POSITIONING OF ISLAMIC HOTELS: A CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS APPROACH

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Abstract: Islamic hotels are defined as those implementing the Islamic model of hospitality and this pioneering study aims to examine the positioning of these hotels compared to conventional hotels. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data and a total of 207 responses were received and analyzed. Correspondence analysis was used to analyze the data and perceptual maps were generated. The results showed that specific hotel attributes relate more to Islamic rather than to conventional hotels and that both types of hotels seem to lack a comparative positioning strategy. Islamic hotels could build on, and strengthen their current positions, while, simultaneously expanding their appeal to the non-Muslim travel market based on its desired attributes. Conventional hotels, on the other hand, could offer key attributes required by Muslim travelers in order to capture the growing Islamic travel market.

Key words: Islamic hotels, positioning, perceptual maps, correspondence analysis, Muslim traveler

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INTRODUCTION

The market of the travel services oriented towards the Islamic demographic is becoming increasingly significant. Many international hotel chains are now explicitly seeking to cater to the Islamic travel market, including high-end brands such as the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Kempinski in Munich, The Grand Hotel Kempinski Geneva, and the Marriott International's Ritz-Carlton. For example, the Kempinski indicates on its website that "among the services for Muslim guests at the chain's Grand Hotel des Bains in St. Moritz, Switzerland, is a special women's spa and gender-segregated exercise sessions. Kempinski offers identical services at other properties in Berlin, Bangkok and Budapest, Hungary" (Islam.ru, 01.17.2013). Accordingly, understanding the desired attributes of Islamic hotels by both Muslim and non-Muslim travellers is of value to conventional hotels in that they are better able to keep up with increased competition from the Islamic hotels. While Muslim travellers probably took the conventional hotel model for granted as the sole model in hospitality in the past, the number of Muslim travellers seeking an Islamic hotel experience is substantial (Kamin, 2019), especially coming from the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Conventional hotels are indeed taking notice of this demand for Shariah-compliant hospitality as the interests of Muslim travellers has become more widely acknowledged.

The academic literature on hospitality branding has recently been advanced to give greater consideration to non-Western cultural frameworks. For example, Han et al., (2021) found that there are adverse mental health effects of "inconvenient tourism" for Muslim travellers in non-Muslim countries. One such extension is to the development and marketing of tourism to the Muslim demographic through Islamic and/or Halal tourism. While recent research examines the demand for Islamic compliant services, customer satisfaction, trust, performance of Islamic hotels, and customer preferences, less has been explored regarding the positioning of Islamic hotels. The position of a brand is the perception it creates in the minds of consumers and the way an organization positions itself is its positioning strategy that enables it to establish a competitive advantage (Chieh-Hua and Wen-Ya, 2010). Although such a position remains in the eyes of customers, establishing a unique market position is critical to an organization's success in boosting its market share. That position encompasses the bundle of attributes offered in an effort to meet customers' wants and needs. In other words, the offer must clearly show the organization's selling proposition. In order to demonstrate the selling proposition, accurate positioning must occur. In this paper, we examine the current position of Islamic hotels in the marketplace -whether that position reflects their true identity as

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'Islamic' - and whether it serves the business interests of Islamic hotels to create a more authentic identity as Islamic in the minds of consumers. Therefore, positioning in the case of Islamic hotels is analysed here through their niche strategy or building their position away from competitors using the four major components of positioning; product, perceptions, communications, and competition. We use perceptual mapping to reflect each of these components.

We find that survey respondents consider a number of attributes characteristic of Islamic hotels, namely privacy and modesty in attire of staff and customers, the provision of prayer facilities, dedicated check-in facilities for female guests, a prohibition on alcohol and exclusively Muslim food services staff, conservative in-room entertainment, Muslim-majority staff and management and Islamic management practices, on-site Islamic educational opportunities, and sharia-compliant hotel events. Consumers surveyed consider the prohibition of immoral entertainment activities, the provision of exclusively halal food, gender-segregated sports facilities, and the restrictions on unmarried couples staying together desirable attributes for both conventional and Islamic hotels. Further, survey respondents indicate that their perceptions of the attributes of conventional hotels include non-Muslim guests dressed decently (but without a mandatory headscarf) and bidets in guest bathrooms. Our results have implications for governments, management of hotel chains, and the hospitality industry at large. Some of the anticipated attributes of tourists related to conventional hotels could be achieved by many family-oriented hotel chains, even outside of Muslim-majority countries, such as disposable (given as gifts) bidets and guidelines on appropriate guest attire. Clearly, hotels outside of Muslim-majority countries with on-site activities considered immoral by Islamic travellers (casinos, nightclubs, bars, and so forth) will not seek to implement changes to take on these attributes. For hotels in Islamic countries, and for hotels seeking to improve their reputation in meeting the needs of Islamic tourists, improvements in the quality of services provided can be made in some cases simply by establishing policies regarding guest and staff attire, controls on in-room entertainment, staff and facilities more responsive to Muslim women, and on-site infotainment regarding Islamic culture and religion. Doing so can both meet the needs of Muslim travellers and generate brand loyalty by providing holistic benefits.

In addition to that the success of Islamic tourism or halal tourism depends on whether the tourism activities are carried out according to Islamic principles (Battour and Ismail, 2016). Yousaf and Xiucheng (2018) emphasize that Muslims travel according to certain Islamic rules. Akyurt (2020) say that the most important factors among the Islamic hotel selection criteria of Muslim tourists are halal food and segregated service areas. Karaoğlu and Şahbaz (2021) stress the importance of halal certification in hotel marketing. Yusof and Soelar (2022) found that service quality significantly affects customer satisfaction in their study on Muslim-friendly hotels. Al-Ansi et al., (2022) investigated the effects of Islamophobia on Muslim tourism, examined the differences between western and eastern society, and emphasized that local people's feelings about Muslim tourists are an important factor for tourists. An important point that is usually overlooked is the role of Muslim women in choosing a hotel (Khan et al., 2022), as they have a keen interest in attributes such as privacy and segregated facilities. Accordingly, this study used a descriptive method to describe customers' perceptions concerning the positioning of hotels, i.e., Islamic and conventional hotels.

Correspondence analysis was used to develop perceptual maps (Iacobucci and Grisaffe, 2018), with attributes related to Islamic and Conventional hotels. For this purpose, we first show the current market positioning of both types of hotels. Next, we examine whether the current position of Islamic hotels truly reflects the acclaimed Islamic identity. To collect the needed data, an online questionnaire was designed to collect data from Islamic hotel in Jordan.

The paper proceeds as follows. In section 1, we review the relevant literature on Islamic hotels and brand positioning, and present our research questions. In sections 2 and 3, we describe the data and methods used in the analysis while section 4 presents the findings, limitations, implications for future research, and conclusions. The following figure 1 summarizes the steps followed to achieve the research objectives.
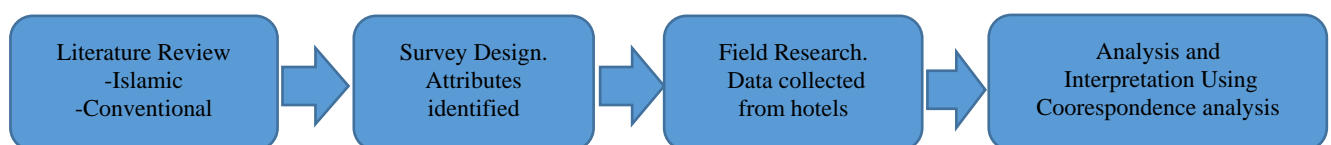
Literature Review
-Islamic
-Conventional → Survey Design. Attributes identified → Field Research. Data collected from hotels → Analysis and Interpretation Using Coorespondence analysis

Figure 1. Research Flowchart

LITERATURE REVIEW
1. Islamic Hotels

Islamic marketing has evolved into a substantial body of literature. Alserhan (2010) offers a detailed description of Islamic branding, linking it to the Islamization of international brands. He notes that a number of non-Muslim corporations, such as Nestle, have made substantial investments in research on the factors related to their brands that would make them amenable to the Halal market, as well as new production facilities in Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia. Alserhan (2016) notes that in order to engage the halal market, firms need to employ brand-Islamization strategies, using a holistic analysis of the business environment they seek to develop. However Alserhan (2016), warns that success for non-Muslim MNCs in entering and maintaining positions within the Islamic demographic will rely on marketing and branding strategies that adhere to Islamic guidelines and standards rather than simply applying Western marketing and branding approaches to Islamic consumers. In addition, authenticity in the approach to product offerings demonstrates respect, care, and consideration, and signals that the company values the Islamic consumer, which can lead to increased brand loyalty. The literature on Islamic branding has been extended to the hospitality and tourism literature, often under the guise of "halal"

tourism. It is necessary to make a distinction between Islamic hotels and Halal hotels, two terms which are often conflated in the literature despite a significant difference in interpretation. The term "Islamic" is a more general term, rooted in Islam and Arabic, than the term "halal", which is too specific to describe institutions or frameworks. For this reason, for instance, the term "Islamic finance" is used to describe the framework of a financial system, rather than "Halal finance", and "Halal Certificates" are given for certain products (such as food or drinks) at Islamic hotels. Our objective is to examine the positioning of Islamic hotels, not to define which products or services of hotels are "halal".

Islamic hotels draw their justification from the Islamic Shariah. Therefore, they are clearly guided in terms of what kind of behaviour or hospitality they offer (Alserhan et al., 2016). Islamic hotels offer a comfortable, 'culturally compatible' experience for Muslims, by catering to their basic religious requirements (Rehman and Aisha, 2023). In addition to this, for any other guest, an 'Islamic' hotel can provide a 'cultural and family experience' (Batrawy, 2015; Moussly, 2011).

In order for hotels to appeal to consumers looking for a 'Muslim' guest experience, many hotels utilise the Crescent Rating system (www. crescentrating.com), which is an accreditation system for hotels measuring particular criteria which are important within Islamic teaching. These characteristics include, among others, the provision of a 'dry' (alcohol free) environment, availability of halal foods, and access to dedicated prayer space.

Muslim travellers increasingly consult the Crescent Rating website when booking a holiday or business trip (Zulkharnain and Jamal, 2012). In addition to looking to the Crescent Rating for a perspective on what an Islamic hotel is, several researchers focused on their attributes. One of the most complete works in this regard is that of Stephenson (2014) who listed twenty nine attributes divided among five major categories: Human Resources, Private Rooms (bedrooms and bathrooms), Dining and Banqueting Facilities, Other Public Facilities, and Business Operation. Another detailed assessment is found in Razalli et al., (2015), who introduced SIHAT or Shariah Islamic Hotel Assessment Tool, a comprehensive model generated from an exploratory study of Shariah–compliant hotels in Malaysia. SIHAT is composed of five main categories; administration, common areas, bedroom, services, and food and beverages, with a total of 64 attributes. Finally, the concept of *Aurat* would require compliance with dress standards (i.e., non-revealing clothing and head coverings for Muslim guests and staff and non-revealing clothing for non-Muslim guests), with this dress code clearly stated in the hotel. Further, privacy requires separate recreational facilities for men and women, halal food prepared by Muslim food service workers, and Islamic themed events for guests.

2. Brand Positioning

A positioning strategy is used by organizations to establish a competitive advantage through an assessment of the impact of their external environment on their strategic capability (resources and competences) and expectations. Kotler (2000) defines positioning strategy from the marketing point of view as the act of designing a company's offerings and image to occupy a distinct place in the target market's mind; it refers to the design and implementation of a retail mix to create an image relative to its competitors. It is a holistic, integrative, cross-functional activity taking into account merchandise, environmental, customer service, and customer communication decisions. Kalafatis et al., (2000) argue that positioning strategy deploys both tangible assets (such as products and other physical items) and intangible assets, such as the reputational capital of the company. Managers should deliberately and proactively define, modify, and implement consumer perception of marketable offerings relative to the competition.

Although there are different conceptualizations regarding positioning, the literature appears to have reached a consensus that it corresponds to the development of a resource-based asset valued in the capital markets. Dou et al., (2010) and Coffie and Owusu-Frimpong (2014), among many others, consider positioning "to be one of the key elements of modem marketing management" (Blankson and Kalafatis, 2004: 5). Positioning adds value to the firm by supporting the differentiation of the organization from its competitors, stimulating more effective strategic planning, directing a successful corporate communication program that clarifies to customers what the organization stands for, and enhancing financial performance (Coffie and Owusu-Frimpong, 2014; Gilbert and Wong, 2003; Fisher, 1991). However, for these benefits to be realized, positioning needs to be successful: firms need to develop and occupy a well-defined position in consumers' minds, which is difficult to develop and maintain due to various market forces and dynamics. Further, internal forces, such as constraints on capital and managerial expertise, also have significant impacts on positioning.

Prior research has uncovered insights into various aspects of positioning strategy. For example while Lovelock and Wirtz (2011: 83) focus on the product in the positioning process and posit that "positioning involves decisions on attributes important to customers" (Chieh-Hua and Wen-Ya, 2010: 7) highlight a different aspect –customers- of that process and Ries and Trout (1972, 2006), positioning is about how a product or service is communicated to the target audience and its ability to represent it. Positioning is explored through the concept of distinctiveness by Andrei et al., (2008: 1106) who define positioning as "the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market".

Taken together, successful positioning supports enhanced performance objectives. First, a well-established position is difficult and costly for competitors to achieve. Second, it requires firms to develop their corporate communication skills (Gursoy et al., 2005). Third, it supports brand loyalty. Fourth, it allows the organization to command higher prices through differentiation (Coffie and Owusu-Frimpong, 2014).Because our study focuses on the establishment of a comprehensive positioning strategy for Islamic Hotels, we use a broad perspective, defining it as an effort to influence consumer perception of a brand or product relative to competing brands or products, to create an image for the product based on its intended audience achieved through the marketing mix (promotion, price, place and product). This perspective includes the four main core components of positioning as product, perceptions, communications, and competition. These components will be used as the basis for the perceptual maps that will be created and discussed in the analysis section of this paper.

3. Positioning of Islamic Hotels

For Islamic hotels, the most obvious choice is to pursue their own path to hospitality as it will be very difficult for them to compete on the same ground as more established competitors within the conventional hospitality industry (Alserhan et al., 2018). Islamic hotels are distinct, and they should emphasize and exploit their distinctiveness, and build business around this core concept of hospitality. The distinctiveness of Islamic hotels generates barriers to entry for traditional hotels to compete with Islamic hotels using the Islamic concept. This conclusion is fact not myth. One only needs to look at Islamic finance as an example where almost all major banks in the world are opening Islamic banking windows or branches. Yet, these windows are not having the same success as banks that were established as Islamic from the beginning. The point that needs to be emphasized here is that doing business as 'Islamic' is unique. While major hotel chains will shy away at this period in the life of Islamic hotels, they will have no option but to engage the Islamic guest segment sooner or later. This is so because, eventually, even though Islamic hotels are targeting a specific type of guests. That segment is growing and that growth will inevitably come at the expense of traditional hotels. Therefore, rather than seeing their share of the Muslim guest segment dwindle they will launch their own Islamic brands or dedicate as Islamic some of their hotels that are most frequented by Muslims. Islamic hotels are also building the image of family friendly hotels i.e. no alcohol, no night clubs, no prostitution etc. Family travellers are a significant segment that could also possibly be lost to Islamic hotels provided that these hotels could manage their image properly and stand by their values (Alserhan et al., 2018). While Islamic hotels could at this stage build their position away from competitors, they will eventually become main stream providers of hospitality services. This natural transformation from niche to direct competition will be gradual and therefore giving Islamic hotels the time to establish themselves as formidable competitors within the hospitality industry.

Broadly speaking, although businesses have the ability to differentiate and position their offerings using a seemingly infinite combination of the various elements of the marketing mix (Coffie and Owusu-Frimpong, 2014) the extent of this ability varies between sectors since what works in a sector doesn't necessarily work in another. This situation is even exacerbated in services since the characteristics of the service makes it almost impossible to standardize and therefore harder to use as a foundation for positioning. Islamic hotels are not only part of the international hospitality industry, but also part of the growing Islamic business which is was worth between 3 and 5 trillion USD.

This sector includes, in addition to hospitality, other services such as Islamic finance, Islamic entertainment, and most recently Islamic airlines, among many other services. Although the fact that Islamic hotels are 'Islamic' could be leveraged as a positioning strategy, it also poses several challenges for Islamic hoteliers.

As a strategy, positioning as 'Islamic' has the potential to fulfil the requirements of effective positioning. First, it becomes difficult for competitors to match since it is based on an entirely different business model within the hospitality industry that competitors cannot readily emulate, or want to emulate in the first place. Second, it is also easy to communicate to customers because such a position means a hotel is Shariah-compliant i.e. no alcohol, no night club, gender-segregated swimming pool, etc. Associating Islamic hotels with these attributes would be similar to Toyota being associated with economy and breakthrough technology, Ferrari with speed and thrill, and Range Rover with luxury. Not only are such attributes are easy to communicate to customers, they also give a clear idea about the hotel's identity and values, an issue that many organizations struggle to achieve. Third, customers can clearly see the difference between such a hotel and a traditional hotel by comparing the attributes of both. Fourth, customers who are specifically looking for an Islamic hotel might be willing or expecting/expected to pay a premium for it. The literature indicates that Islamic hotels are characterized by high customer satisfaction.

Eygu and Gulluce (2017) examine expectations of Turkish conservative concept hotels by Turkish and foreign customers and find that over 90% of customers were satisfied by conservative concept hotels, particularly Turks and retired customers. They also note that while satisfaction is high, conservative concept hotels should continually update their facilities, services, and offerings. This being the case, there is an established model for Islamic hotels to follow successfully. On the other hand, positioning of hotels as 'Islamic' presents several significant challenges. While Islamic hotels face the usual challenges most other new comers face, there are some that are unique to these hotels (Alserhan et al., 2018). However, in this paper we will not be discussing the usual challenges because these are found in numerous resources specializing in the establishment of new businesses, but special attention will be given to those aspects specifically related to Islamic hotels. These unique challenges are related to staffing, stereotyping, Islamophobia, transparency, and facilities. These four challenges are discussed next.

1. Staffing. Finding qualified people who are well-trained in the provision of hotel services that are guided by Islam is a serious problem. The key challenge here is that Islamic work ethics and values, including those related to hospitality, cannot be easily communicated through a crash course or even an extended one. These are acquired through life time exposure to them which limits the pool of applicants to Muslims, especially in front stage positions where guests and staff members meet regularly whether that meeting takes place in reception, room services, catering, sports and entertainment facilities, etc. Other back stage jobs with less direct contact with guests can tap into a much larger pool of applicants since non-Muslims can apply to them. For Muslim guests, catering is the most important aspect, since food and drinks must be Halal. Other aspects that have been linked to satisfaction of Islamic hotel guests are segregated swimming pools and fitness facilities, although important, are not core requirements. Eating and dining takes precedence over swimming and going to the gym. Muslim guests can simply avoid them if they wish to do so. However, the lack of such facilities can undermine the hotel's position as Islamic.

2. Stereotyping. Being an Islamic hotel will directly imply religion (Rehman and Aisha, 2023). Religion is not usually associated with fun and relaxation, something that is expected of hotels. How do Islamic hotels position themselves as Islamic while at the same time be associated with offering a gratifying guest experience is a nontrivial challenge.

3. Islamophobia. This situation arises more so in the case of non-Muslim guests who might have negative preconceptions about Islam as a religion and such preconceptions are projected on Islamic hotels. This is a difficult challenge

to overcome because it requires a change at the level of the society as whole and not a single initiative by a certain hotel. On the other hand, there is a chance that the problem of Islamophobia may not be as detrimental to the success of Islamic hotels as one may think. This is so because people with such believes might avoid all together going to Islamic countries, in addition to a world-wide attitude towards encouraging mutual understanding between different cultures and religions.

4. Transparency. Islamic hotels risk losing out on repeat business from some non-Muslim clients who were unaware that they were staying in an Islamic hotel. Many traditional hotels, especially in the west, are associated with offering alcoholic beverages, and guests would naturally expect to find these in the hotel of their choice. Since many Islamic hotels do not clearly specify in their corporate communications and marketing that they do not serve alcohol, guests desiring such products will be unpleasantly surprised when they discover that they are unavailable. Such a position leads to client disappointment and bad customer experience, which are two situations that all businesses try to avoid (Alserhan et al., 2018).

5. Facilities. The challenge regarding facilities is that the high cost of building and maintaining the quality of segregated faculties, including the corresponding staffing costs. If Islamic hotels opt for shared facilities that provide separate operating hours for men and women, time management and optimizing the use of these facilities to achieve higher customer satisfaction become costly. The fitness facilities and pool are the two most difficult facilities to manage in this regard in terms of cost, optimal use, and time management.

Based on our literature review, we ask three research questions:

RQ1. What are the perceived essential attributes of Islamic hotels?

RQ2. What are the perceived essential attributes are common to both Islamic and Conventional hotels?

RQ3. Do the perceived essential attributes of Conventional hotels differ from Islamic hotels?

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive method to describe customers' perceptions concerning the positioning of hotels, i.e., Islamic hotels and conventional hotels. We used correspondence analysis to develop perceptual maps with attributes related to Islamic and Conventional hotels. Like many multivariate data analysis approaches, correspondence analysis seeks to establish scores that indicate how similar or dissimilar answers from two or more variables are (Beh, 2004). Thus, the correspondence analysis transforms the table with the data into a row set and a column set, which provide the similarity structure of the rows and the columns based on the correspondence data table (Abdi and Béra, 2014). The correspondence analysis as a technique turns a data matrix into a specific type of graphical representation in which the rows and columns are shown as points (Greenacre and Hastie, 1987). Thus, the correspondence analysis plots the data for better visualization.

1. Measurement Constructs

The measurement scale was based on the list of attributes from Stephenson (2014) and Razalli et al., (2015) in addition to the Crescent Rating system. The attributes, which are shown in table 1, are comparable. It is important to note here that although many conventional hotels announce that they are Muslim-friendly and provide Halal food, we do not know if consumers' actually perceive them as Islamic hotels or not. Based on these three resources, the following attributes were included in the survey: Aurat (Privacy and modesty in attire), Halal food, Mahram (Male companion), Ibadat (Worship), Islamic entertainment and decoration, Islamic management, and Islamic event. For a better clarity, first the original Arabic words are given, then the English equivalents in the parentheses are given. Respondents were asked to indicate which attributes relate to which type of hotel. Of course, any given attribute could be specific to one type of the hotels or could apply to both types. A Convenience sampling technique was applied for this study. Two-hundred and seven valid responses were collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included attributes and respondents were asked to indicate if these attributes mostly described one type of the hotels or both hotels (Islamic vs. Conventional). As shown in Table 1, these attributes, as dimensions, were included in the survey: Aurat, Halal food, Mahram, Ibadat, Islamic entertainment and decoration, Islamic management, and Islamic event.

2. Questionnaire and Sample Selection

The face validity of the questionnaire was ensured following a two-stage approach. A panel of three bilingual faculty members who are fluent in both Arabic and English were asked to review the instrument and make suggestions, which were then incorporated in the revised instrument and sent back to the panel for their approval. Afterwards, the questionnaire was administered to hotels guests. The questionnaire included a list of attributes and respondents were asked to indicate which type of hotels these attributes mostly belong. Respondent had the option select both types of hotels if they deemed certain attributes applied to both types. Using a convenience sampling technique, 207 valid responses were collected through a structured questionnaire.

3. Data Collection

An online questionnaire was designed to collect data from Islamic hotel guests in Jordan. The questionnaire included the hotel service attributes representing either, or both Islamic and conventional hotels. It also included certain attributes that mostly characterize Islamic hotels such as being alcohol-free, the existence of prayer rooms, gender separation, Halal catering, etc. While it might be wrongly assumed that conventional hotels would not provide such features, it is important to debunk such a myth. Almost all international conventional hotels in Muslim countries are progressively moving closer towards the Islamic model of hospitality. For example, the Sheraton in Bahrain - a conventional hotel- provides a prayer mat with a compass that shows the direction of Mecca while the Royal Plaza on Scotts in Singapore declares that it has many Muslim-friendly amenities: all rooms come with Quran and Qiblah direction signs, prayer times and prayer mats are available upon request, food at buffet restaurant, Carousel and Artisan Cupcakes by Gourmet Carousel are prepared in Halal-certified

kitchens, and there is also a prayer room within the hotel. The PNB Darby Park Executive Suites is another example of such a trend. It is a four-star hotel in Malaysia that caters to Muslim guests, albeit quietly, which sometimes inconveniences some of its guests. For example, a review at Booking.com by a guest reads "No biggie - No wine glasses in room".

Table 1. Constructs items

Constructs	Code	Items
Aurat (Privacy and modesty in attire)	AU1	AU1. Muslim women staff shall dress fully complying with Aurat rules.
	AU2	Non-Muslim women staff shall wear decent clothing according to Islamic-style complete with headscarves.
	AU3	Muslim women hotel guests shall wear headscarves and decent clothing.
	AU4	.Non-Muslim hotel guests shall wear decent clothing without the need for head covering for the women.
	AU5	The hotel shall provide separate recreational facilities or different timings for men and women use.
Halal food	HF1	Alcoholic beverages cannot be consumed anywhere in the hotel premise including guest rooms.
	HF2	Only halal food can be served in the hotel premise.
	HF3	All kitchen workers for all the restaurants and cafes within the Islamic Hotel premise shall be Muslim
Mahram (Male Companion)	MA1	Only couples with Mahram relationship can be allowed to check in to the same room
	MA2	The hotel shall allocate a dedicated floor for female guests to check in without a male guest as their Mahram
Ibadat (Worship)	IB1	The hotel shall provide a dedicated place or preferably a mosque for congregational prayer and Islamic teaching. Call for prayer shall be clearly broadcast to the rest of the hotel and congregational prayer must be established for the five compulsory daily prayers.
	IB2	All guest rooms shall be equipped with means that facilitate Muslim guests to comfortably pray. Prayer mat, holy Quran, and Qiblat signs, the three basic facilities, are compulsory in all rooms.
	IB3	The bathroom as well as the bed is not positioned in the direction of the Kiblah.
	IB4	A bidet shall be provided for all bathrooms in guest rooms.
Islamic Entertainment & Decoration	IED1	The hotel shall not allow entertainment centres offering any form of service that contains immoral elements.
	IED2	For room entertainment, only conservative and Islamic television channels can be provided by the hotel.
	IED3	Hotel decoration using statues or images of living objects should be avoided.
Islamic Management	IM1	The majority of the hotel staff should be Muslim, particularly the management.
	IM2	The whole aspects of the hotel management shall be based on the principles and models of Islamic management especially the financial aspects.
	IM3	The hotel must ensure that donation and zakat responsibilities are paid according to the annually earned profit
Islamic Events	IE1	The hotel must ensure that all events held within the premises are carried out according to the Islamic way or shariah
	IE2	The hotel should regularly organise events related to Islamic teaching and knowledge.

RESULTS

We conduct correspondence analysis using SPSS statistical software in order to generate tables and two-dimensional graphs. These tables and graphs show hotels and associated attributes (Aurat, Halal food, Mahram, Ibadat, Islamic entertainment and decoration, Islamic management, and Islamic event) that were plotted representing customer's perception of Islamic and conventional hotels. Table 2 and Figure 2 show the frequency of responses related to consumer perceptions regarding the attributes that Islamic and conventional hotels have.

In order to support the correspondence analysis, a chi-square test was used to examine the significance of the association between hotels and attributes (Greenacre, 2017). The results shown in Table 3, revealed a significant association between attributes dimensions and hotels ($\chi2$, 676.453; Df, 42; P < 0.001) (Table 3). Table 3 shows the summary of inertia value for each dimension, as well as the total inertia value, which is 0.136. As it can be seen from Table 3, the inertia value for dimension 1 is 0.131 Thus, dimension 1 accounts for 13.1% of 13.6% of the total variance that explains the model. Dimension 2 accounts for 0.04% of the total variance. Therefore, our model explains only 13.6% of the variance in the correspondence table. In addition, the proportion of inertia column shows that dimension 1 accounted for 97% of total inertia (13.6%), whereas dimension 2 accounted for 0.30% of the total inertia (13.6%). Finally, the standard deviation column shows the standard deviation of the singular values, which are 0.014 and 0.016 while the correlation between dimensions is shown on the correlation column.

Table 2. Correspondence frequency of respondents

Items	Islamic	Conventional	Both	Active margin
AU1	189	10	16	215
AU2	187	9	18	214
AU3	164	20	41	225
AU4	141	32	64	237
AU5	120	35	85	240
HF1	168	12	37	217
HF2	132	30	73	235
HF3	190	7	15	212
MA1	144	30	61	235
MA2	157	22	48	227
IB1	180	15	25	220
IB2	181	13	24	218
IB3	173	25	32	230
IB4	81	65	124	270
IED1	145	23	85	253
IED2	179	15	26	220
IED3	162	23	43	228
IM1	192	13	13	218
IM2	190	14	15	219
IM3	191	14	14	219
IE1	191	14	14	219
IE2	192	13	13	218
Active margin	3649	454	886	4989

Table 4 displays how each row contributes to the dimensions (of point to inertia of dimension), and how each dimension (of dimension to inertia of point) contributes to the rows (Abdi and Valentin, 2007). Whereas the mass represents the proportion of rows to the total (4989). Table 5 displays how each column contributes to the dimensions (of point to inertia of dimension), and how each dimension (of dimension to inertia of point) contributes to the columns. Whereas the mass represents the proportion of rows to the total (4989). Moreover, the inertia column reveals the amount of variance that each column contributes to the total inertia value (rows (Abdi and Valentin, 2007; Clausen, 1998). The contribution of point to inertia of dimension columns denotes the role that each column plays in each dimension.

Figure 2. Correspondence frequency of respondents

Table 3. Summary of Inertia

Summary									
Dimension	Singular Value	Inertia	Chi Square	Sig.	Proportion of Inertia		Confidence Singular Value		
					Accounted for	Cumulative	Standard Deviation	Correlation	
								2	
1	0.363	0.131			0.970	0.970	0.014	-0.023	
2	0.064	0.004			0.030	1.000	0.016		
Total		0.136	676.453	.000ᵃ	1.000	1.000			
a. 42 degrees of freedom	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Table 4. Overview of row points

Overview Row Points[a]									
Hotels	Mass			Inertia	Contribution				
				I	of point to inertia of dimension		of dimension to inertia of point		
					1	2	1	2	Total
Islamic	0.731	-0.363	0.017	0.035	0.265	0.003	1.000	0.000	1.000
Conventional	0.091	0.812	-0.723	0.025	0.165	0.744	0.877	0.123	1.000
Both	0.178	1.078	0.302	0.076	0.569	0.253	0.986	0.014	1.000
Active Total	1.000			0.136	1.000	1.000			
a. Symmetrical normalization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 5. Overview of column points

Overview Column Points[a]									
Attributes	Mass			Inertia	Contribution				
					Of point to inertia of dimension		Of dimension to inertia of point		
					1	2	1	2	Total
AU1	0.043	-0.554	0.054	0.005	0.036	0.002	0.998	0.002	1.000
AU2	0.043	-0.530	0.149	0.004	0.033	0.015	0.986	0.014	1.000
AU3	0.045	0.012	0.045	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.272	0.728	1.000
AU4	0.048	0.510	-0.097	0.005	0.034	0.007	0.994	0.006	1.000
AU5	0.048	0.879	0.154	0.014	0.103	0.018	0.995	0.005	1.000
HF1	0.043	-0.144	0.381	0.001	0.002	0.099	0.446	0.554	1.000
HF2	0.047	0.647	0.170	0.007	0.054	0.021	0.988	0.012	1.000
HF3	0.042	-0.612	0.194	0.006	0.044	0.025	0.983	0.017	1.000
MA1	0.047	0.444	-0.058	0.003	0.026	0.002	0.997	0.003	1.000
MA2	0.046	0.154	0.083	0.000	0.003	0.005	0.951	0.049	1.000
IB1	0.044	-0.328	-0.021	0.002	0.013	0.000	0.999	0.001	1.000
IB2	0.044	-0.370	0.062	0.002	0.016	0.003	0.995	0.005	1.000
IB3	0.046	-0.096	-0.376	0.001	0.001	0.102	0.268	0.732	1.000
IB4	0.054	1.604	-0.475	0.051	0.384	0.191	0.985	0.015	1.000
IED1	0.051	0.629	0.708	0.009	0.055	0.397	0.818	0.182	1.000
IED2	0.044	-0.310	-0.001	0.002	0.012	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000
IED3	0.046	0.076	-0.065	0.000	0.001	0.003	0.885	0.115	1.000
IM1	0.044	-0.570	-0.163	0.005	0.039	0.018	0.986	0.014	1.000
IM2	0.044	-0.521	-0.174	0.004	0.033	0.021	0.981	0.019	1.000
IM3	0.044	-0.539	-0.194	0.005	0.035	0.026	0.978	0.022	1.000
IE1	0.044	-0.539	-0.194	0.005	0.035	0.026	0.978	0.022	1.000
IE2	0.044	-0.570	-0.163	0.005	0.039	0.018	0.986	0.014	1.000
Active Total	1.000			0.136	1.000	1.000			
a. Symmetrical normalization									

The following Figure 3 shows the score for each category of Attributes on dimension number 1. On the other hand, Figure 4 shows the score for each category of Attributes on dimension number 2.

The results from Figure 5 denote that most of attributes relate to Islamic hotels and address our first research question. Respondents perceive that essential attributes of Islamic hotels include the following: AU1, AU2, AU3, IB1, IB2, IB3, M2, HF1, HF3, IED2, IM1, IM2, IE1, and IE2. These factors correspond to policies supporting modesty in attire of hotel staff and guests, required facilities and items for prayer, a floor with check-in facilities for female guests, a prohibition on alcohol, an exclusively Muslim food services staff, conservative in-room entertainment, Muslim-majority staff and management and Islamic management practices, on-site Islamic educational programming, and sharia-compliant hotel events.
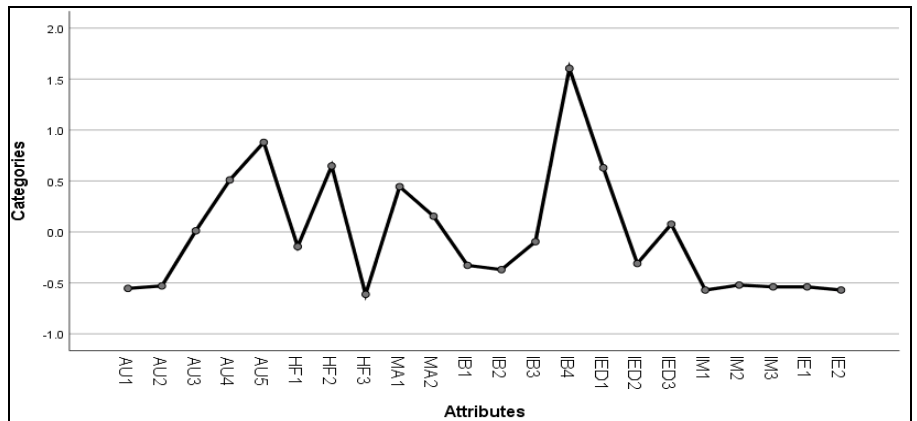
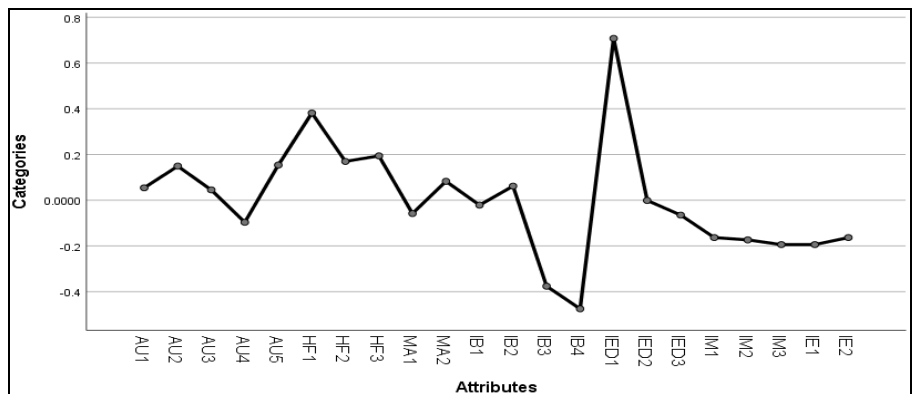Figure 3. Attributes score for dimension number 1 (Symmetrical normalization)

Figure 4. Attributes score for dimension number 2 (Symmetrical normalization)
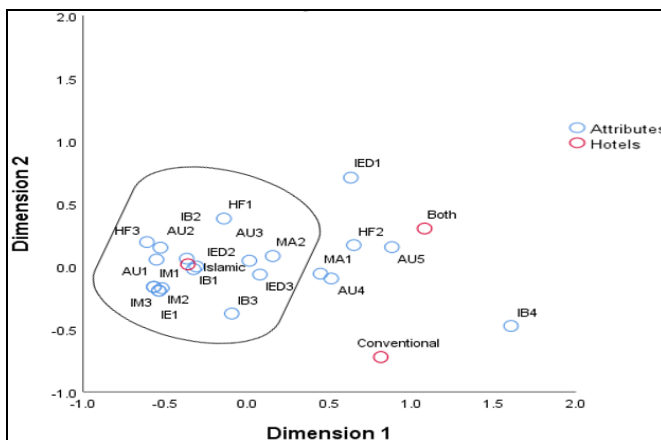

Figure 5. Customers' Perception of attributes items regarding Islamic hotels

Figure 6. Customers' Perception of attributes items regarding both Islamic and conventional hotels

Note: Aurat (AU1, AU2, AU3, AU4, AU5), Halal food (HF1, HF2, HF3), Mahram (MA1, MA2), Ibadat (IB1, IB2, IB3, IB4), Islamic Entertainment & Decoration (IED1, IED2, IED3), Islamic Management (IM1, IM2, IM3, Islamic Events (IE1, IE2)
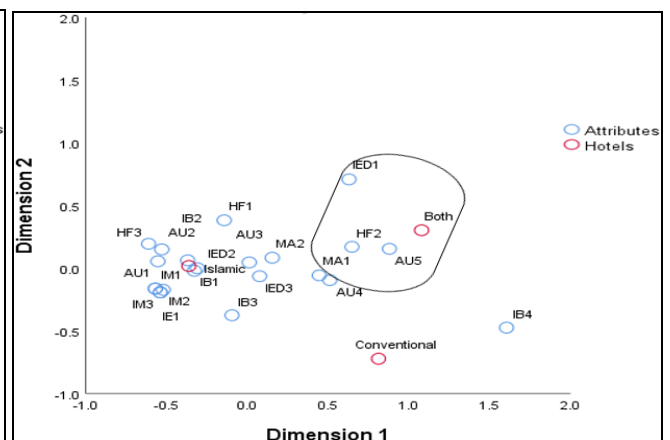
The results from Figure 6 address research question 2 and reveal that customers believe that perceived attributes of both Islamic and Conventional hotels are the following IED1, HF2, MA1 and AU5. These attributes include: the prohibition of immoral entertainment activities on the hotel grounds, halal only food items, gender-segregated sports facilities, and prohibition of unmarried couples staying together in the same room. Figure 7 addresses our third research question and indicates that items AU4 and IB4 were perceived by the customers to be attributes only of conventional hotels, involving non-Muslim guests dressed not wearing headscarves and bidets provided in guest bathrooms. Clearly, the expectations of conventional hotels differ substantially from those of Islamic hotels.
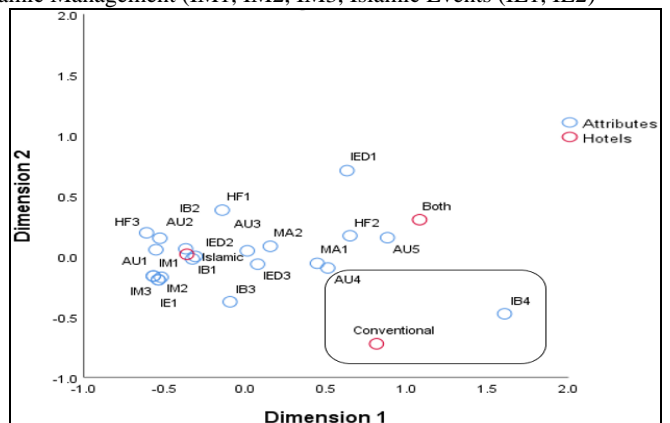

Figure 7. Customers' Perception of attributes items regarding Conventional hotels

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Our goal was to create perceptual maps showing the comparative positioning of Islamic and conventional hotels as viewed by guests. These maps revealed the perceptual space Islamic hotels occupied relative to their competitors. Therefore the maps can be used as strategic planning tool since they can help Islamic hotels, and conventional hotels as well, decide if the current position is actually reflecting their intended offerings and whether the position should be maintained or changed. Moreover, the perceptual maps reveal the critical differentiating factors which set apart these two types of competing hotel business models.

a. Practical Implications

For a hotel seeking to be perceived as Islamic, a key consideration will be its overall compliance with the Shariah requirements pertinent to hotels. This position in turn will impact everything else the hotel does. Hotels, like other businesses, need to create a unique positioning advantage. One-dimensional strategy position maybe hard to find. At the same time a strategic position that works for one firm may not work for another. Clearly one-position-fits-all does not work and different positioning options may be required. Islamic hotels should evaluate the importance of the various attributes for the development of their positioning strategy. Most likely, not all Islamic hotels need all attributes. Depending on their segment, some of the more expensive attributes could be outsourced, or removed all together if not in demand.

For example, a dedicated floor for female guest check-in and gender-segregated exercise facilities may be prohibitively expensive to achieve; however, women-only hours for swimming pools and exercise rooms may be achievable for many hotels. Certainly, spa facilities are already gender-segregated in many hotels, both conventional and Islamic. The provision of prayer rugs and bidets in guest rooms are not standard in some Western countries; however, hotels (both Islamic and conventional) seeking to appeal to Muslim guests could provide these amenities, as well as a dedicated prayer space, for customers in some rooms at relatively low cost. Other attributes of Islamic hotels may be difficult to accommodate even in Muslim majority countries based on business laws; for example, a perceived attribute of Islamic hotels is Muslim-only food preparations staff, which could run afoul of anti-discrimination regulations. Finally, the hotel industry itself can promote Islamic values in terms of common global values. Islamic management practices contain universal values of equity and justice, and these should be promoted under the general banner of sustainability. Further, a global alliance of Islamic hotels could be formed, with a network extending to "Islamic adjacent" structures such as wellness resorts and spas where halal dining options are offered, family privacy is afforded through segregated pools, gyms, and spas, and alcohol is not sold on the premises. For instance, The Retreat Palm Dubai by Sofitel is a dry resort which offers halal dining, segregated gender gyms and spas, and extensive juice bars. While it does not explicitly target Muslims, it may be the case that the features that make it amenable for holistic health reasons would attract Muslim guests as well, if they were aware of the hotel features. Forming alliances and networks will help Islamic hotels in achieving and reinforcing their positioning advantage.

An example that could be followed is One World, which is an Airline alliance based in New York City. Such an alliance will greatly expand the reach of these hotels through providing them with the much needed access to international travellers.

b. Limitations and future research

This study is the first of its type within the Islamic hospitality industry. It is intended as an eye-opener, and to instigate more in depth research. While positioning studies are abundant in other sectors, there is a clear lack of them in all areas of Islamic business, including hospitality. Therefore, despite of the obvious limitations, which include a relatively small sample size, nonprobability sampling, being limited to hotels in one country only – Jordan, the study remains a significant step forward in the positioning area. Future research could address one or more of the limitations of this study. In particular, surveying guests form several locations and increasing the sample size. However, getting a probability sample could prove to be more problematic due to the nature of the hospitality business.

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