The Role of Travel Agency in Encouraging Sharia Tourism in Indonesia

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Abstract: Indonesia is a country with the largest population of Muslims in the world. It has the potential for an ordinary tourist attraction that has yet to become the primary choice of international Sharia tourists. With such a huge potential, Indonesia should be able to achieve its primary purpose. However, the condition of Indonesia has yet to be included in the top 10 destinations of world sharia tourism. On the contrary, Indonesian citizens become Sharia tourists with the purpose of other countries. One that plays a role in encouraging Indonesia to be the leading destination of Sharia tourism in Indonesia is the Travel Bureau. This study aims to determine the role of the Travel Agency in encouraging Sharia tourism in Indonesia. In addition, this research is meant to identify the factors that support and inhibit the role of the Travel Agency in encouraging Sharia tourism in Indonesia to become the world's leading tourist destination. This study's results indicate that no Travel Agency focuses on the Sharia tourism business in Indonesia. For that, the existence of the Travel Agency plays a significant role in encouraging Sharia tourism in Indonesia to be the primary goal.

Keywords: travel agency, sharia tourism, Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Sharia tourism in Indonesia is currently overgrowing. According to international tourist achievement data in 2010, out of a total of 7 million foreign tourists visiting Indonesia, 1.2 million tourists, or around 18 per cent, were Muslim tourists, who have the potential to participate in developing Sharia Tourism. The Director General of Tourism Marketing, Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Esthy Reko Astuti, is optimistic that with the continued development of tourism in Indonesia and the awareness of the industry to apply star's values to their products, in the next few years there will be an increase in international Muslim tourists to at least 20-25 per cent of the number of foreign tourists entering Indonesia. (Ministry of Tourism, 2017)

The development of halal tourism is an alternative to the tourism industry in Indonesia, along with the trend of halal tourism, which is part of the global Islamic economic industry (see Samori et al., 2016: 132). The increase has influenced the dynamics of world tourism in the last three years in trips between countries and economic growth, especially in the Asia Pacific region. Total world tourists 2014 reached 1,110 million overseas trips, which grew 5% compared to the previous year. 2014 more than 300 million (27.1% of total world tourists) travelled to Asia, and 96.7 million entered Southeast Asia. While in 2015, amidst the unfavourable global situation, world tourist trips still grew by 4.5%. So, tourism continues to
The number of tourist visits to Indonesia in 2016 reached 12,023,971, an increase of 15.5% compared to the number of visits by Indonesian tourists throughout 2015, which reached 10,406,759 people. Meanwhile, in the 2017 Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) report, according to the Minister of Tourism (Menpar) Arief Yahya, Indonesia's tourism competitiveness index is at 42, or fourth after Singapore (13), Malaysia (26), and Thailand (34). According to the Minister of Tourism Arief Yahya, in May 2017, Indonesia was included in the top 3 Muslim-friendly destinations in the world by the 2017 Mastercard-Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index or rose one rank by surpassing Turkey (4), Saudi Arabia (5), and Qatar (6). (Klikkabar, 2017)

Foreign tourists (tourists) who came through 19 main entrances in March 2017 totalled 909,173 people. This number has increased from foreign tourists who entered in the previous month, which amounted to 838,686 people (Graph 4). The increase in the number of foreign tourists occurred at 18 main entrances. Meanwhile, compared to the absolute number of foreign tourists arriving in March 2017 compared to March 2016, there was an increase of around 12.26 per cent. The Room Occupancy Rate (TPK) in star hotels in all provinces in March 2017 increased in 26 provinces compared to the previous month. TPK in that month ranged from 26.0-68.2 per cent, with the highest TPK recorded in North Sulawesi. In the same month, foreign guests' average length of stay at star hotels ranged from 1.3-4.8 days, with the highest stay in Bengkulu. (BPS, 2017)

Specifically, in the tourism sector, the contribution of Muslim tourists reached USD 126 billion. BPS recorded the number of Muslim tourists entering Indonesia until October 2012, reaching 1,270,437. It is so fabulous. With such great potential, Indonesia should be able to become the leading actor in driving Sharia tourism (Satriawan, 2017). With all the market potential and potential tourist attractions that Indonesia has, the government has set several targets at the end of the presidency of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, President Joko Widodo, in 2019. At that time, the target of Muslim tourists coming to Indonesia was five million people, domestic tourist trips reached 242 million, and Indonesia's position in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) was already first place. (Pratawi, 2017)

This target was then accompanied by several steps, such as enhancing the international image by winning international awards, integrated promotion and marketing in international...
markets, and strengthening the competitiveness of attractions. Indonesia itself has won the World Halal Travel Award in Abu Dhabi for two years in a row. As a priority for halal tourism, West Nusa Tenggara won this prestigious award twice in a row. After becoming a priority program of the central government, tourism has also become a concern of local governments. Especially for West Nusa Tenggara, halal tourism is part of regional development. (Republika, 2017)

Indonesia has great potential in developing Sharia tourism, considering that most of its population is Muslim, and there are supporting factors such as the availability of halal products. Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, naturally has a culture of carrying out an Islamic social life, so most of its areas which are tourist destinations, are friendly to Muslim travellers. Regarding the needs of the world's Muslims, of the more than 6.8 billion world population, no less than 1.57 billion or around 23% are Muslims. Even in Indonesia, adherents of Islam are estimated to reach 203 million people or around 88.2% of the total population. For example, Sharia tourism development has the potential to create Sharia tour packages in Indonesian tourist destinations. (Arby, 2017)

This considerable potential must be managed and optimized to benefit Indonesia, which is predominantly Muslim. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia is concerned with developing Sharia tourism in Indonesia. It can be seen from the efforts made by the government through the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia to develop and promote service businesses in the fields of hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and spas in 12 Sharia tourist destinations. The development was carried out in several cities, namely Aceh, West Sumatra, Riau, Lampung, Banten, Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, West Nusa Tenggara and South Sulawesi (Sapudin, 2014 in Haidar Tsany Alim, et al. 1). Central Java and Yogyakarta provinces are Sharia tourist destinations with many exciting tourist objects. Supported by adequate transportation, these tourist objects are elementary to visit. (Alim, 2015)

Indonesia, as a country with extraordinary natural wealth and beauty, has considerable tourism potential compared to other countries. Especially when it is connected with the largest Muslim population in the world, it is projected that Indonesia will become a pioneer of world Sharia tourism in the future. Even a report Utilizing the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) shows that foreign Muslim tourists contributed 126 billion US dollars in 2011. (Aulia, 2017)

Because Indonesia has the world’s largest Muslim population, the international community also considers Indonesia, a potential primary market for the world’s halal consumers. Globally, the Muslim population in the world is growing. It is estimated that 1.6 billion or 3 per cent of the world’s population (Vivanews, 19/12/2012). That number beat tourists from Germany, the United States and China. According to data from Global Muslim Traveler, Indonesian Muslim tourists are included in the top 10 countries with the most tourists. However, unfortunately, Indonesia is not included in the top 10 destinations for Muslim visits. Indonesia, which is rich and has abundant natural wealth, must be able to seize this opportunity so that it is not just a consumer. For this reason, some time ago, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism developed and promoted service businesses in hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and spas in 12 Sharia tourist destinations. The development was conducted in several cities: Aceh, West Sumatra, Riau, Lampung, Banten, Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, NTB and South Sulawesi. (Aulia, 2017)

To seize this sharia tourism opportunity, Indonesia needs to make serious efforts to become an actor in global sharia tourism and not just as a consumer. One that plays a role in encouraging Sharia tourism in Indonesia is the Travel Bureau. The Travel Bureau is expected to lead in encouraging Sharia tourism in Indonesia. Based on Travel Service Statistics Data
published by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), the number of Travel Agencies in 2011 was 3,038 Travel Service Businesses (UPW) consisting of 1,120 Travel Bureaus (BPW) and 1,918 Travel Agents (APW) as explained in Table 1.

Only now does data mention the number of Sharia Tourism Travel Agencies in Indonesia. However, in practice, the Sharia Travel Bureau has begun to appear with the presence of the Indonesian Halal Travel Association or abbreviated as ATHIN. ATHIN was founded in Jakarta to become the best Halal Travel association with the broadest network worldwide.

**Table 1. Development of Medium and Large Scale Tourism Travel Services Business, 2007–2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Travel Bureau</th>
<th>Travel Agency</th>
<th>Tourism Travel Service Business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business/Company</td>
<td>Average Employee</td>
<td>Business/Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>Growth (%)</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>24.43</td>
<td>12.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>16.81</td>
<td>12.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1.116</td>
<td>17.23</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1.120</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Travel Service Statistics (BPS), 2012

Observing the huge opportunity for Indonesia to become a significant actor in global Sharia Tourism, the writer is interested in conducting research specifically related to the Travel Bureau with the title Role of the Travel Bureau in Encouraging Sharia Tourism in Indonesia.

**METHOD**

The research methodology on the Role of Travel Agencies in Encouraging Sharia Tourism in Indonesia is carried out in three stages, including searching for information sourced from electronic media and tourism literature, collecting data related to government policies on tourism, conducting a descriptive analysis of existing data, as well as draw conclusions from the discussions that have been carried out.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Overview of Sharia Tourism in Indonesia**

The general description of the development of Sharia tourism in Indonesia concerns 2 (two) things, namely: government policies and Sharia tourist destinations in Indonesia. For the first is government policy. Indonesia already has Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism. The government, in this case, the Ministry of Tourism, has issued Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2014 concerning Business Standards for Tour and Travel Services. The existence of this regulation forms the basis of tourism governance in Indonesia.

The President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, the government has also made a target for 2019. The target of Muslim tourists coming to Indonesia is five million people, the trips of domestic tourists reached 242 million trips, and Indonesia's position in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) is ranked first (Pratiwi, 2017). In order to realize this target, the government is carrying out several steps, such as enhancing its international image by winning international awards, integrated promotion and marketing in international markets, and strengthening the competitiveness of attractions. In this case, Indonesia has won the World
Halal Travel Award for two consecutive years in Abu Dhabi. Local governments also follow the seriousness of this central government. Damiana, as one of the ten priority provinces for halal tourism, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) won this prestigious award twice in a row. After becoming a priority program of the central government, tourism has also become a concern of local governments. Especially for NTB, halal tourism is part of regional development. (Republika, 2017)

Third, Sharia tourist destinations in Indonesia. The Ministry of Tourism develops sharia tourism covering four types of tourism business components: hotels, restaurants, travel agents or services, and spas. There are 13 (thirteen) provinces that Indonesia is preparing to become sharia tourist destinations, namely West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, West Sumatra, Riau, Lampung, Banten, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, South Sulawesi, and Bali (IndonesiaTravel, 2013). The Sharia tourist destination areas are determined based on human resources, community culture, regional tourism products, and tourist accommodation readiness. (Andriani, 2015)

As it is known that there are many tourist destinations in Indonesia, and they are not only limited to the thirteen established Sharia tourist destinations. Thus it is necessary to explore the potential for sharia tourism development in other regions in Indonesia. However, the great potential that Indonesia has not been maximally worked on when compared to other Southeast Asian countries. Based on the Three Greats concept promoted by the Ministry of Tourism, the 13 destination areas will be divided into three main entry points: Jakarta, Bali and Batam. Foreign tourists can reach the surrounding areas, which are Sharia tourist destinations. Through Jakarta, foreign tourists can also access West Java, Banten and Lampung destinations. You can access Lombok, East Java, Central Java, and Yogyakarta through Bali. In Batam, it is more directed to West Sumatra. However, seen as a whole, the regions that have just made a commitment and have indeed stated they are ready are Jakarta, West Java, NTB, Yogyakarta and East Java. (Andriani, 2015)

Figure 1. Sharia Tourism Destinations in Indonesia

Source: Kemenparekraf, 2013, Indonesia as Moslem Friendly Destination (Travel Guidebook)

Development of Sharia Tourism Travel Bureau

Organizationally and institutionally, the development of the Sharia Travel Bureau has progressed. It can be seen from the existence of associations or associations that cover the Sharia Travel Bureau. An association in Indonesia has been formed called the Indonesian Halal Travel Association, which will be officially called ATHIN. ATHIN at the National level is
domiciled in the Capital of the Republic of Indonesia, ATHIN at the provincial level is located in the provincial capital, and ATHIN at the Regency or City Regional level is located in the Regency or City Capital.

ATHIN's vision is to become the best Halal Travel association with the broadest network worldwide. Meanwhile, there are 8 (eight) Missions: 1) Become a government partner promoting Indonesia's halal tourism potential worldwide. 2) Serve and protect members' interests, accommodate suggestions and fight for members' aspirations. 3) Provide guidance and direction to members to develop their capacities and abilities. 4) Provide input and/or consideration to the government and stakeholders in formulating policies and programs for halal tourism 5) Support members in empowering and developing professionalism capabilities. 6) Provide guidance and supervision to members in carrying out business activities professionally and in compliance with Islamic Sharia. 7) Initiate the halal tourism movement. 8) Become a member mediator with tourism business stakeholders to build synergistic cooperation inside and outside the tourism service business at the local, national and global levels.

ATHIN's vision is to carry out the following functions: 1) Representing and fighting for members' interests. 2) Develop capabilities and improve the skills of members in order to achieve better performance. 3) Collecting and disseminating information regarding government policies and other provisions in the field of travel business. 4) Maintaining business ethics, preventing unfair competition among fellow members and fostering cooperation with all parties for the benefit of members in particular and the interests of tourism in general. 5) Carry out the mediation function among members and other parties in the context of solving problems. 6) Provide advocacy to members.

Besides ATHIN, in Indonesia, there is also the Indonesian Islamic Tourism Association (APII) actively promoting Halal Tourism. The socialization and coaching were carried out for the Halal Tourism Community Group with the Community, one of which is in Sembalun, East Lombok. However, on the other hand, the Sharia Tourism Travel Bureau still needs to be ready to welcome Islamic tourism opportunities in Indonesia. Based on the results of a study conducted by the Ministry of Tourism in 2015, there are 157 travel agency business units or tours and travel in Manado. Of these, no Travel Bureau provides travel/tour packages that meet Sharia tourism criteria or has a list of accommodations and restaurants that meet Sharia criteria. For tour guides there is also no tour guide specifically to handle Muslim guests or tourists. Likewise, the Travel Bureau (BPW) and Tour Guides are still conventional, and none have been specifically dedicated to serving Muslim tourists. Suppose you want to develop Manado into a Sharia tourist destination. In that case, the government must be able to encourage BPWs in Manado and its surroundings to make Sharia or halal tour packages. In practice, the role of BPW is huge in bringing in Muslim tourists, both domestic and foreign. Guarantees for halal or sharia tourism are stronger through tour packages because everything has been well prepared by BPW, destinations, attractions, hotels and resorts that are family-friendly, so that Muslim tourists, especially those travelling with family, can avoid these things that are prohibited by Islamic religious rules (Andriani, 2015). For this reason, the Sharia Tourism Travel Bureau needs to continue improving to optimise this vast potential and opportunity.

As an illustration, the profiles of the Sharia Travel Bureau as described below. Muslim Bali Tours is a Sharia Tours & Travel Travel Bureau in Bali; we started this business in 2011. Halal tourism on the island of Bali started from a concern where we often encounter Muslim tourists who travel to Bali, who often have difficulty finding halal food, hotels that serve truly halal food, and difficulty finding mosques or prayer places. When they want to ask about halal food or the location of a place to pray, they are sometimes embarrassed to ask because the
Guide or Driver who takes them is a non-Muslim. Calmness, comfort, pleasure in travelling without leaving the five daily prayers, and tranquillity in enjoying genuinely Halal culinary offerings are our service's main principles. Our drivers, guides, tour leaders, and staff are Muslims who, God willing, are diligent in worship, understand very well about tourist attractions in Bali, halal food spots and menus in Bali, and know about mosques or prayer places in Bali. (muslimbalitours, 2017)

Cherie Halal Wisata Tour Travel is present to fulfil one of the needs of Muslims to travel for worship, namely the importance of halal menus at tourist visits, even to non-Muslim countries. Established in 2012, we have served thousands of tourists and pilgrims with a commitment to the best service at competitive prices and guaranteed satisfaction for our guests. Services cover the needs of Muslim tour packages for domestic and foreign and provide tickets, hotels, visas and other travel needs for personal, corporate or group needs. Cheria Tickets are IATA Agents, both Domestic and International and For Hajj Plus and Umrah Services, Cheria is the Official Medina Iman Wisata Jakarta Branch Agent with an Official Permit of the Ministry of Religion No. 118/2015 and D/70/2015. Cherie Holiday can be accessed via http://cheria.co.id/#/app/tour/list.

Factors supporting the Travel Bureau

Several factors support the Sharia Travel Bureau's role in growth and development in Indonesia. First, there is the potential for the best tourist destinations. Efforts made by the government in developing Sharia tourism are preparing 13 (thirteen) provinces to become Sharia tourist destinations, namely West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, West Sumatra, Riau, Lampung, Banten, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Java. Central, Yogyakarta, East Java, South Sulawesi and Bali. However, of the 13 declared ready provinces, namely Jakarta, West Java, NTB, Yogyakarta, and East Java (Andriani, 2015). It is undoubtedly a supporting factor for the Sharia Travel Bureau to be able to sell the best destinations.

Second, there are awards events. The existence of award events is essential as a form of appreciation to those who have pioneered and developed sharia tourism in Indonesia. One of the recent events was the 2016 National Halal Tourism Competition (KPHN) for the Best Halal Travel Bureau category. As a result, ten nominations came from five provinces. Nominees for the 2016 National Halal Tourism Competition (KPHN) Best Halal Travel Bureau: Cheria Halal Wisata Tour Travel – South Jakarta, DT Mice and Tour – Bandung, West Java, Ero Tour – West Sumatra, ESQ Tours Travel – South Jakarta, Gaido Travel & Tours - South Jakarta, Gardi Tour - Makassar, South Sulawesi, Kaisa Rossie - Semarang, Central Java, Munatour Travel - South Jakarta, Royal Indonesia Travel - Depok, West Java and Tazkia Travel - South Jakarta. (Afifon, 2017)

Third, there is a fatwa on halal tourism No 108/2016, which stipulates the basic principles of implementing and standardizing tourism aspects based on sharia, with aspects in the form of hotels, spas, massages, saunas, tourist attractions and travel agents. Provisions for Sharia travel agents are travel guides that prevent shirk, immorality, superstition, adultery, pornography and pornography, drugs, gambling and alcohol. (Halal Corner, 2017)

Inhibiting Factors of Travel Bureau

The results of this study have identified several factors that impede the role of the Sharia Travel Bureau in Indonesia to grow and develop. First, there still needs to be more able to provide travel/tour packages that comply with Sharia tourism criteria. Second, there still needs to be more able to have a list of accommodation that complies with the general guidelines for Sharia tourism accommodation. Third, there still needs to be more able to have a list of food
and beverage provider businesses following the general guidelines for Sharia tourism food and beverage supply businesses. Fourth, halal tourism standards have yet to be socialized as a reference.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study conclude that Indonesia already has adequate regulatory support for Sharia tourism development. There are 13 (thirteen) leading sharia tourist destinations in Indonesia, namely West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, West Sumatra, Riau, Lampung, Banten, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, South Sulawesi and Bali. This research also concludes that the existence of a Travel Bureau plays a significant role in encouraging Sharia tourism in Indonesia. Based on the results of this study, there are several suggestions for ethical stakeholders. First, based on the results of this study, the Sharia Tourism Travel Bureau needs to improve 3 (three) capabilities, namely: the ability to provide travel/tour packages that comply with Islamic tourism criteria, the ability to have a list of accommodations that comply with the general guideline for Islamic tourism accommodation and the ability to have a list of food and beverage provider businesses that are following the general guidelines for sharia tourism food and beverage provider businesses. Second, the government is expected to continue providing support for the Sharia Travel Bureau to optimize the potential of Sharia tourist destinations in Indonesia. Third, for further research related to the Sharia Tourism Travel Bureau, it is suggested to use the object of the Sharia Tourism Travel Bureau, which fully handles Islamic tourism, to see more in-depth conditions.

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