Factors Influencing Customers' Decisions to use Muslim Friendly Hotel Service: A Study in Selangor

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	In the post-pandemic era of global tourism, Muslim travellers are increasingly seeking experiences that are both comfortable and aligned with Islamic ideals and lifestyles. Malaysia, a premier location for Muslim tourism, is pivotal in offering Muslim-friendly hospitality services. Nonetheless, the degree of customer comprehension regarding the authentic notion of Muslim-friendly hotels remains inconsistent, which may affect their lodging booking selections. This study aimed to assess customer comprehension of Muslim-friendly hotel services, evaluate customer perceptions regarding safety, quality, and cleanliness, and identify the key factors influencing customer decisions to utilize Muslim-friendly hotel services in Selangor. This research employed a survey methodology, utilizing questionnaires for data gathering. A total of 384 respondents were chosen, although only 303 questionnaires were full and suitable for analysis. The study results indicated that most respondents have a comprehensive understanding of Muslim-friendly hotel services. Perceptions of safety factors were also elevated. Religious factors were recognized as the primary influence on customer decisions to select Muslim-friendly hotels.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Muslim-friendly hotels are a crucial sector for serving the needs of Muslim tourists. As an Islamic country that attracts Muslim tourists from all over the world, Malaysia's hospitality business actively promotes hotels with a Muslim-friendly concept (Yahaya et al., 2020). The formation of the Muslim Friendly Hotel concept began with the initiative taken by several agencies to work on the development of Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services-necessities (Hashim & Mohd Fauzi, 2022). Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and, more recently, China have employed the terms halal tourism or halal travel to promote their tourism markets to Muslim travellers. However, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, on the other hand, have struggled to make the phrase known around the world. Thus, Malaysia uses the term Muslim Friendly not only to cater to the needs of Muslim travellers but also to give the same products and services that everyone, including non-Muslims, can experience as well (Aziz, 2018).

Besides, Muslim-Friendly Hotel is one of the unique and creative services available in Malaysia's hotel sector (Karia & Fauzi, 2019). When tourists walk into hotels, they are certain that their fundamental needs as Muslims will be met. For example, the study by Mazlan et al. (2023) stated that rooms must be labelled with qibla signs, have prayer mats and women's prayer attire, and the hotel kitchen must make and prepare Halal food for its Muslim guests. This study is in line with the study by Hussain et al. (2021), which noted that Muslim travellers prioritize six religious needs, including Halal food, prayer facilities, Ramadan services, water-friendly washrooms, prohibition of non-halal activities and recreational facilities, and privacy services for Hijabis and Nikabis. Thus, it shows that as Islam is a way of life, even during tourism experiences, it is obligatory for Muslim tourists to do religious responsibilities (Hashim & Mohd Fauzi, 2022).

Essentially, the existence of the Muslim Friendly Hotel concept in Malaysia derived from the concept of Shariah Compliant Hotel (Hashim & Mohd Fauzi, 2022). It is also reasonable to mention that the Muslim Friendly Hotel concept, due to its universality, emphasizes the common hospitality services that non-Muslims may also utilize. Moreover, the Articles of Iman and the Islamic Pillars serve as the guidelines for Muslim travellers' requirements. This is because it is considered a sin for a Muslim to do anything that does not align with the principles of Islam and the Article of Iman (Hashim & Mohd Fauzi, 2022). According to Boğan et al. (2020), Muslims tend to take advantage of Allah's blessings and avoid behaviors or things that are banned by Him in their tourism activities, just as they do in their everyday life. Some experts state that to provide hotel services and create a marketing strategy, it is essential to analyze the religious requirements (Che Omar & Ali Adaha, 2019). Thus, Muslim-friendly hotels should take note of the criteria they need to provide for their Muslim customers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Muslim friendly hotel service quality

The ever-increasing number of tourist visits has caused competition between hotel businesses around the world. This occurs because of the business hotel's desire to retain customers to prevent them from booking at another business hotel. This competition will demonstrate the ability of travelers to identify the characteristics of a quality hotel. According to Malik et al. (2020), there has been a rise in tourists' awareness of the value of selecting distinctive hotel offerings and services because of hotel industry competitiveness. Travelers will have an unforgettable experience when they see how crucial high-quality inclusive hotel services are (Jeaheng et al., 2020). International hotel businesses are also becoming more competitive, as they aim to draw in Muslim travelers from all over the world. To draw in more Muslim travelers and expand the hotel business, international hotels have started offering Halal goods and services to Muslim travelers (Ainin et al., 2020; Al-Ansi et al., 2019).

According to Jeaheng et al. (2020), Muslim travellers have different opinions when it comes to selecting their accommodation. The growth of hotels that provide their Muslim guests with premium Halal goods and services is to blame for this difference of viewpoints. To make sure that the features and caliber of the hotel meet the expectations of visitors, the fundamental requirements, goods, and services that this establishment provides are assessed. According to Van Hoof (2002), this high-quality service has been described as challenging to comprehend. Most academics, meanwhile, have had difficulty defining this high-quality service. Nevertheless, both Jeaheng et al. (2020) and Samori & Sabtu (2014) define quality service, similarly, stating that the primary determinants of this quality service are personnel attitude, cleanliness, protection, and room maintenance. According to Ali et al. (2014), the high caliber of this service benefits the business and opens new avenues for the hotel industry. An organization's ability to survive is typically correlated with the quality of service it provides to visitors. This is so that visitors will see the hotel as dependable based on the services it provides (Malik et al., 2020).

In order to guarantee hotel visitors' contentment, quality service is crucial. Past research from Malik et al. (2020) and Pamukcu & Sariisik (2020) may attest to this. Quality service plays the most important role in ensuring the loyalty of tourists in choosing a Muslim-friendly hotel. This high-quality service will leave a positive impact on customer behavior with customer satisfaction. Arasli et al. (2023) is also in line with those studies, as it recommended that visitors and hotel management give priority to aspects of service quality, such as the hotel's capacity to assist customers. When a hotel possesses that attribute, travellers will be given a positive viewpoint and may even be persuaded to choose a hotel that is hospitable to Muslims (Suci et al., 2021). However, this is contrary to the study done by Jeaheng et al. (2019), which states that nobody knows what Muslim tourists' perspectives are. Currently, five crucial elements, including "halal food and beverages," "halal social climate," "halal entertainment," "halal facilities," and "halal-friendly employees," were found to have a substantial impact on Muslim visitors in a South Korean study (Han et al., 2019). Therefore, in order to gain a positive reputation among Muslim travelers, hotels that cater to Muslims should offer top-notch halal services (Arasli et al., 2023).

2.2 Customer decision behaviour

The study of consumer behavior focuses on how people, groups, and organizations select, purchase, utilize, and arrange products, services, concepts, or experiences to fulfil their needs and desires (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Consumer behavior is described as a dynamic interplay between the effect of cognition, conduct, and external events by the American Marketing Association, or AMA for short (Sunyoto & Yanuar Saksono, 2022). According to Tuhin et al.'s (2022) consumer behavior model, producers consider how well their products can satisfy customers' needs and wants because of intensifying competition, shifting consumer preferences, and rapidly advancing technological advancements. By knowing consumer behavior, the nature of uncertainty in marketing can be reduced, and making decisions can be anticipated (Juliana et al., 2024).

According to Idris & Rizal (2016), customer behavior was affected by the Quranic philosophy of what is Halal and Haram. Despite the brief summaries of the subject matter, Islam has a significant impact on how Muslims behave. These include dishonesty, gambling, alcohol, pork, financial interest, animal blood, and animal flesh offered as sacrifice to deities other than Allah (De Run et al., 2010). Faith that complies with Shariah and moral principles leads to conduct that necessitates Halal income, equitable spending, and Halal utility, which results in material fulfilment and metaphysical reward. Ghassan (2015) states that customer utility and behavior are related. The customer's utility function in Islam is divided into two categories: spending in the present moment and spending in the hereafter. Ine, the Muslim customer is acting rationally in the conventional sense of attempting to maximize benefit. His needs are met not just by what he takes for himself but also by what he spends helping others and doing good deeds in the name of Allah (Mansyur, 2016).

3.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data is data that is collected by the researcher directly. In this study, it will be using a quantitative approach. This study focuses on the people who live in Selangor. Those aged 18 to 60 are the target for this study. While those aged 18 and under are excluded from following this study. The respondents accepted for this study are 303 respondents. The survey questions included in the set were modified from those used by M. A. Aziz & Mohamad Saleh, (2019); Mohd Ahid et al., (2022); and Mulia, (2017). Nonetheless, the questionnaire set was adjusted to better fit the needs of this investigation. When various dimensions of the study were obtained by highlighting previous studies and works, modifications were made in accordance with the applicability of the study.

A statistical technique called descriptive analysis uses metrics like mean, median, mode, range, standard deviation, and variance to compile and characterize data gathered from independent and dependent variables. Descriptive analysis will therefore be used in this study to give an overview of the data, spot trends and patterns, find outliers, and compare variables. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 27.0 will be used as a tool in conducting this descriptive analysis. The data collected from the questionnaire is transcribed and the information will be transferred to the SPSS system.

4.   DATA ANALYSIS: FACTOR INFLUENCED CUSTOMER'S DECISION TO USE MUSLIM FRIENDLY HOTEL SERVICE

In this section, the questions asked are related to the third objective of this study, which is to summarize factors that influence customers' decisions to use Muslim-friendly hotel services. Based on this objective, there are 7 questions asked by the respondents. Each question represents a factor influencing a customer's decision to use Muslim-friendly hotel service.

Many studies have discussed the factors that help Muslim tourism develop successfully. Among them, past research obtains various types of factors in terms of religion, awareness, image, customer satisfaction, halal certification, quality services, facilities, halal kitchens, staff attitude, and price. Instead of focusing on many factors, this study chose to focus on seven factors only.

Based on the table below, among the factors that are focused on are halal awareness, image, religion, staff's attitude, price, customer, and halal certification. Each question given will be related to the factor that is being studied. The results to find out how many respondents chose a factor for this multiple-answer question will be seen through frequency analysis. The element that is chosen the most will determine the factor influencing customer decision. Table 1 shows the elements of the question and what factors represent those elements.

Table 1 *Factor Influenced Customer's Decision to use Muslim Friendly Hotel Service*

No.	The elements	Factor
1	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I realize that as a Muslim, I must support the Muslim hotel industry	**Halal Awareness**
2	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because of the image of the hotel that provides halal service based on Shariah	**Halal Image**
3	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because my religion tells me to use halal services.	**Religious**
4	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the employees there treat their guests politely and respect the boundaries	**Staff's Attitude**
5	I chose Muslim Friendly hotel because the price offered is reasonable with the service provided.	**Price**
6	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I was satisfied with the service provided throughout my stay there.	**Customer Satisfaction**
7	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the hotel has Halal Certification.	**Halal Certification**

Besides, the respondent was given the opportunity to choose multiple answers, as they were given multiple choices of answers to the question. Based on the highest answer choices, it will determine the result of this

research. Therefore, to find out the frequency of the respondent's choice in this section, Table 2 will show the frequency factor influencing the customer's decision.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistic of Frequencies and Percentage of Respondents in Factor Influencing the Customer's Decision (n=303)

$factor Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
factor influence customer's decision[a]	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I realize that as a Muslim, I must support the Muslim hotel industry	109	13.1%	36.0%
	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because of the image of the hotel that provides halal service based on Shariah	161	19.4%	53.1%
	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because my religion tells me to use halal services	164	19.8%	54.1%
	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the employees there treat their guests politely and respect the boundaries	90	10.9%	29.7%
	I chose Muslim Friendly hotel because the price offered is reasonable with the service provided	86	10.4%	28.4%
	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I was satisfied with the service provided throughout my stay there	102	12.3%	33.7%
	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the hotel has Halal Certification	117	14.1%	38.6%
Total		829	100.0%	273.6%

Based on the Table 2 above, it shows the factors that influenced customers' decisions to use Muslim-friendly hotel service. First, the most common answer chosen by the respondents is 'I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because my religion tells me to use halal services' (n=164, 54.1%). The second highest answer chosen by the respondents was 'I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because of the image of the hotel that provides halal service based on Shariah' (n=161, 53.1%). Based on the data, the third highest answer that the respondents chose was 'I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the hotel has Halal Certification,' which got n=117, 38.6%. Furthermore, the answer 'I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I realize that as a Muslim, I must support the Muslim hotel industry' (n=109, 36%). Next, 'I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I was satisfied with the service provided throughout my stay there' (n=102, 33.7%). Next, 'I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the employees there treat their guests politely and respect the boundaries' (n=90, 29.7%). The least option chosen by the respondent is 'I chose Muslim Friendly hotel because the price offered is reasonable with the service provided' (n=86, 28.4%). The result of this section can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Fig 1: Factor influenced customer intention in deciding to use muslim friendly hotel service
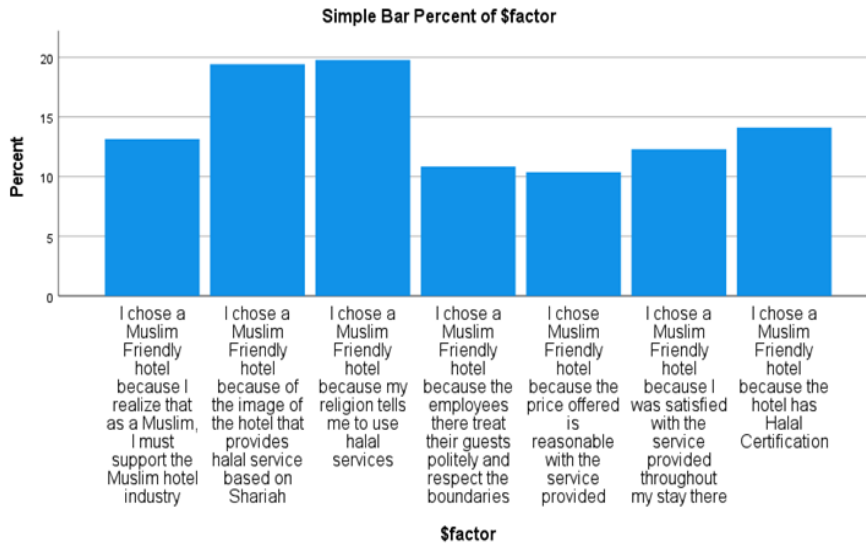
Based on Figure 1 above, the choice is based on the seven factors that influence customer decisions, which are, in terms of halal awareness, halal image, religion, staff's attitude, price, customer satisfaction, and halal certification. Each result of those factors will be described herein. It can be seen that religious is the most chosen option by the respondents with 54.1%, while the least chosen option is price with 28.4%.

4.1 Analysis on Races Variable with Factor Influence Customer's Intention

Table 3 Frequency between variable races and factors

			I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I realize that as a Muslim, I must support the Muslim hotel industry	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because of the image of the hotel that provides halal service based on Shariah	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because my religion tells me to use halal services	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the employees there treat their guests politely and respect the boundaries	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the price offered is reasonable with the service provided	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I was satisfied with the service provided throughout my stay there	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the hotel has Halal Certification	Total
Races	Malay	Count	109	161	164	69	58	81	112	754
		% of Total	13.1%	19.4%	19.8%	8.3%	7.0%	9.8%	13.5%	90.9%
	Chinese	Count	0	0	0	17	22	17	5	61
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	2.7%	2.1%	0.6%	7.5%
	Indian	Count	0	0	0	4	6	4	0	14
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.0%	2.4%
Total		Count	109	161	164	90	86	102	117	829
		% of Total	13.1%	19.4%	19.8%	10.9%	10.4%	12.3%	14.1%	100.0%

Percentages and totals are based on responses.
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Based on Table 3, it shows that most Malay respondents have chosen the seven factors as influencing their decision. However, Chinese and Indian respondents did not choose the first 3 factors in terms of halal awareness, halal image, and religiousness. This is because they are non-Muslim customers, so their choice is more in terms of staff's attitude, price, and customer satisfaction. If you look at the results of this study, the price factor is the least chosen factor by the respondents. Nevertheless, respondents of Chinese and Indian races choose price as their selection factor over staff' attitude and customer satisfaction factors. This

is in line with the study conducted by Dealwis et al. (2022), which shows that non-Muslims prefer to stay in hotels that offer reasonable prices. Thus, it shows that although the price factor is the least selected factor by the respondents, it is one of the important factors for non-Muslims.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to identify the relationship between the factors influencing customers' decisions to use Muslim-friendly services in Selangor. This analysis also includes the relationship between demographic variables (specifically ethnicity) and the factors influencing the selection of services in Muslim-friendly hotels. By conducting this correlation, researchers can determine whether ethnic background affects customers' preferences or sensitivity towards Shariah-compliant elements offered. The findings from this analysis will provide clearer insights into hotel operators in strategizing their marketing efforts and improving facilities and services that meet the expectations of multi-ethnic customers in Selangor. The correlation matrix between the variables under study is shown in Table 4. The significance value (p) indicates if the relation is significant at the 0.01 or 0.05 level, while the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is used to ascertain the relationship's direction and strength.

Table 4 Correlation Matrix Between the Variables Studied

Correlations

		Races	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I realize that as a Muslim, I must support the Muslim hotel industry	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because of the image of the hotel that provides halal service based on Shariah	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because my religion tells me to use halal services	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the employees there treat their guests politely and respect the boundaries	I chose Muslim Friendly hotel because the price offered is reasonable with the service provided	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I was satisfied with the service provided throughout my stay there	I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the hotel has Halal Certification
Races	Pearson Correlation	1	-.273**	-.388**	-.396**	.147*	.299**	.111	-.217**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	.011	<.001	.055	<.001
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	302	303
I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I realize that as a Muslim, I must support the Muslim hotel industry	Pearson Correlation	-.273**	1	.304**	.124*	-.051	.001	-.080	.196**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	.031	.378	.987	.166	<.001
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	302	303
I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because of the image of the hotel that provides halal service based on Shariah	Pearson Correlation	-.388**	.304**	1	.303**	-.041	-.157**	-.043	.229**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	.479	.006	.460	<.001
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	302	303
I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because my religion tells me to use halal services	Pearson Correlation	-.396**	.124*	.303**	1	-.068	-.140*	-.146*	-.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.031	<.001		.236	.015	.011	.939
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	302	303
I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the employees there treat their guests politely and respect the boundaries	Pearson Correlation	.147*	-.051	-.041	-.068	1	.360**	.245**	.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.378	.479	.236		<.001	<.001	.563
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	302	303
I chose Muslim Friendly hotel because the price offered is reasonable with the service provided	Pearson Correlation	.299**	.001	-.157**	-.140*	.360**	1	.232**	-.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.987	.006	.015	<.001		<.001	.957
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	302	303
I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because I was satisfied with the service provided throughout my stay there	Pearson Correlation	.111	-.080	-.043	-.146*	.245**	.232**	1	.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.166	.460	.011	<.001	<.001		.537
	N	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302
I chose a Muslim Friendly hotel because the hotel has Halal Certification	Pearson Correlation	-.217**	.196**	.229**	-.004	.033	-.003	.036	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	.939	.563	.957	.537	
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	302	303

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a) **Relationship between Ethnicity and Factors Influencing the Selection of Muslim-Friendly Hotels**

Table 4.1 shows that there are several significant relationships between ethnicity and the factors influencing the selection of Muslim-friendly hotels:

Table 4.1 Significant relationships between ethnicity and the factors influencing the selection of muslim-friendly hotels

Factors	Correlation	Interpretation
Halal Awareness	(r = -0.273, p < 0.001)	Moderate negative correlation between ethnicity and the factor
Halal Image	(r = -0.388, p < 0.001)	Moderate negative correlation between ethnicity and the factor
Religious	(r = -0.396, p < 0.001)	Moderate negative correlation between ethnicity and the factor. The tendency to decide on hotels based on religious considerations decreases with increasing scores for a given ethnic group variable.
Staff's Attitude	(r = 0.147, p = 0.011)	Weak positive relationship between ethnicity and the factor
Price	(r = 0.299, p < 0.001)	Moderate positive relationship between ethnicity and the factor.
Customer Satisfaction	(r = 0.111, p = 0.055)	Very weak and insignificant positive relationship between ethnicity and the factor

b) Relationship between Factors Influencing Hotel Selection

In addition, Table 4.2 also reveals a positive relationship between several factors influencing the selection of Muslim-friendly hotels:

Table 4.2 Positive relationship between several factors influencing the selection of muslim-friendly hotels

Factors	Correlation	Interpretation
Hotel Image and Halal Certificate	(r = 0.229, p < 0.001)	Weak positive relationship
Price and Staff's Attitude	(r = 0.360, p < 0.001)	Moderate positive relationship
Staff's Attitude and Customer Satisfaction	(r = 0.245, p < 0.001)	Weak positive relationship
Price and Customer Satisfaction	(r = 0.232, p < 0.001)	Weak positive relationship

Overall, the correlation analysis's findings show that Muslim guests' decisions to employ Muslim-friendly hotel services are significantly influenced by religious considerations, hotel image, and halal certification. Price and employee service, however, should not be disregarded because they also have a big influence on consumer choices. Ethnicity and religious characteristics, hotel image, and halal certification have a negative association, which implies that non-Muslim guests give these elements less weight when deciding on a hotel that attracts Muslims. However, other ethnic groups place a higher value on staff service and price.

This correlation study shows how customer choices to employ hotel services that are Muslim-friendly are influenced by a variety of factors that differ depending on their ethnic background. In order to draw in a greater variety of multi-ethnic customers in Selangor, hotel management should take these various aspects into account while creating marketing plans and enhancing existing offerings.

4.3 Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, it was found that most people know about Muslim-friendly hotels. They also prefer to stay in Muslim-friendly hotels. Two questions from the findings of this study are related to the element of knowledge and preference and are in line with the findings of the study conducted by Mohd Ahid et al. (2022). Besides, the service provided by Muslim-friendly hotels is also always used by customers. At the same time, customers are also aware that not all services in the Muslim-friendly hotel follow Shariah. This is proven in a study conducted by Hashim & Mohd Fauzi (2022), where Muslim-friendly hotels are still serving alcohol in the hotel even though it is only limited to their non-Muslim customers. This shows that Muslim-friendly hotels only use the tagline 'Muslim-friendly' to get profit (Mazlan et al., 2023). Even so, not all Muslim-friendly hotel services provided are Shariah-compliant. There are still Muslim-friendly hotel services that follow Shariah, for example, Grand Bluewave Hotel and De Palma Hotel. Therefore, customers should make a review of the Muslim-friendly hotel they want to stay

in to find out the type of service provided in the hotel so that it really meets their needs. Based on the finding, the first objective of this study, which is to identify the level of customers' understanding regarding Muslim-friendly hotel services, has been achieved.

Besides, customers also prefer Muslim-friendly hotels that take care of customer safety, provide quality service, and ensure that the environment in the hotel is clean. When these three things are met, customers will feel more comfortable staying and using the services provided by Muslim-friendly hotels. Based on the data, safety has the most respondents agreeing on it. It shows that safety is important because without safety, customers will not come to the Muslim-friendly hotel. Anything that causes harm or danger to guests should not be ignored in order to create a positive and comfortable environment (Adenan et al., 2023). Aside from that, behavioral intentions have the potential to predict behavior, suggesting that behavioral intentions and customer service quality characteristics are related. As a result, hotels must offer a better and higher-quality service overall to satisfy their customers (Ma'asor et al., 2018). In terms of hygiene, the hotel needs to ensure that rooms that have been used by past customers are cleaned, and they also need to provide new sheets, pillowcases, blankets, and personal care products in the washroom before new customers come to stay in the room. Thus, based on the response received from this study, it is proven that the second objective of this study, which is to analyze customer perception in terms of safety, quality, and hygiene service in Muslim-friendly hotels, has been achieved.

Furthermore, as for the findings of this study, which related to the third objective, which is to summarize factors that influence customers' decisions to use Muslim-friendly hotel service are achieved when the religion factor is the most important factor in influencing customer decisions. This strong religious role will influence the attitude of tourists in making the choice to visit again. Nevertheless, the studies conducted by Arta & Fikriyah (2021) and Juliana et al. (2024) show that religiosity gives positive results, but it does not affect tourists' decisions. Meanwhile, this study is in line with the study conducted by Lusiana (2020), which states that religiosity has a positive effect on tourists visiting again. Their devotion to religiousness is consistent with the products and services they purchase. Besides, some of the studies highlight the needs of Muslims based on their Islamic faith, which may include Muslim religious prohibitions on immoral behavior and admittance for single couples. They also discovered that hotels might offer religious information, such as the location of a local mosque, the hours of prayer, and the names of nearby Halal restaurants (Samori & Sabtu, 2014). This suggests that people who practice Islam more fervently have higher satisfaction rates with Halal-themed hotels.

Next is the factor of halal image. According to Hussain et al. (2021), a good and strong image will affect tourists' perception of this Muslim-friendly hotel and subsequently increase their business value. Based on a study conducted by Absah & Yuliaty (2024), the number of Muslim tourists in Malaysia is increasing due to the provision of hospitality and tourism facilities that comply with Shariah. Among the services that customers expect to be provided by Muslim-friendly hotels according to Shariah are: the Holy Book Quran, a prayer mat and arrow indicating the direction of the *qiblat*, beds and toilets positioned away from the *qiblat*, prayer rooms available in the premises and hotels, no inappropriate entertainment, a staff mostly made up of Muslims who dress appropriately for the Islamic dress code, a separate salon, recreational areas, and a swimming pool for men and women, a separate room or floor for unmarried couples between men and women, the dress code for tourists, no alcohol or gambling in the hotel lobby or restaurant, and no forbidden foods and drinks kept in the hotel refrigerator. When the service is provided, customers, especially Muslims, will be interested in staying in a Muslim-friendly hotel because of the halal image shown. Thus, it shows that the image of a hotel that provides halal service based on Shariah is one of the most important factors that influence customer decisions.

The third factor is the halal certificate. Halal certificate is very important for Muslims because they are required to buy, eat, and use services or products that are halal. The certificate is used to promote the hotel in the name of Shariah or Muslim-friendly hotel, which means that it does not sell pork, alcoholic beverages, or anything that is not allowed in Islam. There are 273 hotels that get 3 to 5 stars and 53 hotels

that get 1 and 2 stars that have a halal certificate (Absah & Yuliaty, 2024). By proving that the restaurant or kitchen in the Muslim-friendly hotel has a halal certificate, it will give comfort to customers (Yahaya et al., 2020) because they do not have to worry about the food provided by the hotel. The basic condition to get 'Muslim-friendly' is to have a halal certificate. According to Saffinee et al. (2019), recent studies have shown that Muslim purchasing behavior for food and beverages is highly dependent on the logo and labeling. Without a halal certificate or logo that proves that the hotel provides Shariah-based services, it will make customers hesitant to use the service.

The fourth factor is in terms of halal awareness. Based on the data, it was found that many respondents are aware that they need to support the halal industry. A study conducted by Peristiwo (2020) found that the increase in tourists from year to year is the potential to further develop the Islamic tourism sector in Malaysia. The excellence factor possessed by Malaysia has ignited the spirit of other countries to strive to develop halal tourism. The more the Islamic tourism industry develops, the more people will want to use it either to feel the experience of staying in a Muslim-friendly hotel or because of the intention to visit again due to the services provided that satisfy them.

Next is the factor of customer satisfaction. When customers are satisfied with all the services received by them during their stay at a Muslim-friendly hotel, they will intend to visit the hotel again. This is in line with a study conducted by Ma'asor et al. (2018), which states that when hotels provide satisfaction to their customers, the hotel will gain their loyalty. Loyalty from old customers who revisit the hotel is better than receiving new customers. This is because hotel employees need to find the new needs of the customer to ensure that the customer is satisfied with the service provided. However, this does not mean that new customers are not invited to stay at Muslim-friendly hotels, because with the presence of new customers, Muslim-friendly hotels' business will increase. Therefore, to ensure that customers achieve a high level of satisfaction, every service provided to them must be of high quality as well.

The sixth factor is the staff's attitude. Based on the data, it was found that staff's attitude is the second least factor that was chosen by respondents as the factor that influences customer intention in deciding to use a Muslim-friendly hotel. Although in this research it is the second least important factor, in other research, staff is considered the most important factor. For example, according to a study conducted by Han et al. (2019), staff is one of the most important factors among tourists. This study is in line with Malik et al. (2020), which states that the quality of service of hotel employees is included in the quality of other services. This is because hotel staff provide excellent service to guests, who inadvertently make them feel comfortable and provide a consistent impression of the hotel. Furthermore, it instills in clients confidence that the hotel can fulfill their demands, including resolving a range of issues and grievances, thereby impacting the choice of lodging (Rivaldo et al., 2021). Employees who can provide good service despite the many challenges they have to face are the best employees. Their existence is what can increase the reputation of Muslim-friendly hotels. Therefore, hotel employees must provide good service to their customers, such as being attentive, friendly, and kind.

Lastly, the price factor is the factor least chosen by customers as one of the factors that influence their decision to make a choice. Customer thought that the price offered by the Muslim-friendly hotel should be reasonable with the service provided. Based on a past study conducted by Hidayat et al. (2021), the study found that the price offered by the hotel must be in accordance with the quality of the service offered. If they are charged high fees, it may cause them to refuse to stay in Muslim-friendly hotels and further affect the Muslim tourism industry (Mazlan et al., 2023). The high price, despite the poor-quality service, shows that the hotel only wants to make a profit. Nevertheless, if the service offered by this Muslim-friendly hotel is of high quality, then customers are willing to pay a higher price to use the service. This can be proven based on a study done by Malik et al. (2020), whose study clearly explains that service quality with price is positively related to customer satisfaction. In addition, a study done by Dealwis et al. (2022) stated that non-Muslim customers stay in a Muslim-friendly hotel because it is affordable, as they believe that the service is provided based on Islamic principles and not as a quick profit-making scheme. Thus, it shows

that even though price is the least important factor chosen by customers, it is still an important factor that causes customers to make a choice before choosing a Muslim-friendly hotel.

5.   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings of the study have been thoroughly analyzed based on the survey answers that have been obtained from 303 respondents. The researcher finds out that the survey has given the best information to achieve the objective of this study, which is to identify the level of customers' understanding regarding Muslim-friendly hotel services, to analyze customer perception in terms of safety, quality, and hygiene service in Muslim-friendly hotels, and to summarize factors influencing customers' decisions to use Muslim-friendly hotel services. As a result of this study, the researcher finds out that respondents have knowledge regarding Muslim-friendly hotel service and customer perception of safety services is high. As for factors that influence a customer's decision to use Muslim-friendly hotel services, most of the respondents agree on religion.

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7.   CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

8.   AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Dinie Kaiyisah Mohamad Tauhid: Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation and writing-original draft; **Shahirah Said,** Conceptualisation, methodology, and formal analysis; **Najwa Alyaa**, formal analysis, and validation; **Sakinatul Raadiyah Abdullah**: Review and editing, and validation.

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