve as the vanguard in promoting Islamic hospitality, ultimately mitigating Islamophobia.

This research employs a qualitative approach. The data in this study comes from secondary data, which is mostly sourced from journal articles and online news articles relevant to the research topic. Data was collected thorough a comprehensive literature study. Data sources can be grouped into three themes in accordance with the concepts discussed in this study. First, publications related to Islamophobia; second, publications related to Islamic hospitality; and third, publications related to the perception of non-Muslim communities towards halal tourism products, including Sharia-compliant hotels. Important findings obtained in the literature study are then used to support and strengthen the author's argument. Particularly to show the role of Sharia-compliant hotels in moderating Islamophobia among non-Muslim tourists.

Islamophobia: Definition and Impact on Muslim Society

Literally, Islamophobia signifies an excessive fear of Islam, Muslims, and everything associated with the religion, such as mosques, Islamic centers, the Quran, the hijab, and other elements.[14] Islamophobia even encompasses forms of racism and discrimination that pervade everyday life, including in the media, workplace, or within the context of political competition. This type of fear is not merely a thought but is reflected in attitudes and ultimately manifested through acts of violence. Concrete examples include the burning of mosques and the destruction of properties related to Muslims; the disturbance and harassment of women wearing hijab; or the derogation of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and other sacred symbols of Islam.[15]

Islamophobia is often represented in the form of direct or indirect prejudice, discrimination, religious profiling, xenophobia, social and political marginalization, as well as violence. All of these elements contribute to what is referred to as "the globalization of fear" concerning

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[14] Ismail Adaramola Abdul Azeez and Amidu Adinoyib Jimoh, 'The Impact of Islamophobia on Society, Attitudes, Policies and the Youths', *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies*, 3.7 (2023), 1322–39 <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v3i7.873>.

[15] Azeez, Badmus NO Abdul, Amidu Adinoyi Jimoh, Issah Zubairu Achara, and Abubakar Yusuf Abdullahi. "Islamic Concept of Dignity of Labour and Its Effect on The Nascent Entpreneurship Model." *Journal of Entrepreneurial and Business Diversity* 1, no. 2 (2023): 108-113.

Islam.[16] The significant social impact of Islamophobia is keenly felt by Muslim communities. The portrayal of Muslims as terrorists or extremists affects their freedom to travel and participate freely in tourism activities, particularly in Western countries. As a result, they frequently experience unwarranted treatment from immigration officers and aviation authorities, fellow passengers, tourists, and the local communities at tourism destinations.[17]

Furthermore, Islamophobia can lead to social fragmentation, discrimination, and restrictions on participation in society.[18] Its impact also includes fostering social division, eroding trust, and perpetuating stereotypes and biases. Verbal and physical attacks become tangible, creating an environment of fear and hostility that can impede social and multicultural cohesion.[19] From a psychological standpoint, Islamophobia can also result in negative effects such as anxiety, fear, stress, and a sense of insecurity for Muslims.[20] From the definitions and identified impacts, it can be concluded that in the context of interfaith interactions, Islamophobia is not beneficial, as it often prioritizes negative prejudices and disregards common sense. Consequently, anything affiliated with Islam, even mere fashion, becomes something to be avoided or prohibited.

The conflicts and acts of terrorism associated with Islam create challenging conditions for Muslim minorities in certain countries, as they are often perceived to be associated with the perpetrators of such conflicts or terrorism. This stigma further burdens Muslim minorities in a country, especially those with ultranationalist sentiments based on non-Islamic religious grounds. This situation can be exacerbated by state policies that do

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[16] Stephenson, David Alan, and Azhar Ali. "Tool temperatures in interrupted metal cutting." (1992): 127-136.

[17] Stephenson, David Alan, and Azhar Ali. "Tool temperatures in interrupted metal cutting." (1992): 127-136.

[18] Azeez, Badmus NO Abdul, Amidu Adinoyi Jimoh, Issah Zubairu Achara, and Abubakar Yusuf Abdullahi. "Islamic Concept of Dignity of Labour and Its Effect on The Nascent Entpreneurship Model." *Journal of Entrepreneurial and Business Diversity* 1, no. 2 (2023): 108-113.

[19] Naheed Ahmed and others, 'From Interpersonal Violence to Institutionalized Discrimination: Documenting and Assessing the Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Americans', *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 15.2 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.119>.; Mustafa Osman and I. Elamin, 'The Role of Non-State Actors in Combating Islamophobia: The Case of the European Organization of the Islamic Centers', *International Journal of Membrane Science and Technology*, 10.3 (2023), 1608–21 <https://doi.org/10.15379/ijmst.v10i3.1760>.

[20] Elamin, Osman EO, Sara EO Elamin, Badr Altamam A. Dafalla, Mohamed E. El-Amin, and Adil A. Elsiddig. "Cigarette smoking among medical students in the National Ribat University, Sudan." *Sudanese journal of paediatrics* 13, no. 2 (2013): 45.

not support Muslim minorities.

Regionally, empirical examples of conflicts involving Muslim minority populations can be observed in countries such as China, India, and Myanmar. State policies tinged with Islamophobia are evident in the treatment of Muslim communities in these nations. China exemplifies a strong emphasis on sinicization policies targeting minority communities, such as the Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang.[21] India demonstrates ultranationalist Hindu tendencies,[22] while Myanmar's Buddhist majority exhibits a harsh stance towards Muslim Rohingya minorities.[23] Indeed, in Myanmar, Muslim minorities encounter significant economic barriers, including the denial of ethnic citizenship by the government.[24]

This article does not intend to promote political strategies or international relations approaches to alleviate Islamophobia. Instead, it seeks to raise awareness among stakeholders in the halal tourism sector that there is a role they can play in combating Islamophobia from a tourism perspective. Although the impact may not be immediate, these efforts are hoped to attract the attention of international non-Muslim tourists visiting Muslim-majority countries or staying in Sharia-compliant hotels. By engaging with products in the Islamic hospitality industry, it is anticipated that their perceptions of Islam can be altered. Muslim communities can create values that resonate with the preferences of non-Muslim guests, thereby providing comfort and security during their stay.

Islamic Hospitality and Sharia-Compliant Hotel

Islamic hospitality is inseparable from Muslim-related tourism, encompassing tourism activities involving Muslims as hosts or guests. In the context of tourism, Islam encourages its followers to travel for various purposes, including seeking well-being, recreation, knowledge, social activities, and, above all, to appreciate the creation of Allah, witness His glory, and spread the word of Allah.[25] Tourism activities undertaken by

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[21] Jennifer Ang, 'Sinicizing the Uyghurs', *Peace Review*, 28.4 (2016), 399–406 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2016.1237078>.

[22] Amarnath Amarasingam, Sanober Umar, and Shweta Desai, '"Fight, Die, and If Required Kill": Hindu Nationalism, Misinformation, and Islamophobia in India', *Religions*, 13.5 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050380>.

[23] Chris Beyrer and Adeeba Kamarulzaman, 'Ethnic Cleansing in Myanmar: The Rohingya Crisis and Human Rights', *The Lancet*, 390.10102 (2017), 1570–73.

[24] Nehginpao Kipgen, 'The Rohingya Crisis: The Centrality of Identity and Citizenship', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 39.1 (2019), 61–74

[25] Jafari & Scott, 2014, Kessler, 2015, Jia & Chaozhi, 2020.

Muslims give rise to the concept of halal tourism. This concept not only appeals to Muslim travelers but also receives significant contributions from non-Muslim tourists, making halal tourism globally accepted.[26]

The term hospitality originates from the Latin term *"hospitaire,"* which means to receive guests.[27] Hospitality is the act performed by hosts to welcome and care for guests, whether they are strangers, tourists, or anyone residing in the host's home or country.[28] In the context of Islam, concepts such as Islamic hospitality, halal tourism, Islamic tourism, halal-friendly tourism, Sharia-compliant hotels, and halal food are experiencing rapid development alongside the significant growth of Muslim travelers in international destinations.[29] Products and services like halal food, halal finance, halal cosmetics, and Sharia-compliant hotels are becoming increasingly important to meet the rising demands of Muslim consumers in recent years.[30] In Muslim minority countries such as Taiwan, Vietnam, China, and South Korea, Halal tourism is considered a good business opportunity [31]. This indicates that the development of the halal tourism industry, or Islamic hospitality, is also a concern in Muslim-minority countries.

The hospitality industry has expanded across various sectors, including food and beverage, accommodation, and tourism. In the hospitality sector, product diversification encompasses various forms, such as hotels, motels, homestays, resorts, restaurants, snack bars, nightclubs, and cafeterias [32]. In addition to its rapidly growing expectations, Islamic or halal tourism, as a relatively new phenomenon, has the potential to attract many non-Muslim tourists seeking cultural, doctrinal, and Islamic law-themed

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[26] M. Rahman et al., 2020

[27] M S Islam and M Arif, 'Validating Islamic Hospitality Management in Tourist Destination: A Case of Malaysia', *International Tourism and Hospitality Journal*, 6.1 (2023), 1–12 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37227/ITHJ-2023-08-378>.

[28] Islam and Arif.

[29] Ghaith Hammuri and Ismet Eseynel, 'The Analysis of Hoteliers Attitude towards the Establishment of Islamic Hospitality Policies: North Cyprus', *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2.2 (2017), 124–31 <https://doi.org/10.21276/sjhss.2017.2.2.3>.

[30] Omar Ahmad Al Serhan and Nhar Ahmad Alobaitha, 'Islamic Hospitality in the UK: Build It and They Will Come', *International Journal of Teaching and Case Studies*, 4.2 (2013), 171–86 <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijtcs.2013.058804>.

[31] Mohamed Battour and Mohd Nazari Ismail, 'Halal Tourism: Concepts, Practises, Challenges and Future', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 19 (2016), 150–54 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.12.008>.

[32] Siti Zanariah Yusoff and others, 'The Functions of Advertising in Promoting Islamic Hospitality', *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 15.15 (2017), 537–44.

travel experiences.[33] The development of halal tourism presents opportunities for Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia to capitalize on the sale of halal tourism products and services to non-Muslim tourists.

By definition, Islamic hospitality is a process of demonstrating love, respect, and kindness towards guests or tourists, with the aim of ensuring their comfort.[34] Related to the spirit of hospitality in Islam, there are historical events narrated in hadith that demonstrate how Islam emphasizes the principle of hospitality in interacting with people of other faiths (non-Muslims). For example, the story of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delivering a peace treaty to the Christian community of Bani Najran. The essence of the treaty is that the Islamic government guarantees the freedom of Christians to worship according to their religious beliefs, ensuring they will not be harmed or expelled from their lands.[35]

Hospitality is also considered a part of moral conduct and virtues that were heavily emphasized by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) concerning human relationships.[36] In a hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) conveyed that whoever believes in Allah and the last day should honor his neighbor and be generous to his guest.[37] Muslims practice hospitality by providing healthy food and drinks, as well as offering comfortable and secure accommodation for guests or tourists, aiming to build good relationships between hosts and guests.

One potential industry within Islamic tourism to promote the values of Islamic hospitality to non-Muslim communities is the Sharia-compliant hotel sector. In the operations of Sharia-compliant hotels, there is an interaction between guests (both Muslim and non-Muslim) and hosts (hotel management). Sharia-compliant hotels provide a conducive environment for interfaith or intercultural dialogue among tourists and hotel management, as well as among tourists themselves. When tourists from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds visit and stay at Sharia-compliant hotels, they encounter goods and services that reflect Islamic principles. It is at this point that the potential for intercultural and interfaith dialogue becomes highly plausible. The concept and definition of Sharia-compliant hotels will be elaborated on in the following section of this article.

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[33] Hammuri and Eseynel.

[34] Islam and Arif.

[35] Zainuddin Lubis, 'Toleransi Rasulullah Pada Umat Agama Lain', *Islam.Nu.or.Id*, 2023, p. 1 [accessed 21 February 2024].

[36] Yusoff and others.

[37] Serhan and Alobaitha.

Shariah-compliant hotels traditionally emerged in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and their growth can be linked to the increasing number of Muslim tourists in those regions.[38] In its development, Sharia-compliant hotels have also flourished in other regional areas beyond the Middle East, such as Southeast Asia, including countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, which have Muslim-majority populations. Additionally, these types of hotels have emerged in countries with minority Muslim populations in Asia, such as Japan.[39] The presence of Sharia-compliant hotels in various countries inevitably involves the application of Sharia principles, which may vary from one establishment to another.

Shariah-compliant hotels can be defined as hotels that provide services in accordance with Shariah principles.[40] Various terms used by researchers to refer to this type of hotel include Shariah-compliant hotel, halal hotel or halal-friendly hotel, Islamic hotel, Muslim-friendly hotel, and dry hotel. Shariah-compliant hotels possess several distinctive attributes, including traditional uniforms for hotel staff, dress code regulations for female staff reflecting modest dress principles, qibla direction markers (towards Mecca), separate prayer areas for men and women, the provision of prayer rugs, serving halal food without pork, television channels adhering to conservative principles, artwork that does not depict human forms, and bed and toilet placements that do not face the qibla.[41] Furthermore, the financial management of the hotel is also governed by Shariah principles, or Islamic finance. Shariah-compliant hotels also have an obligation to pay zakat to their owners, reflecting a commitment to Islamic financial principles.[42]

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[38] Serhan and Alobaitha.

[39] Battour and Ismail.

[40] Hesham Ezzat Saad, Badran Nabil Ali, and Abdel-aleem Magdy Abdel-Ati, 'Sharia-Compliant Hotels in Egypt: Concept and Challenges', *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research (AHTR)*, 2.1 (2014), 1–15 <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ahtr/issue/32308/359044>. Nor'Azzah Kamri and others, 'Management of Sharia Compliant Hotel in Malaysia: The Experiences of Waqf Hotels', *Proceedings of the 3rd International Halal Conference (INHAC 2016)*, Inhac 2016, 2018, 373–83.

[41] Marcus L. Stephenson, Karl A. Russell, and David Edgar, 'Islamic Hospitality in the UAE: Indigenization of Products and Human Capital', *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 1.1 (2010), 9–24 <https://doi.org/10.1108/17590831011026196>.

[42] Paul Rosenberg and Hala Matar Choufany, 'Spiritual Lodging – the Sharia - Compliant Hotel Concept', *HVS Global Hospitality Services- Dubai*, April, 2009, 1–7 <https://www.hvs.com/content/2856.pdf>. Joan C. Henderson, 'Sharia-Compliant Hotels', *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 10.3 (2010), 246–54 <https://doi.org/10.1057/thr.2010.3>. Stephenson, Russell, and Edgar.

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In the context of Shariah-compliant hotels, forms of Islamic hospitality include efforts to ensure that guests always feel warmly welcomed by employees and staff, guaranteeing that all meals are prepared on time as per the predetermined menu, maintaining the cleanliness and comfort of guest rooms, and maximizing profits by ensuring efficient and systematic management, all in accordance with the principles of Islamic law.[43] Considering their fundamental concepts, these hotels have some critical points that are quite sensitive concerning the preferences of non-Muslim tourists. For example, hotel policies prohibit non-Mahram couples from staying in the same room,[44] and ban the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages on hotel premises.[45] Additionally, there is a negative perception among non-Muslim tourists towards Shariah-compliant hotels.[46] While formulating appropriate strategies to address these challenges, hotel management can promote the universal values of Shariah-compliant hotels that align with the values held by non-Muslim tourists.

The Role of Sharia-Compliant Hotels in Moderating Islamophobia

Islamophobia and hate crimes against Muslim groups continue to occur sporadically. Nevertheless, academic studies indicate that non-Muslim communities' express interest in Islamic hospitality products, with many focusing on the positive perceptions of non-Muslims toward halal food. For example, research conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) demonstrates that the majority of non-Muslim participants in the study have positive perceptions of halal products regarding quality[47]. Additionally, these studies also address issues related to knowledge about halal, cultural acculturation, and animal welfare concerns.

Other studies also indicate positive perceptions of non-Muslim communities toward halal food in other countries. For instance, research conducted in Indonesia and Malaysia demonstrates similar trends of

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[43] Yusoff and others.

[44] Rakhman Priyatmoko, Addin Maulana, and Basuki Antariksa, 'The Sharia Hotel Policy in Yogyakarta toward Non-Mahram Guests', in *Islam, Media and Education in Thr Digital Era*, ed. by Atie Rachmiatie and others (Bandung: Routledge, 2022) <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003219149>.

[45] (Rosenberg & Choufany, 2009; Saad et al., 2014

[46] Noor Azimin Zainol, Rozila Ahmad, and Nurzami Mohd Shariff, 'Investigating the Barriers and Success Factors in Implementing Shariah Compliant Hotel Operations', *The Social Sciences*, 11.6 (2016), 7163–67 <https://medwelljournals.com/abstract/?doi=sscience.2016.7163.7167>.

[47] Rana Muhammad Ayyub, 'Exploring Perceptions of Non-Muslims towards Halal Foods in UK', *British Food Journal*, 117.9 (2015), 2328–43 <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-07-2014-0257>.

positive perceptions among non-Muslims regarding halal food[48] [49] [50]. This undoubtedly presents an opportunity for Shariah-compliant hotels, as providers of halal food, to promote the value of their products and attract the interest of non-Muslim tourists. In addition to the interest in halal food, research has shown a growing interest among non-Muslim tourists in staying at Sharia-compliant hotels in Indonesia[51]. The study found that a higher number of female non-Muslim respondents were interested in halal (Sharia-compliant) hotels compared to males. Additionally, some respondents were unmarried, young, university-educated, and predominantly Catholic.

Furthermore, the Islamic hospitality values embedded in Sharia-compliant hotels, such as separate facilities for men and women, the absence of adult entertainment, and the exclusion of alcoholic beverages, can be effectively promoted to non-Muslim tourists. Particularly appealing to those seeking an Islamic-oriented experience that emphasizes tranquility and serenity, these values hold significant potential for resonating with specific segments of non-Muslim travelers. This may include parents traveling with underage children (family segment), solo female travelers, or school groups embarking on educational tours.

Sharia-compliant hotels constitute a product within the Islamic hospitality industry. As an integral part of this industry, such hotels offer goods and services embodying Islamic hospitality values, namely halal foods, the absence of alcoholic beverages, family/children-friendly services, protection for female travelers, and customized faith-based service in hotel rooms. It is important to note that the range of goods and services provided by Sharia-compliant hotels extends beyond these five categories. All three have the potential to serve as universal values that can capture the attention

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[48] Agus Purwanto and others, 'Halal Foods Purchase Intension among Indonesian Non-Muslim Consumers: An Exploratory Case Study Approach', *International Journal of Science and Management Studies (IJSMS)*, April 2020, 2020, 15–27 <https://doi.org/10.51386/25815946/ijsms-v3i2p103>.

[49] Farah Raihana Hj. Ismail and Kauthar Nasiruddin, 'Perception of Non-Muslim Consumers towards Halal Products in Malaysia', *International Journal of Accounting and Business Management*, 2.1 (2014), 128–33; Ahasanul Haque and others, 'Non-Muslim Consumers' Perception toward Purchasing Halal Food Products in Malaysia', *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 6.1 (2015), 133–47 <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-04-2014-0033>.

[50] Haque and others.

[51] N Ulfa and others, 'How Different Believers' Perceptions of Choosing Halal Hotels an Empirical Analysis of Non-Muslim Customers in Jakarta', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism and Entrepreneurship (JoSTE)*, 3.3 (2022), 235–51 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35912/joste.v3i3.1664>.

of non-Muslim travelers, necessitating further elaboration. The subsequent section delves into the specifics of each Islamic value mentioned.

The Goodness of Halal Food

Halal food serves as a prominent attribute within the realm of halal tourism and Sharia-compliant hotels. While it may not be the primary consideration for non-Muslim travelers, halal cuisine possesses its own allure. Various scientific studies support this premise. Non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia, for instance, exhibit a positive response towards halal food.[52] The interest of non-Muslim consumers in halal food is associated with aspects such as safety, nutrition, and food quality.[53] Other motivating factors include novelty and taste of the food, cleanliness, recommendations from friends, pricing, hunger, and the motivation to experience local culture.[54]

Another study conducted in Indonesia[55] discovered that the majority of non-Muslim respondents exhibited a high interest in purchasing packaged food bearing halal labels. In the perception of non-Muslim consumers, the halal label on a product is not merely a commercial term to bolster the product's image in the market; rather, it signifies that the product meets health and cleanliness standards. Psychologically, the halal label instills trust, comfort, and a sense of security in consumers.

Tasting halal food can create profound memories for non-Muslim consumers. To establish such conditions, several dimensions need to be considered. These include the food itself (related to taste, novelty, quality, and safety), the company with whom they enjoy it (interaction with family and friends and the friendliness of service providers), and the ambiance (the atmosphere or setting of the dining venue).[56] Sharia-compliant hotels, as mini-destinations, have a strong potential to meet these dimensions, particularly in creating a service setting aligned with the expectations of non-Muslim consumers.

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[52] Haque et al., 2015; Mathew et al., 2014; Billah et al., 2020.

[53] Rezai et al., 2012; Aziz & Chok, 2013; Latif et al., 2014; Mathew et al., 2014; Haque et al., 2015; Billah et al., 2020.

[54] Erose Sthapit, Peter Björk, and Senthilkumaran Piramanayagam, 'Motivational, Emotional and Memorable Dimensions of Non-Muslim Tourists' Halal Food Experiences', *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 14.1 (2023), 23–42 <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-02-2021-0047>.

[55] Purwanto et al., (2020)

[56] Sthapit, Björk, and Piramanayagam.

Sthapit found that a significant portion of non-Muslim respondents are food neophiliacs[57], individuals with a proclivity for seeking and tasting new foods. This demographic tends to prioritize the experience of halal cuisine while traveling, making it a crucial aspect. Sharia-compliant hotel operators can capitalize on this opportunity to promote the positive values associated with halal food, as conveyed by previous research findings. Beyond merely emphasizing taste, halal cuisine offers novelty, safety, cleanliness, and other positive attributes.

In conclusion, halal food has the potential to leave a positive impression on non-Muslim communities during their tourism experiences. When non-Muslim tourists visit halal tourism destinations, they perceive it as an opportunity to gain insights into the local culture and customs by engaging with halal products in the tourism industry, including halal cuisine.[58] Tourists' satisfaction with their experiences at halal tourism destinations significantly impacts word of mouth (WOM), or their intention to verbally promote the destination to their peers. [59]

The Positive Impact of Prohibiting Alcoholic Beverages

In addition to providing halal food, Sharia-compliant hotels prohibit the circulation of alcoholic beverages within the hotel premises. This restriction constitutes one of the services offered by Sharia-compliant hotels and serves as a distinguishing attribute from conventional hotels. The prohibition of alcoholic beverages in Sharia-compliant hotels aligns with the principles of Sharia, which forbid Muslims from consuming alcoholic beverages. Apart from adversely affecting physical health, the consumption of alcoholic beverages can also impact the mental well-being of those who partake in them.

The absence of alcoholic beverage circulation within the hotel area prevents guests from experiencing potential negative incidents associated with alcohol consumption. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to the loss of control over one's consciousness (intoxication), subsequently resulting in behaviors that may harm others. For instance, individuals may become easily angered or offended, engage in altercations with fellow

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[57] Sthapit et al., (2023)

[58] M K Rahman and others, 'Does the Perception of Halal Tourism Destination Matter for Non-Muslim Tourists' WOM? The Moderating Role of Religious Faith', *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 8.2 (2022), 478–96 <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-12-2019-0207>.

[59] M K Rahman and others.

guests, cause disturbances, and vandalize hotel facilities. Bali, as one of the tourist destinations in Indonesia frequently visited by non-Muslim tourists from Europe and Australia, has experienced several unpleasant incidents caused by intoxicated tourists. These incidents include reckless driving under the influence, damage to public facilities, and altercations with both fellow tourists and local residents of Bali.[60]

Such situations undoubtedly create discomfort for other guests. Therefore, staying at a Sharia-compliant hotel is a prudent choice for non-Muslim tourists seeking security for themselves, their families, and especially for the children accompanying them on their journey. The assurance of safety from the adverse effects of alcohol is one of the values of Islamic hospitality found in Sharia-compliant hotels, setting them apart from other conventional hotels.

Family/Children-Friendly Services (No Adult Entertainment)

Another promotable value to non-Muslim tourists is the character of Sharia-compliant hotels, which abstain from providing adult entertainment services such as television channels and internet content featuring pornography.[61] They also refrain from offering entertainment facilities like nightclubs and do not facilitate gambling activities.[62] This is intended to prevent the exposure of minors to pornography when staying in the hotel with their parents. Sharia-compliant hotels provide entertainment aspects that are friendly to the children and family segments.

The hotel policy of refraining from providing adult entertainment on the hotel premises offers significant advantages, especially for travelers with underage children. In long-stay situations, where families may spend extended periods in hotel rooms, the availability of television channels filtered by hotel management can provide comfort and security for parents. With entertainment aspects being filtered, parents can feel assured that the content displayed on the hotel room's television channels aligns with their values. This not only involves screening content inconsistent with Islamic values but also extends to content that goes against universally accepted

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[60] www.aljazeera.com, 'Australian Gets 4 Months in Jail over Drunken Bali Rampage', *Https://Www.Aljazeera.Com*, 2019, p. 1 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/12/australian-gets-4-months-in-jail-over-drunken-bali-rampage> [accessed 8 January 2024]; www.thebalisun.com, 'Russian Man Detained In Bali For Public Indecency And Drunken Disturbance', *Https://Thebalisun.Com*, 2022, p. 1

[61] (Rosenberg & Choufany, 2009; Henderson, 2010; El-Gohary, 2016; Alam et al., 2018; Kamri et al., 2018; Battour, (2018).

[62] Alam, Nurzaman, and Hasan.

norms of decency. Thus, Sharia-compliant hotels can offer a positive, safe, and comfortable lodging experience for various types of families, enhancing their reputation as family-friendly accommodation destinations that value guest diversity. Awareness of these needs can also boost the appeal of Sharia-compliant hotels among travelers seeking a balance between adherence to religious values and comfort.

Protection for Female Travelers

Islam encourages its followers to engage in travel or tourism. There are intriguing aspects related to the Islamic perspective on tourism, particularly concerning the protection and respect for women in this activity. Islamic values strongly emphasize the protection and respect for women, including in the context of travel and tourism. As expressed by the regulation of travel for women in Islam is a crucial aspect of tourism activities undertaken by the Muslim community.[63]

According to Sharia, women are not allowed to travel alone without the presence of a Mahram, who is either a husband or a man whom the woman is forbidden to marry under Islamic law. This principle underscores the necessity for the protection and security of women during their journeys. The foundation of this regulation can be found in a Hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas, which means no woman should travel except with a Mahram, and no man should enter upon her unless a Mahram of hers is present.[64] The implementation of this rule may vary among Muslim communities and depends on the interpretations of specific schools of thought and scholars. However, in many Muslim communities, this principle is firmly upheld as part of efforts to preserve the moral values and ethics of Islam in daily life, including in the context of tourism activities.

Sharia-compliant hotels have specific provisions concerning the involvement of women in travel and tourism. One notable feature is the provision of dedicated floors for female guests, staffed exclusively by female personnel.[65] Designating specific floors for female or family guests aims to create a safer and more comfortable environment for female guests. This measure may contribute to a sense of increased protection and freedom from potential discomfort. Supporting this premise, a study conducted in Jakarta found that non-Muslim female travelers exhibited a greater interest in

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[63] Shakona et al., (2015)
[64] Shakona and others.
[65] Henderson, 2010; El-Gohary, 2016; Battour, 2018; Priyatmoko et al., 2021.

Rakhman Priyatmoko

Sharia-compliant hotels compared to their male counterparts.[66]

In its implementation, managers of Sharia-compliant hotels differ in their interpretation and adherence to these rules. Due to the associated high costs, not all Sharia-concept hotels incorporate these provisions into their establishments for various reasons. Hotels with a four-star rating or higher find it relatively easier to provide such services due to their larger financial resources. In addition to the option of offering dedicated hotel floors for families or female guests, Sharia-compliant hotels also prohibit guests arriving as couples (male and female) from staying in the same room. To enforce this policy, various measures are undertaken, such as requesting guests present identification cards, marriage certificates, or wedding photos. Some Sharia-compliant hotels in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, have implemented these rules.[67]

Certainly, not all non-Muslim or even Muslim travelers consider these provisions essential. A significant portion of them value freedom in the hotel environment. As such, these values are highly segmental and have the potential to attract the attention of prospective travelers, both families and women traveling alone. Promoting these values simultaneously offers a new experience for non-Muslim consumers seeking tranquility and comfort during their hotel stay without wanting to witness or be involved in unwanted interactions with the opposite gender.

Customized Faith-Based Service Hotel Room

As hotels adhering to Islamic principles in their services, the hotel rooms are designed to accommodate the preferences of Muslim travelers. One of these is the provision of Qur'an and prayer equipment in hotel rooms. Although this service may seem sensitive for non-Muslim guests, as mentioned earlier, non-Muslim travelers exhibit flexibility in accepting Islamic rules within certain tolerance limits when in Muslim destinations.[68]

The presence of the Qur'an allows Muslim guests who may not have brought the holy book during their travels to feel comfortable and have their needs met for reading the Qur'an. However, to ensure the comfort of non-Muslim guests, a sensitive and inclusive approach is necessary. During the

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[66] Ulfa and others.

[67] Priyatmoko, Maulana, and Antariksa.

[68] Mohamed Battour, 'Halal Tourism and Its Impact on Non-Muslim Tourists' Perception, Trip Quality and Trip Value', *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 2017 <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-02-2017-0020>.

check-in process, receptionists can inquire with non-Muslim guests about their preferences regarding the presence of the Qur'an in the room. If non-Muslim guests feel uncomfortable or have objections, the hotel can promptly and courteously relocate the Qur'an from their room.

This approach ensures the satisfaction of Muslim guests and demonstrates sensitivity to the needs and preferences of non-Muslim guests as well. This is an example of a practice in the Shariah hospitality industry that can create a positive experience for all guests without disregarding their individual values and beliefs. Through such services, Shariah-compliant hotels can enrich the knowledge of non-Muslim guests about Islamic culture and embrace them through values of tolerance and mutual understanding. Some non-Muslim guests might be interested in learning about Islamic culture, including the Qur'an, so it would be beneficial if the hotel could provide translations of the Qur'an in English or other international languages.

The flexibility demonstrated by Sharia-compliant hotel managers regarding Islamic attributes in rooms can be a crucial factor in shaping a positive perception among non-Muslim consumers. It is essential to emphasize that, despite the hotel carrying the "Sharia" label, it does not imply that managers will compel non-Muslim guests to confront or use Islamic attributes that may be present in the room. This approach can enhance the hotel's image as a welcoming place for all guests, irrespective of their religious background, thereby increasing the likelihood of garnering support and trust from diverse consumer segments.

Potential Challenges

Sharia-compliant hotels initially exist to meet the needs of Muslim travelers, but they also provide goods and services that both Muslims and non-Muslims can use. This implies that Sharia-compliant hotels can serve as a platform to communicate the values of Islamic hospitality inherent in the products and services offered to both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Despite the fact that non-Muslim tourists are not the primary target, Sharia-compliant hotel operators still need to prioritize the satisfaction of this segment. When tourists (both Muslim and non-Muslim) are satisfied with the services provided, they are more likely to revisit, as well as recommend Islamic hospitality products (in this case, Sharia-compliant hotels) to their peers through word of mouth (WOM), both in

person and electronically through eWOM. Studies have shown that WOM plays a role in increasing tourist visits to a destination. For example, positive word-of-mouth promotion of Yogyakarta (Indonesia) influences the high decision to visit the destination.[69]

In the era of information technology, stakeholders in the halal tourism industry also benefit from WOM conducted through electronic media, including social media (eWOM). eWOM has emerged as a highly influential element in modern marketing strategies, given its ease of dissemination and significant, rapid impact.[70] eWOM also plays a crucial role in the hospitality and tourism industries, influencing consumer behavior regarding tourist decisions and shaping perceptions of destinations, and overall experiences.[71]

Through eWOM, the positive values gained by non-Muslim tourists when staying at Sharia-compliant hotels, whether individually or as a group, can quickly spread to other individuals and groups. This has the potential to change the perceptions of non-Muslims towards Sharia-compliant hotels or other halal tourism products, even before they personally experience the products themselves.

Despite their potential role in communicating the values of Islamic hospitality, Sharia-compliant hotels face several challenges in attracting non-Muslim tourists. Firstly, there is research indicating that among non-Muslims, there are groups with negative perceptions of Sharia-compliant hotels.[72] This can be understood because even among Muslim communities, perceptions of Sharia-compliant hotels can vary, likely influenced by differing understandings of Sharia law.[73]

Segmenting hotels that adhere to Sharia law within the Muslim community is likely to happen inside the non-Muslim population as well. This necessitates that Sharia-compliant hotel managers have a thorough understanding of which segments of the non-Muslim population are potential markets for them. For instance, potential market segments could

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[69] Christina Catur Widayati and others, 'The Role of Destination Image on Visiting Decisions through Word of Mouth in Urban Tourism in Yogyakarta', *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 12.3 (2020), 177–96.

[70] Stephen W. Litvin, Ronald E. Goldsmith, and Bing Pan, 'A Retrospective View of Electronic Word of Mouth in Hospitality and Tourism Management', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30.1 (2018), 313–25 <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-08-2016-0461>.

[71] Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan.

[72] Zainol, Ahmad, and Shariff.

[73] Azizah Musa and others, 'Developing a Proper Framework towards Shariah-Compliant Hotel in Malaysia: Identifying Opportunities and Challenges', *Journal of Global Business and Social Entrepreneurship (GBSE)*, 1.4 (2017), 103–11.

include family tourists with children, solo female travelers, or school student tour groups. Understanding and catering to these specific segments can help Sharia-compliant hotels better tailor their services to the needs and preferences of non-Muslim guests.

The next challenge relates to the provision of halal food. This is closely linked to the budget of each hotel. Hotels with budgets of three stars and above can manage restaurants independently within the hotel premises, thereby creating an experience of dining on halal food with local flavors. However, issues surrounding the halal status of food can also be sensitive, including for non-Muslims.

The previous section mentioned that the halal logo on food or restaurants for non-Muslim tourists is not just a commercial matter but represents the overall image of the product, related to its quality, taste, and safety. However, obtaining halal certification from a specific authority in Indonesia requires a process and cost that not all service providers are willing and able to undertake. Additionally, Sharia-compliant hotel operators in Indonesia argue that certification from a specific authority is not necessary because not all tourists, including Muslims, pay attention to halal certification in a Muslim-majority country like Indonesia. Consequently, not all Sharia-compliant hotels necessarily have restaurants, and those with restaurants are not necessarily halal-certified.

To address these challenges, Sharia-compliant hotel operators can focus on what they can offer to tourists, both Muslim and non-Muslim. For example, they can prioritize basic services such as prohibiting non-Mahram couples from staying together to avoid potential moral dilemmas, ensuring that no pornography is displayed within the hotel premises, and banning alcohol consumption to provide peace of mind for Muslim and non-Muslim guests alike. Thus, hotels can fulfill the role of reducing Islamophobia in both large-budget and limited-budget hotels, considering their respective capabilities.

Promoting Islamic hospitality values to non-Muslim travelers will expand the market reach. In addition, effective promotion of Sharia-compliant hotel values can play a crucial role in reducing Islamophobia and its negative impacts, including the rise of hate crimes. To achieve this, creativity within the Islamic hospitality-based hotel industry becomes paramount. Industry stakeholders must actively promote the concept of Islamic hospitality through branding that reflects openness to non-Muslim

guests across various media platforms. An example of a suggested tagline could be, "Shariah Hotel: Inclusive Serenity, Where Comfort Knows No Bounds." This branding signifies that in Sharia-compliant hotels, non-Muslim guests can discover universal beauty and comfort, experiencing the touch of Islamic hospitality in every aspect of their stay and creating unforgettable memories. Through such branding efforts, it is hoped that awareness of positive Islamic values will increase, reducing misunderstandings and fears that often underlie Islamophobia and mitigating hate crimes directed towards the Muslim community.

Conclusion

Tourism, serving as a medium that brings together Muslim and non-Muslim communities, holds the potential to act as a tool for moderating Islamophobia by promoting the values of Islamic hospitality. Sharia-compliant hotels, as part of the Islamic tourism industry, embody Islamic hospitality values in their goods and services that can be promoted to a segmented market of non-Muslim tourists. Those values include the benefits of halal food, the advantages of prohibiting alcohol consumption, the absence of adult entertainment, extra protection for female guests, and customizable room configurations.

These products have the potential to moderate Islamophobia because their characteristics align with the preferences of certain segments of non-Muslim tourists. The success of Sharia-compliant hotels in creating satisfaction among non-Muslim tourists can significantly alter the perceptions of these tourists regarding halal tourism products. When these hotels successfully create positive travel experiences, there is a shift in perspective, indicating that Islam is not solely associated with conflicts in the Middle East, extremism, jihad, and various forms of violence. Non-Muslim tourists will understand that Islam also emphasizes gentleness, respect for guests, and peace, regardless of religious differences. This moment presents a crucial opportunity to reduce stereotypes, stigmas, and misunderstandings about Muslim communities.

This research has limitations as it solely relies on a literature review as the method for data collection. A more comprehensive study in the future is needed to explore the perceptions of Sharia-compliant hotel managers as well as non-Muslim tourists toward Sharia-compliant hotels. Through such efforts, a more comprehensive strategy can be developed to win the hearts of non-Muslim tourists and counter Islamophobia. Islamophobia is a global

issue, requiring collaboration from various countries and communities in order to work together to alleviate or even eliminate it completely.

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