Predictors of Hotel Guests' Loyalty: Investigating The Role of Shariah Compliant Hotel (Sch) Practices and Hotel Guests' Acceptance

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ABSTRACT

Guest loyalty is a major consideration for hotel competitive advantage. To be sustaining in this competitive market, hotel organization need to differentiate their business with their competitors. The new concept and new experience of SCH will capture guest attention that really concerns on halal, food safety and hygiene. SCH practices have discovered significant influence towards customer awareness, guests' perception, perceived values, attributes and challenges. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between SCH practices, hotel guests' acceptance and hotel guests' loyalty. Data for this study were gathered through self-administered questionnaires on 420 hotel guests' who have had experienced staying in 45 Five-star rated hotels in Malaysia. PLS-SEM was performed to analyse the proposed hypotheses. Findings showed that SCH practices have significant positive effect relationship on hotel guests' acceptance and hotel guests' loyalty. Hotel guests' acceptance has also been found to be significant mediator of the relationship between SCH practices and hotel guests' loyalty. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings were discussed. Limitations and future research approaches were forwarded.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysian has taken an opportunity in introducing Islamic hotels and Islamic tourism as another form of tourist services as an initiative to become an Islamic Tourism hub. The Islamic hotel brand concept indirectly endorses and provides services and facilities that cater to the needs of billions of Muslims as they are able to easily engage their culture in the practice of Islam (Yusof & Muhammad, 2013; Karim, Ahmad & Zainol, 2017; Haque, Chowdhury, Yasmin & Tarofder, 2018). Recently, it has been perceived that there is an increasing interest and demands on Islamic hospitality and services that have been recognized in Malaysia by many countries especially from the Middle East and Southeast Asia (Zafir, 2015; Patwary, Mohammed, H.A Hazbar & Nor Kamal, 2018). Due to the rising number of Muslim tourists despite the world affairs, the demands of Muslim-friendly service have been mounting. Furthermore, according to annual MasterCard/Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), the current Muslim visitors is 108 million worldwide with a total spending power of USD 145 billion (RM 500 Billion). By 2020, the number of tourists is set to increase exponentially up to 40%, to 150 million visitors that will spend about USD 200 billion (RM 900 Billion). The majority of these Muslim tourists were from neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and India. However, UNWTO (2008) declared that apart of Muslim tourists, Malaysia and UAE also have a record as having the highest non-Muslim tourists too. This statistic showed unrealized potentials among Muslim and non-Muslim markets and significant obstacles to destination development, although the often substantial scale of domestic tourism should not be forgotten (Zamani & Henderson, 2010).

According to AL-Rousan, Mohamed and Fernando (2011) in order to building long-term relationship between hotel industry and hotel guests, the excellent and quality service is required. The ability to retain loyal guests plays an important role towards hotel performance and profitability. Besides that, it is much easier to maintain current guests than to attract new guests (Ahmad & Buttle, 2002). Syaqirah and Faizurrahman (2013) indicated that loyalty occurs when the guests revisit the hotel to experience the services over an extended period of time. Previous studies have shown that guests' loyalty to a particular hotel comes in several ways. There are those from the aspects of service quality dimensions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985), food and beverages (Siguaw, Simpson & Kasikci, 2006), location (Ramanathan & Ramanathan, 2010), physical facilities (Nasution & Wiradiputra, 2010), room service quality (Syaqirah et al., 2013), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities (Marti'nez, Perez' & Rodri'guez del, 2013; Othman & Hemdi, 2015), staff service (Sim, Mak & Jones, 2006; Prasad, Wirtz & Yu, 2014) and ambient conditions (Suh, Moon, Han, & Ham, 2015).

SCH is not a new concept in Malaysia but only a few hotels have been practicing it. Samori and Rahman (2013) mentioned that few hotels that serve basic facilities to fulfill the Muslim tourists' needs and it considered as Muslim-friendly hotel. However, the existence of SCH still suffers the lack of exposure around Malaysia as not all Malaysian knows about the practices. Most five-star rated hotels are international brands that have influenced other hotel operators to apply SCH practices and concept in their business. However, a few of them especially conventional hotels are in dilemma on how to position the hotel and promote this concept to non-Muslim guests. Therefore, the specific objective of this study is to examine the relationship between SCH practices, hotel guests' acceptance and hotel guests' loyalty at a Five-star rated hotel in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic Tourism

Islamic tourism is a relatively new product in the tourism industry, and it provides holiday destinations that are guided by Shariah laws for Muslim tourists (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Shaharuddin, Kassim, Yusof, Bakar & Talib, 2018). Therefore, in order to attract more tourists to Malaysia, the number of hotel that followed Shariah compliant practices should be increased in order to provide the religious needs of Muslims. Moreover, most of the hotel operators need to ensure that the *halal* concept is not just implementing in the context of food, but also in other operational aspects of the SCH as well. Islamic tourism is a one of alternative tourism that will obtain highly attention by the tourism industry in the near future.

Islamic tourism is tourism activity that follows the Shariah principles and guidelines (Duman, 2011). Islamic tourism also refers to the participation by Muslim tourists, visiting to Islamic countries, provide *halal* products and services, ethical marketing and *halal* production process. From the definitions, generally, the initiation act of travelling is referred to as motivations. Furthermore, religion as in the case here with Islamic tourism, has long been recognized as an influential factor in tourism (Battour, Ismail & Battor, 2011; Jafari & Scott, 2014; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015) and fastest development segment in a world-wide tourism (El-Gohary, 2015). Therefore, in order to attract more tourists to Malaysia, the number of SCH should be increase in order to serve the religious needs of Muslims. Moreover, most of the hoteliers need to ensure that the *halal* concept is not focus in the context of food, but also in other operational aspects of the SCH as well.

Shariah Compliant Hotel (SCH) Practices

Shariah is an Arabic word that means the path that should be following by Muslims (Doi, 1984; Gulam, 2016). Moreover, Shariah also means the totality of Allah's commands, which regulate life for every Muslim in all aspects of life. The lodging sector consists of all the hotels business that provides accommodation service to the guest. Today, Shariah Compliant Hotel (SCH) is classified as a service innovation because SCH offers a new service concept adopted and implemented by many hotels in Asia especially in Malaysia (Salleh, Hamid, Hashim, & Omain, 2014). Malaysia is known as an Islamic country with a dominant percentage of the Muslim population (61.3%). Most of the hotels in Malaysia provide facilities such as the *qiblah* direction in each room; prayer mat and *halal* food, which make it convenient for Muslim tourist to travel in Malaysia.

The Shariah Compliant Hotel (SCH) can be defined as services that are provided in accordance to the Shariah principles and practices where it is more than just prohibition of serving alcoholic beverages and non-*halal* food and drink (Zailani, Omar & Kapong, 2011). The principles and practices must be implemented in all parameters that have been designed for safety, environment, health and economic benefit of all mankind regardless of race, faith and culture. Rosenberg and Choufany (2009) classified SCH practices into three categories, namely, operations, interior design and finance. For the purpose of this study, SCH dimensions pertaining to administrative, common areas, bedroom, service and F&B are chosen since these practices are derived from various frameworks such as the *halal* certification system by JAKIM, Islamic Quality Standard (IQS) for hotel, Islamic human resources management, Islamic marketing and Islamic finance (Razalli, Ismail & Yaacob, 2015). Although there are still no written requirements or guidelines for SCH, academicians and industry practitioners set some basic characteristics and attributes of SCH.

(a)   Administrative Practices in SCH

In the administrative section, previous studies have considered managerial, financial and human resource practices to be included. In order to ensure that the operations are in accordance with the Islamic concepts, a group of religious advisors who are responsible for Shariah compliance is required (Ahmat & Zahari, 2012). Without proper guidelines in carrying out *halal* operations, the goal of SCH cannot be easily achieved. Razalli et al. (2015) suggested that establish a Shariah advisory committee for purpose audit, training and monitoring to ensure the hotel operation based on the Shariah compliance principles, set an Islamic quality principle as a hotel policy. Meanwhile, in terms of the financial practices, a SCH should pay the *zakah* (if it is owned by a Muslim) or sponsors a social responsibility program (for a non-Muslim) each year. This suggestion is in-line with Rosenberg et al. (2009), whereby a hotel should pay a business *zakah* when it has fulfilled the conditions for haul (period a year) and *nisab* (achieve the required amount of *zakah*). The main objective of *zakah* is to purify one's wealth and to ensure equal allocation of wealth to everyone (Vejzagic & Smolo, 2011).

Besides that in term of human resource, the management should hire a certain number of Muslim employees and provide suitable resources for them to perform their right as a Muslim such as prayer room for employee, time allocation for Friday prayer and proper Islamic dress code for Muslim (Henderson, 2010, Razalli et al., 2015).

(b)   Common Area Practices in SCH

The second practice is related to the public areas in the hotel. This category concerns with the *aurah* or the social interaction between men and women in Islam, Islamic entertainment and the usage of *halal* products (Henderson, 2003; Razalli et al, 2015). The practices are separate facilities for men and women or at least provision of segregated time slots for men and women. For operations, the hotel must follow according to Shariah and Islamic laws. All the permissible elements need to be practices in the hotel operation. The hotel should not allow any drug-dealing activities within its premises. Hence, for the hotel's interior and design, the building and decoration of the hotel should not display any art similar the human or display any form jewels which does not reflects any sign of symbol of living being and layout of furniture must meet the Shariah principles (Sahida, Rahman, Awang & Man, 2011; Samori et al., 2013).

(c)   Bedroom Practices in SCH

The third practice is solely applicable to the guest's room. The rooms to be provided with certain facilities and amenities such as *qiblah* direction, the *Quran*, prayer mat, prayer schedule, bidet, *halal* toiletries, *halal* in-room food, Islamic in-room entertainment and non-alcoholic beverages. Furthermore, the hotel must provide smoking and non-smoking room because smoking is deemed as *haram* in Malaysia (JAKIM, 1995). In other words, it is simply about creating the right themes, ambiances, architecture, and any contingent support that would make the Muslim customers feel at ease during their stay (Sahida et al. 2011; Razalli, Shuib & Yusoff, 2013; Stephenson, 2014).

(d)   Service Practices in SCH

Hotel is a service organization and the heart of a hotel operation lies at the front office department, where the customers interact with the hotel services. For service practices, it should be included Islamic greeting, notification of the banning of alcoholic drink, Islamic products/services (wake up call for *subuh* prayer, *Ramadan* buffet, no gambling activities and etc) and information on *halal* restaurant, mosque and groceries. Moreover,

in lined with Razalli et al. (2015) that SCH must consider ethical and fair pricing, proper hotel's location and absence of sexual promotion.

(e)   Food and Beverage (F&B) Practices in SCH

Fifth category would be food and beverage practices. The hotel obtains *halal* certification not only for the kitchen but also for its restaurant for all meals including the room service. The certification of *halal* program such as in Malaysia would undergo a strict guidelines and inspections in various aspects including the food, preparation and storage and handling. This certification would ensure that food available at the hotels is *halal* for Muslim consumption. Yang and Huang (2017) stated that the global market for *halal* products today is rapidly growing and *halal* is no longer related to religious obligation or observance, but it can be considered as the standard of choice for Muslims as well as non-Muslims worldwide. This is an extremely important part of Muslim culture and involves the preparation of food in accordance with Islamic laws. In addition, consumption of any food or drinks with alcoholic content is also prohibited. In fact, it is also not permissible for Muslims to visit places where alcohol is consumed and gambling is practiced (Henderson, 2003; Samori et al., 2013; Samori & Sabtu, 2014; Rezai, Mohamed & Shamsudin, 2015). The Muslims' awareness towards *halal* concept is also increase and this has opened up the demand for *halal* foods in compliance with their religious requirement.

Hotel Guests' Loyalty

Loyalty is defined as the process where customers continue to buy products and services within a determine time (Egan, 2011; Solomon, 2012). Loyalty occurs when a customer is loyal to a company, a brand or a specific product or service, expressing long-term commitment and refusing to purchase from competitors. In the context of this study,

customers' loyalty refers to hotel guests' regarding on intention to revisit and spread a positive word-of-mouth about particular hotel (Bigne, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2001; Choo, Ahn & Petrick, 2016; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; Tanford & Jung, 2017; Fungai, 2017). The measures of loyalty can be measure through repurchase intention. Repurchase intention are usually obtained from surveys of current customers assessing their tendency to purchase the same brand, same product or service from the same company. Cronin, Brady and Hult (2000) have treated loyalty and repurchase intention as synonymous constructs. Ranaweera and Prabhu (2003) defined future loyalty as the future propensity of a customer to continue or to stay with the service provider. On the other hand, an understanding of this concept is essential for every organization, especially for those who are trying to identify the critical elements affecting customer's purchase experience as well as his or her post-purchase behavior such as continuously purchase and favorable word-of-mouth publicity (Khairunnisak & Ng, 2015; Topcu & Duygun, 2015; Isa, Chin & Mohammad, 2018; Naqvi, Jiang, Naqvi, Miao, Liang & Mehmood, 2018).

Hotel Guests' Acceptance

Acceptance is defined as positive feedback of the customers. The acceptance of the customers is observed when they are willing to continuing use the product or services offered (Mansor, Hamid & Muda, 2011). The more people using them, the more valuable they become. In addition, high customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty which will also contribute to future revenue to the businesses (Williams & Naumann, 2011; Lahap, Ramli, Said, Radzi & Adli, 2016; Rahimi & Kozak, 2017). In fact, the relevancy towards understanding customer acceptance is vital as it act as a motivational lead to repeated selection and will be favourably reflected by the satisfaction shown by the customers (Martin, O'Neill, Hubbard & Palmer, 2008). Understanding the motivations, expectations and needs of the customers

provide a foundation on how to provide best services by the provider. When customers give positive feedback on something, it shows that the acceptance has occurred. The attitudes of customers toward SCH will be measured by their acceptance and keenness to stay because

the attitudes may differ among customers itself (Ahmat et al., 2012).

Based on the literature review pertaining to the study variables, the framework of this study proposed as followed:
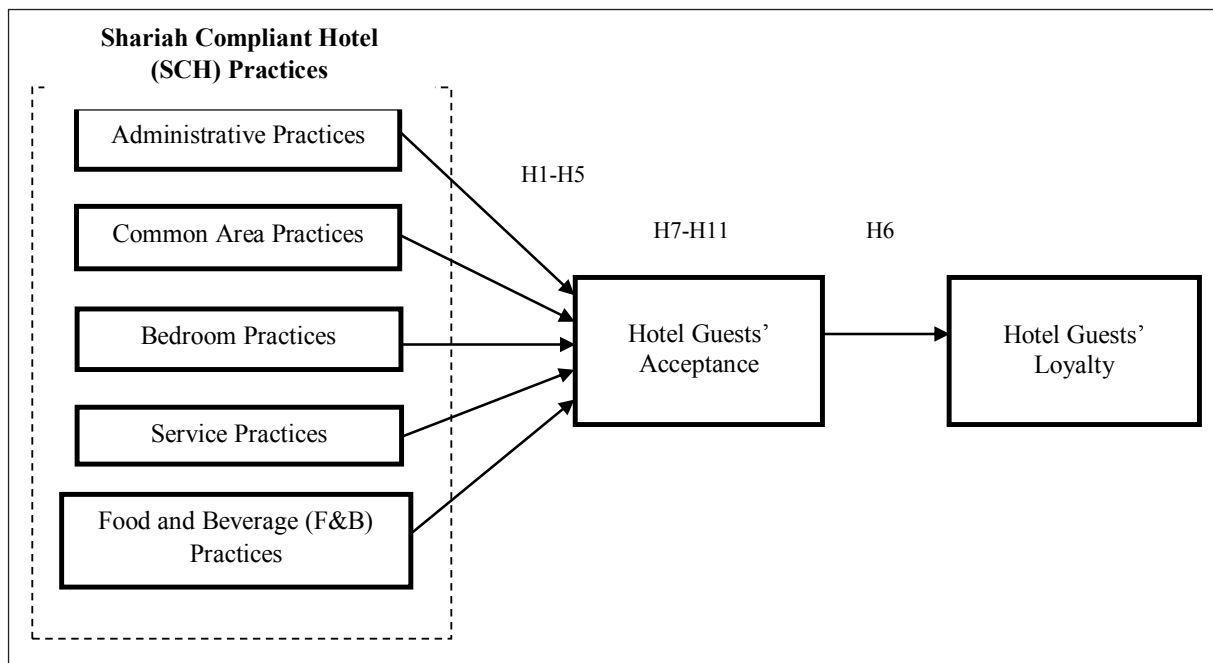

Figure 1 Research framework

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Relationship between Shariah Compliant Hotel (SCH) Practices and Hotel Guests' Acceptance

Stephenson, Russell and Edgar (2010) further added that as far as Islamic funding is concerned, the finance used to operate a hotel should be compliant with Shariah regulations and in fact, the hotel owner must contribute a proportion of revenue to *zakah* (charitable acts). For the operating of staff management, the hotel must be predominantly with Muslims staff with a proper Islamic dress code (Henderson, 2010). In addition, common area practices as part of the SCH practices that must follow according to Shariah and Islamic laws. Hence, the design of the hotel includes the building and decoration of the hotel should not display any art similar the human or display any form

jewels which does not reflects any sign of symbol of living being and layout of furniture must meet the Shariah principles (Shahida et al., 2011; Samori et al., 2013). According to Ahmad, Jumli, Mahendran and Azmi (2018), SCH should have free accommodations for hotel guests', no indoor disco or nightlife entertainment, gender- segregated fitness and sport facilities to avoid free mixing between males and females, separate swimming pools and recreational facilities, prayer rooms in the premise, female-only floors and Islamic entertainment programs. Many hotels provide extensive guidelines on the bedroom interior and in-room facilities in accordance to the Muslim needs such as prayer room, *qiblah* directions, the *Quran*, prayer mat, prayer schedule, bidet, *halal* amenities, *halal* room-service food, Islamic entertainment and toilets not facing to Mecca direction (Ramli & Zawawi, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2018). Meanwhile, food is

the most crucial part of the overall restaurant experience (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Thus, it is important that there is a strong awareness among hoteliers in Malaysia for their hotels to be certified with JAKIM *Halal* Certification and to provide *halal* accommodation in attracting more Muslim and non-Muslim guests locally and internationally (Ching & David, 2005). Based on the above review, the hypotheses of this present study are presented:

- H1: Administrative practices in SCH have positive effect on hotel guests' acceptance.
- H2: Common area practices in SCH have positive effect on hotel guests' acceptance.
- H3: Bedroom practices in SCH have positive effect on hotel guests' acceptance.
- H4: Service practices in SCH have positive effect on hotel guests' acceptance.
- H5: Food and beverage (F&B) practices in SCH have positive effect on hotel guests' acceptance.

Relationship between Hotel Guests' Acceptance and Hotel Guests' Loyalty

Customers' acceptance and loyalty are regarded as qualitatively different constructs. Acceptance may be merely a judgment with cognitive and affective dimensions, whereas repeat intentions consist of a loyalty component (Ali, Amin & Cobanoglu, 2016; Razzaq, Yousaf & Hong, 2017). The outcome of acceptance and satisfaction may reinforce a customer's decision to use a particular brand of service on a given occasion (Borzooei & Asgari, 2013; Zhang, 2015). Providing a high-quality service has become an increasingly important issue to service providers. Failure to pay attention to those hotel attributes considered most influential in choice intention by hotel guests may lead to negative evaluation of the hotel, eventually reducing the chance of repeat patronage by the hotel guests to the

same hotel. Therefore, based from the above findings, hotel guests' acceptance influences their loyalty towards the hotel. Hence, hypothesis 6 is proposed:

- H6: Hotel guests' acceptance has positive effect on hotel guests' loyalty.

Mediating Effects of Hotel Guests' Acceptance between Shariah Compliant Hotel (SCH) Practices and Hotel Guests' Loyalty

The increase in acceptance in turn would entice the customer to become loyal customers of particular product or service (Tuu & Olsen, 2012; Yunus, Razak & Ghani, 2014). For Muslim standpoint, instead referring to the same decision process and characteristics that is religious related with their whole life aspects including engaging purchase behaviour and loyalty towards the product or service (Shah Alam & Mohamed Sayuti, 2011). The attitudes of customers towards SCH practices were measure by their acceptance and keenness to stay (Ahmat et al., 2012). It is presumed leisure travellers are more likely to have a SCH as a place to stay for family holidays compared to business travellers. The notion that Islamic hotels only appeal to Muslim travellers may not hold water considering the fact that a large number of Islamic hotels' guests originate from other non-Muslim countries as well. However, the acceptance level of non-Muslims on Shariah compliant practice in the Malaysian context may not be the same as in other countries. Based on the findings in the study by Azsyanti and Jamal (2016), the prohibition of alcoholic beverage and the separation of male and female wellness facilities lead to guests' acceptance and recommendation to others about the hotel. Therefore, the following hypotheses are developed:

- H7: Hotel guests' acceptance mediates the relationship between administrative practices and hotel guests' loyalty.

- H8: Hotel guests' acceptance mediates the relationship between common area practices and hotel guests' loyalty.
- H9: Hotel guests' acceptance mediates the relationship between bedroom practices and hotel guests' loyalty.
- H10: Hotel guests' acceptance mediates the relationship between service practices and hotel guests' loyalty.
- H11: Hotel guests' acceptance mediates the relationship between food and beverage (F&B) practices and hotel guests' loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

The subject of this study was individual guests who have stayed at 45 Five-star rated hotel in Malaysia. Specifically, in these five states, namely Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Kedah, Pulau Pinang and Sabah were selected due to the high occupancy rate of Five-star hotel in the particular areas. From the 500 questionnaires distributed, a total of 445 questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 89%. 25 questionnaires were found to be unusable due to them being incomplete or the respondents were not the subjects of focus in this study. Therefore, only 420 questionnaires were coded and analysed. Data for this study were gathered through self-administered questionnaires. The non-probability convenience sampling

is used to select the sample of this study. The convenience sampling is categorised into two major types which are purposive sampling and judgemental sampling. In this research, purposive sampling is used because of the filtering questions in the questionnaire and the selection of the respondents.

In answering the research objectives of this study, the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) were applied. PLS-SEM as an advanced statistical analysis that aims to examine the complex predictive relationship between SCH practices, hotel guests' acceptance and hotel guests' loyalty. The other statistical tool used in this study was the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). Assessment of PLS-SEM followed a systematic evaluation of the recommended two-steps approach, first the measurement model and then followed by the structural model (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016).

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

The demographic features of the present study include their hotel state/locality, nationality, religion, gender, age group, marital status, experienced staying in SCH, purpose of stay, times of stay and length of stay at the hotel.

Table 1 Summary of demographic profile (*n* = 420)

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Hotel State/	Kuala Lumpur	230	54.8
Locality	Selangor	63	15
	Kedah	50	11.9
	Pulau Pinang	44	10.5
	Sabah	33	7.8
Nationality	Malaysian	214	51.0
	Foreign	206	49.0
Religion	Muslim	210	50.0
	Non-Muslim	210	50.0
Gender	Male	131	31.2
	Female	289	68.8
Age group	Below 21 years old	27	6.4
	21-30 years old	182	43.3
	31-40 years old	176	41.9
	41-50 years old	23	5.5
	51 years and above	12	2.9
Marital status	Single	161	38.3
	Married	259	61.7
Experienced	Yes	147	35.0
staying at SCH	No	273	65.0
Purpose of	Holiday	292	69.5
staying	Shopping	21	5.0
	Business	74	17.6
	Event	33	7.9
Times of stayed	First time	216	51.4
	2 times	113	26.9
	3 times	15	3.6
	More than 3 times	76	18.1
Length of stay	1 night	150	35.7
	2 nights	205	48.8
	More than 3 nights	65	15.5

As presented in Table 1, the results indicated that out of the 420 respondents, 230 respondents (54.8%) have stayed at Five-star rated hotels in Kuala Lumpur, while 63 respondents (15%) have stayed at Five-star rated hotels in Selangor. This is followed by 50 respondents (11.9%) in Kedah and 44 respondents (10.5%) in Pulau Pinang and 7.8 % (33 respondents) in Sabah.

Out of the 420 respondents, 214 respondents (51.0%) are Malaysians. The religion reveals that there is an equal percentage (50%) for Muslims and non-Muslims. The gender distribution is slightly higher for female, with 289 respondents (68.8%) compared to 131 male respondents (31.2%). 182 respondents or 43.3% belong to the age range between 21-30 years old. This is followed by the 31 – 40 years old age group (41.9%) and the age group of below 21 years

old (6.4%). There are only 23 respondents (5.5%) that fall in the 41 – 50 years age group, while only 12 respondents (2.9%) are 51 years old and above. Most of the guests (259 guests or 61.7%) are married.

More than half (65%) of the respondents have never experienced staying in any SCH. This clearly shows that SCH practices are still new to the hospitality industry in Malaysia. The percentage may seem high, but there is a possibility that some of the respondents had actually stayed at a SCH but unfortunately, they were not aware of the existence of SCH practices in the hotels. Therefore, it is imperative for hotel operators to introduce SCH practices and concept to the guests. In terms of the main purposes of staying at a Five-star rated hotel in Malaysia, 69.5% (292 respondents) are due to holiday, while 74 respondents (17.6%) were due to business purposes. Meanwhile, 33 respondents (7.9%) stayed for the event purposes and 21 respondents (5.0%) indicated that their main purpose was shopping. On the frequency of staying at the hotel, most of the respondents (216 respondents or 51.4%) had stayed for the first time, followed by 113 respondents (26.9%) who have stayed for the

second time and 76 respondents (18.1%) had stayed more than three times. Only 3.6% (15 respondents) had stayed for three times.

Respondents were also asked to answer questions about the length of stay at the hotel. Majority of the respondents (205 respondents) stayed at the hotels for two nights, while 35.7% indicated that they stayed for only one night and the remaining 65 respondents (15.5%) indicated that they stayed more than three nights.

Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

From Table 2, all dimensions in the measures are moderately and highly rated by the respondents (mean value ranging from 3.01 to 6.34). Respondents in this study were moderately and high rated by perceived SCH practice by the hotels. Hence, hotel guests' acceptance was obtained high mean value. Respondents of this study highly agreed that they would be retuning back to the hotel. Table 2 shows the results of the mean for the study variables.

Table 2 Mean for study variables ($n = 420$)

Variables	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Hotel Guests' Awareness	420	3.01	1.04
SCH Practices			
• Administrative Practices	420	4.94	0.74
• Common Area Practices	420	5.36	0.92
• Bedroom Practices	420	4.36	0.50
• Service Practices	420	5.09	0.75
• F&B Practices	420	6.34	0.81
Hotel Guests' Acceptance	420	4.00	0.60
Hotel Guests' Loyalty	420	5.66	1.27

Measurement Model of Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) Analyses

Table 3 exhibits the results of measurement model of this study, which consists of internal consistency reliability, indicator reliability, convergent reliability and discriminant validity. For internal consistency reliability, all the constructs have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were ranged from 0.836 to 0.977, thereby satisfying the rule of thumb. As for indicator reliability, analysis was conducted by examining the outer loadings or a set of indicators is consistent with what it intends to measure. However, five questions item were deleted due to main loading < 0.5. Upon deleting these items, the new loading values were retrieved from the same PLS algorithm procedure. In term of convergent reliability, analysis involves the degree of agreement of each indicator in measuring the same variable. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for five SCH practices ranged from 0.507 to 0.730 and exceeding the recommended 0.5.

Table 3 Result of measurement model

Question items	Main loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
AP1	0.595			
AP2	0.705			
AP3	0.747			
AP4	0.777			
AP5	0.778			
AP6	0.794	0.568	0.940	0.929
AP7	0.786			
AP8	0.596			
AP9	0.758			
AP10	0.791			
AP11	0.839			
AP12	0.827			
CAP1	0.612			
CAP2	0.669			
CAP5	0.698	0.507	0.836	0.761
CAP7	0.778			
CAP8	0.787			
BP4	0.714			
BP5	0.705			
BP6	0.758			
BP7	0.688	0.503	0.890	0.861
BP9	0.765			
BP11	0.685			
BP12	0.693			
SP1	0.775			
SP2	0.732			
SP3	0.743			
SP4	0.659	0.562	0.875	0.870
SP5	0.764			
SP6	0.764			

SP7	0.804			
FB1	0.851			
FB2	0.924			
FB3	0.904			
FB4	0.929			
FB5	0.921			
FB6	0.913	0.730	0.970	0.965
FB7	0.877			
FB8	0.705			
FB9	0.879			
FB10	0.817			
FB11	0.755			
FB12	0.737			
HGA1	0.689			
HGA2	0.793			
HGA3	0.780			
HGA4	0.747			
HGA7	0.723	0.606	0.925	0.906
HGA8	0.820			
HGA9	0.838			
HGA10	0.825			
HGL1	0.877			
HGL2	0.940			
HGL3	0.852			
HGL4	0.944			
HGL5	0.921	0.825	0.977	0.973
HGL6	0.920			
HGL7	0.926			
HGL8	0.932			
HGL9	0.855			

Note: Five question items (BP1, BP10, CAP4, HGA5 and HGA6) were deleted due to main loading <0.5. Four question items (BP8, BP3, CAP3 and CAP6) were deleted due to AVE <0.5. In addition, two question items (RE5 and RE2) were deleted due to HTMT insufficiency.

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio Criterion

The final step in assessment of the measurement model was to evaluate discriminant validity by Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. HTMT approach is an estimate what the true correlation between two constructs. The results show that every value is below 0.90. However, the value is seen as valid if it is below 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015). Thus, the HTMT ratio criterion is fulfilled. This present study inferred that discriminant validity is established since all discriminant validity measurement is satisfied.

Table 4 Discriminant validity of measurement model by HTMT ratio

Latent Variable	AP	BP	CAP	FB	HGA	HGL	SP
Administrative Practices							
Bedroom Practices	0.695						
Common Area Practices	0.813	0.876					
F&B Practices	0.739	0.754	0.768				
Hotel Guests' Acceptance	0.584	0.562	0.640	0.620			
Hotel Guests' Loyalty	0.580	0.526	0.607	0.580	0.881		
Service Practices	0.776	0.813	0.898	0.833	0.696	0.609	

Structural Model

The structural model denotes the association existing among the hypothesized latent variable in the model of the study. This study examined the structural model with one exogenous variable, which is SCH practices and two endogenous variables, which are hotel guests' acceptance and hotel guests' loyalty. The first step was to analysed significance and relevance of the path and Table 5 represent the result of the hypotheses.

Table 5 Result of path coefficients

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Value		Standard Error	t-values	p-values	Decision	f^2	
H1	AP > HGA	0.109		0.074	1.477	0.070	Not supported	0.009	
H2	CAP > HGA	0.117		0.081	1.455	0.073	Not Supported	0.001	
H3	BP > HGA	0.033		0.058	0.571	0.284	Not Supported	0.008	
H4	SP > HGA	0.304		0.061	**4.967*****	0.000	**Supported**	0.017	
H5	FB > HGA	0.172		0.060	**2.874****	0.002	**Supported**	0.047	
H6	HGA > HGL	0.473		0.046	**10.221*****	0.000	**Supported**	0.394	

Note: *$p<0.05$ (t>1.645); **$p<0.01$ (t>2.33);***$p<0.001$(t>3.33) (One-Tailed)

As illustrated in Table 5, service practices and F&B practices were significantly contributed to the prediction of hotel guests' acceptance. Service practices had the most impact on the prediction of hotel guests' acceptance (β = 0.304, $p<$ .01) and followed by F&B practices (β = 0.172, $p<$ 0.05). Administrative practices, common area practices and bedroom practices were not predicted hotel guests' acceptance. Therefore, hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 was not supported. In other hand, hypothesis 4 and 5 was fully supported. Result indicated that hotel guests' acceptance (β = 0.473, $p<$ 0.01) was significantly and positively predicted hotel guests' loyalty. Thus, hypothesis 6 was fully supported. Table 3 also revealed that hotel guests' acceptance (f^2 = 0.394) has a large effect in producing the R^2 for hotel guests' loyalty. Moreover, F&B practices (f^2= 0.017) and service practices (f^2=

0.047) have small effect in producing the R^2 for hotel guests' acceptance. On the same note the five SCH practices were able to explain 43.5% ($R^2 = 0.435$) of the variance in the hotel guests' acceptance construct. Additionally, the hotel guests' acceptance was able to explain 77.3% ($R^2 = 0.773$) of the variance in hotel guests' loyalty. Lastly, the study analyzed the predictive relevance Q^2, which represents the accurateness of the path model in predicting the original values that were being observed. This study shows all the two Q^2 values for hotel guests' acceptance ($Q^2 = 0.264$) and

hotel guests' loyalty ($Q^2 = 0.614$) are more than zero, indicating that the model has sufficient predictive relevance.

Mediation Analysis

This present study reveals that two out of five indirect relationship were found to be significant *p<0.05 (t>1.96); **p<0.01 (t>2.58) (two-tailed). The t-value significance of the indirect relationship were obtained using bootstrapping (n=5000). Table 6 provides a summary of the significance of indirect effects and path coefficients.

Table 6 Result of mediating effect of hotel guests' acceptance

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta Value	Standard Error	t-values	p-values	Decision
H7	AP > HGA > HGL	0.114	0.077	1.475	0.070	Not Supported
H8	CAP > HGA > HGL	0.123	0.084	1.455	0.073	Not Supported
H9	BP > HGA > HGL	0.035	0.061	0.568	0.285	Not Supported
H10	SP > HGA > HGL	0.318	0.070	4.573**	0.000	**Supported**
H11	FB > HGA > HGL	0.180	0.068	2.647**	0.004	**Supported**

Note: *p<0.05 (t>1.96); **p<0.01 (t>2.58) (Two-tailed)

As shown in Table 6, out of the five SCH practices examined, only service practices and F&B practices were able to meet the condition for mediation. The guests' acceptance has positive mediating effects on service practices (β=0.318, p<0.01), thereby implying significant and supported. Similarly, the effect of F&B practices (β = 0.180, p< 0.05) was significant in the presence of hotel guests' acceptance, thereby, implying supported. Hence, hypothesis 10 and hypothesis 11 are fully supported. However, administrative practices, common area practices and bedroom practices are not significant. Therefore, hypothesis 7, 8 and 9 was not supported.

DISCUSSIONS

The objective of this study shows that SCH practices and hotel guests' acceptance have positive and significant influence on hotel guests' loyalty. Results of this study indicated that SCH practices pertaining to service practices and F&B practices have significant and positive effect on hotel guests' acceptance and hotel guests' loyalty. Hotel guests' acceptance was also found to be significant mediator on the relationship between SCH practices and hotel guests' loyalty.

Guest who has higher perception of the service quality in SCH practices will have a higher level of acceptance. Specifically, if the hotel displays the price and information of every room, meal, product and service to

avoid price discrimination, the guests will express their acceptance and have higher intention to comeback. These findings are in line with Idris & Wahab (2015), who found that the service practices have significant influence on hotel guests' acceptance. Similarly, this study also found that F&B practices would also significantly influence the level of guests' acceptance toward the hotel. In particular, F&B practices such as all *halal* menu are safe to eat, do not allow alcoholic beverages, must have a *halal* certificate and *halal* verification, would significantly influence guests' acceptance to the hotel. This finding is parallel with Zailani, Omar and Kapong (2011) which agreed that F&B practices influence guest acceptance.

Based on the results, the administrative practices, common area service and bedroom practices were not found to be significant and have a negative relationship with hotel guests' acceptance. According to the respondents, they are not aware of the importance of administrative practices in SCH concept, particularly on the fact that SCH must be financially in line with Islamic principles such as the hotel owner must contribute a proportion of revenue to *zakah*. Therefore, they agreed that the administrative practices are not important elements in the acceptance of SCH practices. Majority of the respondents agreed with an idea to separate swimming pools for female or the separated time for male and female guests. However, some of the guests need a leisure time together with all family members and the segregation of the gender adversely affects their holiday fun. This shows that although Muslim guests agree with this practice, the hotel should also not overlook the acceptance level of non-Muslim guests to ensure the satisfaction of all hotel guests. According to the respondents, the bedroom facilities such as the *Quran* and *tasbih* (Muslim prayer beads) would be available upon request. Moreover, non-Muslim guests agreed that prayer facilities should be placed accordingly to avoid misuse by guests.

Practically, the findings of this study offer several suggestions to government especially Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC), hotel managers and operators, industry players and hotel guests. MOTAC should promote this practice in an effort to increase Muslim and non-Muslim awareness in line with the government's initiative in promoting SCH practices towards Malaysians and international tourists. Moreover, lack of advertising in promoting SCH also contributes to the low level of awareness and acceptance of hotel guests on the SCH practices. Hence, there is a need to provide a proper accommodation for their convenience such as SCH, excellent service quality and *halal* F&B service that are in line with Shariah principles. This situation will attract non-Muslim hotel managers and operators to follow these practices and the hotel industry will become more competitive. Additionally, given that religiosity is found to be significantly linked to Muslim and non-Muslim hotel guests' loyalty, it is obligatory for hotel managers and operators to be sensitive and respectful about the religious beliefs and values of hotel guests particularly in developing marketing strategies and activities. In that sense, Shariah practices are not developed only for Muslims as they can also benefit the non-Muslims as well and that is the reason why Shariah is considered as universal divine law. It has been proven by demographic findings whereby the non-Muslims also understand and are aware of the existence of SCH practices.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has found that service practices and F&B practices have positive effect on the hotel guests' loyalty at a Five-star rated hotel in Malaysia. Meanwhile, the hotel guests' acceptance also found to have mediating influence on the relationship between SCH practices and hotel guests' loyalty. Therefore, the objectives and questions of this study have been achieved. However, several limitations

have been faced throughout the study. Firstly, the SCH practices investigated in this study are limited in scope. Future researchers may need to widen the scope of investigation by incorporating the SCH practices specifically on organisation's perspectives. Secondly, this study is limited to the Five-star rated hotels in Malaysia, in which not all of them are actively engaged with SCH practices. Small hotels may also be actively involved in SCH practices but are not really exposed to the public. Future researchers may need to justify the number of hotels that are really engaged with SCH activities and not just focused on the star rating. Future research may also want to broaden to other categories of hotels.

The development of Shariah Compliant Hotel (SCH) creates a win-win situation for the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC), hotel managers and operators, industry players and hotel guests. However, all party manages to identify the challenges and most suitable approach and ways to address by implement SCH practices. On the top, the level of acceptance of SCH practices and concept among Muslim and non-Muslim hotel guests' will depend on the level of service provider's initiative in integrating the existing hotel service with Shariah principles and rules. Overall, there is a big opportunity of the *halal* industry and hospitality in terms of marketing size and income. Specifically, to the hotel service industry, it is clearly demonstrated that it will not only benefit to the Muslim but advantageous to non-Muslim as well. Hence, it gives a large space for another niche industry, which is able to generate income for the country especially Malaysia. In line with the government mission and vision to be the global Islamic Tourism Hub that certain aspect, need to be improve from time to time and will come into reality.

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