



## Research Article

# Islamic hospitality practices: Changes and challenges in Pakistani hotels

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## ABSTRACT

This study will examine the potential of Islamic hotel services framed by Pakistani hoteliers. The halal lifestyle is increasing worldwide; consequently, a parallel ecosystem is evolving in many Muslim and non-Muslim countries to cope with market demand. The halal laws and standards mainly regulate the import and export of food products in Pakistan but the majority of hotel business in Pakistan is self-claimed halal. Even though the hotel is certified by the halal authority, the GMP is still not fully standardised as halal. The Pakistan hotel industry is mainly composed of SME businesses. Western presidency and operational standards shape Pakistan's current hospitality management activities within the commercial accommodation sector. Furthermore, these standards are not sensitive to the religious values and socio-cultural perceptions of Islamic culture. In the current study, the hotelier responded to 48 variables in six operating segments for hotels. The hoteliers were optimistic about developing fully operational Islamic hotels for sensitive customers as competitive to conventional hotels. The government should devise a policy to establish and adopt Islamic tourism in the national tourism policy.

**Keywords:** *Halalicity; Halal Hotel; Hospitality; Islamic Tourism Islamic Hotel; MFT*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism & hospitality is paramount to the economy, peace, understanding, and promotion of heritage. The number of international tourists rose to 1.4 bn and added US\$ 1.7 trillion to the global economy (UNWTO 2019). Crecent rating (2023), concluded that in year 2022, the number of Muslim international visitors had reached 110 million, as for 12% of all international arrivals, shows a growth of nearly 68% of pre-pandemic levels recorded in 2019. According to Crecent rating (2023), projections, Muslim traveler arrivals would rise to 140 million in 2023, before returning to pre-pandemic levels of 160 million in 2024, will be reached to 230 million Muslim immigrants by 2028, with a projected spending of USD 225 billion.

Over 100 countries hosted 1.57 bn Muslims approximately 23% of the world's population (Henderson, 2010; Henderson, 2009). Pakistan nests 2.81% of the world's individuals and in Pakistan, travel and tourism contributed 7.6% to GDP by 2.8% in 2018. Pakistan received 965,500 foreign visitors, US\$ 351.6 million inbound receipts, and US\$ 364.2 in annual tourism spending (Calderwood & Soshkin, 2019). According to Global (2015), they were estimated to



be 156 hundred hotels worldwide with 14.5mn guest rooms for sale. The global OIC share of hotels was estimated at 10.3% in 2015 global market was 16,000 establishments with 1.5 million rooms (COMCEC, 2017). It is considered that Islamic hotel operations and certifications are effective marketing means for encouraging halal trademarks or Islamic services (Rajagopal et al., 2011). Islamic hotels fascinate the expected interest of guests who pay respect to the ethnic, social heritage, and environment (Razalli et al., 2012). There is no national body in most OIC member countries to certify hotels (Muda et al., 2019). The OIC countries were categorised into 4 clusters according to the positioning of member countries. Pakistan lies in the least developed MFT ecosystem group D and ranks 16 in OIC destinations. COMCEC (2017), has identified 680MFT accommodation establishments with either focused or mixed offerings in 2015, but globally, no such data exists. In the above context, the hotels in Pakistan are self-claimed mixed offering MFT hotel accommodations. The numbers of registered hotel establishments were 1859, with approximately 41 thousand guestrooms for sale in 2009. Pakistani share in the halal market is less than 1% out of the global 3.6 trillion global markets (Zubir, 2018). The hotel industry in Pakistan is mainly composed small size hotel businesses with less than 20 guestrooms. Shah and Kamal (2018), while PHA claimed that over ten thousand hotels, establishments with 50,000 rooms, are part of Pakistan's hospitality sector. This concluded that the hotel industry in Pakistan is not vertical and faced a turbulent environment due to terrorism, economic crises, and natural disasters. However, the economic indicators of the Pakistani hotel industry are more than satisfactory but the hotel industry is growing horizontally (Naseem et al., 2011a).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, it has been observed that there is a growing interest in a new tourism concept such as 'Islamic tourism' or 'halal' hospitality which similar to the concept of Halal food which had been recognised in many countries including those in the Middle East (Battour et.al., 2014). In recent decades, curiosity about halal hospitality is increased. It is predicted that Islamic hotels are the next significant demand from Muslim tourists (Supardin et al., 2023). The researcher urges that it is an accurate time to promote the concept of Islamic hotels and to display Islamic hospitality services according to sharia principles (Idris & Razali 2016; Othman & Othman, 2013). The idea of dry hotels is customarily practiced in many Muslim countries where alcohol consumption and sale are banned by law, i.e., Pakistan, Brunei etc. However, four and five-star or international hotels are licensed to serve or sell to non-Muslim customers (Ridzuan & Zahari, 2012). Khatkhatay and Nisar (2007), states that Quran, Hadith, and Ijtihad are the three basics for Sharia-compliant hotel operations. Rosenberg and Choufany (2009), mentioned three areas of the hotel to be addressed, i.e., operations, interior design, and financial management. Naseem. et al. (2011b) summaries the factors to create hotel standards are cleanliness, courteous employees, service quality, unique environment, and customer satisfaction. The hotel-related rules need to be addressed because the weaker organisations and wealthy investors monopolised the hotel business in Pakistan (Alam et al., 2019). It is essential to consider that nearly all Islamic countries were controlled by colonial or western nations directly or

indirectly (McDonnell, 2010). These colonial power changed secularism into societal Islam or compatible Islamic ideology in modernity. The Muslims observed Sharia was replaced by European-style laws that were developed so the government could enforce them An-Na'im and Ahmed (2006). These colonial powers fetched their laws, amended cultural rules, and practices, and used them in Islamic countries (Alam et al., 2020).

The hospitality industry is fulfilling customer needs in a dynamic market (Shoemaker & Lewis: 1999). Comcec (2016), concluded that Muslim visitors demand; 67% of them insist on halal food, while 53% consider the overall value and 49% that experience worth suitable for Muslims in destinations. However, hoteliers offer the same products (guestrooms) to all tourists regardless of their unique desires or fondness of any specific group of tourists (Heo et al., 2004). Hotels that cater to the unique demands of religious travelers of any faith are extremely hard to locate these days (Weidenfeld, 2006). In countries like India, Pakistan, Middle East, hotels are providing few services to religious travelers. Islamic hotels, which can be described as hotels offering services in compliance with the principles of Shariah, are regarded as a code of ethics to follow the rules for the Islamic lifestyle (Rasit et al., 2016; Razalli et al., 2012). Tourist preferences and catering to their hospitality industry needs are vital, particularly in the hotel room (Wuest et al., 1996). The services must match the tourists' desires to pay the prices or even higher and return as loyal guests (Choi & Chu 2001). To fulfil the basic guest needs, hoteliers have usually distinguished their products based on brand image, amenities, services, facilities, location, architecture design, quality of service, size, price, and distribution technologies. The accommodation types directly influence the hotel rates; additional facilities, amenities, and services will also be charged higher rates (Baker, 2010). Several studies articulate that hospitality is measured in the tourism industry; generally, hospitality's modern meaning refers to services, hotels, restaurants, and events sectors.

The terms Islamic and halal are often used interchangeably (Jafari, & Scott 2014; Battour et al., 2014). The word 'Islamic' is specifically useful only to that which relates directly to the faith and its doctrines such as Islamic Sharia, Islamic values, principles and beliefs, and Islamic worship (Douglass & Shaikh, 2004). The concept of halalicity or Islami city hotels is relatively new. Most Muslim hoteliers agreed that the halal concept is not to be applied just to food but also to hotels' operational aspects (Samori & Rahman, 2013). When the hotel is based on halal and haram principles, the concept is known as Sharia Compliance Hotel or Islamic Hotel or Halal Hotel. According to COMCEC (2017) Muslim-friendly accommodation establishments are divided into two segments the focused and mixed offering of products and services. The global hotel quality standards are uneven, and sometimes the criteria are implemented through internal audit (Marriott, hotel seven-star Galleria) or by association (AAA, CAA, ISO 13811, ISO 14001), Govt (ASEAN green hotel, Egypt NN) or through the market review (Trip Advisor, booking. com etc.). Many alternative accommodation standards are also such as environmental standards (ISO 14001, Green star etc.) and faith-based standards (Diamond, Crecent rating etc.).

### 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Pakistan is an Islamic republic and 2nd largest Muslim country. Many standards were developed to certify halal products for exports and imports, A different supporting institution line PSQCA, PNAC, PHA, HCB's etc. in Pakistan involves in food Safety and accreditation of the halal supporting system but lacks the power to exercise its authority. However, no halal quality standards and a fully halal ecosystem evolved accordingly as compared to other Muslim countries. Halal hospitality standard, accreditation and rating system is not available. Pakistan halal product is generally composed of halal food products but confirms no compliance towards Islamic hotel products and services. To promote the halal tourism industry, the ecosystem for halal compliance is significant in halal hotels, and halal food assurance.

### 4. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

The current research stands on the experts 'opinion mining, considering the primary and secondary research techniques to get the experts' opinions on a cross-sectional survey. Opinion mining determines the positivity, negativity, or neutrality of a statement or sentiment (Mouthami et al., 2013). A cross-sectional survey is a useful instrument for collecting (Sexton et al., 2000). The statements in the questionnaire were measured through 48 statements on a five-point scale. A convenient sampling technique is selected to get the cross-section (Etikan et al., 2016). The questionnaires were checked for scale validity and reliability. Moreover, the questionnaires were filled face to face or sent by postal mail. Hotel Expert study -III data collected from the 52 Hotel Experts. The questionnaire was filled within 88.5% male & and 11.5% female population ratio. The statistical analysis of the data gathered was performed using SPSS, Version 18.0 used for descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVAs analyses. The diagram was created by using diaw.exe 0.97.2. see Fig. 1.

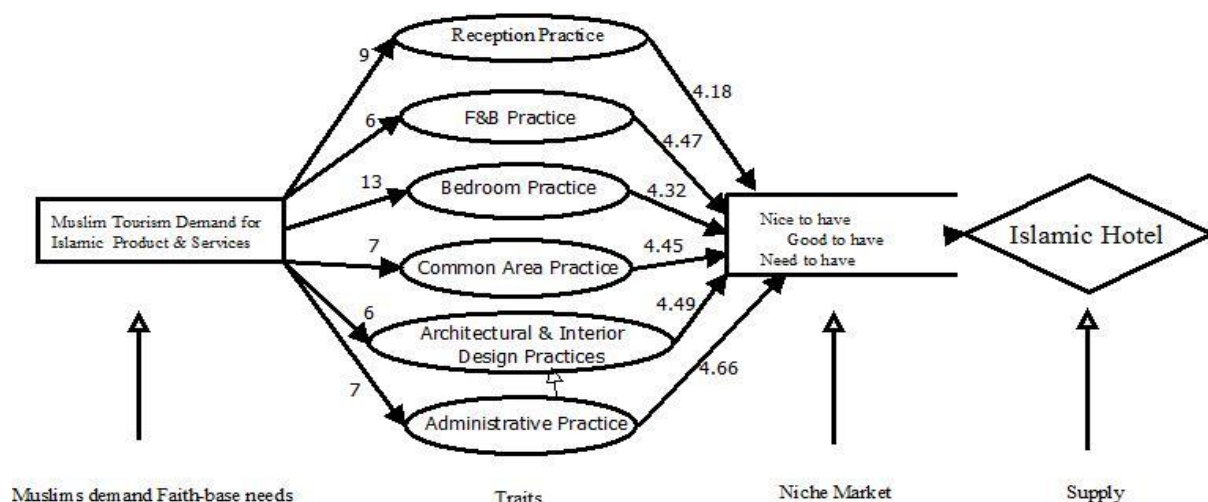


Fig. 1. Conceptual design

### 5. SURVEY, OBSERVATION & FINDINGS

The Islamic hotel explanation is assessed from study-III and data collected from 52 Hotel Experts but not includes the five-star hotels by purpose. The details show that 88.5% were

male, and 11.5% were female population. This study's demographic shows that a mix of young and aged managers gives a holistic view of life and industry experience. Halal tourism and hospitality services that acquiesced with the Islamic law are considerably more accepted. Many national and international hotels serve Halal food and beverages, but their services are not certified on the Halal assurance system. More hotels today are pleasing the profitable Muslim captive market by migrating to Halal certifications.

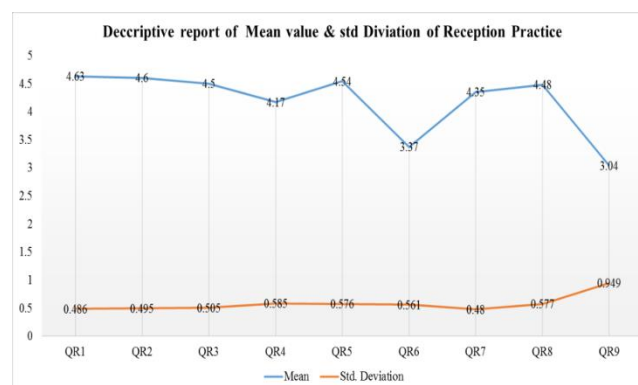
The hotel experts' opinion was analysed on six operational segments and with 48 variables for Islamic hotels explains in a table 1 with average value; i. Reception Practice ii. F&B Practice. iii. Bedroom Practice. iv. Common Area Practices. v. Architecture & Interior Design and vi. Administrative Practices.

**Table 1.** Islamic practice average value of the statement

Criteria For Islamic Hotel Practices	Statements	Average Value	Std. Deviation
Reception Practice (QR1-QR9)	9	4.18	0.579
F&B Practice (QF1-QF6)	6	4.47	0.545
Bedroom Practice (QB1-QB13)	13	4.32	0.425
Common Area Practice (QCA1-QCA7)	7	4.45	0.749
Architectural & Interior Design Practices (QAI1-QAI6)	6	4.49	0.570
Administrative Practice (QAP1-QAP7)	7	4.66	0.458

## 5.1. RECEPTION PRACTICE

The hotel reception is vital and liable for providing efficient and excellent services, welcoming the guests, and using the best hotel practices. This department is the hotel's face; needs impression, skills, patience, selling qualities, service provision, knowledge, information, and guest recordkeeping technicalities, also described as guest cycle procedures. Fig. 2 shows the QR1, QR2, QR3, QR4, QR5, QR7, and QR8; the mean value was above 4.17 and considered extremely important is cleared from the stack bar chart. The mean value of QR6 "Islamic Packages (wedding, Tour, Seminar, Conference)" & QR9 "Mini exchange on the same rate to the local market "was the lowest average at 3.37. The statement was also considered important by at least 23.1% of the respondents confirm by the stacked bar. The 09 reception statements, show the significant statistical differences of opinion illustrated by the One-way ANOVA results in Fig. 2.



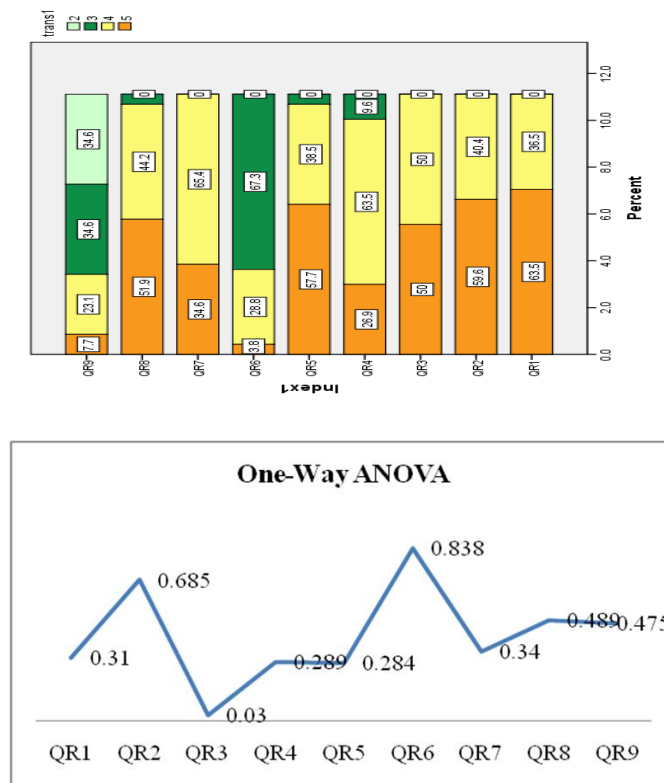


Fig. 2. Islamic Hotel Reception Practice

## 5.2. FOOD & BEVERAGE PRACTICE

All items taste good when you are hungry because you are so eager to eat them, and "Hunger is the best sauce" has been confirmed experimentally by several investigators (Seaton & Peryam, 1970). F&B practices incorporate to development of flexible approaches to address the needs of the changing world. F&B revenue for in-house establishments typically represents 25% of total income, and that portion grows year over year (Hallam & Baum, 1996). The growing market, social media coverage, cuisine exploration, new age trends, and religiosity are redefining F&B businesses. According to Islamic law, Muslims may eat most food and drink (Nurdeng, 2009). Nowadays, Muslims are more perceptible in several kinds of ingredients and industrial food questionable in Muslim daily use (Arif & Ahmad, 2011). The Muslim demands in F&B provided new business guidance, regulations, standards, and certification (Talib et al., 2010). The Hotel Experts respondents, 06 statements in this category, were documented. The mean value statement exhibited in Fig. 3 shows QF1, QF2, QF3, QF4, QF5, and QF6. The mean value above 4.04 was considered extremely important. The One-way ANOVA results presented in Fig. 3 confirm that QF1, QF2, and QF6 show a strongly significant difference in the respondents' opinion while QF3, QF4 & QF5 represent no significant difference. The Fig. 3 indicates the level of adaptation and level of adaptation of F&B practice in Islamic hotel.

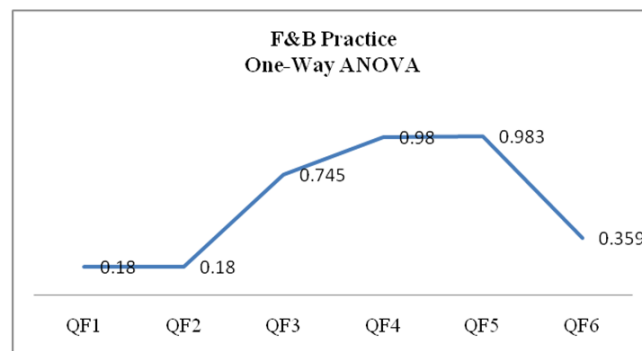
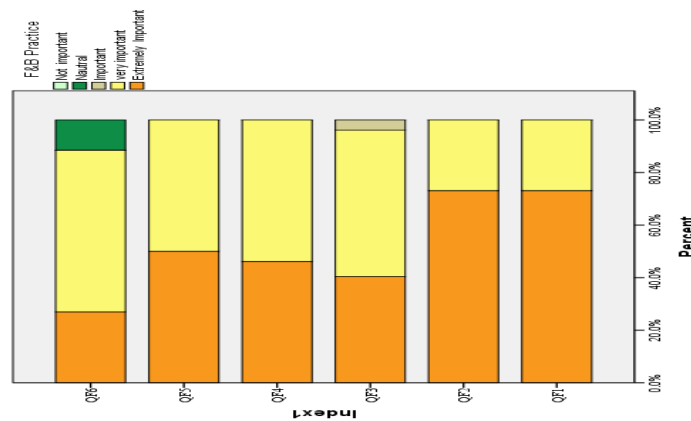
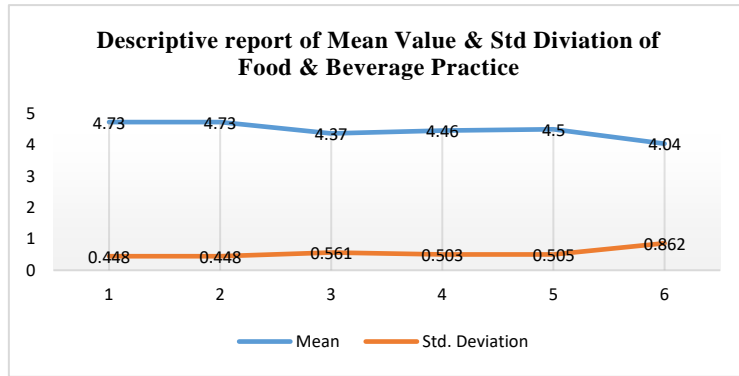


Fig. 3. Islamic Hotel Food & Beverage Practice

### 5.3. BEDROOM PRACTICE

The perfections of the bedroom are one of the major concerns during the hotel design process. All bedrooms should have sufficient space, the market demand, and guests to move quickly around the room, the bedroom size, the space available, and the comfortable and convenient use of facilities. The orientation of the fixtures and amenities provided in the guestroom is important for consideration when designing a hotel room with Islamic attributes (Majid et al., 2015). In Pakistan, little international standardisation is followed in star rating requirements, which leads to a discrepancy in the quality of bedrooms. A hotel bedroom important as a typical guest spent 50 percent of their waking time in the bathroom and 50 percent in the bedroom area (Ransley & Ingram, 2001). The respondent hotelier assesses 13 statements in this category, and the statements documented in the

Figure show QB1, QB2, QB3, QB4, QB5, QB7, QB8, QB9, QB10, QB11, QB12, and QB13, were above 4.04 was considered extremely important which is cleared from the Fig. 4. The One-way ANOVA results presented on QB1, QB3, QB5, QB7, QB9, and QB12, show a significant difference in opinion exist while QB2, QB4, QB8, QB10, QB11, and QB13, presents no statistically significant difference in the view.

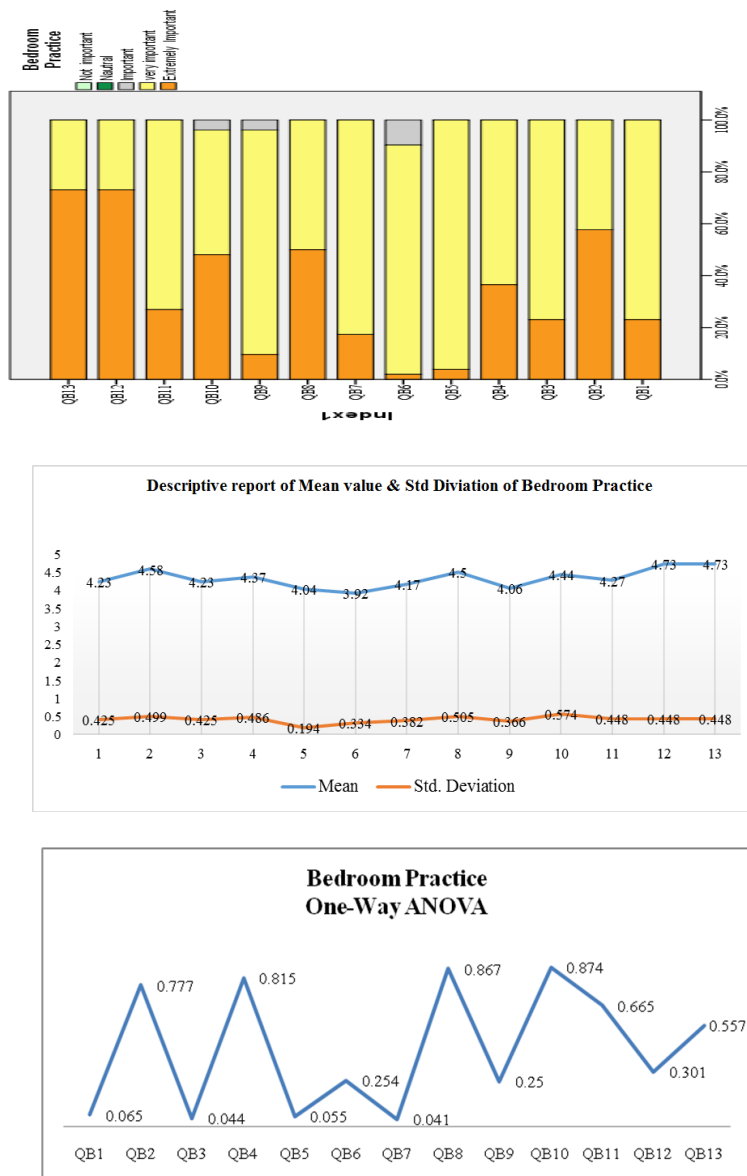


Fig. 4. Islamic Hotel Bedroom Practice

### 5.4. COMMON AREA PRACTICE

A common area is an area that is available for use by more than one person (Sevatdal, 1999). The common areas are those places in a hotel for all the visiting guests and residents guests. The common area is an important part of the hotel utilised by guests other than personal rooms and guestrooms. The hotel experts documented responses from seven statements in the common area, illustrated in Fig. 5. The data is charted in Figures, and the

mean value is exhibited shows the statements QCA1, QCA 2, QCA3, QCA4, QCA5, QCA7, and QCA7. The mean value above 4.04 was considered extremely important, which is cleared from the Stack bar chart. The One-way ANOVA results presented confirm that all the statements show no statistically significant difference in the opinion. At the same time, QCA6, Islamic channels are available, the highest for no statistical difference in opinion.

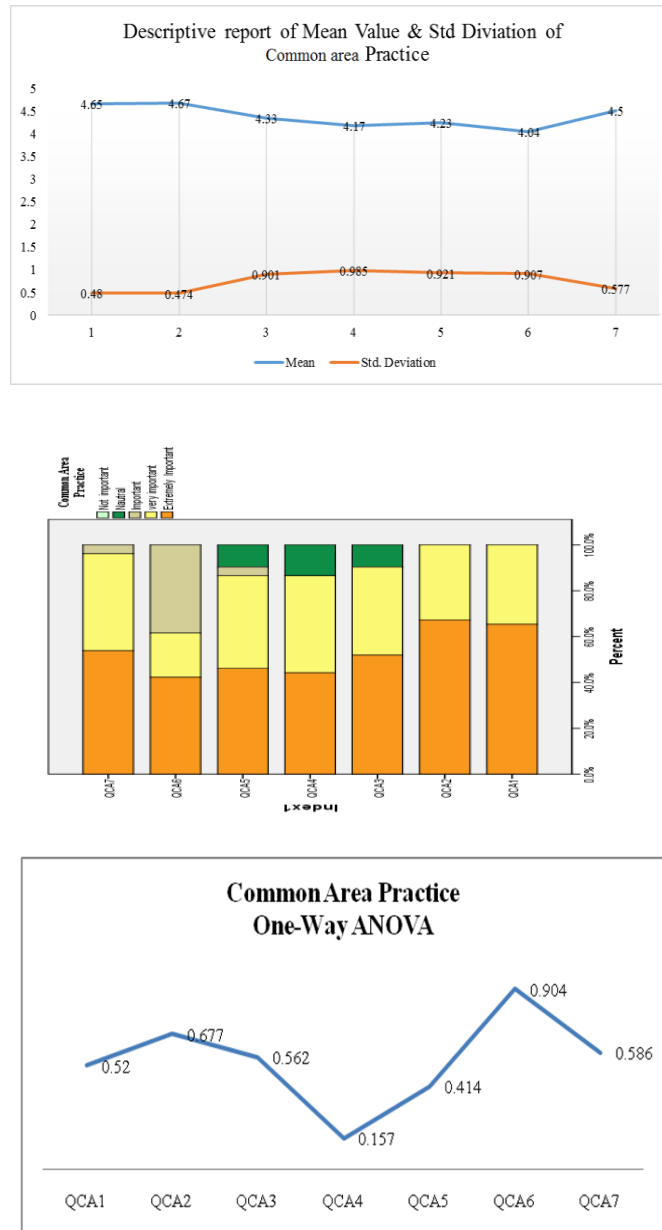


Fig. 5. Islamic Hotel common Area Practice

### 5.5. ARCHITECTURAL & INTERIOR DESIGN

The hotel design is conceptualised from the ideas and themes of cost, function, demand, and user satisfaction. Islamic hotel architectural design is planned by keeping the religiosity and culture of its user in mind. The 06 statement in the category of architecture & interior design was presented to the respondents. The mean value of the statements QAI1, QAI2, QAI3, QAI4, QAI5, and QAI6 was above 4.27, therefore considered extremely important. The

agreement level is the One-way ANOVA results presented in Fig. 6 confirms that all the statements show little significant difference of opinion among various stakeholders.

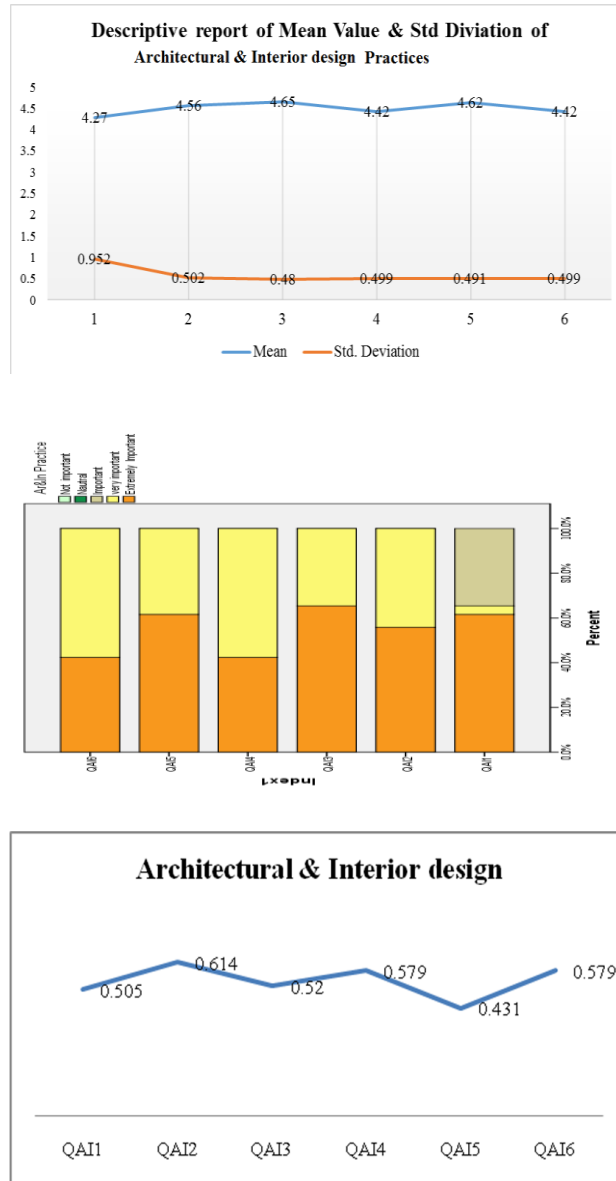


Fig. 6. Islamic Hotel Architectural & Interior Design Practice

### 5.6. ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

The skillfully managed operational functions are the principal element of whether the guest's hotel experience is satisfactory, good or excellent (Siguaw & Enz, 1999). The act and ability to deliver the services on demand and accomplish the guest's needs will repeat business. The Islamic hotel will satisfy the demand by providing a system based on Islamic principles (Henderson, 2010). In the category of Administrative practice, 07 statements were presented to the respondents. The data was structured in figures for the mean value that "QAP1", "QAP2", "QAP3", "QAP4", "QAP5", "QAP6"&"QAP7" above 4.5 was considered extremely important. The One-way ANOVA results presented in Fig. 7 confirms that all the statements show little statistical significance difference in opinion.

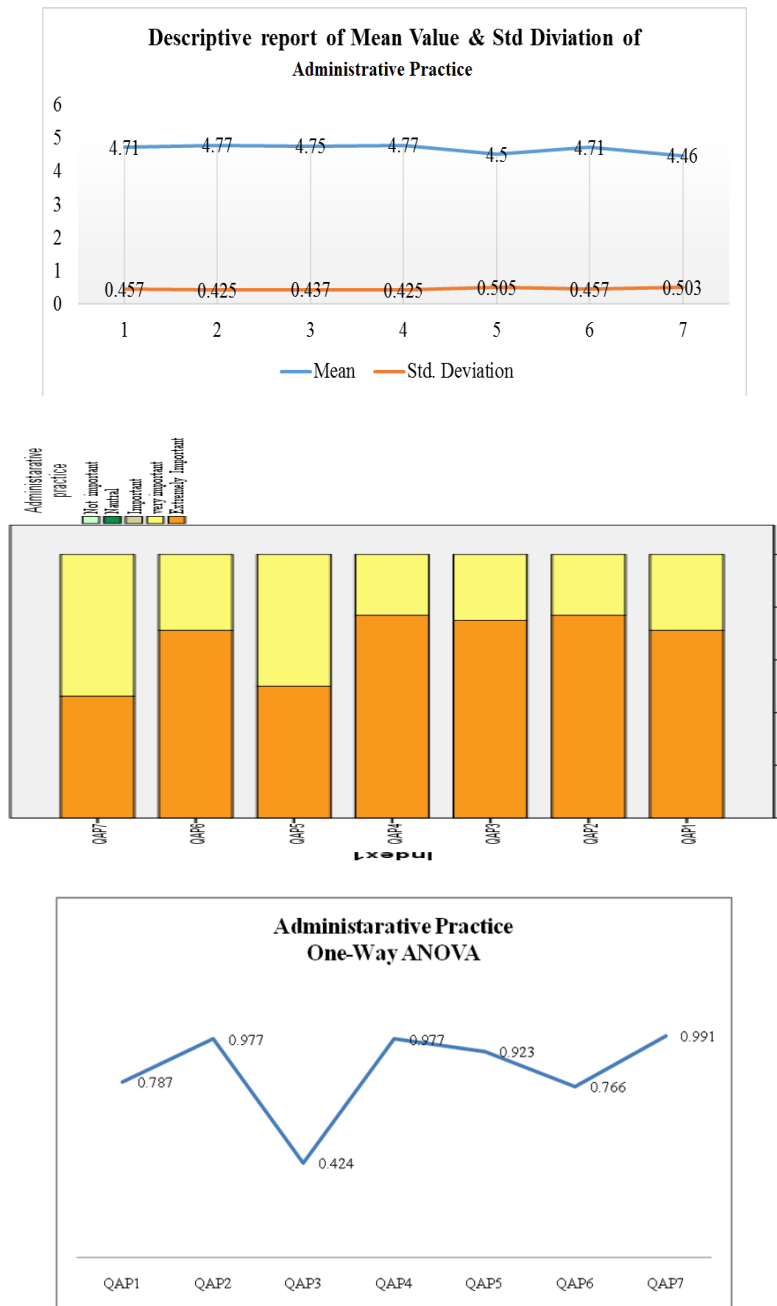


Fig. 7. Islamic Hotel Administrative Practice

## 6. CONCLUSION

The halal lifestyle is increasing world wide; therefore, the hotel industry is taking the initiative to adopt Halal products& services both in conventional hotels by getting certified as Islamic, Halal, or Islamic. Muslim leisure travelers prioritize halal food and privacy when choosing accommodations. Halal booking websites categorize hotels and resorts as "Serving Halal," "Alcohol-free," or "Highly Compliant" based on their offerings. "Serving Halal" accommodations have halal eateries on-site or offer halal food on request. "Alcohol-free" accommodation serves only halal food and do not sell alcohol on the premises. "Highly Compliant" Islamic accommodations go the extra mile to ensure visitors' privacy, providing women-only beaches or isolated swimming pools for women.

The western philosophy of products and services influences the operational procedures of the Pakistani hospitality industry. There are currently two categories of Islamic (halal) hospitality businesses; certified and self-claimed. They are certified as (hotels or restaurants by the halal food authority but not considering the food & beverages on halal traceability audit or Islamic hotel standards) and self-claimed halal hospitality establishments as per the owner's claim. Even though the hotels are approved by Halal authorities, the GMP is still not fully halal certified. Pakistan has mixed MFT services hotels, Non-MFT service hotels or self-claimed MFT hotels. Therefore, it is essential to examine the current policies and regulatory framework describing Islamic hotels due to the trend. Some Pakistani hotels contain critical elements in Islamic hotels, similar to Baker et al (2018).

In Pakistan, no halal standards or ecosystems for the halal hotel industry have been formulated; therefore, it does not have an integrated legal framework at the Federal and Provincial levels. Five laws deal directly or indirectly relevant to food safety, standards for food items, imports and exports, and regulations controlling Halal food, in linking the new development in a niche market within the Islamic concept. There is an urgent need to develop the Islamic tourism ecosystem, utilise Islamic hospitality services' potential, and provide MFT products and services to faith-based customers.

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Muhammad Alam conceptualised, methodology and contributed in the data and discussion. Danish Ali Khan contributed in the literature review and Abrar Ullah contributed in conclusion, review and editing

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Not applicable

### **Informed Consent Statement**

Not applicable

### **Data Availability Statement**

Data will be available on request.

### **Acknowledgments**

Not applicable

### **Conflicts of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest.

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