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UNVEILING ISLAMIC HOSPITALITY: INSIGHTS FROM THE *QURAN* AND *HADITH*

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Abstract:

The expansion of Islamic hotels is increasingly attracting attention from industry players and scholars in the hotel sector. While some researchers have studied the attributes of Islamic hotels, research examining these attributes from the perspective of the *Quran* and *hadith* has been lacking. This study aims to fill this gap by reviewing translations of the *Quran* and a database of *hadiths* to gather relevant attributes of Islamic hotels. The study employed a thematic analysis of selected verses and *hadiths* to identify key attributes. The results indicate that every action is evaluated based on intention, and the prohibition of improper conduct, welcoming and honouring guests, and creating a peaceful environment are essential components of the spiritual aspect of hospitality. These findings highlight the profound spiritual and ethical dimensions of Islamic hospitality. The insights from this study are crucial for developing a culturally sensitive and ethically grounded hospitality industry, particularly in regions with significant Muslim populations. Further research can extend the attributes of Islamic hospitality, provided they conform to Sharia law principles. This study's scope focuses on general Islamic teachings, applicable across various geographical and cultural contexts within the Muslim world.

Keywords:

Islamic Hospitality, Islamic Hotel, *Quran*, *Hadith*, Attributes

Introduction

The tourism sector has played a significant role in fostering economic growth in Malaysia, with a particular emphasis on the hospitality industry, notably within Muslim friendly tourism (MasterCard-Crescentrating, 2019). According to the most recent statistics released by the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), Malaysia has consistently held the top position as the preferred destination for global Muslim travelers in the MasterCard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2022, drawing in more than 5 million Muslim tourists each year since the inception of the Index in 2015. This substantial influx has significantly contributed to the country's tourism sector.

Malaysia's adeptness in implementing Muslim-friendly tourism products, including the prominent offering of Islamic hotels, contributes to this remarkable achievement. Hoteliers are constantly introducing new concepts and ideas to attract customers and generate profit, and Islamic hotels offer a unique spiritual aspect that sets them apart from other commercial business models (Mohammad et al., 2022).

The concept of Islamic hotels offers services and amenities designed to accommodate the cultural practices of over a billion Muslims, facilitating their engagement with Islamic customs (Karim et al., 2017; Pitra & Albattat, 2021; Sulaiman et al., 2022). Recently, there has been a noticeable surge in interest and demand for Islamic hospitality and related services in Malaysia, particularly from countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia (Patwary et al., 2018; Yahaya et al., 2020). This uptick is primarily driven by the growing number of Muslim tourists, resulting in an increased demand for Muslim-friendly services.

Early discussions surrounding Islamic hospitality have predominantly relied on the work of Western scholars such as Henderson (2010), Rosenberg and Choufany (2009), and Stephenson (2014). Additionally, some contributions have come from scholars like Küpeli, Koc, and Hassan (2017), as well as Mansor and Rasit (2015). A considerable body of research has been dedicated to Islamic hotels, including studies by Kamaruzzaman et al. (2014), Shaharuddin et al. (2018), and Zainol et al. (2020), which delved into the knowledge and acceptance of Islamic hotel concept among both hoteliers and guests.

Furthermore, various scholars have tackled aspects like the implementation of the Islamic hotel concept within the hospitality sector (Abu Karim et al., 2017; Sahida et al., 2011; Samori & Abd Rahman, 2013), the obstacles and challenges faced by hotel operators when adopting this concept (Saad et al., 2014; Samori & Abd Rahman, 2013), and the framework and procedure for obtaining Islamic hotel certification (Park & Jamaludin, 2018; Razalli et al., 2013; Samori et al., 2017).

Despite the extensive discourse on the subject of Islamic hotels, there remains a persistent lack of clarity surrounding the concept, particularly with regard to the crucial dimension of hospitality informed by Islamic principles derived from the *Quran* and *Sunnah*.as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

As long as you hold fast to two things which I have left among you, you will not stray: God's Book (Al-Qur'an) and the sunnah of His messenger.

(*Riwayat Malik*:1594)

Hence, it is imperative that every action undertaken by a Muslim is rooted in a belief system grounded in Islamic teachings, primarily derived from the Qur'an and Hadith (Usman, Sobari & Sari, 2019). Nevertheless, the scarcity of literature that employs the *Quran* and hadith to elucidate the Islamic hospitality concept has given rise to uncertainty regarding this concept. Consequently, the primary objective of this study is to establish a unified and widely accepted understanding of the Islamic hotel concept by drawing upon the *Quran*, hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence. Such harmonization is vital to prevent any ambiguity among providers of hospitality businesses.

Literature Review

Hospitality

Scholars have widely debated the definition of hospitality. Cambridge Dictionary (2019) defines hospitality as "being friendly and welcoming to visitors and guests." The term' hospitality' finds its origins in the old French word "hospice," meaning "to provide care/shelter to travelers" (Walker, 2016, p.30). Throughout history, people have traveled for various purposes, including trade, religious activities, and diplomacy (Abdullah, 2012). In response, medieval houses of rest catered to the basic needs of travelers and pilgrims. This definition aligns with Telfer's (2000) description of hospitality as providing food, drink, and sometimes accommodation to people who are not regular household members. Hospitality's primary goal in ancient times was to fulfill the basic needs of guests or strangers, mainly related to food, drink, and accommodation (Chan & McKenzie, 2013).

Aramberri (2001) identified three critical features of host-guest relationships in 14th-century hospitality: protection, reciprocity, and duties for hosts and guests. These obligations often originate from cultural or religious beliefs that intertwine with economic factors. Major religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, emphasize kindness, hospitality, and charity to others (Din, 1989; Kirillova et al., 2014). Hospitality studies have been integrated with various disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, and economics (Lashley et al., 2007; Morrison & O'Gormon, 2008). From an economic perspective, hospitality can be seen as the method of production to satisfy the proposed guest's needs to their satisfaction (Tideman, 1983). Economic factors such as labor supply, government policies, income development, price elasticity, and service attitude influence the provision of hospitality services.

Lashley (2000) examined hospitality from social science perspectives, defining it through three dimensions: social, private, and commercial. Social hospitality represents the obligation to entertain guests according to culture and religion. Private hospitality concerns hospitality offered at home, while commercial hospitality involves the relationship between host and guests in a business context where hospitality services are sold. Hepple, Kipps, and Thomson (1990) identified four characteristics of hospitality:

i) A host provides it to a guest away from home.

ii) The host provides for the guest's security and comfort.

iii) It involves interactions between the provider and receiver.

iv) It comprises tangible and intangible factors.

Skandrani and Kamoun (2014) expanded these characteristics into five key dimensions: personalization, comfort, guest-host relationships, hospitableness, and warm welcoming, which are applied in current commercial hospitality to meet guest needs and wants.

In summary, scholars have offered numerous definitions of hospitality, reflecting their different backgrounds and research agendas. Nevertheless, a common thread in these definitions is that hospitality entails a relationship between a host and a guest, with the host displaying kindness in attending to the guest's needs, such as food and accommodation, while the guest is away from home. As we delve into the concept of hospitality, it is essential to recognize how various cultures and belief systems influence the practice, including the distinctive realm of Islamic hospitality.

Islamic Hospitality

Islamic hospitality is a concept that is rooted in the *Quran* and *Hadith*. It is about treating guests with honor and providing them with the best services possible. The *Quran* and *Hadith* provide guidance on the values, rules, and ethics of hospitality. The practice of hospitality is seen as a good value and ethic in Islam (Duman, 2019). Islamic hospitality is not limited to Muslims only, but also extends to non-Muslims. It is about welcoming and confronting strangers, celebrating relationships, and reinforcing human interaction (Alserhan et al., 2023). Islamic hospitality is based on principles such as good intentions, good service, and wise spending (Rababah & Rababah, 2016). It is seen as a way to deepen piety and righteousness in the Islamic way. Overall, Islamic hospitality is an important aspect of Muslim culture and plays a significant role in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Typically, Islamic teachings emphasized on the welcoming of guests and regarded hospitality as a symbol and element of faith (Kirillova et al., 2014; Siddiqui, 2015). The holy *Quran* and Islamic doctrine urge Muslims to be hospitable hosts. Several *Quranic* verses suggest that hosts to be respectful and honor guests. For example, hospitality is implied in the *Quran (Adz-Dzaariyat*, 24–27) regarding etiquettes of entertaining guests or strangers, as follows:

Has the story reached you, of the honored guests of Abraham (PBUH)? When they came into him and said: 'Peace be upon you!' He [Abraham] replied: "Peace be upon you,' and said: "You are a people unknown to me.' Then he turned to his household secretly and brought out a fattened [roasted] calf. Then placed it before them [noticing that they refrained from eating, he said]: 'Will you not eat?'

(*Adz-Dzaariyat*: 24- 27)

The verses highlight that guests should be treated with hospitality. Guest entertainment etiquettes and how Muslims are required to comprehend and practice Islamic hospitality in daily life are also elaborated further. The *hadith* indicates Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) conduct regarding the respectful treatment of guests, as follows:

Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should not hurt his neighbor and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should speak what is good or keep silent.

(*Sahih Al-Bukhari* :6136).

In this regard, Islamic principles encourage host communities to practice kindness to travelers and offer lodging and special meals which all of these conducts are being practice in the current hotel businesses.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing thematic analysis as its primary research method. Thematic analysis involves searching for themes or patterns across a dataset, such as interviews, observations, or documents. Researchers code the qualitative data to identify themes and patterns related to the research questions (Saunders et al., 2016). The analysis followed the six-phase model proposed by Clarke and Braun (2013), which includes: i) data familiarization, ii) initial code generation, iii) theme searching, iv) theme reviewing, v) defining and naming themes, and vi) producing the report.

This paper involves the systematic collection and examination of data from specific sources, including *Quran* translations and the *MyHadith* database provided by JAKIM. Additionally, a comprehensive review of secondary sources related to Islamic hospitality, including numerous published articles, contributes to the data pool. This approach is employed to extract vital information pertaining to the concept of Islamic hospitality.

The document analysis process was guided by the attributes identified in the existing literature. In the case of the *Quran* translation, researchers benefitted from the thematic indexes provided at the end of the text. These indexes are organized around themes such as *mua'malah* (commercial transaction), prayer and others. Consequently, researchers meticulously combed through these indexes, aligning the identified attributes with those extracted from the literature. A similar method was applied to the MyHadith database. Subsequently, the findings underwent interpretation to facilitate in-depth discussions.

Findings And Discussion

The Concept of Islamic Hospitality according to Quran and Sunnah

This study identified a dearth of Islamic scholarly research on the hospitality context, utilizing the *Quran* and *Sunnah* as guiding principles. The *Quran* represents the divine words of Allah SWT, and the Sunnah consists of the authentic sayings, deeds, and silent approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), recorded as *hadith*. The findings were derived from data analysis utilizing English translations of the *Quran* and hadith database. The themes illustrated in the Figure 1 below are based on the findings that were found from the data analysis, which categorized as spiritual aspects of hospitality. Four sub-themes were extracted from the data analysis with regards to spiritual aspects of hospitality. The first sub-theme is that each living act is evaluated based on intention. Second is prohibition in bad conducts. Third is welcoming and honouring guests and the last is creating a peaceful environment.

Figure 1: The Summary of the Findings for the Study

Each Living Act Is Evaluated Based On Intention

In Islam, every action is evaluated based on the intention of the beholder. In *Quran*, the word 'desire' is often used to describe an intention. Intention can be defined as desire and purpose (Abdul Rahman, Mohd Radzi, Sahad & Abdullah, 2012). One of the verses is Allah's saying in *Surah Al-Imran*, verse 152 which means:

And Allah had certainly fulfilled His promise to you when you were killing the enemy by His permission until [the time] when you lost courage and fell to disputing about the order [given by the Prophet] and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you love. Among you are some who desire this world, and among you are some who desire the Hereafter. Then he turned you back from them [defeated] that He might test you. And He has already forgiven you, and Allah is the possessor of bounty for the believers.

(*Al- Imran*; 152)

Thus, intention is crucial as it will prove whether or not the action committed by the beholder is genuinely towards Allah's preference. This notion was also mentioned by the Prophet (PBUH) as narrated in the *hadith* below:

Actions are (judged) by motives (niyyah), so each man will have what he intended. Thus, he whose migration (hijrah) was to Allah and His Messenger, his migration is to Allah and His Messenger; but he whose migration was for some worldly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated.

(*Sahih Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*)

From the narration, it is clear that actions are judged by intention. If the intention for any action is purely based on worldly gains like a successful business, high income, or people's recognition, then that is the only outcome they will get. However, if the main intention of any doing is to get Allah's blessing, then all the actions done will be considered good deeds and will be rewarded by Allah in the hereafter.

The same notion applies to the hospitality industry. For example, among the duties of a bellman are welcoming and greeting guest upon arrival to the hotel, picking up and sending luggage to guest room. If he does all the tasks for the sake of fulfilling his job scope, then, that is what he only gets. But, if he intends all his works to have Allah's blessing, then all the works will be counted as good deeds, and will be rewarded by Allah in the Hereafter. Thus, one should always correct his/her intention in every action to be counted as good deeds and most importantly, gain Allah's blessing in our daily life.

Prohibitions in Bad Conduct

Quran provides guidelines on how to act and behave for Muslim to follow. *Surah Al-Baqarah* verses 168 to 169 note:

O humanity! Eat from what is lawful and good on the earth and do not follow Satan's footsteps. He is truly your sworn enemy. He only incites you to commit evil and indecency, and to claim against Allah what you do not know.

(*Al-Baqarah*: 168-169)

In these verses, Allah has outlined several prohibitions for humanity, including steering clear of sinful actions such as immoral or inappropriate behavior and anything related to sexual impropriety. Satan manipulates these behaviors to seem appealing, leading people astray. Simultaneously, Allah has identified Satan as a genuine adversary to mankind. Therefore, Allah has given humans clear guidelines on appropriate conduct in this world. Additionally, there is a caution for humans to avoid any behavior that might lead to sin or sexual impropriety, as these actions can result in adultery. Allah adds:

O believers! Do not forbid the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors. Eat of the good, lawful things provided to you by Allah. And be mindful of Allah in whom you believe.

(*Al-Ma'idah*: 7-88)

On a similar note, this verse urges humanity not to overstep boundaries in their actions. It also reminds individuals not to alter the status of halal to haram or vice versa, as the authority to define what is halal and haram rests solely with Allah.

Welcoming and Honouring Guests

The *Quran* encourages just treatment and courtesy toward guests as been emphasized in the *Surah Al-Nahl*, verse 90 as below:

Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as courtesy to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful.

(*Al-Nahl*: 90)

In the above verse, Allah commands humans to practice justice and show kindness to close relatives. Close relatives here could also expand to guest as denoted by *Abu Huraira* below:
Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously: and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should

*unite the bond of kinship (i.e., keep good relationship with his kith and kin): and whoever
believes in Allah and the Last Day, should talk what is good or keep quiet.'*

(*Sahih Al-Bukhari*: 6138)

The tradition of serving and honouring guests dates back to the time of Prophet Muhammad
(PBUH). In this narration, the Prophet (PBUH) stated that those who believe in Allah and the
Last Day (of Judgment) should speak good words or remain silent if they have nothing positive
to say, refrain from harming their neighbours physically or mentally, and treat guests with
generosity. This hadith emphasizes the importance of kindness and generosity towards guests.

From this evidence, it is understood that the central idea is the conduct of the host towards their
guests. The findings on welcoming and honouring guests are consistent with previous studies
by Kirillova et al. (2014) and Siddiqui (2015), which reveal that Islamic teachings emphasize
the importance of receiving guests and view hospitality as a symbol and element of faith.
Additionally, the findings on honouring guests align with Rababah and Rababah's (2016) study.
Their research examines various verses from the Holy *Quran* and the Sunnah of the Prophet
(PBUH), discussing the definition, values, and rules of Islamic hospitality, with a particular
focus on honouring guests as a key Islamic ethical practice for hosts.

Creating a Peaceful Environment

The idea of Islamic hospitality is also connected to the goal of fostering a peaceful environment
around us. This begins even before one re-enters their home. *Quran*ic guidance advises greeting
when entering homes and reciting the *Quran* to foster tranquillity. This is mentioned through
the *Quran* verse which is as follow:

*However, when you enter houses, greet one another with a greeting 'of peace' from Allah,
blessed and good. This is how Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so perhaps you will
understand.*

(*An-Nur*: 61)

In this verse, Allah highlights the importance of greeting or offering Salam to those in the
house, such as immediate family members, housemates, or anyone present when one enters
their home. Allah emphasizes that Muslims should give Salam upon entering houses. In
addition to giving *Salam*, the Prophet (PBUH) also instructed Muslims to regularly recite the
Quran as narrated by *Abu Huraira* in *Sahih Muslim*, 2119 below:

*The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'Do not make your houses into graveyards, for the Satan
is alienated from the house where he recites Surah al-Baqarah.'*

(*Sahih Muslim*: 2119)

The hadith states that a house where *Surah Al-Baqarah* is not recited is akin to a cemetery,
which is typically seen as a quiet place, devoid of activity and life. Moreover, reciting *Surah
Al-Baqarah* helps protect Muslims from Satan's disturbances and wards off negative
influences. Therefore, to cultivate a peaceful and serene atmosphere at home, Muslims are
encouraged to regularly recite this *surah*. It is well-known for its effectiveness in offering
personal protection and spiritual security. By incorporating *Quranic* recitation into their daily

routines, Muslims aim to shield themselves and their families from any potential harm or interference.

The four sub-themes explored in this study are integral to the concept of Islamic hospitality. Previous discussions on Islamic hospitality have predominantly emphasized its physical aspects, while its spiritual dimensions have often been overlooked by scholars, despite the concept being a blend of both. A precise definition and comprehensive understanding of Islamic hospitality are crucial as they will form the basis for implementing Islamic principles in hospitality services. Importantly, the themes identified in this study are derived from *Quranic* verses and *hadith*, establishing a robust foundation for establishing a unified understanding of Islamic hospitality. These findings aim to clarify any existing confusion surrounding the concept.

Conclusion

This research has highlighted the profound importance of Islamic hospitality within the broader tourism context, drawing guidance from the *Quran* and Sunnah. The spiritual aspects of hospitality emphasize the importance of intention-based evaluation, avoiding improper conduct, welcoming and honouring guests, and fostering a peaceful environment. These spiritual dimensions resonate with Islamic principles and emphasize the ethical standards that should characterize the hospitality industry.

These insights not only enrich our understanding of Islamic hospitality but also provide guidance for hospitality operators seeking to cater to the needs and preferences of Muslim guests. By adhering to these principles, businesses can offer a more welcoming and respectful experience to their Muslim clientele. Furthermore, this research underscores the importance of ethical and cultural sensitivity within the hospitality industry. By aligning operations with Islamic principles, businesses can foster positive relationships with Muslim guests and contribute to a more inclusive and respectful global tourism sector.

It is important to note that the reliance on *Quran*ic verses and hadiths in this study is based on the researcher's understanding of translated sources. The selection of verses was guided by the thematic index provided in the translated *Quran*, and the hadiths were sourced exclusively from the 'Halal & Haram in Islam' publication. As a result, the evidential basis of this study is limited by the scope of the researcher's interpretation and the selection of references from the specified sources. This constraint inherently limits the exploration of various aspects of Islamic hospitality that could be found in a broader range of evidence.

It is recommended for future studies to diversify sources by expanding beyond a single publication. Utilizing multiple translations of the *Quran* and consulting various collections of hadiths will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic and help researchers gather more robust evidence. Additionally, consulting scholars and incorporating interdisciplinary insights will further enrich the understanding of Islamic hospitality.

As the global hospitality industry diversifies, the value of understanding and implementing Islamic hospitality practices cannot be overstated. This approach provides not only a path to cater to the needs of a significant demographic but also a means to cultivate a more culturally sensitive, ethical, and inclusive sector.

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