

Islamic Tourism: A Form of Harmonization of Religion, Politics, Social, Culture and Economy

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Abstract—Most research concluded that the development of Islamic tourism was associated with business and economic factors, namely the matter of seeking benefits from the development of Muslim tourism behavior. Research on Islamic tourism only made the connection between religion and tourism behavior but it did not examine the increasing awareness of Muslims in their obedience to sharia. This article aimed to compare the results of research on the development of Islamic tourism in various countries, both those with a majority of Muslim population and those which are not. This study applied a qualitative approach and chose a literature study to examine the data. In addition, research studies on the development of Islamic tourism provided other variations of the causes of the tourist variants development, namely political factors. The development of Islamic tourism in North Africa, Middle East and Asia, in general, is an impact of Islam after the WTC tragedy and in Thailand, Islamic tourism is part of conflict resolution in Southern Thailand.

Keywords—*business, halal tourism, Islamic tourism, politics*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism as a reality in the 21st century is a phenomenon that cannot be separated from the socio-cultural factors of society. Thus, the study of tourism development can be observed from various perspectives of social science disciplines so that reality can be better captured and understood. Traditionally, tourism is closely related to religion, which has acted as a strong motive for travelling [1]. This happened because religion had a huge influence on the daily lives of Asians [1]. Religion forms and contributes to shape human behavior, culture, and customs [1]. Religion has been linked to consumption habits and has become an economic target [2].

Religion is one of the main components of human culture which historically plays an important role in driving human behavior [2]. Religion has been an interesting research topic in social science since the 2000s that focused on human behavior [2]. Religious beliefs affect behavior in two ways. On the one hand, it influences behavior based on certain prohibitions and obligations; for example, Muslims are not permitted to eat pork or drink alcohol. On the other hand, religion creates the

norms, habits, and culture of society, which inevitably influence behavior [1].

At present, the concept of *sharia* has become a trend in the global economy, ranging from food and beverage products, finance, to lifestyle. Islamic Tourism is one of the trends in tourism development today [3]. In several countries in the world, *sharia* travel terminology uses several names that are quite diverse including Islamic Tourism, Halal Friendly Destination Tourism, Halal Travel, Muslim-Friendly Travel Destinations, Halal lifestyle, etc [3]. This article will consistently use the concept of Islamic tourism.

The emergence and development of Islamic tourism can be understood as a phenomenon that cannot separate tourism from the socio-cultural structure of society. The development of Islamic tourism is not only related to the objects visited by tourists in the form of places related to religious elements, but also related to the carrying capacity of tourism, including the provision of *halal* food and beverages and places of worship for Muslim tourists.

The trend of Islamic tourism began to develop along with the increasing Muslim population in the world. The increasing population of young, educated and high-income Muslims makes many international tourism industries start targeting Muslim tourists as their market target [4]. Sharia-compliant tourism targeting Muslim consumers shows that businesses are considering the characteristics of their customers [2]. At first, there were many obstacles for Muslims as tourists in the modern era when they travelled, especially in countries where the population is not the majority of Islam regarding regulations related to clothing, food, entertainment, personal and social relations, and religious observance [5]. Muslims will be hampered and disturbed when they find it difficult to find halal foods and drinks, places of worship, and prohibitions on Islamic dressings.

Religious beliefs encourage people to consume products according to their religious beliefs [2]. These religious-based consumption recipes have begun to be marketed as determinants of consumption that will provide positive and spiritual benefits for individuals on the condition that he

follows the rules of religion [2]. Muslims who travel certainly cannot separate the beliefs they profess. The tourists certainly need things regarding *halal* and illegitimate foods they will consume, the availability of comfortable places of worship, and the separation of public facilities between men and women, so that Muslim tourists can enjoy tourism without having to worry about these things [4].

II. METHODS

This study applied a qualitative approach starting from obtaining, analyzing, interpreting the data and making conclusions. The aim of the researcher to use a qualitative approach was to look for complex and holistic pictures of the subject matter concerning Islamic tourism. In detail, the researchers chose a literature study to examine the data.

III. FINDING

Sharia tourism or Islamic tourism is one of the allotments of tourism systems for Muslim tourists whose implementation complies with sharia rules [6]. Islamic Tourism is a tour that comes from nature, culture, or artificial which is framed by Islamic values [3]. Religion itself is one of the key elements of culture in Muslim societies. Religion-inspired journeys have been considered as an important theme in the tourism literature [1]. Islamic tourism is a tourist activity carried out by Muslims who are indeed motivated by the motivation to carry out Islamic activities and in accordance with the principles of Sharia [7].

The development of Islamic tourism has an economic, socio-cultural and religious relationship that Al-Hamarneh summarizes as a phenomenon; *first*, the rise of Islamic culture and the spread of Islamic values; *second*, economic benefits for the Islamic community; and *third*, strengthening Islamic self-confidence, identity and belief in facing stereotypes compared to other cultures and lifestyles [5].

In this case, hotels that carry *sharia* principles do not serve alcoholic drinks and have swimming pools and separate spa facilities for men and women [6]. Talking about *sharia* tourism is not only tourism to religious tourism sites or pilgrimage, but also to the implementation of promoting Muslim's *halal* standards-based services, such as providing *halal* food and places of worship [6].

As an important part of the development of OIC countries, international tourism activities have also grown substantially from the aspect of tourist arrivals and tourism receipts [1]. The number of tourist arrivals to OIC countries grew 5.5% during the 2007–2010 period [1]. There are several things that become the motor of growth of the global Muslim market, namely the demographics of young and large numbers of Muslim markets, the rapid economic growth of Muslim-majority countries, Islamic values that encourage the growth of business and Islamic lifestyles, the growth of trade transactions between countries of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), participation of multinational companies, technology and connectivity/ connectivity between countries [3].

The development of the concept of sharia tourism originated from the type of *jiarah* and religious tourism (pilgrims tourism/ spiritual tourism) which in 1967 there was a conference held in Cordoba, Spain by the United Nation of World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Islamic tourism has been introduced since 2000 from discussions on OIC meetings [8]. The term *halal* tourism has only become known since 2015 when an event at the World *Halal* Tourism Summit (WHTS) was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Previously the world of tourism only knew as a Muslim tour or for example.

The Islamic-based economic sector has recently increased significantly, namely culinary, Islamic finance, the insurance industry, fashion, cosmetics, pharmacy, entertainment, and tourism [3]. Islamic Tourism has become one of the oldest forms of tourism, with human migration associated with religion since the earliest times [9]. Since the early 2000s, the development of Muslim-friendly tourism products has also increased in several Muslim countries. Many studies have explained that the emergence of Islamophobia in Europe and America after the September 11, 2011 tragedy made Muslim tourists move their tourist destinations to fellow Muslim and Asian countries [10].

The development of Islamic Tourism was also influenced by the increase of anti-Islamic sentiments after the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States that made tourists from Muslim countries feel hopeless and afraid to travel to Europe and the US [5]. At the Damascus conference in 2008, the development of cultural tourism in Islamic countries was aimed at making non-Muslims accustomed to and not allergic to Islamic culture, and indirectly able to combat anti-Islamic sentiments. Islamic Tourism puts forward *halal* products and it is safe for consumption by Muslim tourists. However, that does not mean non-Muslim tourists cannot enjoy *sharia* tourism. For Muslim tourists, *sharia* tourism is part of *da'wah*. For non-Muslims, Islamic tourism with *halal* products is a healthy guarantee [6]. One important reason for studying the Muslim world is that the trajectory of tourism development may not follow a pattern identical to that which is found in other countries.

OIC countries have a high potential for sustainable development of the international tourism sector. This is especially true considering the nature and geography of those who are rich and diverse, the history, and cultural heritage assets [1]. Based on the 2015 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) in the destination OIC group, Indonesia (index score 67.5) ranks sixth after Qatar (index score 68.2), Saudi Arabia (index score 71.3), United Arab Emirates / UAE (index score 72.1), Turkey (index score 73.8), and Malaysia (index score 83.8) [3].

The connection between tourism and religion is not the same between one Muslim country and another. Strict Islamic rules are often found in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain but seem more liberal in Indonesia, Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco [5]. In addition, not all Muslim countries experience the development of good Islamic tourism because in

Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine, Lebanon and Yemen, the social upheavals, civil unrest, and conflicts hampered the development of the world of tourism.

In Indonesia, the term *sharia* tourism still invites debate because it is considered exclusive and contains elements of radicalism, so the concept developed is directed at *universal tourism*. Indonesia certainly has a uniqueness that is characteristic of the nation with existing tourism destinations, such as the palace, mosque, heirlooms, tombs, and culinary properties [9]. Indonesia has great potential in the development of Islamic tourism considering that the majority of its population is Muslim and there are supporting factors such as the availability of halal products [6]. In Indonesia, Muslims are estimated to reach 203 million or around 88.2% of the population. This is a potential for the development of sharia tourism, for example by creating sharia tourism packages in Indonesian tourism destinations [6].

In 2015, Indonesia received three awards at the 2015 *World Halal Travel Summit and Exhibition*. This was an important point in the development of sharia tourism in Indonesia. Most foreign tourists visiting Indonesia are from Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, India and Australia [7]. In Indonesia, Aceh Province has been quite optimal in launching Islamic tourism in its tourism products but still needs some improvements or strategies to attract Malaysian tourists as its main market [3].

In developing tourism in Indonesia, the Ministry of Tourism collaborates with the National Sharia Council (DSN), the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (MUI) and the Business Certification Institute (LSU). They will work together to develop tourism potentials and standards that uphold culture and Islamic values [9].

In Indonesia, world tourism revenues declined slightly to 13% in 2011, compared with 14.3% in 2010 [1]. There are 13 (thirteen) provinces that Indonesia has prepared to become sharia tourist destinations, namely West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, West Sumatera, Riau, Lampung, Banten, Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, South Sulawesi, and Bali [3]. *Sharia* tourism in Central Java and Yogyakarta can be developed by optimizing the creative industry [8].

In some Islamic countries (for example in Iran and Saudi Arabia) tourism development has not experienced the same pattern as in other countries and tourist destinations [1]. Islamic tourism is indeed growing rapidly in several countries. In Iran, a country that has a large number of cultural heritage and religious attractions, religious tourists tend to concentrate mostly on Shia Imam Reza's temple in Mashhad and his sister Fatima in [1]. In Iran and Saudi Arabia, tourism development is mainly achieved by attracting Muslims from neighbouring countries, that is, countries with geographical proximity [1].

Malaysia has built the concept of *sharia* tourism since 2006 and has even had a Directorate General of Sharia Tourism since 2009. This makes their sharia tourism programs

more integrated so that they are more coordinated [6]. Islamic tourism in Malaysia is good because they have a special system of Muslim tourism that promotes Islamic tourism on the national tourism agenda [3]. In Indonesia, currently there are only two hotels that get certificates or recommendations from the DSN. Meanwhile, Malaysia already has hundreds of *halal*-certified hotels from the local *ulama* assembly. There are 273 3-5 star hotels, 53-star hotels 1 and 2 [6].

Turkey is famous for its summer destinations because they continue to promote various tourism resources including history, culture, spa, natural beauty and urban tourism resources [11]. There are 75 hotels in Turkey that label Islamic hotels friendly with headscarves, Islamic holidays, and *halal* tourism. Islamic hotels are often found in destinations such as Canakkale Kas and Kusadasi. These hotels do not serve alcohol and pork, separate swimming pools for male and female guests, and require employees to dress modestly [3].

In Jordan, since 2001, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities has approved the opening of a new branch of tourism, namely Islamic tourism. This new policy has targeted tourists from Muslim countries and Western tourists. Jordan promotes the visit of the tombs of the prophets before the Prophet Muhammad and the companions of the Prophet [12]. Previously, the Jordanian Government has also developed religious-based tourism, namely *Christian tourism*. Morocco's policy succeeded in positioning the country as the top tourist destination in Africa in 2014 [13]. Attracting Muslim tourists is considered a good business opportunity in Tunisia which is one of the most important tourist destinations in the Middle East and North Africa.

In Tunisia, tourism began to develop during the Bourguiba era (1957-1987) which designed to attract tourists from Western Europe [14]. Nevertheless, the period of Bourguiba to Ben Ali (2011), remains clearly separated between religion and public space, including tourism. The 2011 Revolution did not change the conditions, PM Jebali still did not agree with the development of Islamic tourism. Nonetheless, the idea of Islamic tourism in Tunisia continues to grow to this day.

In the past few decades, Muslim travellers have gained a presence in the world of tourism markets. Special tastes and habits of Muslim consumers are increasingly taken into account by the global tourism industry, offering customized goods and services to meet their demands [2]. In the 2015 Global Master Card-Crescent Rating Muslim Travel Index, Singapore was re-elected as the most popular Muslim minority country for Muslim tourists. In the top 5, Singapore won 68.4 points, following Thailand in second place with a score of 59.5 points. Furthermore, in third place, there is England with a score of 59.0 points. In the fourth and fifth places is occupied by South Africa and Hong Kong with a total score of 53.1 and 53.0 points [4].

The tourism industry is always looking for new customer segments and one reason why business people target the tourist market is because Muslim tourists have significant purchasing power and market potential so they try to find out

the reasons why Muslims travel and choose more specific goals [15]. The opportunity to develop Islamic tourism in non-Muslim countries is also based on the opportunity that some tourists feel disappointed and have no choice but to compromise their religious beliefs to enjoy tourism [15].

Muslim markets have specific requirements of religion and culture, which tourism developers cannot ignore. Thus, there is actually a great opportunity if a country or tourist destination understands and meets the needs of this significant market segment, namely Muslim tourists. Business people in the tourism sector need to understand the motives behind the Muslims' behavior in making certain trips, including the selection of goals and attributes found in vacation spots [15]. If business people understand the purpose and aware of the reasons why Muslim travellers travel, they can do the right marketing promotion because it is based on the motives and motivations of Muslim travellers.

Countries such as Japan, Australia, Thailand, New Zealand, and so on, which in fact are not Muslim-majority countries contribute to Islamic tourism products [3]. Singapore is the main destination for non-OIC destinations, where Thailand, Britain, South Africa and France are also included. A number of countries in the world have worked on the Islamic tourism industry. For example in Asia, such as Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Korea, Japan, Taiwan and China, it has first developed Islamic tourism [3].

Singapore has again been named the friendliest non-Muslim country to Muslim tourists by the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) in 2015. Singapore is not a Muslim country and Muslim communities are only a minority there. But with the intelligence of his government, Singapore is currently the friendliest country to Muslims. The success of Islamic tourism has a positive impact on increasing the number of tourists from Indonesia which will indirectly affect the country's foreign exchange earnings [4].

For the tourism industry sector itself, Singapore has an STB (Singapore Tourism Board). The main focus of the STB is to provide information to Indonesian Muslim tourists about tourism places related to Islamic history, mosque & mosque locations, and various places in Singapore that provide a variety of certified foods. Halal by Halal Certification Institutions [4]. Singapore officially has a halal certification which has been recognized by the Institute for Food, Drug and Cosmetic Studies of the Indonesian *Ulama* Council (LPPOM MUI) in collaboration with the Islamic Council of Singapore (MUIS) [4].

Thailand has The Halal Science Center Chulalongkorn University, the research center is working with the Thai Government and religion makes certification and standardization for the industry which is carried out transparently, even the financing is clearly and transparently listed [3]. The development of Islamic tourism in Thailand is indeed a dilator behind political problems other than because of economic benefits. The Thai government involves Muslim minority communities in Pattani in the development of Islamic

tourism. Thus, it is expected that economic equality will occur in the southern region which will reduce political turmoil there.

Australia through the Queensland Tourism Institute issued an Islamic tourism program in August 2012. The Australian Government in collaboration with renowned hotels held a joint *iftar*, providing comfortable and easily accessible prayer centers in shopping centers, providing Qibla direction and the Koran in hotel rooms, to provide officers at the Visitor's Information Offices who are able to speak Arabic [4].

South Korea through the Representative of the South Korean Tourism Organization in Jakarta (KTO Jakarta) acknowledges that it is ready to become an Islamic tourism destination by providing tourism packages for Muslims and supporting facilities [4]. Tourist attractions in South Korea already provide facilities that facilitate Muslim tourists. Halal tourism destinations in Korea include Gyeonggi-do (there are many entertainment venues that provide places of worship and halal food for Muslims including Everland, Korea Folk Village in Yongin, Petite France in Gapyeong, Skin Anniversary in Paju with Woongjin Playdoci and Aiins World in Bucheon [4]. Germany provides clean and comfortable prayer rooms at Terminal 1 of Munich Airport, Germany since June 2011 [4].

IV. CONCLUSION

Religion forms and contributes to shape human behavior, culture, and customs and concepts Sharia has become a trend in the global economy, ranging from food and beverage products, finance, to lifestyle. The trend of Islamic tourism began to develop along with the increasing Muslim population in the world, which made many international tourism industries begin to target Muslim tourists as their target market. Muslims who travel certainly cannot escape the beliefs they profess. Religious beliefs encourage people to consume products according to their religious beliefs and Muslims will be hampered and disturbed when they find it difficult to find halal food and drink, places of worship, and prohibitions on Islamic dressings at tourism sites.

The Islamic-based economic sector has increased significantly lately, namely culinary, Islamic finance, insurance, fashion, cosmetics, pharmacy, entertainment and tourism industries. The development of Islamic Tourism was also influenced by the increase of anti-Islamic sentiments after the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. The development of cultural tourism in Islamic countries aims to enable non-Muslims to get used to and not be allergic to Islamic culture, and indirectly combat the anti-Islamic sentiments. The development of Islamic tourism has an economic, socio-cultural and religious link. Islamic Tourism development has several objectives, namely the rise of Islamic culture and the spread of Islamic values; economic benefits for the Islamic community; and strengthening Islamic self-esteem, identity and belief in facing stereotypes compared to other cultures and lifestyles.

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