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SERVICE QUALITY OF HOTELS SERVING SAUDI TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *This research aimed to get insights into the current Saudi Arabian research relating to service quality of hotels compared to other countries, and to identify areas of improvement relating to the service quality of Saudi Arabian hotels. A systematic review was conducted with relevant keywords and using the Google Scholar search engine. A review of 59 shortlisted papers indicated that research relating to service quality of hotels serving the Saudi tourism industry could be classified into two major topics, i.e., 'General' for different countries, and 'Halal, Islamic or Sharia-compliant hotels'. The findings from the review indicate that, generally, there is a dearth of research on service quality of hotels serving the Saudi tourism industry; SERVQUAL and its adapted versions have been used by several researchers studying service quality of hotels in other countries; Malaysia leads in the research into Islamic and Sharia-compliant hotels; Malaysia and Indonesia have shown tendencies to enforce strict Islamic practices in international hotels; and Saudi Arabia, has not demonstrated how well it complies with Islamic standards when receiving foreign tourists. Therefore, the importance of more research on Halal/Sharia/Islamic compliant services in Saudi hotels can hardly be overemphasized, especially, given that Saudi is a significant Muslim pilgrim destination. Clarity about the compliance with Islamic standards in Saudi hotels is an essential aspect of service quality offered by hotels. The practical implication of this research is that Saudi hotels need to demonstrate greater clarity about compliance with Islamic standards to improve their service quality.*

Keywords: *Service quality, Halal, Saudi Arabia Hotels*

1. Introduction

The contribution of tourism and travel industry to Saudi GDP was 70.9 billion USD in 2019. Some recent data on tourism arrivals have been provided by ATM (2019). Colliers, an associate of ATM, reported that international arrivals to Saudi Arabia were 17.7 million in 2018. This is expected to reach 23.3 million in 2023, showing a 5.6%

increase overall. Religious tourism, due to the location of two holy shrines of Islamic religion in Saudi Arabia, has been targeted to reach 30 million pilgrims by 2030. In 2017, the total Haj and Umrah pilgrims were 19 million and therefore an increase of 11 million should happen in the next 13 years. Also, the projected 23.3 million in 2023 and 30 million religious tourists in 2030 means, a growth of more than 8 million should occur between 2023 and 2030. According to Statista

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(2020), revenue from the travel & tourism market was US\$3,973m in 2020. An expected annual growth of about 2.5% will increase this revenue to US\$4277m in 2023. Hotels, the largest segment of this market, may grow to volume of US\$2,637m in 2020. With huge potential for growth projected, there is substantial enthusiasm to invest in Saudi tourism sector.

An annual growth rate of over 10% since 2010 has been claimed by about 45% of this is pilgrim tours. Domestic tourism has also been showing high recent growth rate. The high tourism volumes and their substantial increases have reflected in the growth of hotel industry, tourist spent, contribution to GDP and increase in foreign direct investments.

Amid all these outstanding achievements, some issues of quality are important. These include quality of political and social environment, absence of any discriminatory restrictions, human rights violations, safe entry, visit of all target spots, duration of stay and safe exit. Quality of treating visitors at their places of stay (mainly hotels) and at the visiting sites are also important. The service quality at hotels need to be high. The last said factor is reviewed in this paper.

2. Methodology

This paper is based on a systematic review. The topic itself was used as the search term in Google Scholar to yield a total of 59 papers, out of which two have been cited above and the rest were reviewed in the following sections. No paper directly dealing with the topic was excluded.

3. Result and Discussion

Hotels are regarded as service industry. Therefore, a conceptual review by Alzaydi et al. (2018) was selected here to show that service delivery is complex and challenging. There are unique characteristics in service domains. One important factor is the high level of customer involvement in the creation

of services. The facilitation, transformation and usage framework was used to identify the reasons for failures at each stage of service delivery starting with the characteristics of the service environment. Control theory can be applied to explore formal and informal controls involved in the facilitation and transformation stages with the aim of reducing service delivery failures.

Martín-Ruiz et al. (2012) used the theory of cognitive schemata and the means-end theory, to explain the hierarchical nature of service experience. The customers evaluate their experiences and build their service relationships, for which, they consider service attributes, which is the first level of abstraction. The outcomes and consequences caused by these attributes form the highest level of abstraction. The authors obtained the results showing that the strongest driver of service value is servicescape when service experiences are created. The next in importance was service equity. Service experience is determined by to customer's easiness to relax and escape from routine through service quality elements of the hotels.

3.1 General

Internal service quality (ISQ) was positively affected by staff recruitment and internal communications. Staff motivation positively and significantly affected job security, and job security positively and significantly affected staff retention. ISQ was also significantly and positively affected by staff retention. The strongest effect on staff motivation and ISQ was exerted by staff recruitment (Akroush et al., 2013).

Two combinations of server behaviour to ensure service quality in cafes were discovered by Barkan et al. (2004). Individual tip policy, combined with low visibility, leads to quality service. In the case of shared tip policy, quality service occurs when individual tip policy is combined with high visibility.

Three main categories of online service failure complaints of customers were

identified using thematic analysis of Trip Advisor posts by Ekiz et al. (2012). The three main themes were: rooms, failure to respond and arrogant/clueless staff.

In the studies of Nikolaidis et al. (2016), the five service quality dimensions predicted all the hotel brand personality dimensions. Sincerity and excitement dimensions were the two most highly predicted ones. The SERVQUAL dimensions of tangible and empathy contributed most strongly to all dimensions of hotel brand personality. SERVQUAL and Aker's brand personality questionnaires were used for this research.

Brand image was an important factor affecting customer's restaurant attribute preference in the studies of Yi et al. (2018). Customers' restaurant attribute preference was partially affected by their perception of living status based on the comparison between residents and tourists. In a related work, the same authors (Yi & Jai, 2019) found that hedonic and utilitarian desires of customers influenced their positive emotions, which in turn, influenced their impulse buying behaviour of daily meals from restaurants.

From a survey study on guests of luxury hotels, Islam et al. (2019) noted positive relationship for service quality with customer engagement. This, in turn, positively influenced brand experience and revisit intention. These relationships were stronger for women than men, thus displaying clear gender effect.

3.1.1 United States

At a nature-based resort in Virginia, Meng et al. (2008) found friendly and quality services and lodging performance to be the significant factors of overall satisfaction of tourists. Using SERVQUAL to assess service quality in limited services restaurants of Jordan, Al-Tit (2015) showed positive effects for qualities of service and food on customer satisfaction. Customer retention was also positively impacted by service quality and

customer satisfaction. Finally, the results confirmed that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and customer retention. Caro and Roemer (2006) identified three primary dimensions of personal interaction, physical environmental and outcome and seven subdimensions of service quality as conduct, expertise, problem solving, equipment, ambient conditions, waiting time and value in the travel and tourism industry. The impact of cultural differences on customer satisfaction and service quality evaluation in U.S. hotels was studied by Seo (2012) using review of literature. The determinants of service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction differed among the customers of USA, China and Japan staying and dining in US hotels. Although the cultural differences among the three countries according to Hofstede dimensions were also listed, no correlation was done for cultural dimension with service quality perceptions of customer satisfaction, which was the purpose of the study. However, the importance of relating the three factors cannot be denied.

3.1.2 Finland

Food quality, price, ambiance and service quality were significantly correlated with customer satisfaction in the Nepalese restaurants of Finland. Quantitative primary and secondary research methods were used in this research done by Karki and Panthi (2018). In the primary research, questionnaire survey was used. In the secondary research reviews in Trip Advisor and other social media were analysed.

3.1.3 Malaysia

There is positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. This was demonstrated when most of the customers of Malaysian hotels expressed their satisfaction of service quality (Amin et al., 2013). A current trend is the attraction of moderately or low priced food served in a casual atmosphere

like the open roadside tables. Seeing its high potential, several such restaurants have sprung up in many urban areas. But such rapid spread of casual restaurants has created intense competition between them. The consequent price war and deterioration of quality has led to loss of customer patronage and closure of these restaurants as fast as they came up. Urban Malaysia is no exception to such trends. A study by Saad et al. (2020) focused on service quality aspect of these hotels in Malaysia.

SERVQUAL was used for collection of data from customers of such hotels. The factors related to the scenario of rapid spread and eclipse of these casual restaurants described above, was verified by the results of the study. Thus, a highly competitive business environment, customer evaluation of service quality and customer satisfaction were found to be highly critical to the survival of these casual restaurants.

All variables, with the exception of physical environment, predicted relationship quality in casual dining restaurants in a Malaysian study by Prayag et al. (2019). The significant predictors included food quality, customer orientation, communication, relationship benefits and price fairness. These predictors were also related to customer loyalty, which was mediated by relationship quality.

3.1.4 China

The necessity for upgrading the facilities in Chinese resort hotels for more positive customer emotion and greater customer satisfaction was proved by the results obtained by Ali and Amin (2014). Thus, customers who had higher perceptions of the physical environment showed greater likelihood for more positive emotions, higher customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The factors affecting the choice of a budget hotel from a list of available hotels in the case of Chinese domestic travellers were investigated by Yang et al. (2017). Both attribute-based and customer characteristics were included. The selection preferences of

these tourists included location, price and business functions as guest choice behaviour. In the case of budget hotels, location in the traditional central business districts and attached restaurant were the primary factors for guest preference. The consumer personal characteristics determining guest choice behaviour were income, occupation, purpose of travel, personal attitude and past experience.

3.1.5 Jordan

A paucity of research on service quality Jordanian hotels made to explore appropriate management interventions. Perceptions of service quality and their sociodemographic characteristics and characteristics of organizations delivering the service have not been researched well. The perceptions of service quality in the food and beverage service department in Jordanian hotels were conceptualised by AbuKhalife and Som (2015). In the case of Ghana hotels, food service quality was perceived to be below the expectations of customers, as was revealed in a survey by (Mensah, 2009) Attitude of employees and long waiting periods were the reasons for the perception of low food service quality. Loyalty of guests towards five star hotels of Aqab city in Jordan, was influenced by environmental preservation, hotel image and service quality. Advanced technology did not influence guest loyalty (Almomani et al., 2017).

3.1.6 Egypt

In the case of Egyptian budget hotels, the factors determining satisfaction of domestic tourists were: the budget hotel location, cleanliness, maintenance, comfort level, hotel staff service, and value for money room rates and food and beverage values. These results were reported by Hossam (2016). Parking spaces, healthy and local dishes, rest-room cleanliness were rated as the most important factors for satisfaction of services offered in floating restaurants in Egypt. The views of the

Nile river also impress the customers. These factors also contribute to repeat intentions of customers. This study was conducted by Abdelhamied (2011). Perceptions of guests about the service quality of and rapport with front office departments at 4-5 star hotels of Cairo and Giza in Egypt and their impact on customer satisfaction were studied by Hussein (2017). It was found that service quality dimensions predicted enjoyable interaction and personal connection for front office employees with guests. Such interactions and connections mediated the impact of the quality of services provided by front office employees on guest satisfaction. The service quality dimensions of front office employees also predicted guest satisfaction. Significant differences between four and five star hotels were noticed in respect of perceived service quality and guest satisfaction. Such differences were absent in the case of rapport dimension. Foreign and Arab tourists behaved similarly in these respects.

3.1.7 Kenya

Kiunga et al. (2019) obtained positive correlations for customer cultural orientation versus service quality, management perception versus service quality and communication strategies versus service quality in 3-5 star hotels in Nairobi City County. Customer cultural orientation, management perception and communication strategies together explained 53.9% of changes in service quality. The need for managers and staff of such hotels to understand the cultural differences in customer preferences and adjust to their needs to the maximum possible extent, were stressed.

3.1.8 Turkey

Development of religious tourism in Turkey (Egresi et al., 2012) has resulted in high occupancy rates in the hotels in the entire year. There was positive growth in the

number of new hotels during the last five years. Most visitors preferred to eat in local restaurants frequently.

3.1.9 India

Usually, whenever service qualities of hotels are researched the findings are related with the management. The recommendations based on findings are directed towards the steps the management must implement to improve service quality. The only point for employees will be regarding the training to be given to them, which is also a management perspective. In a different approach, an Indian study on West Bengal hotels by Banerjee and Biswas (2018) highlighted the contribution of hotel employees to service quality as measured by customer perceptions.

3.1.10 Taiwan

In study conducted in a Taiwanese international resort hotel, Park et al. (2019) obtained the usually reported finding that motivation and service quality perception positively affect value perception of the resort hotel customers. The additional finding of this study was that the length of stay moderated this relationship. In an investigation, Lin and Chen (2014) noted that Chinese tourists were satisfied with the way in which their physiological and safety needs were met in Taiwan. Fulfillment of these needs enhanced sense of belonging and self-esteem among them. Their preference to participate in local food-related activities to interact with local people to acquaint with the local food was also fulfilled. The Chinese tourists expressed intention to revisit Taiwan and to recommend Taiwanese food to others. A revised gap model was used by Lee, et al. (2016) to evaluate and improve service quality in Taiwanese hotel industry. The model is useful to measure service quality by identifying gaps. Such analysis is useful to offer more effective methods of improving service quality. The identification and analysis of service gaps were done using

HOLSERV instrument. The service gaps perceptions of internal and external customers were measured. The sample consisted of tourists, employees, and managers. From the analysis, five gaps were found to influence tourists evaluations of service quality. The Gap 1 (management perceptions vs. customer expectations) and Gap 9 (service provider perceptions of management perceptions vs. service delivery) were more critical than the other gaps in determining perceived service quality. Thus, improvement of service quality becomes the main aspect.

3.1.11 Ethiopia

The gap between customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality of hotels in selected cities of Tigray region, Ethiopia was the theme of research by Gebremichael and Singh (2019). The authors used a modified version of SERVQUAL model. The results showed low level of customer perceptions for all dimensions of service quality compared to their expectations. Tangibility was the most important dimension for customers to evaluate service quality. Therefore, the management of these hotels need to improve the tangible dimensions of their service, viz., renewal of all physical facilities, equipment and communication materials used in their hotels. An interesting study by Tefera and Migiro (2018) was to compare the service quality ratings of hotel owners, government authority, travel agents and customers for Ethiopian hotels. Modified versions of SERVQUAL and HOTSPERF were used. No significant difference was obtained in the mean score for service quality between the four hotel ratings by the different agents and groups. Also, the different hotel rating systems and its effect on service quality were not significant. It is unlikely that a really good service quality rated very badly or very bad service quality rated very good by a large number of rating entities. Small variations, some borderline may perhaps show shift of rating from one type to the next higher or the

previous lower rating. Purposeful ratings by a small fraction of rating entities cannot be avoided.

It is a great challenge for hotels to meet the needs and expectations of all diverse types of guests due to the wide variations in their profiles. In this respect, Tefera and Migiro (2017) studied the relationship of demographic and tripographic attributes with customer expectation, perception and service quality of hotel guests of star rated hotels in Ethiopia. The tested tripographic variables included length of stay of the current visit, source of information on the hotel rating, staying preference as per rating of hotels, staying preference for chain or independent hotels, source of information on the hotel, purpose of stay, mode of payment. HOTSPER, the modified version of SERVQUAL and SERPPER, instrument which utilizes the gap analysis techniques were used for survey. Significant relationship was obtained only for the relationship employment type and customer perception and expectation and no other demographic variable. There were significant relationship for two tripographic variables. Staying preference for rated hotels was correlated with both service expectation and perception. Source of hotel information for the current visit was correlated with service expectation. A significance level of 0.59 was obtained for source hotel information for the current visit with service perception. A relationship of customer preference for a chain or independent hotels and service quality was also observed.

3.1.12 Indonesia

In well-known star hotels, it is necessary to have a section to provide specialised attention to VIP and VVIP guests. Butlers are exclusively allotted the duty of attending to their needs. The opinion of guests about the existence of Butler at Raffles Hotel, Jakarta and the association of having a butler with service quality were evaluated by Fandya et al. (2017). The VIP guests rated the existence

of butler and the service quality as very good. A strong positive correlation between existence of a butler and service quality was also found in this research context of Raffles Hotel Jakarta.

3.1.13 Nigeria

Quality of facilities on customer patronage among selected hotels in south-west, Nigeria were researched by Patrick et al. (2019). The variables studied were good access road, basic security facilities, constant water supply, constant electricity and convenient parking space. Significant positive correlations for quality of facilities with customer patronage were obtained. The order of importance was: good access road, constant electricity, constant water supply, basic security facilities and convenient parking space.

In their study, Adebayo and Adedeji (2019) focused on perception, experience and satisfaction of hotel guests having to wait for service. Results of a survey of guests of seven Nigerian hotels showed significant positive correlation between perception, experience and satisfaction of waiting for hotel services. A positive relationship was also obtained for guests' satisfaction versus their perception and guests' satisfaction versus experience of waiting for service.

A study was undertaken by Maidugu (2017) to examine the methods used by foreign firms with headquarters in developed markets to transfer their service culture when operating in emerging markets like Nigeria. There is need to understand these methods due to the unique features of these emerging markets with respect to their natural and human resources. Case studies of two hotels from different firms, both located in Abuja, Nigeria, were used for this purpose. Both hotels have their headquarters in USA. The study exposed the challenges and difficulties involved in the process of transferring service culture due to the unique contextual challenges. Challenges common to all emerging markets and specific to Nigeria

were discovered. The Nigeria-specific challenges were strong religious allegiance and cultural affinity, and unique societal factors. With regard to any emerging market country, the challenges of corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of skilled labour were important. Some new elements enabled both firms to address these challenges and facilitate the transfer of focal areas in their signature service culture were also noted. These new elements were inclusiveness and provision of social support for Nigeria specifically. Three elements applicable to any emerging market were transfer of knowledge and skills, accommodating corruption and improvisation. These new elements add to the existing five elements of internal service quality. These five existing elements were employee selection, job description, reward and recognition, tools to serve customers and workplace design.

3.1.14 Oman

The performance of most Omani hotels was found to be technically inefficient. Most of the efficient hotels were located in the Oman capital, Muscat. Most important customer attractants were star rating and cultural attractions and the same factors also influenced efficiency of these hotels. Oukil et al. (2016) used a two-stage data envelopment analysis with bootstrap in the first stage and a truncated regression model in the second stage for deriving these findings from secondary data.

3.1.15 Saudi Arabia

In a Saudi Arabian study, Bostanji (2013) evaluated the how service quality of five star hotels in Riyadh impacted on customer loyalty. Service quality was measured in terms of quick responsiveness, empathy and tangibility. All the three service quality variables had significant impact on customer loyalty. Based on the findings, providing services closest to the customer expectations,

training of employees and strengthening the organisational culture of service quality to strengthen the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty was suggested to the hotels in Riyadh.

Qarashia (2018) observed that several Saudis had been visiting many foreign countries and experienced high quality service in hotels of these countries, especially in the hotels of UAE. These Saudis are now questioning the inferior quality of service offered by Saudi hotels.

The capacity of KSA to become an international business conference tourism destination is determined by the tourism policy of the government and service quality management during the business conference. A significant majority of external delegates preferred staying in 4- and 5-star hotels. The very availability of these hotels demonstrated the capability of KSA to accommodate conferences and with high level of customer satisfaction. Infrastructural facilities, organisational capabilities to host such conferences, Saudi traditions and culture were also favourable factors. Some challenges also exist (Almubark, 2018). According to the research results of Abdulla (2011). Saudi Arabia has the capacity to host international conferences efficiently. But the effects of uncertain attitude towards opening up to the outside world revealed by factors related to the socio-political situation in the kingdom has caused a stalemate. This factor blocks the development of Saudi Arabia as a preferred conference tourism destination.

Khaled (2015) investigated on the effects of guests' waiting experience on service quality and subsequent satisfaction with the overall experience. Samples of guests and staff of a Riyadh hotel were interviewed. Most customers were satisfied with the location of the hotel and the services it provided. Crowding in the hotel parking area was resented by the customers. Delay of valet car service, limited variety for breakfast and long queue at the buffet table were experienced by

the guests. However, these problems did not affect their satisfaction. No activities were available to the guests during the long waiting period unless there was a service failure.

Some success factors of Saudi restaurants were identified from interviews of restaurant operators of Jeddah by Gadelrab and Ekiz (2019). First among them were delivery of consistent quality food and service. These factors are related with customer relationship and develop loyalty. The next important factor was customer service and focus on customers according to their needs. Clear and consistent strategy for menus was also important. Word of mouth and social media need to be watched and steps taken for positive messages for good restaurant reputation. Shortage of relevantly educated and competent staff is an important issue.

A Saudi Arabian study (Al-Hazmia, 2020) found significant relationship between tourism service quality and hotel service quality. Service quality was strongly related with its dimensions. Need to improve the tangible aspects of hotel services and strengthen the relationship between the hotel employees and customers was stressed.

3.2 Halal, Islamic Tourism - Sharia and Islamic Hotels

Although there are opinions that these terms denote different meanings, for this review purpose, all these terms are considered synonymous. A lot of papers dealt with these topics especially from Malaysia and Indonesia, the two Muslim dominant countries of East Asia.

3.2.1 Malaysia

The need for Malaysian hotels to enhance value in offering halal foods along with good service quality was highlighted by Samori and Rahman (2013). If hotel basic facilities are in line with the Islamic teachings, it will attract more Muslim tourists especially from the Middle East and West Asia. Therefore, the hoteliers should maintain the quality of

services according to the needs of customers' needs. Customer satisfaction is determined by his or her perceptions of service quality and image of the hotel. The need for developing more Sharia compliant hotels and halal tourism products and services has been stressed. The benefits of halal have also been perceived positively even by non-Muslims. Thus, the potential future market for the halal-based tourism and hotels is high.

A SWOT analysis of halal hotel industry in Malaysia was done by Idris and Wahab (2015) Unique concept, high demand and low supply to give high margins, service standards which are friendly to Muslims (strengths), non-enforcement of compliance of standards (weakness), strong government support and global scope (opportunities) and competition from other Muslim countries (threat) were identified.

In a Malaysian study on perceived value and satisfaction of Muslim customers on Sharia-compliant hotels, Azhani et al. (2017) found that six dimensions perceived value were positively related with their satisfaction. The six value dimensions were quality, price, emotional value, social value, Islamic physical attribute value and Islamic non-physical attribute's value.

A study aimed to determine the relationship of halal image, halal awareness, religiosity, service quality with purchase intention of Shariah compliant hotels, was undertaken by Haque et al. (2018). A self-structured questionnaire was used for collection of data from Muslim travellers in Malaysia, mainly Kuala Lumpur. Halal image, halal awareness and religiosity were associated with the purchase intention of Muslim consumers towards Shariah compliant hotels. Interestingly, service quality was not significantly associated to purchase intention. Thus, Sharia compliance takes precedence over service quality when Muslim customers patronise hotels in Malaysia, as is the general trend everywhere.

In order to ensure service quality of Islamic hotels to attract Muslim tourists, it is

absolutely critical that hotels and restaurants serve only halal meals. Managers should obtain halal certification to instil confidence among Muslim tourists. The in-house hospitality of hotels should be designed according to Islamic values and principles, as they are part of the Muslim social systems. Employees need training in Islamic tourism, so that they can serve the Islamic tourists better. Hotel personnel should possess appropriate skills, character and devotion towards Islam, as to facilitate the creation of the right theme and ambience. These observations were made by Musa et al. (2016) while analysing the factors of Islamic tourism using Leiper's tourism system.

Malaysian hoteliers seems to be confused about the basic attributes of the Islamic Hotel concept and sharia compliant hotel and how the two are different or similar. To remove this confusion, Karim et al. (2017) analysed the characteristics of one each of declared Islamic hotel (Adya Hotel Langkawi) and Sharia compliant hotel (Perdana Hotel Kota Bharu). It was found that certain attributes of Sharia hotels were not enforced in the case of Islamic hotels due to different business perspectives and commercial considerations. The two differ with respect to the need to appoint a Sharia compliant manager and staff, enforcement of Sharia dress code and need for guest dress codes. Virtually, all other Sharia practices were followed by Islamic hotels also but not as enforced, but as optional, requirements. Notably, even the Sharia compliant hotel was not 100% compliant.

3.2.2 Indonesia

Halal Tourism had been growing in Indonesia continuously from 6th position in 2015 to 3rd position in 2017 and the first position in 2019. This phenomenal growth was due to the simultaneous focus on both international and domestic Muslim travellers. A standardised halal certification has been introduced for the restaurant industry. Andrianto (2017) studied on the extent of halalness in the implementation of halal tourism. Data were

obtained from three restaurants in Bandung, Indonesia. It was found that local restaurant management were not concerned about the quality of halalness services. On the other hand, halalness was very important for chain restaurant management. The local travellers also endorsed the view of the local restaurants that halal certificates were not critical. But it is compulsory for chain restaurants. Corporates perceived the value and differentiation of products to be two other key factors of the halalness hospitality for halal restaurants.

Adirestuty (2019) investigated upon the effect of Islamic service quality, Muslim Customer Perceived Value (MCPV), customer satisfaction on revisit intention of sharia hotels in Bandung. Samples were drawn from five Sharia hotels. Questionnaire survey was done on customers. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling and Muslims Customer Perceived Value (MCPV). The results showed that both the suggested Islamic attributes of value and conventional value dimensions are important to satisfy Muslim tourists who intend to buy a tourism package. The tested value attributes were quality value, price value, emotional value, social value and Islamic value. The measured Islamic values were physical attributes like space for worship, guaranteed halal products, Quran in the room, gender separation and other facilities as per Sharia. Significant positive relationships were obtained for quality value vs. satisfaction, emotional value vs. satisfaction, Islamic attribute vs. satisfaction, price value vs. repurchase intention, emotional value vs. repurchase intention, satisfaction vs. repurchase intention. No negative relationship was obtained.

3.2.3 Jordan

The aim of the research by Hijawi et al. (2019) was to examine the degree to which halal features existed in hotels in Jordan and the awareness of halal tourism among Jordanian businesses. Survey results of 29

hotels across Jordan showed that the Jordanian hotels already had complied with many features of halal hotel specifications. This may, perhaps, be due to the large Muslim population in Jordan. Evidence for increasing awareness of halal tourism in Jordan was noted. Many hotels had plans to incorporate more features of Halal tourism into their own programs.

3.2.4 Saudi Arabia

In a survey, Almohaimmeed (2017) measured restaurant quality using 11 dimensions consisting of halal, food, hygiene, menu and atmospheric quality, assurance, accuracy, responsiveness, interior design, external environment and price. Customers from both small and large full-service restaurants in Saudi Arabia were surveyed. All 11 dimensions had positive relationship with customer satisfaction. All restaurants served only halal foods. Other dimensions like food quality consisting of taste, freshness of meals and amount of food, hygiene consisting of clean dining area and clean staff, responsiveness measured by promptness of service and menu displayed, its variety and knowledge of items, were also important. These results of full-service restaurants may not be applicable to fast food and self-service restaurants.

4. Conclusion

A wide range of factors related to service quality were investigated by researchers in various countries. SERVQUAL and its adapted versions were used by many researchers. A strong component of service quality of hotels was on the topics of the halal food, Islamic hotel and Sharia compliant hotels (which were not very different from another with respect to service quality requirements), especially in Malaysia.

In the case of Saudi Arabia, in spite of being a strong Islamic country with two of the holiest Islamic holy shrines, there had been no studies evaluating how best the Islamic

principles and halal requirements are practised in hotels which host international tourists. Malaysia has been leading in this respect. On the other hand Saudi Arabia was reluctant to dilute its cultural standards for the sake of international tourists coming from non-Muslim countries. In a recent policy

reform, it has changed this stand and allowed foreign female tourists to wear any decent dress of their choice. Having changed the policies, the immediate challenging task is to train hotel employees to accept non-Islamic practices and convincing the public at large. These things need to be researched.

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