

# Shariah Compliance Space Planning for Hotel Room Design

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**Abstract**—This paper illustrates the background of various concepts, approaches, terminologies used to describe the basic framework of an Islamic Hotel Room design. This paper reviews the theoretical views in establishing a suitable and optimum environment for Muslim as well as non-Muslim guests in hotel rooms while according to shariah. It involves a few research methodologies that requires the researcher to study on a few characteristics needed to create more efficient rooms in terms of social interaction, economic growth and other tolerable elements. This paper intends on revealing the elements that are vital and may contribute for hotels in achieving a more conclusive research on space planning for hotel rooms focusing on the shariah and Muslim guests. Malaysia is an Islamic country and has billion of tourists coming over for business and recreational purposes. Therefore, having a righteous environment that best suit this target user is important in terms of generating the economy as well as providing a better understanding to the community on the benefits of applying these qualities in a conventional resort design.

**Keywords**—Design, Islam, room, shariah compliant hotel.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE Shariah compliant hotels are one of the newest editions in the conceptual hotel market trend nowadays. Muslims cover 29% of the world's population, most living in the Middle East [1]. This means that there are around 2 billion potential clients that would benefit from sharia compliant hotels. It was also discussed in article [2], that there has been a significant increase in the demand of a hotel with more Islamic friendly facilities and the trend of Islamic hotels is actively available due to the availability of shariah financed investment funds because 10% of the source for tourism is funded by Muslims from middle east.

The main attraction of hotels is the bedroom; hence it is important to note that the improvement of hotel rooms can possibly impact the sales. Muslims have a more conservative protocols and religious requirements that may be a challenge to conduct in a conventional hotel design. Shariah compliant hotels is defined as a hotel that does not only limit themselves to the dry hotel concept but also practices halal financial

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planning and considers the safety, wellbeing and benefits of mankind regardless of race, faith or culture [3]. There are however, challenges about shariah compliant hotels in this industry. Reference [4] has stated that shariah compliant hotels are ill defined due to lack of synchronization in its application and understanding. It was also projected that the hotels should have a more detailed manual and makes many more dedicated researches regarding the topic to fully educate the public on the matter. The same argument was presented by [5] in his research when he discussed about shariah hotels guidelines that are not synchronized and clear as there are a few ambiguous gaps that are prominent in his scope of study. Further research can possibly fill in the lack of information needed to make a more comprehensive outcome of what a shariah compliance hotel should represent. In the existing shariah compliant hotel requirements, there are no specific guidelines made for room design.

There are a few shariah compliant elements that should be considered when designing a hotel room that are often overlooked that may lead to discomfort of Muslim users in conventional design. According to [6] the demands for Islamic friendly hotels are high and a lot of hotels and investors are improving their services to provide better service to the guests. Apart from that both Islamic concept of living and indoor environment quality promotes the same values and can benefit a lot of people and potential economy boosters into creating a more environmentally friendly development in the future.

## II. OBJECTIVES

In order to understand Shariah Compliant Hotels better, it needs to be better defined and synchronized. Therefore, this paper intends to analyze the orientation and prayer mat layouts that is most essential in shariah complaint hotel room design. This research also intends to identify the shariah compliant elements contributing in hotel room design. Guestrooms in hotel are where the main business of a hotel is and by tapping into a niche market and provide accommodations targeted for Muslims. Existing hotels that are claimed to be Shariah Compliant can also be improved in their effectiveness with more strategic recommendations. The implementation of Shariah Compliant Hotels in hotel rooms could also allow critical asses of the fundamentals needed to provide a more conducive space planning option in hotel rooms.

### III. SHARIAH COMPLIANT HOTELS

In the ever evolving hotel market, there are trends that are emerging in the development. Hotel teams have noticed the potentials in pursuing these business opportunities that can exclusively cater to different target users with their preference. By providing options to the guests, these hotels can accommodate the guests with the proper facilities needed.

Shariah Compliant hotels are hotels where the services offered and financial transactions are based on Shariah principles and it is not only limited to serving halal food and

beverages but all parameters that have been designed for health, safety, environment, and the benefits of all mankind, regardless of race, faith or cultures [7]. Implementation of the Shariah Compliant concept is not to discourage people of other religion to experience the service of the hotel, but to rather support and accommodate Muslims with the needed facilities and not jeopardize the qualities of a conventional hotel to guests that may not believe in the same faith.

Shariah Compliant Hotels like any other hotels falls under categories [8].

TABLE I  
TYPES OF SHARIAH COMPLAINT HOTELS

Types of Hotel	Definition
Dry hotels	These hotels do not serve alcohol on their outlets but operates like a conventional hotel.
Partially Shariah Compliant Hotel	Hotels that provide a few more Islamic services such as Halal food, prayer rooms, Quran and prayer rugs in each room, and separate facilities for men and women.
Fully Shariah Compliant Hotel	Hotels that have Shariah governing all of its operations from its design, interiors to the hotel's accounts.

The Shariah compliant hotels are one of the newest editions in the conceptual hotel market trend nowadays. Muslims have a more conservative protocols and religious requirements that may be a challenge to conduct in a conventional hotel design. A fully Shariah Compliant Hotel will allow a smooth functional space needed to perform their religious routines that are vital in their faith. Other than convenience, this concept can also ensure privacy to be better preserved and spaces can be used up to its maximum potential in a positive manner throughout the whole building especially the rooms.

### IV. SHARIAH COMPLIANT HOTEL ROOM

Bedrooms are important in any types or forms of shelter including hotels. A research [9] states that the average person will spend around 6 to 8 hours in the bedroom to rest and sleep. As mentioned earlier in the research, the hotel business revolves around the availability of rooms that can cater to the hotel guests because about at least 29% of a person's day will be spent in the hotel room. The ideal Islamic approach of bedrooms as explained by [10] is Muslim houses must facilitate the privacy protection among the family members inside the house's realm. As a minimum requirement, every Muslim house should have a room for parents, another room for female children, and yet another room for male children. This is because there are also awrah restrictions between family members that should be protected.

Another factor to be considered on Islamic bedrooms is the fact that the qiblat direction affects heavily on the sleeping direction and placement of furniture. Reference [9] argues that in Malaysia the laws of rooms is to be at least 6.5 m<sup>2</sup> to enable a bed, storage, ample amount of movement and also sufficient space to perform prayer. Hotels' space requirement differs according to the star rating. According to Sistem Perlesenan Industri Pelancongan [11], the total space of a room increases perpendicular to the ratings.

Four and Five star hotel room requirements gave larger space as they need the luxury of space needed for an extra bed upon guests' request, therefore, the limitations of space do not

apply to these categories of rooms. The rooms of other ratings are also more than the required of what [9] mentioned in her research by at least 1.5 m<sup>2</sup>. Any problems that may occur regarding the discomfort in terms of space in hotel rooms according to shariah can be solved in many ways. One of which is space planning.

TABLE II  
STAR RATING AND ROOM SIZES

Star Rating	Single (m <sup>2</sup> )	Double (m <sup>2</sup> )
One-star	8	10
Two-star	8	10
Three-star	10	12
Four-star	12	14
Five-star	13	16

Space planning is also a practice that is applied by Muslims in Islamic Architecture. As discussed in [12] the space allocation for Islamic housing in his research stating that justice is achieved when placing spaces and everything related to it in its rightful place, doing it otherwise is considered as maltreatment. The whole concept of adapting a shariah compliant space planning is to ensure that none of the spaces and activities that require a significant amount of space is ignored, not letting any crucial elements to be maltreated. Researches in [10] also states that A Muslim house is expected to take into account the climate, topography, wind direction and the movement of the sun, so that it is turned as much as possible into an effective self-heating, cooling, ventilation and illuminating mechanism. From this opinion, it can be summed up that the placement and order of spaces play an important role in maintaining the good balance of a home so that it can take advantage of its surrounding factors. The application of this concept can benefit the building occupants in terms of health, safety and avoiding wastage.

### V. ANALYSIS

In the rise of shariah compliant hotels in Malaysia, a few responsible bodies were elected to implement certain criteria

in order to ensure that the title awarded meet the needs of a shariah compliant hotel. The organizations came up with guidelines and considering rooms are an important aspect of the business, some shariah compliant guidelines were set up. According to [www.hotelsnow.com](http://www.hotelsnow.com), there are three main characteristics taken into consideration to determine the level of shariah compliance which are operations, design & interiors and financial. Under design & interiors category, there are seven sub categories that are needed to be fulfilled for a hotel to be able to be considered as shariah compliant. There are only three requirements that are dedicated to hotel rooms which are:

- Markers in the rooms indicating the direction of Mecca
- Bidets and toilets should not face the direction of Mecca
- Art in the hotel should not depict the human form

The placement of the toilets is in the requirement of planning out a complete shariah compliant hotel room. Some of the considerations that needed to be paid attention to are the positioning of toilet to the adjacent room and how it compliments to the room right next to it. It was in [13] discussed that there are three generic plan arrangements.

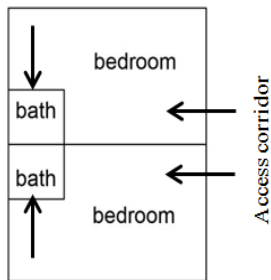


Fig. 1 Bathrooms on external walls

Fig. 1 shows a bathroom orientation in which the bathrooms are positioned to the external wall. This type of room planning allows the bathrooms to have optimum ventilation due to having direct connection to the outside. The drawbacks of this however, is that inspection can only be done by having workers to enter the room which may not be the most convenient way when guests are in the room. To solve this issue, there are also a few other types of room types.

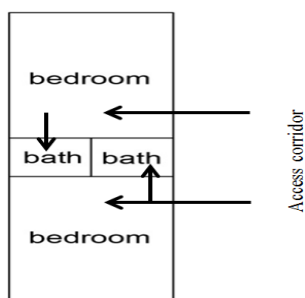


Fig. 2 Bathrooms between bedrooms

Bathrooms that are located in between two hotel guest rooms are considered as a half solved solution because only

one of the two bathrooms get the proper ventilation needed. Another problem that suffices is also the large usage of external wall space. Some see it as a factor that may lead to losses in making more rooms.

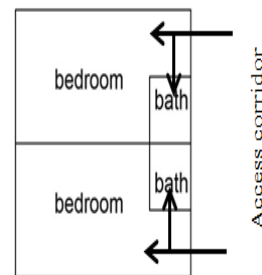


Fig. 3 Internal bathrooms

The last type of generic bathroom arrangements is internal bathroom in which the bathroom takes up the space of the bedroom as shown in Fig. 3. This configuration can take advantage of the bathroom placement to create a lobby as an obstruction from directly seeing the main bedroom upon entering. There will be the need of artificial lighting and ventilation but the external wall is used up to its potential. Arrangement of this kind will allow a more synchronized layout for the rooms. It is also the most common layout for hotel rooms.

There are benefits and drawbacks in each and every typical layout. It is vital in maintaining the practicality of the rooms and connecting toilets to ensure that the rooms served its purposes and for it to be the comfortable for the hotel guests. Apart from the bathroom layouts, there are also other factors that may contribute to better planning of a shariah compliant hotel rooms. One of the components mentioned in the list of categories listed is indication of Mecca direction.

Although the markers in the rooms indicating the direction of Mecca is provided, having an ample amount of space for praying is not included as one of the requirements. Praying five times a day is one of the most important routines of a Muslim in an everyday lifestyle; therefore, having the space for it to be able to practice it at ease is the utmost priority. A sajadah (prayer mat) is approximately 1100 mm in length and 700 in width. In a congregational prayer with two people, the Imam leading the prayer will pray at the front while the ma'mum will pray at the right side of the Imam, slightly to the back. However, in a two person congregational prayer, the imam and ma'mum can be positioned side by side as long as the ma'mum is not in front of the imam [14]. Positioning of the prayer mats are explained in Fig. 4.

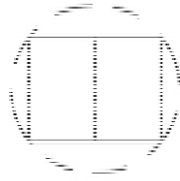


Fig. 4 Sajadah position in a two person congregational prayer (one sajadah is 1100 mm x 700 mm)

The circle is the indication of the sajadah to measure the flexibility of having different qiblat possibility. The minimum space allowance for a double occupancy room in 3 star hotels is 12 m<sup>2</sup>. Requirements of furnishings needed in the room aside from beds are:

1. Curtains
2. Night table
3. Writing table
4. 1 chair
5. 1 armchair
6. Cupboard inclusive of shelves, drawers and hangers
7. Mirror
8. Waste basket
9. Recycling bins (optional)

From the list, it was determined that the furniture that take up the most space will be night table, chair, armchair and of course the bed.

A few layout samples were made with different furniture configurations with the desired furniture within a 12m<sup>2</sup> space.

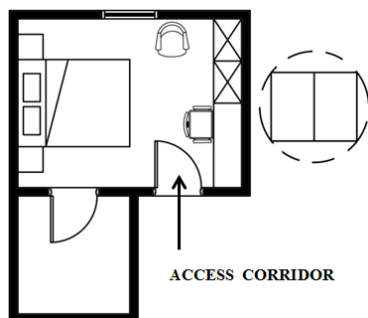


Fig. 5 Room 1a (3000 mm x 4000 mm)

As seen in Fig. 5, the sajadah arrangement cannot fit into the available floor space in the room. Therefore, it is not possible for two people to perform their prayer at the same time. The maximum allowance of prayer space is only valid for one person to perform their prayer provided the entrance door is closed and the qiblat must be straight vertically. Even for a single praying area, the room lacks flexibility. Due to the positioning of Mecca that varies in different buildings, the layout can affect the possibility of conducting a prayer greatly. The theory was then again tested with the same size of bedroom but different furniture orientation as shown in Fig. 6.

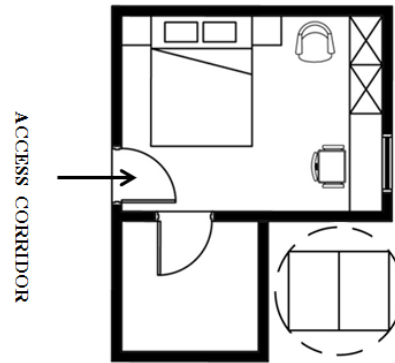


Fig. 6 Room 1b (3000 mm x 4000 mm)

Rearranging the furniture in a different way still failed to allow a congregational prayer for two people. It may be possible for two people to pray at the same time in different spaces with slight adjustments with the movable furniture. To further analyze the layout within the given minimum boundary, a different room dimension was applied with the exact same furniture.

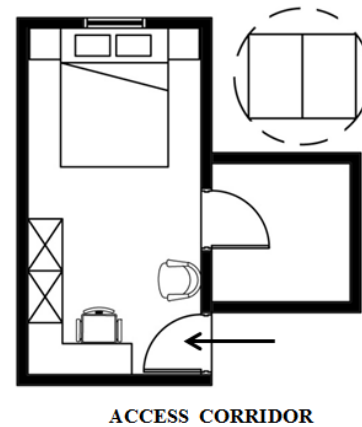


Fig. 7 Room 2a (2500 mm x 5000 mm)

The total space area of the room as shown in Fig. 4 is slightly above the minimum requirement, 12.5 m<sup>2</sup>. Even with the slight increment, the room can only accommodate a two-person congregational prayer with the door closed provided that the direction of Mecca is straight. The sleeping area of the room may appear a little restricted due to the fact that there is not much space on the width of the room, however, these are the sacrifices needed when planning a layout within the minimum boundary.

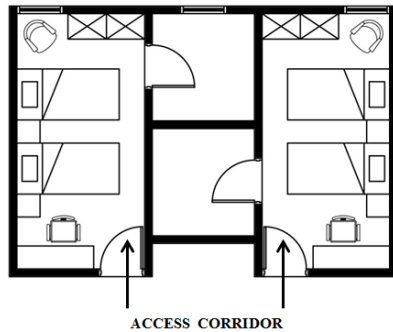


Fig. 8 Room 2b (2500 mm x 5000 mm)

As shown in Fig. 8, the room is mirrored in bathrooms between bedrooms layout. The same problem occurs due to the fact that the room cannot accommodate even for one person to perform prayer. A minimum of 12 m<sup>2</sup> of space for a double occupancy hotel room does not allow it to be considered as shariah compliant as it lacks flexibility for the guests to carry out one of their religious obligation and still maintain the comfort level of conventional hotels.

#### VI.FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main issue that is to be discussed is for a double occupancy room in which two people are going to stay in the bedroom. A room which can accommodate two people, the double room, should have the flexibility to accommodate two people in a congregational prayer or at least for both of them to be able to pray simultaneously. Space needed to accommodate prayer for one person is significantly less in comparison to a double occupancy room.

The research reported only discussed the space allowance of a shariah compliant space planning for hotel room. Shariah compliant hotels are a growing trend especially now Islamic tourism is a niche market and is rapidly evolving. Although the support for this concept is positive, it is a newly developed idea of a lifestyle that has been practiced in a long time. There are bound to be loopholes in the research and different opinions will arise that may disagree with one another.

It is not realistic to have a minimum requirement of 12m<sup>2</sup> for a guestroom in a hotel especially for shariah compliant hotels. The possibility of having sufficient space for a two person congregational prayer is possible; however, the flexibility of having different qiblat orientation is restricted in a room of that size. According to United Nations World Tourism Organization, under the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism - Article 1, "The understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism; stakeholders in tourism development and tourists themselves should observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples, including those of minorities and indigenous peoples and to recognize their worth;" [15]. Therefore, having a space that is comfortable for a Muslim to practice their daily routines is a

right and should be considered especially in a Shariah Compliant Hotel.

One solution that can improve the flexibility of the room is by increasing the minimum space requirement by 3m<sup>2</sup>. Having a room that is 15 m<sup>2</sup> will allow better flow and improve the practicality tremendously.

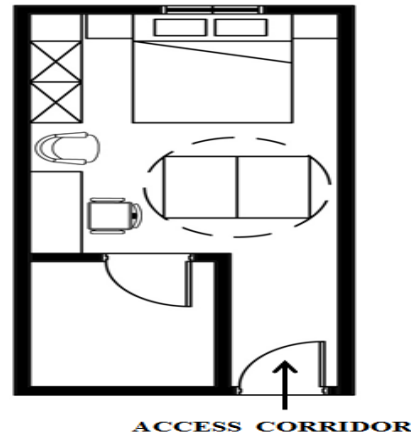


Fig. 9 Proposal A (3000 mm x 5000 mm excluding bathroom)

Proposal A in Fig. 9 shows the flexibility of space that can only happen by increasing the size of the room. Regardless of the qiblat direction, there is still sufficient amount of space available for the use of Muslim guests. Having the flexibility of space will also allow the furniture configuration mainly the bed to follow the Sunnah way of sleeping which is to face the direction of Makkah when they are sleeping on the right side.

Arguments were made on the facing of toilet in the direction of qibla is further justified in Spahic [10] that the theory only applies in open spaces where there are no solid walls or barriers between the toilet and the praying area. With the presence of any sort of fixed partitions, there should be no problem regarding the qibla direction and position of toilets which is why the main issue is focused on the planning of the actual room.

There are many solutions to the problem of the existing hotel rooms that claims to be shariah complaint. For instance, ante room. Reference [16] defines ante room as a small room that is connected to a larger room and used as a place for people to wait before going into the larger room. If this concept is applied to the rooms the privacy and awrah of the guests would be better preserved as there will be less contact between the guests and workers, thus giving them more control over the flow of people in and out of the room. The implementation of the ante room is not a foreign concept among the western community, therefore adapting the culture would also make people with different faiths comfortable. There is not much difference in conventional hotel rooms to shariah compliant hotel rooms. A shariah complaint hotel rooms would still function like any other room would but will consider more functional for Muslim guests.

A better layout would require more space as it includes an ante room and by having the bathrooms in between the

bedrooms, it allows a bigger space between the entrances of the two neighboring rooms. A larger distance may increase the privacy between the guests as it makes the rooms more private. Fig. 10 shows the option of having a larger room to accommodate the religious element in terms of prayers and also the privacy element due to having a separate area for guests and staffs to attend to the guests without interrupting the main area of the room.

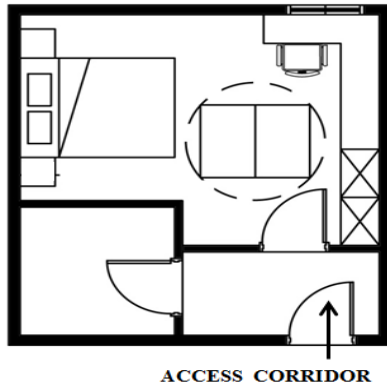


Fig. 10 Proposal B (4600 mm x 3600 mm excluding bathroom with 1300 mm x 2000 mm ante room)

Layout for proposal B is  $1\text{m}^2$  bigger than Proposal A as its floor space totals up to  $16\text{m}^2$ . It also has more space at the external wall therefore; it can get more natural lighting. However, Proposal B has a drawback in which artificial ventilation is needed because it is not located at the external wall of the building. Artificial ventilation is not the most ideal kind of ventilation but it is the most common layout in conventional hotel as it is a more economical route in comparison to Proposal C as shown in Fig. 11.

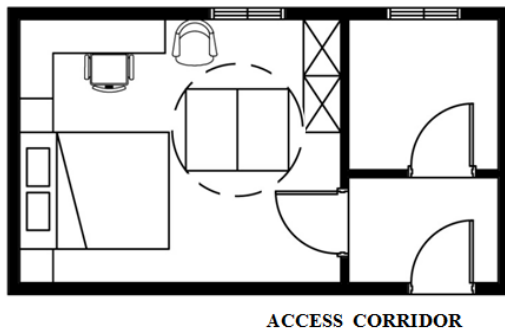


Fig. 11 Proposal C (5000 mm x 4000 mm excluding bathroom with 1400 mm x 2000 mm ante room)

Fig. 11 explains an ideal room but it requires a bigger floor space and takes up more of the external wall. The bathroom is facing the external wall which will allow the space to have better natural ventilation apart from having more space for natural lighting. Apart from that, the most important aspect of the room is the floor space of the main bedroom that can accommodate the need of a double occupancy bedroom with

comfortable flexibility to perform their daily routines especially for Muslims.

Within the space of  $15\text{m}^2$ , an ante room can also be considered when planning a shariah compliant hotel room. An ante room can be used for staffs to accommodate the guests without entering the private areas of the room. It can allow better control of privacy while having the flexibility for the guests to carry out their daily routines. Furthermore, awrah between guests can also be better preserved with the implementation of ante room. For instance, females who stay in the same room still have awrah requirement that they have to follow according to shariah, therefore, the ante room acts as a barrier that ensures the comfort of the guests while still following shariah. Furthermore, should there be any maintenance needed in the bathroom, the workers can access the space without interrupting the guests. Since flexibility is an important aspect in increasing the practicality of a room, ante room provides the flexibility needed as it can serve for different functions to the guests' preference while still having ample space in the main sleeping area for praying purposes.

Planning the interior space of a hotel room may increase the standards and have a lot of positive benefits for both guests and hotel team. By increasing the volume of the room, the management may better accommodate the guests with better ventilation and air flow around the room. Guests may feel calmer and less claustrophobic in comparison to a cramped room. It will also increase the space needed to properly keep the room in mint condition. In a finding [9] it was mentioned that a room should be a good size in which will help in cleanliness and maintenance of the room. One of the suggested solutions is by increasing the room size to at least  $15\text{m}^2$ , which may contribute to better maintained room for a much longer period of time which may lead to a better business decision.

## VII.CONCLUSION

The study concludes that improvements can be made from the existing rating tools for hotel room design in order for it to be applicable to a wider market group especially for Muslim guests. With the minimum requirement of the rooms to be  $12\text{m}^2$  it may be restricting for guests to perform their prayers and for the hotel to accommodate to their needs. There are 5 prayer times in a day for Muslims, most of which may be performed in the comfort of their rooms. The orientation of prayer mats is most essential in designing a shariah compliant hotel room as it is an important obligation for Muslims to ensure a completely conducive day.

Shariah compliant elements vary in previous researches as it is new in the business and is ever evolving therefore, there are bound to be loopholes and gaps that may later be filled with better and more complete information that can only be achieved with more extensive research in this field. The elements present in the research reveals that there are more elements that suffice and may be taken into consideration due to the fact that it affects the daily routine of a Muslim traveler. The existing elements of the shariah compliant hotel rooms are beneficial for the guests however, there are more vital

elements needed to ensure a completely shariah compliant hotel room design can be achieved.

A 12 m<sup>2</sup> room is not realistic in creating a comfortable environment for guests mainly for Muslim guests to stay in. After critically assessing the fundamentals needed to provide a more conducive space planning option in hotel rooms, it was found that there are a lot of solutions in creating a room that can fulfill the requirements needed especially for Muslim guests. Space planning may solve a lot of issues that becomes a problem for guests and still meet the requirements of a shariah compliant hotel room. The study concludes that a shariah compliant room should provide facilities that ease the guests to perform their religious routines in the comfort of their own room. The analysis also revealed that layout can be adjusted to the suitability of the hotel room size. Options are available in creating different levels of shariah compliant hotel rooms that can accommodate to any size of room with a minimum size of 15 m<sup>2</sup>. By having the luxury of space, a higher level of shariah compliant hotel room can be achieved, with a smaller room the goal can still be fulfilled with minimal drawbacks but not jeopardize the benefits needed by the guests.

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