



Positioning and differentiation strategies as drivers of revisit intention and room occupancy rate: the moderating role of sharia hotel branding

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Abstract

The growing competition among four-star hotels has encouraged operators to optimize marketing strategies to sustain room occupancy rates. Previous studies have reported inconsistent findings on the effects of positioning and differentiation strategies on revisit intention, while the role of Sharia hotel branding as a boundary condition of these relationships remains underexplored. This study examines the effects of positioning and differentiation strategies on revisit intention, their impact on room occupancy rates, and the extent to which Sharia hotel branding strengthens these relationships in a four-star Sharia hotel in Yogyakarta. A quantitative explanatory approach was employed using purposive sampling of 200 former hotel guests. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression, t-tests, and F-tests in SPSS. The results show that positioning and differentiation strategies positively and significantly influence revisit intention and jointly improve room occupancy rates. Sharia hotel branding made the strongest contribution to both regression models, providing indicative support for its hypothesized role as a trust amplifier that strengthens these relationships. Because the present analysis did not include interaction terms, this moderating role is treated as a preliminary, theory-supported interpretation rather than a statistically confirmed moderation effect; a formal Moderated Regression Analysis with interaction terms and ΔR^2 comparison is recommended to confirm it. This study nonetheless contributes to the development of moderation models in Sharia hospitality marketing by providing a theoretical and empirical foundation for future confirmatory testing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is a strategic sector that supports tourism development and national economic growth. Hotels contribute to employment, destination development, and the tourism value chain, including transportation, culinary services, and the creative economy (Firanti, 2025). According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2025), the number of star-rated hotels increased from 3,644 in 2020 to 4,584 in 2024. This growth reflects the recovery of the



hospitality industry following the COVID-19 pandemic while intensifying competition, particularly among four-star hotels serving middle- and upper-income market segments (Anggaraksa, 2026).

Room occupancy rate is a key indicator of hotel performance because it reflects a hotel's ability to attract and retain customers. Kotler and Keller (2016) argue that service marketing success depends not only on acquiring new customers but also on retaining existing ones through sustainable value creation. Therefore, hotels need effective marketing strategies to build and sustain competitive advantage. Among the most widely adopted strategies are positioning and differentiation (Porter, 1985).

The same competitive pressure is evident in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, one of Indonesia's leading tourism destinations. Most four-star hotels offer comparable facilities and service standards, making it increasingly difficult for customers to distinguish one hotel from another. Consequently, revisit decisions are influenced not only by functional attributes such as price and location but also by brand image, previous experiences, and perceived value (Praptiningrum, 2022). Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja faces a similar challenge. The hotel positions itself as a Sharia-compliant hotel by offering halal services, prayer facilities, Islamic hospitality, and a spiritually supportive environment. Despite these distinctive characteristics, its room occupancy rate continues to fluctuate, indicating that the effectiveness of its marketing strategies in encouraging revisit intention requires further evaluation.

Previous studies have primarily examined positioning and differentiation as direct determinants of customer behavior, including customer satisfaction, purchase decisions, customer loyalty, and revisit intention. Several studies reported positive effects of positioning and differentiation on customer loyalty and revisit intention (Yuliasti, 2023; Nurjannah, 2025). In contrast, other studies found negative relationships when the implemented strategies failed to meet customer expectations (Paryanti, 2025; Agone, 2025). Some studies also reported insignificant effects because customers placed greater emphasis on price, location, and promotional activities (Iqbal, 2020; Tarigan et al., 2022). These findings indicate that previous research has largely focused on direct-effect models.

In contrast, studies that develop moderation models to explain the relationship between positioning, differentiation, and revisit intention remain limited. Specifically, Sharia hotel branding has predominantly been examined as an independent variable that directly influences customer behavior rather than as a variable that strengthens or weakens the relationship between marketing strategies and revisit intention (Maleha, 2025; Nuraini et al., 2023). Consequently, the existing literature provides limited evidence on how Sharia hotel branding influences the effectiveness of positioning and differentiation strategies in encouraging revisit intention. This gap forms the basis of the present study.

To address this gap, the present study develops a model that positions Sharia hotel branding as a moderating variable in the relationship between positioning strategy, differentiation strategy, and revisit intention. It argues that Sharia hotel branding strengthens the effects of positioning and differentiation by enhancing brand trust, value congruence, and perceptions of authentic Sharia-based hospitality services. Accordingly, branding is conceptualized not only as a direct determinant of customer behavior but also

as a boundary condition that influences the effectiveness of marketing strategies. This study aims to examine the effects of positioning and differentiation strategies on revisit intention, the effect of revisit intention on room occupancy rate, the indirect effects of positioning and differentiation on room occupancy rate through revisit intention, and the moderating role of Sharia hotel branding at Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the marketing literature by extending the relationship between positioning, differentiation, and revisit intention through the moderating mechanism of Sharia hotel branding. It also broadens the application of Brand Equity Theory within the context of the Sharia hospitality industry.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

This study is grounded in several major theoretical perspectives, each selected because it explains a distinct part of the proposed model rather than being invoked generically. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by [Ajzen \(1991\)](#) explains that behavioral intention is determined by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. TPB is used specifically to explain how positioning strategy translates into revisit intention: a clear and favorable position formed in the customer's mind functions as an attitudinal object, so that a positive evaluation of the hotel's position (attitude), social approval of staying at a Sharia-compliant hotel (subjective norm), and the perceived ease of choosing that hotel again (perceived behavioral control) jointly shape the intention to revisit ([Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975](#); [Kesuma, 2023](#)). Brand Equity Theory ([Aaker, 1997](#)) suggests that brand equity is built through brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. This theory underpins the hypothesized moderating role of Sharia hotel branding because a strong Sharia brand is expected to raise the baseline level of perceived quality and trust against which a customer evaluates the hotel's positioning and differentiation efforts, so that a well-established brand can amplify how favorably those efforts are perceived; the present study tests this amplification indirectly through the relative strength of the branding coefficient rather than through a formal interaction term, as explained in Section 3 and the Limitations. This logic is consistent with prior evidence that religiosity and halal/Sharia-related constructs condition the strength of attribute-outcome relationships in Islamic hospitality settings ([Sulaiman, Iranmanesh, Foroughi, & Rosly, 2022](#)). Customer Loyalty Theory ([Oliver, 1999](#)) describes loyalty as a process that develops through four stages: cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty. This framework is relevant for explaining the formation of revisit intention as a behavioral-loyalty outcome that follows from customers' cognitive and affective evaluations of positioning and differentiation. In addition, Blue Ocean Strategy ([Kim & Mauborgne, 2005](#)) is relevant to Sharia hotels because it explains how a hotel can escape head-to-head competition with conventional four-star hotels by creating uncontested market space: by combining halal certification, prayer facilities, and Islamic hospitality values into a single differentiated offering, a Sharia hotel targets an underserved segment of value-conscious and faith-conscious travelers rather than competing solely on price or star-rating attributes shared with conventional competitors ([Tiqoh, 2024](#); [Reza, 2020](#)). Together, these four perspectives explain, respectively, how intention is formed (TPB), why branding is

expected to strengthen strategy effectiveness (Brand Equity Theory), how intention translates into sustained behavior (Customer Loyalty Theory), and why Sharia-based differentiation constitutes a distinct competitive space (Blue Ocean Strategy).

Positioning is defined as the process of designing a firm's offering and image to occupy a distinctive and valuable place in the minds of target customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Differentiation refers to the strategy of creating products or services that are perceived as unique and valuable, thereby distinguishing them from competitors (Porter, 1985). Sharia hotel branding is the process of building a hotel's image, values, and credibility based on Islamic principles reflected in its services and facilities (Maleha, 2025; Nuraini, 2025). Revisit intention refers to customers' intention to repurchase or revisit a hotel, reflecting their satisfaction and loyalty (Herison, 2021). Meanwhile, room occupancy rate represents the proportion of occupied rooms relative to the total available rooms within a given period, indicating the effectiveness of marketing strategies and customer retention (Siregar, 2025; Walker, 2020).

Based on the theoretical review above, the conceptual model of this study, which integrates positioning strategy, differentiation strategy, revisit intention, room occupancy rate, and the moderating role of Sharia hotel branding, is presented in Figure 1.

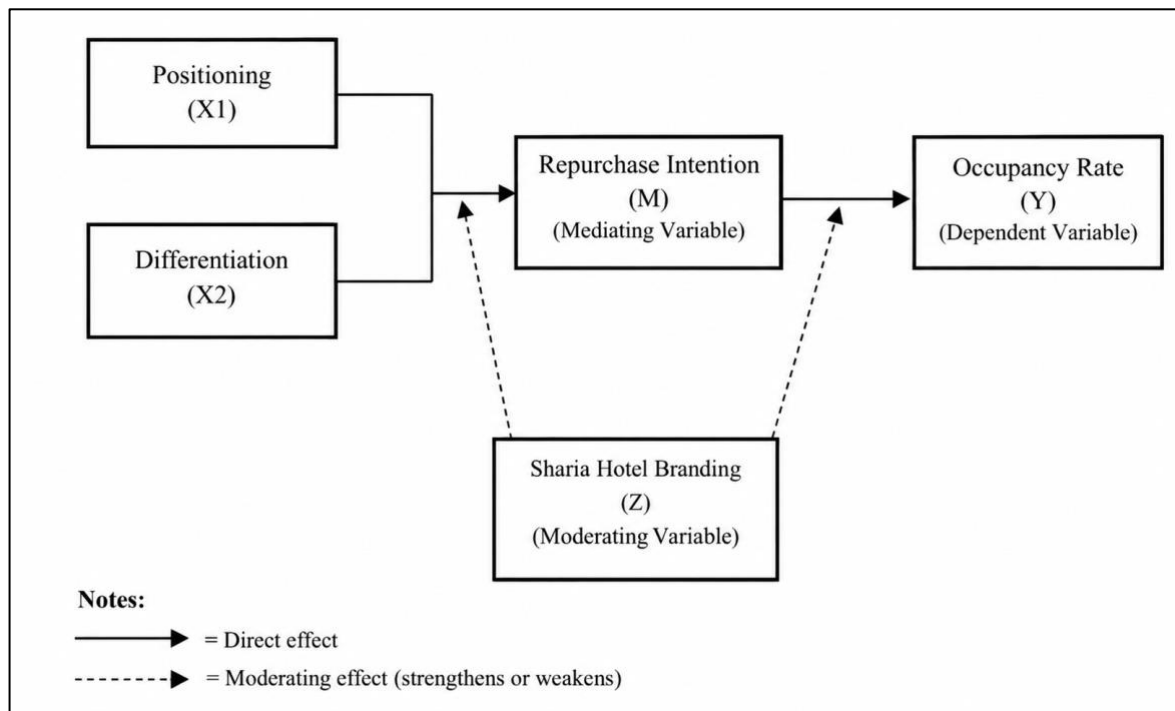


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

This study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H₁: Positioning strategy (X₁) has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention (Y₁) in four-star hotels.
- H₂: Differentiation strategy (X₂) has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention (Y₁) in four-star hotels.
- H₃: Positioning and differentiation strategies simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on revisit intention in four-star hotels.

- H₄: Revisit intention (Y_1) has a positive and significant effect on room occupancy rate (Y_2) in four-star hotels.
- H₅: Sharia hotel branding (Mo) moderates the relationship between positioning strategy and revisit intention in four-star hotels.
- H₆: Sharia hotel branding (Mo) moderates the relationship between differentiation strategy and revisit intention in four-star hotels.
- H₇: Revisit intention (Y_1) mediates the relationship between positioning and differentiation strategies and room occupancy rate (Y_2) in four-star hotels.

Each hypothesis is grounded in prior empirical findings. H₁ and H₃ are supported by studies reporting positive effects of positioning on revisit or repurchase intention (Yandi, 2023; Santoso, 2024; Muhyiddin & Yuliandari, 2023). H₂ and H₃ are consistent with evidence that differentiation strategy increases customer loyalty and repeat-visit behavior (Amanah & Prasetyo, 2019; Diputra, 2024; Nasir, 2024). H₄ aligns with relationship-marketing and loyalty research showing that revisit or repurchase intention translates into measurable performance outcomes such as occupancy or sales (Herison, 2021; Ridwan et al., 2021). H₅ and H₆ draw on studies demonstrating that religiosity and Sharia-related constructs condition (strengthen or weaken) the relationship between hotel attributes and revisit intention, most notably Sulaiman et al. (2022), who found that religiosity moderates the effect of Shariah-compliant hotel attributes on Muslim travellers' revisit intention using a formally specified interaction-based model; this study adopts the same conceptual logic but, given data limitations described in Section 3, tests it through a comparative-coefficient approach rather than a full interaction-term regression. H₇ follows established mediation logic in services marketing, in which intervening behavioral intentions (here, revisit intention) transmit the effect of upstream marketing strategies onto downstream performance indicators such as occupancy rate (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Oliver, 1999).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among the research variables (Sugiyono, 2019). Positioning strategy (X_1) and differentiation strategy (X_2) were specified as the independent variables, revisit intention (Y_1) as the intervening variable, room occupancy rate (Y_2) as the dependent variable, and Sharia hotel branding (Mo) as the moderating variable. The study was conducted at Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja, a four-star Sharia hotel located in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Since its establishment in 2017, the hotel has consistently implemented positioning and differentiation strategies based on Islamic values.

The population consisted of all guests who had stayed at Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja at least once. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who were at least 17 years old and had previous stay experience at the hotel. Following the recommendation of Hair et al. (2017), the minimum sample size was determined using five times the number of research indicators. With 40 indicators, the minimum sample required was 200 respondents. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire

using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Secondary data, including room occupancy rate, lodging revenue, and average room rate for the period of February–April 2026, were obtained from hotel management and supported by relevant literature.

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Instrument validity was assessed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. Classical assumption tests included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. H_1 to H_4 and H_7 were examined using multiple linear regression analysis, in which positioning strategy (X_1), differentiation strategy (X_2), and Sharia hotel branding (Mo) were entered as predictors of revisit intention (Y_1) and room occupancy rate (Y_2). The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory power of the regression models, whereas the significance of individual and simultaneous effects was evaluated using t-tests and F-tests at a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$). For H_5 and H_6 , a fully specified moderation test would require an interaction-based regression model of the form $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3Mo + \beta_4(X_1 \times Mo) + \beta_5(X_2 \times Mo)$, with the moderating effect confirmed through the significance of β_4 and β_5 and an increase in R^2 (ΔR^2) relative to the direct-effect model. Because the available data did not permit centering and computing these interaction terms with adequate reliability, the present study approximates the moderating role of Sharia hotel branding by comparing its standardized coefficient (Beta) against those of positioning and differentiation within the direct-effect model. This approach provides indicative, theory-consistent evidence for H_5 and H_6 but does not constitute a statistically confirmed test of moderation; it is treated as preliminary and is explicitly flagged as a limitation in Section 5, where a fully interaction-based Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) with ΔR^2 comparison is recommended for future research..

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 200 respondents who were guests of Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja, a four-star sharia-based hotel. Respondent characteristics based on gender, age group, and stay frequency are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	95	47.5%
	Female	105	52.5%
Age Group	< 25 years	55	27.5%
	25 – 35 years	105	52.5%
	> 35 years	40	20.0%
Stay Frequency	1 time	35	17.5%
	2 – 3 times	95	47.5%
	> 3 times	70	35.0%
Total		200	100%

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Based on Table 1, respondents were dominated by women (52.5%) compared to men (47.5%), with a relatively small gap indicating a fairly balanced gender composition. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (52.5%) fell within the productive age group of 25–35 years, who generally have high mobility for business and leisure purposes, making them relevant for assessing the hotel's marketing strategy. Regarding stay frequency, most respondents (47.5%) had stayed 2–3 times, while 35% had stayed more than 3 times, indicating that the majority of respondents had sufficient experience to assess the study variables.

Description of Research Variables

The description of the research variables based on the mean scores of respondents' answers is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of Research Variable

Variable	Number of Items	Mean	Category
Positioning Strategy (X1)	5	4.13	High
Differentiation Strategy (X2)	5	4.18	High
Sharia Hotel Branding (Mo)	10	4.16	High
Revisit Intention (Y1)	5	4.19	High
Room Occupancy Rate (Y2)	15	3.67	Moderately High

Source: Primary Data (2026)

All variables fall into the high category, except for Room Occupancy Rate, which falls into the moderately high category. The highest mean value was found for Revisit Intention (4.19), indicating a strong tendency among respondents to stay again. Differentiation Strategy (4.18) and Sharia Hotel Branding (4.16) show that the uniqueness of service and the hotel's sharia identity are perceived positively by guests, while Positioning Strategy obtained a mean of 4.13. Room Occupancy Rate obtained the lowest mean (3.67), indicating variation in perceptions regarding the consistency and density of guest activity across different hotel areas, although the overall perception remains positive.

Instrument Testing

The validity test on 40 statement items showed that all items were valid, as the calculated r-values (ranging from 0.142 to 0.540) were greater than the r-table value of 0.138 at a 5% significance level with 200 respondents. The reliability test results, both per variable and overall, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Remarks
Positioning Strategy (X1)	0.930	5	Highly Reliable
Differentiation Strategy (X2)	0.873	5	Reliable
Sharia Hotel Branding (Mo)	0.958	10	Highly Reliable
Revisit Intention (Y1)	0.946	5	Highly Reliable
Room Occupancy Rate (Y2)	0.973	15	Highly Reliable
Overall Instrument	0.866	40	Reliable

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

All variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.60 and are therefore considered reliable, with the highest value found in the Room Occupancy Rate variable (0.973) and an overall instrument reliability value of 0.866. Thus, the entire research instrument is declared valid and reliable, making it suitable for further analysis.

Classical Assumption Test

The normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov method produced an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200 (> 0.05) for both regression models, indicating that the residual data are normally distributed, as summarized in Table 4 and illustrated in Figure 2.

Table 4. Normality Test (One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test)

Statistic	Model 1 (Y1) Residual	Model 2 (Y2) Residual	Category
N	200	200	High
Mean	.0000000	.0000000	High
Std. Deviation	1.88471355	3.26009619	High
Test Statistic	.055	.053	High
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.200	.200	Moderately High

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

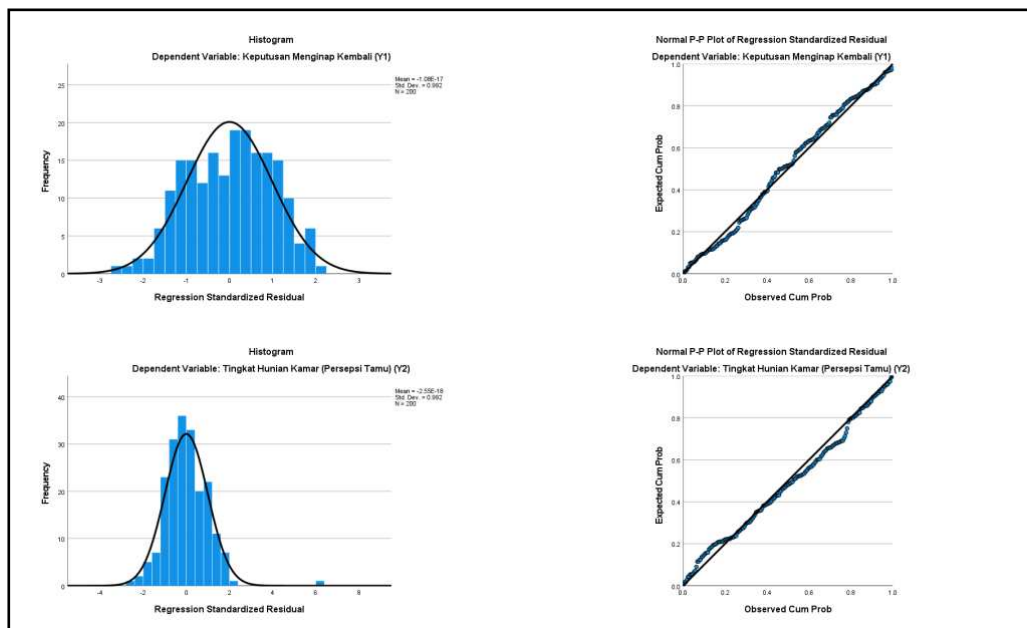


Figure 2. Histogram and P-P Plot of Normality Test (Model 1: Revisit Intention; Model 2: Room Occupancy Rate)
(Source: Data Analysis, 2026)

The multicollinearity test (Table 5) shows that all independent variables have tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10, indicating no multicollinearity among the independent variables.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Positioning Strategy (X1)	0.745	1.342
Differentiation Strategy (X2)	0.798	1.253
Sharia Hotel Branding (Mo)	0.648	1.542

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

The heteroscedasticity test using a scatterplot (Figure 3) shows that the data points are scattered without forming a particular pattern above or below zero on the Y-axis, indicating that the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity problems. With all classical assumptions satisfied, the multiple linear regression model used in this study is declared suitable for hypothesis testing.

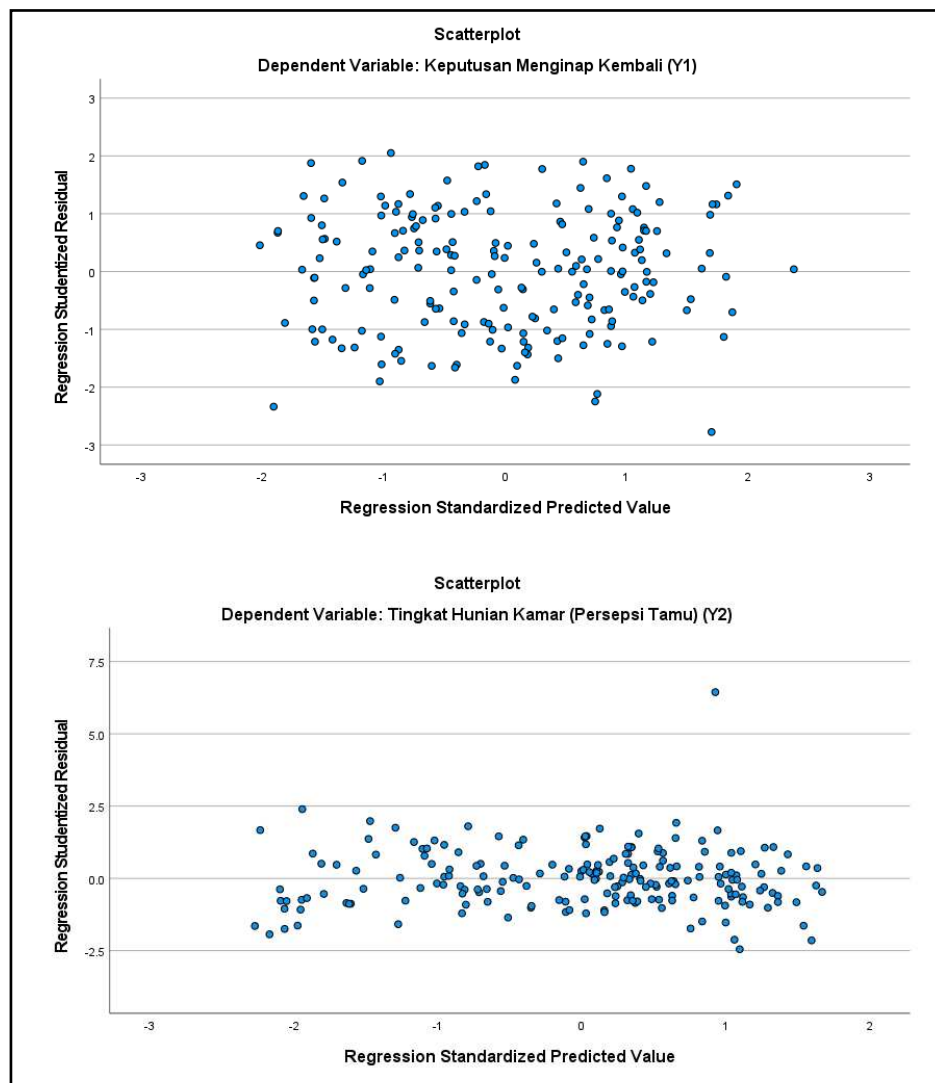


Figure 3. Scatterplot Results of Heteroscedasticity Test (Model 1: Revisit Intention; Model 2: Room Occupancy Rate)
(Source: Data Analysis, 2026)

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted on two models: revisit intention (Y1) and room occupancy rate (Y2) as dependent variables, with positioning strategy (X1),

differentiation strategy (X2), and Sharia hotel branding (Mo) entered simultaneously as predictors.

Table 6. Regression and Hypothesis Test Results for Revisit Intention (Y1)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Remarks
(Constant)	4.153	1.822	-	2.279	.024	-
Positioning Strategy (X1)	.205	.068	.206	2.987	.003	Significant
Differentiation Strategy (X2)	.237	.073	.217	3.250	.001	Significant
Sharia Hotel Branding (Mo)	.183	.048	.281	3.794	.000	Significant
R = .552 R Square = .305 Adjusted R Square = .294 Std. Error of Estimate = 1.899					F = 28.665	Sig. = .000

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

As explained in Section 3, this model tests the direct effects of the three predictors; the hypothesized moderating role of Sharia hotel branding (H5, H6) is subsequently examined indicatively by comparing its standardized coefficient against those of X1 and X2, rather than through a formal interaction-term MRA. The test results are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 7. Regression and Hypothesis Test Results for Room Occupancy Rate (Y2)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Remarks
(Constant)	20.993	3.152	-	6.661	.000	-
Positioning Strategy (X1)	.243	.118	.147	2.054	.041	Significant
Differentiation Strategy (X2)	.237	.073	.217	2.465	.044	Significant
Sharia Hotel Branding (Mo)	.394	.083	.361	4.725	.000	Significant
R = .506 R Square = .256 Adjusted R Square = .245 Std. Error of Estimate = 3.285					F = 22.501	Sig. = .000

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

The resulting regression equations for the two models are as follows:

$$Y1 = 4.153 + 0.205X1 + 0.237X2 + 0.183Mo$$

$$Y2 = 20.993 + 0.243X1 + 0.237X2 + 0.394Mo$$

The t-test results show that all independent variables have a positive and significant effect on both dependent variables (Sig. < 0.05), with sharia hotel branding showing the most dominant influence in both models (Beta = 0.281 on Y1 and 0.361 on Y2). The F-test results show a significant simultaneous effect in both the Y1 model (F = 28.665; Sig. = 0.000) and the Y2 model (F = 22.501; Sig. = 0.000). On this basis, H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported, and H7 receives indirect support through the significant direct-effect chain from positioning and differentiation to revisit intention and, in turn, to room occupancy rate. The R Square values indicate that positioning strategy, differentiation strategy, and sharia hotel branding jointly explain 30.5% of the variation in revisit intention and 25.6% of the variation in room occupancy rate, while the remainder is explained by other factors outside the model, such as price, promotion, seasonal patterns, and market conditions. Regarding

H5 and H6, sharia hotel branding shows a clearly stronger standardized effect than either positioning or differentiation in both models, which is consistent with, but does not statistically confirm, its hypothesized moderating role; because no interaction term was estimated, H5 and H6 are treated as indicatively rather than confirmatorily supported, pending the formal interaction-based test outlined in Section 3 and the Limitations.

The Effect of Positioning Strategy on Revisit Intention

The results show that positioning strategy has a positive and significant effect on repeat stay decisions. This finding is consistent with the concept of positioning proposed by [Kotler and Keller \(2016\)](#), who state that positioning is a company's effort to design an image so that it occupies a distinct and valuable position in consumers' minds. The positioning of Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja as a sharia hotel operates through two main mechanisms. First, positioning creates identity congruence between consumers' values and the hotel's brand image; according to [Al-Ansi, Olya, and Han \(2023\)](#), Muslim tourists tend to have a higher revisit intention when the services offered reflect the religious identity they hold. Second, positioning builds brand trust that reduces consumer uncertainty in evaluating service quality prior to consumption; [Battour, Ismail, and Battor \(2022\)](#) explain that halal attributes and sharia identity function as quality signals that increase Muslim tourists' trust. This finding is also consistent with research by [Muhyiddin and Yuliandari \(2023\)](#) and [Nuraini et al. \(2023\)](#), who found that sharia value-based positioning increases consumer preference and trust. Nevertheless, this result also confirms the findings of [Janah and Sufyati \(2022\)](#) that sharia positioning is only effective when it is consistently realized through actual service experience rather than merely a label.

The Effect of Differentiation Strategy on Revisit Intention

Differentiation strategy is proven to have a positive and significant effect on repeat stay decisions. According to [Porter \(1985\)](#), differentiation is a strategy for creating uniqueness perceived as valuable by consumers, resulting in a competitive advantage that is difficult to imitate. In the context of a sharia hotel, differentiation not only produces service uniqueness but also functions as a quality signal that reduces consumer uncertainty in evaluating intangible services. [Battour and Ismail \(2022\)](#) explain that sharia attributes in hospitality are associated with perceptions of cleanliness, safety, and service quality that create perceived safety. The differentiation of Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja is realized through physical evidence such as prayer facilities, halal certification, and services consistent with sharia values, which generate perceived value and psychological comfort ([Rather, 2021](#)). Consistent with [Han, Al-Ansi, Olya, and Kim \(2024\)](#), consumer trust increases when actual experience matches the expectations formed through this differentiation. Interestingly, the effectiveness of sharia differentiation is not limited to Muslim segments but extends to consumers who appreciate a comfortable, safe, and family-friendly environment, thereby broadening the scope of Porter's differentiation theory within the context of value-based hospitality.

The Effect of Sharia Hotel Branding on Revisit Intention and Its Role as a Moderating Variable

Sharia hotel branding is shown to have a positive and significant direct effect on revisit intention, and is in fact the most dominant predictor compared to positioning and differentiation. According to [Aaker \(1991\)](#), a brand is an asset capable of adding value perceived by customers through brand awareness, perceived quality, and trust. Sharia branding at Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja plausibly operates through the formation of brand trust ([Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005](#)) and brand authenticity ([Morhart et al., 2015](#)), namely the consistency between the brand promise and the actual experience felt by guests. Its markedly larger standardized coefficient relative to positioning and differentiation is consistent with, and lends indicative support to, the hypothesized moderating role of Sharia hotel branding; however, because the regression model estimated in this study includes only the direct effects of X1, X2, and Mo and does not include the interaction terms X1×Mo and X2×Mo, this result cannot be interpreted as statistical confirmation of moderation. It should instead be read as a theory-consistent signal that motivates, but does not substitute for, a subsequent interaction-based test. This interpretation is in line with the concept of brand congruence ([Azizah, 2022](#)), which suggests that when the sharia identity communicated by the hotel is aligned with customers' actual experience, the effectiveness of positioning and differentiation in fostering loyalty is likely to become stronger. Conversely, [Hellyani \(2025\)](#) found that a mismatch between brand image and customer experience can reduce brand trust, which would be expected to weaken rather than strengthen this effect. [Sulaiman et al. \(2022\)](#) provide direct empirical precedent for this type of mechanism, having formally confirmed, through an interaction-based model, that religiosity moderates the relationship between Shariah-compliant hotel attributes and Muslim travellers' revisit intention; the present findings are consistent with that pattern but await equivalent formal confirmation. Taken together, these results extend the view that sharia branding is no longer merely a religious segmentation strategy but has evolved into a hospitality quality signal with broader appeal, a point elaborated further below.

The Effect of Positioning Strategy, Differentiation Strategy, and Sharia Hotel Branding on Room Occupancy Rate

All three independent variables, both partially and simultaneously, are proven to have a positive and significant effect on room occupancy rate. This effect does not occur directly but through a series of processes involving the formation of perception, trust, and loyalty that ultimately lead to repeat stay decisions. Positioning shapes a clear perception of the hotel's identity ([Kotler & Keller, 2016](#)), differentiation produces unique value and experience ([Porter, 1985](#)), while sharia branding with the most dominant influence (Beta = 0.361) builds trust and a consistent perception of service quality ([Aaker, 1991](#)). These findings indicate that consumers do not merely purchase a hotel room but also an experience assurance attached to the brand. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.256$) also indicates that room occupancy rate is influenced by external factors outside the model, such as seasonal patterns, pricing policy, promotion, and market conditions, so the success

of marketing strategy needs to be supported by the hotel's ability to respond to market dynamics on an ongoing basis.

The Effect of Revisit Intention on Room Occupancy Rate

Repeat stay decision has a positive and significant effect on room occupancy rate, indicating that customer loyalty is a more stable source of demand compared to new customer acquisition. This finding supports [Oliver's \(1999\)](#) loyalty theory and [Morgan and Hunt's \(1994\)](#) relationship marketing theory, both of which emphasize that long-term relationships based on trust generate repeat purchase behavior that provides sustainable economic benefits to the firm. The contribution of repeat stay decisions to occupancy rate is multiplicative in nature, as loyal customers also tend to generate positive word of mouth ([Herison, 2021](#); [Yuliasti & Prasetyo, 2023](#)). Consistent with [Han and Kim \(2025\)](#), revisit behavior is a key predictor of long-term hospitality performance. Interestingly, repeat stay decisions in this study were shaped not only by functional satisfaction but also by psychological and emotional attachment to the sharia values embraced by the hotel ([Pratama & Saputra, 2025](#)), so that repeat stay decision functions as the key mechanism that translates the success of marketing strategy into measurable hotel operational performance.

Context, Boundary Conditions, and Audience Scope of the Findings

Three further questions help situate these findings beyond a simple confirmation of prior literature. First, why do these effects appear specifically in an Indonesian Sharia-hotel setting? Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim-majority country and has actively promoted halal tourism as a national development strategy ([Al Mustaqim, 2023](#); [Reza, 2020](#)), so guests at Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja are likely to hold pre-formed expectations about what a credible Sharia hotel should offer, making brand-experience congruence especially salient and consistent with the strong branding effect observed here. This contrasts with markets where halal hospitality is a niche offering rather than a nationally promoted category, and where the branding effect might therefore be weaker because guests lack comparable prior expectations. Second, whether these results would differ from a conventional (non-Sharia) hotel cannot be established directly from a single-hotel design such as this one, since no conventional-hotel comparison group was sampled; however, the theoretical expectation, consistent with [Battour, Ismail, and Battor's \(2022\)](#) and [Al-Ansi and Han's \(2023\)](#) view of Sharia identity as a hospitality quality signal, is that positioning and differentiation would still predict revisit intention in a conventional hotel, but branding-related trust would be expected to play a smaller relative role there than it does in a hotel whose entire value proposition is built around Islamic identity. Testing this comparison directly is an important direction for future research. Third, on whether Sharia branding appeals only to Muslim customers, the pattern in this study is consistent with a broader body of evidence indicating that halal-friendly attributes are not exclusively a Muslim preference: several studies report that non-Muslim travelers also respond positively to halal food and Sharia-compliant facilities for reasons related to hygiene, safety, and family-friendliness rather than religious observance alone ([Battour, 2016](#)). Because this study did not stratify respondents by religious affiliation, this remains an inference from the broader

literature rather than a finding directly established here, and it is listed as a limitation and direction for future subgroup analysis below.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In an increasingly competitive hospitality industry, understanding the effectiveness of marketing strategies is essential for enhancing customer loyalty and sustaining room occupancy rates. This study examined the effects of positioning and differentiation strategies on revisit intention and room occupancy rate, as well as the role of Sharia hotel branding in a four-star Sharia hotel. The findings indicate that both positioning and differentiation strategies positively and significantly influence revisit intention. These strategies also contribute to improving room occupancy rates. Among all predictors, Sharia hotel branding demonstrated the strongest contribution in both regression models, suggesting that a strong and consistent Sharia brand reinforces customer trust and enhances the effectiveness of positioning and differentiation strategies in encouraging revisit intention.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the marketing literature by demonstrating that Sharia hotel branding should not only be viewed as a direct antecedent of customer behavior but also as a contextual mechanism that enhances the effectiveness of positioning and differentiation strategies. The findings broaden the application of Brand Equity Theory in the context of Sharia hospitality by emphasizing the strategic role of branding in strengthening customer trust and revisit behavior.

From a managerial perspective, hotel managers should integrate positioning, differentiation, and Sharia branding into a coherent marketing strategy. A clear market position, distinctive Sharia-based services, and consistent brand delivery can strengthen customer loyalty and contribute to sustainable room occupancy.

This study has several limitations that also define priorities for future research. First, it was conducted in a single four-star Sharia hotel without a conventional-hotel comparison group, which limits the generalizability of the findings and precludes a direct test of whether the observed effects differ between Sharia and conventional hotels. Second, and most importantly, the analysis of H5 and H6 relied on comparing standardized regression coefficients rather than on a formally specified interaction-term model; the moderating role of Sharia hotel branding should therefore be interpreted as indicative, theory-consistent evidence rather than as a statistically confirmed moderation effect. Future studies should re-estimate the model using a fully interaction-based Moderated Regression Analysis of the form $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 Mo + \beta_4 (X_1 \times Mo) + \beta_5 (X_2 \times Mo)$, with mean-centered predictors and a formal comparison of ΔR^2 between the direct-effect and interaction models, supplemented by simple-slope analysis and bootstrapped confidence intervals. Third, this study did not stratify respondents by religious affiliation, so the extent to which Sharia branding appeals to non-Muslim as well as Muslim guests could not be tested directly and should be examined through subgroup or multi-group analysis in future work. Finally, future studies are encouraged to examine additional determinants of room occupancy, such as service quality, pricing strategy, customer satisfaction, and electronic

word-of-mouth, and to employ formal mediation analyses, such as bootstrapping techniques, to further validate the proposed relationships..

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