

## TRAVELERS HOSTEL DESIGN: DOES SPATIAL ORGANIZATION AFFECT THE PRIVACY REFERRING TO ISLAMIC CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLE?

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**Abstract.** This paper illustrates the background of Islamic concepts and principles used to describe the basic framework of privacy on spatial design for traveler's hostel. This paper also reviews the theoretical views in establishing the element of privacy for Muslim guests in traveler's hostel according to Syariah. According to Oliveira-Brochado [19] states there is a huge problem between Travelers' Behavior with Hostel's Spatial Organization relationship in terms of lack of privacy, safety of belongings, how to cater the space to feels comfortable with more privacy, socializing space and the design that reflect the culture. Hence, this paper is to define the personal space concerning to the traveler's privacy according to Syariah that affect the spatial organization. Moreover, this paper intends to reveal the privacy elements that are vital and may contribute for traveler's hostel in achieving a more conclusive research on spatial design focusing on the Syariah and Muslim guests. It involves a few research methodologies that require the researcher to study on the Islamic concept and principles that needed to create more efficient space in terms of personal space, safety and security element, social interaction and space relationship elements. The results of this study could shed useful insights in providing privacy for travelers in a small budget accommodation. With that, by introducing the separateness space according to Syariah-compliant hostel concept among budget hostel operators may give an alternative to Muslim traveler in Malaysia.

### Introduction

Travelling tourism is now considered as one of the most important tourist markets to be targeted in Malaysia. Accordingly, backpackers in Malaysia stay considerably longer (27.6 nights) compared with the average 6.3 nights of all tourists [17]. The spending patterns which largely benefit small local enterprises, in economically deprived areas, produce a more desirable economic multiplier effect.

Backpacking is a term used to reflect a form of travel with the usual cheap. Hostel is a place to stay with facilities used together by Residents, such as bathrooms, sitting rooms and kitchens. Therefore, hostel dwellers have more opportunities great to cultivate with other guests [7]. Hostel is a place that they exchange knowledge. As well, the communal nature of hostel accommodation which encourages social interaction in the spaces provided. The exchange of information about experiences as a product of the social interaction among backpackers throughout their travels has an obvious implication for tourism businesses in this market, including the necessity to provide a product or experience which satisfies their needs. Tarrant [23] has defined Syariah compliant hotels as a hotel that does not only limit themselves to the dry hotel concept but also practices halal financial planning and considers the safety, wellbeing and benefits of mankind regardless of race, faith or culture. He also states that Syariah-compliant hotel is a new innovative and creative service found in the hotel industry [23]. And recently, the existence of Islamic hospitality or Syariah hotel is being built beyond Gulf countries in Asia.

### Spatial Organization in a hostel

A hostel is a budget accommodation with a minimum of one dormitory and a common area. Traveler usually share the common areas and stay at a dorm, but also private rooms are nowadays common [13]. There is also a feedback from Lollis Homestay [9] who has been awarded 5 Star Hostel for Desden, Germany says,

*"A hostel is a place, where backpackers stay. It can be a huge crowded party hostel in any capital of Europe, it can also be cheap place where mainly long term guests sleep or even a private hostel in Ecuador."* [9]

*"It will be the place, no matter of facilities, dorms or private rooms, manned or not, where you will most likely meet other*

travelers.”[9]

Some define a hostel as, “*The essential in a hostel is its social spaces*” [11]. Nevertheless, a stay in a hostel is out of a hotel standard, and more than a bed, it is an all experience that is sold. Although a room is considered low budget, it exists an increasing requirement from these customers, as for example, free access to the Internet, breakfast included high standards conditions for hygiene, safety and security [13].

Besides the advantages staying in a hostel, there is a huge disadvantage which is lacking of privacy space provided in a hostel. In designing a home, Islam teaches Muslim not to violate household visual privacy, for example, by looking at others’ unlawful parts or shame through their windows [6, 8; 26]. This issue is being considered when designing & installing it in traditional Muslim homes to ensure that incidents won’t happen.

According to Ashok [2], spatial design is a relatively new conceptual design discipline that crosses the boundaries of traditional design specialism such as architecture, landscape architecture, landscape design, interior design and service design as well as certain areas of public art. With this understanding, the interior can effectively elect to work with continue or even offer a counterpoint to the essential qualities of an architectural space. Organization in the other hand is the arrangement of rooms within a building: forming a society of rooms. The plan as a director of movement, focus movement, direct movement, free movement, single room, centralized rooms grouped around a courtyard/ Atrium, rooms grouped around a central element, small spaces organized in relation to a single large space [2].

### Privacy in Interior Space According to Concept and Principle of Islam

In a traditional Muslim homes, privacy in the house strictly follows the teachings from the Quran, sunnahs and hadiths to make sure that the owner of the house and his/her family are allowed to unwind and rest from the pressure and demands from the world outside [18]. It is vital in Islam to guard home privacy to promote at tranquil and functional structure of family. Privacy in Muslim homes is the core factor that helps to shape Muslim home dwellers’, “plan, build, perceive, and use their interior home spaces” [20].

It is suggested by Mortada [15; 26] that traditional Islamic homes privacy must involve four main layers of privacy:

- 1) Privacy between neighbors’ dwellings,
- 2) Privacy between males and females,
- 3) Privacy between family members inside a home,
- 4) Individual privacy

It is usually met through careful design for such requirements of privacy by ensuring the family’s safety and separating the private life from public associations [14; 26]. Design considerations involve visibility control through visual privacy, noise transmission through acoustic privacy [15; 26], and the control of odor through old factory privacy [21; 26]. The visual privacy takes place from the beginning; from the entrance. The most obvious separation between the public and private realms is the front entrance door. In traditional Muslim homes, entrance door is placed away from the main street and indirectly facing the opposite neighbors [15; 26]. Another crucial criterion in maintaining visual privacy in Muslim homes design is the creation of gendered space [21; 26]. Although Quran doesnot state the obligation to create gendered space in homes specifically, visual privacy is viewed as a legitimate measure, except for the restrictions in social and allowed behavior between “non-blood-related” or non-muhrim of men and women. The Muslim home’s domestic domain is regarded as a female space [22; 26].

Islam requires that a house must be built in accordance to Syariah law, therefore the designers and builders should make the Syariah principles as guidelines in designing a building. In other words, Muslim building design must be the product of Islamic beliefs and inhabitant’s values. The guiding principles include the privacy, cleanliness, safety, segregation, wastages, house interior decoration and more. As for the purpose of this research, the principle will focus on the privacy aspect that can influence the spatial organization of a hostel design.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوْتِكُمْ حَتّٰى تَسْتَأْذِنُوْا وَّتَسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰى اٰهْلِهَا ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾

Quran (٢٤:٢٧), “*O you who have believed, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded.*”

## 1. Door

فَاِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوْا فِيْهَا اَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوْهَا حَتّٰى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَاِنْ قِيْلَ لَكُمْ اَرْجِعُوْا فَاَرْجِعُوْا هُوَ اَرْزٰكِيْ لَكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

Quran (24:28), “*If ye find no one in the house, enter not until permission given to you; If ye are asked to go back, go back; that makes for greater purity for yourselves, and God knows well all that ye do.*”

“*I benefit from the place in front of my door in which you want to open yours. I open my door no one intervening my privacy, and I bring my loads near my door without causing inconvenience to anyone. Thus, I wouldn’t let you open a door in front of mine or near to it since you may use it as a reception and entertainment area or comparable matters.*” (Ibn. Al- Qasim).

Referring to the hadith, the door design must not be opposite to each other and it should be offset in order to prevent people at the entrance from seeing or looking directly into the house opposite or adjacent. The entrance door placement is also related to the width and function of the street where the door is opened. Also considering if the street width is not wide enough (7 cubits of width), and there is less traffic on it. Furthermore, Islam does not permit the building door located opposite two. This is because the privacy of the people inside the house could be intruded upon when the door is open. (Ibn. Al-Qasim).

## 2. Window

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَعْضُوْا مِنْ اَبْصَرِيْهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوْا فُرُوْجَهُمْ ذٰلِكَ اَرْزٰكِيْ لَهُمْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Quran (24:30), “*Say to the believers that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty that will make for greater purity for them and God is well acquainted with all that they do.*”

“*If a man pushes asides a curtain and looks inside without permission, he has then reached a point which he is not allowed to reach.*” (Ahmad and al-Termedhi)

In term of window location, when the ground level of the building interior is a bit lower, then the exterior window that is below 1.75 m is allowed, only if the sight lines from the window are above head level of a standing person in the interior. According to Umar’s calculation, [24] the ground window should be 2.5m from above the ground level.

## 3. Sex Segregation Room

Sex segregation and privacy has strong connection. The interior privacy can be maintained by implementing special design treatment for public as well as the private area. In public domain, it is necessary to have area to specifically serve guest in Muslim houses. Somehow, the owner’s privacy and guest should be considered. Therefore, it is prohibited to have direct visual access between the guest area and the family. Segregation will be achieved by having transitional or double system circulation between public and private area. This requirement response to the Quranic verses and hadith of prophet that is;

“*Permission is needed as a protection against glance*”

Kitchen and living room are the most important space to protect from the sight of guest because that is where female spent most of their time. The sleeping area has to be well protected because it is considered as the sacred place in the house. More than that, bedrooms for sons and daughters need to be separated at the age of seven [4; 26].

### Building Height

Syariah principles must also be considered in the height of a building. Building height and elevated element such as balconies and roof area could cause a visual intrusion to other house if it’s not well-designed or equipped with the protection. It is available to make balcony and window with *mashrabiya* and *rawahien* which is the projected wooden screened elements to create airflow pattern that is able to modify the hot humid climate inside the house. At the same time, it can avoid visual intrusion as well. It is not specifically mentioned that Syariah specify a particular height of houses. According to Khalid Al Walid, he advised the Prophet that his house became

inadequate to accommodate his extended family, and then the Prophet answered “build higher” [24].

**Conclusion and Recommendations for Implementing Privacy According to Principle of Islam into a Space Organization in a Hostel Design**

Islam is unique, and when a hostel industry is about to follow the Syariah compliance design it is easy and always have a good reason behind it. In the hospitality of the hostel industry, they are many aspects one of them is privacy in the spatial organization. And below are some recommendations towards the passive elements of building structure in space on aspects of studies or issues that can take off for a research.

**a) Door**

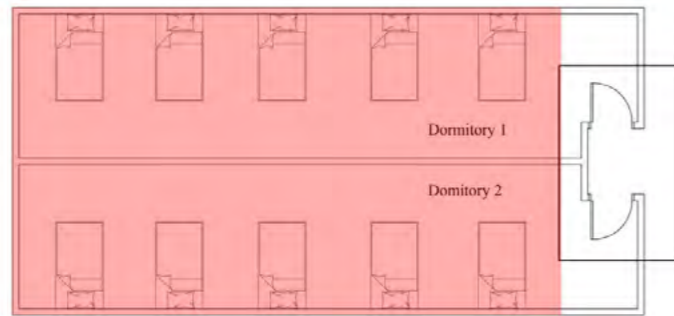


Fig. 1: Door offset

Based on the Fig.1, the position of the door must prior the privacy of the person inside the room by putting a bit barrier or design the area by blocking the view of the red zone by placing the opening of the door leaf on the left side. From this point of view, it is clearly shown that the door leaf and position are designed by purpose. The doors and windows should be discreet, offset and the placement is not adjacent to one another. Moreover, visual privacy in the guestrooms can take precedence to the design implemented in the Malay traditional houses. The control of the openings can be achieved through the layers and versatility of the opening design to ensure the privacy of the guests [10].

**b) Window**

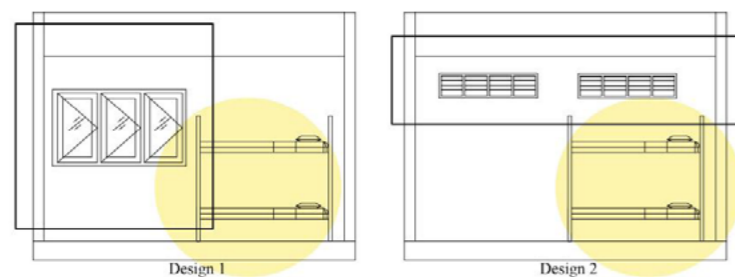


Fig.2: Window location

As for the window design, to keep the privacy of the travellers based on the Syariah compliance in the sleeping or resting area, the window location is really important. To keep the privacy at the yellow area (refer to Fig.2) the window must allocate at the side of the bed or any heavy used area. In that case, curtains are also needed to control the privacy. Besides that, if the area needs more privacy, a louvers design should be recommended as well. Based on the design 2 in the diagram above, a louvers work as an air ventilation and keep the area more privacy. In addition, based on the Zeenat, (2016) [24] the windows should be placed at 1.73 meters from the ground and above eye-level in order to provide privacy.

**c) Sex Segregation Room**

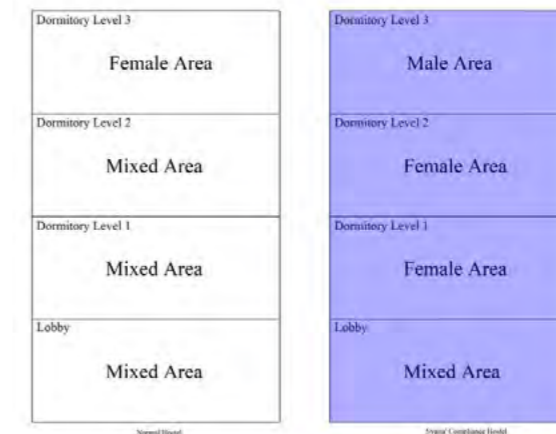


Fig. 3: Segregation of room according to sex [10]

The relationship between sex segregation and privacy is really important in the Syariah compliance hostel design. Based on the diagram above, the normal hostel on the left, separated the level with mixed area are more than the gender private area. According to Oliveira-Brochado [19] regarding to gender differences, female travellers care more about cleanliness, quality of the staff and security than the male travellers. She says towards a better understanding, nevertheless, security and privacy were really important to the female travellers [19]. The needs in implementing the privacy in Syariah compliance, dividing the level of the hostel according to the gender are recommended (refer to the blue area in Fig.3). This will provide more privacy especially to the female travellers. Though, talking about how to make sure that opposite gender would not enter the prescribed level, access card would be given to the travellers based on their gender by the managing officer at the lobby. They are prohibited to access other levels with the access card. Furthermore, the design of the sex segregation are applies most to female guests who require safety and security when enjoying the stay in hostel or hostel. The layout of Malay house expresses clearly the division of space between male and female [10].

**d) Building Height**

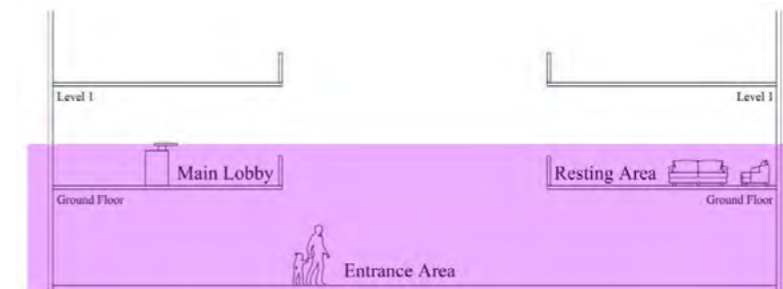


Fig. 4: Building height in a room [10]

Another way for implementing privacy according to principle of Islam into a space organization in a hostel design is a building height. Based on the diagram above, the main lobby and the resting area is a different level to the entrance hall. This is recommended because from the *rumah Melayu* (Malay house) can be interpreted as *anjung*, the balcony and the entrance gives the sense of welcoming with the hierarchy of steps and space. The lobby area can be assimilates the sense of welcoming that accentuate the Malay hospitality. Moreover, the different level of the resting area or any public hostel area’s privacy could be protected in the same time from the new comers that come as a guest.

Therefore, affording this paper as a triggering factor for a new research studies that can be proposed, the results and implementation on it, will be a remarkable impact for the society especially for travelers to undoubting stay in the hotel with comfort and safety assurance. A wise word from Nabila Asyiqin a solo woman traveler [3] “the most challenging thing about traveling would be the journey itself, and sometimes the things you face along the journey such as the language barrier between you and the locals which makes it harder to communicate, or going to places that are difficult to reach or surviving in a place that has no halal food and place to stay” [3]. That shows the Syariah compliance accommodations are always be the most important issue that needs to be highlighted in the tourism and hostel industries. Parallel with it may give a positive react towards a boost of economy in Malaysia by inviting the tourists to the country.

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