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RESEARCH ARTICLE

MUSLIM FRIENDLY TOUR PACKAGES BASED ON PESANTREN IN LOMBOK FOR MALAYSIAN MARKET

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Abstract

Muslim-Friendly tourism has become a global trend and is one of the factors driving the economy and contributes to the growth of tourism industry. The concept of Muslim-Friendly tourism has also garnered considerable interest in recent years, especially in countries with a Muslim majority, such as Malaysia and Indonesia. The island of Lombok is one of Indonesia's major Muslim-Friendly destinations. The island is famous for its beautiful landscapes, underwater, unique culture, and other destination attributes which attract both domestic and international visitors. Lombok, is also home to numerous pesantren that focus on teaching Islamic principles alongside general knowledge, contributing significantly to the religious and social development of the region. Thus, the study aimed to explore Muslim-Friendly tourism based on pesantren for Malaysian tourists in Lombok and to analyse the feasibility of Pesantren tour as a place of attraction and inclusive of the Muslim-Friendly Tour Packages. A qualitative method was adopted where the data is collected through document research and Semi-structured interviews of representatives of travel agents and 3 founders of selected Pesantren in Lombok. The document research is to identify the information on Muslim-Friendly tourism industries, its packages and services provided for tourists especially in Indonesia. The collected data were analysed using content and thematic analysis. The finding showed that Muslim-Friendly tourism tour Package based on Pesantren includes four important criteria which may attract Muslim Malaysian Tourists to Lombok. The criteria cover the product, services and Management, education activities offered, culture and achitecture values and cuisine delight. Charity experience attracted most Malaysians to visit Pesantren. Thus, the study recommended for the tourism agencies and Indonesian authority to boost the pesantren operators' awareness on their potentiality to support the future growth of Muslim-Friendly tourism industry in Lombok.

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Introduction:-

Battour (2016) disclosed that Muslim-Friendly Tourism (MFT) is an endeavour to turn tourism experience as a pleasure to Muslim travellers and letting them to perform their religious duties while travelling. MFT has a large share of Muslim in MFT as stated in the global economic report 2017 with the size of the global Islamic Economy Sector being at USD 169 billion. Moslem friendly tourism has become a global trend and is one of the factors driving the economy and contributes to the growth of the tourism industry. According to Salam Gateway, based on State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2022 estimates Muslim spend on tourism increased from \$58 billion to \$102 billion in 2021 and it is expected to grow another 50% in 2022 to \$154 billion and reach \$189 billion in 2025(SGIE, 2022).

Indonesia, as the destination with the highest Muslim population, continued to improve facilities and services for Muslim travellers to enhance its global attractiveness. As a result, Indonesia has been awarded as the “Top Muslim-Friendly destination” in 2023 and 2024 by Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI). The combination of a welcoming environment, government support, and infrastructure tailored to Muslim needs has helped Indonesia to remain competitive in the Muslim-Friendly tourism market. These awards highlight Indonesia's ability to offer a rich, culturally immersive experience for Muslim visitors while respecting and accommodating their religious practices (Mastercard-Crescentrating, 2024).

As a leading Muslim-Friendly destination, Indonesia attracts millions of international visitors each year especially from neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia, China, Australia, and Europe. Malaysia is the primary contributor to foreign tourist visits in 2024. As of August 2024, over 1.45 million tourists from Malaysia have vacationed in Indonesia. Several factors have contributed to this surge, including geographical proximity, cultural similarities, and the enhancement of tourism services and facilities in Indonesia. Moreover, robust connectivity through air and sea routes between the two nations remains a major reason for Malaysia's continued dominance as Indonesia's principal tourism market (Tempo, 2024). As Malaysia is a major source of international tourists to Indonesia, the number of Malaysian visitors to Lombok is also growing significantly. By August 2024, total Malaysian visitors to Lombok reached 19,060 visitors and became the top foreign tourist contributor (BPS, 2024).

The island of Lombok, the focus of this study, is one of Indonesia's major Muslim-Friendly destination. The island is famous for its beautiful landscapes, underwater, unique culture, and other destination attributes which attract both domestic and international visitors.

Thus, the study aimed to explore Muslim-Friendly tourism based on Pesantren for Malaysian tourists in Lombok and to analyse the feasibility of Pesantren tour as a place of attraction and inclusive of the Muslim-Friendly Tour Packages.

Literature Review:-**Muslim Friendly Tourism**

The concept of Muslim-friendly tourism has garnered considerable interest in recent years, especially in countries with a Muslim majority, such as Malaysia and Indonesia. Muslim-friendly tourism entails offering services and amenities that specifically appeal to the requirements and preferences of Muslim travellers (Nugroho et al., 2021). Malaysia, being a country with a majority Muslim population and a leader in the Halal business, has experienced an increasing demand for Islamic products and services. As a result, there has been a rise in the availability of hotel services catering to Muslim travellers' demands. This tendency is reinforced by the acknowledgement and approval of Muslim-Friendly lodgings and tour guides by the Malaysian Government (Lada, 2024; Osman, 2023).

The advancement of Muslim-friendly tourism encompasses multiple facets, such as creating Muslim-Friendly hotels as Islamic tourism offerings (Mazlan et al., 2023). Hotels are vital in attracting Muslim tourists by providing services that align with Islamic principles and values (Mandalia, 2022). Furthermore, the inclusion of Halal food and amenities, such as prayer rooms and Halal-certified services, has been recognised as crucial elements that impact the happiness and loyalty of Muslim travellers towards destinations (Fajriyati et al., 2022; Han et al., 2021; Yahaya, et. al., 2020).

In locations such as Lombok, Indonesia, incorporating Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) with tourism endeavours can generate distinctive experiences for Muslim travellers (Sutono et al., 2022). Tourism activities incorporating Pesantren can fulfil the spiritual demands of Muslim tourists seeking genuine cultural experiences by

providing knowledge about Islamic doctrines and practices (Sutono et al., 2022). Furthermore, the notion of Halal tourism highlights the importance of meeting the fundamental requirements of Muslims in tourist places, including the facilitation of religious practices and compliance with Sharia regulations (Madnasir, 2024).

Within the Malaysian market, Muslim tourism centred around Pesantren can cater to the specific needs of Malaysian travellers looking for experiences that align with their religious convictions (Maknu et al., 2021). Studies suggest that Malaysian Malay Muslim visitors have a predilection for Muslim-Friendly services, including Muslim-Friendly street cuisine, even while visiting non-Muslim countries like Japan (Maknu et al., 2021). It is essential for places seeking to attract Muslim travellers to comprehend the determinants that impact Muslim visitors' intentions, including Halal-friendly amenities and services (Soonsan, 2024; Hanafiah et al., 2022).

To summarise, the body of literature on Muslim-Friendly tourism emphasises the significance of addressing Muslim travellers' distinct requirements and preferences. Destinations can enhance their appeal to Muslim visitors, particularly those in the Malaysian market, by providing Halal-certified services, Islamic-friendly lodgings, and distinctive experiences that accord with Islamic ideals.

Tourism in Lombok

Lombok, an Indonesian island, has emerged as a prominent destination for the advancement of halal tourism, with a specific focus on incorporating Sharia principles into its tourism services and attractions. The island's distinctive amalgamation of pristine natural landscapes and rich cultural legacy has established it as an up-and-coming locale for tourism catering to the needs and preferences of Muslim travellers (Supratman, 2022). A study has emphasised the significance of comprehending the calibre of services offered by hotels that cater to Muslim tourists in Lombok to improve the overall halal tourism experience (Supratman, 2022).

Efforts to revive Sharia tourism enterprises on Lombok Island after the COVID-19 pandemic have been examined. Qualitative research approaches have been utilised to collect insights from stakeholders engaged in Sharia tourism to develop efficient recovery measures (Sudirman, 2023). This approach highlights the importance of adjusting to the evolving tourism industry while upholding the fundamental principles of Sharia in tourism offers.

In addition, a study using Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) has assessed the balance of the halal tourism sector in Lombok. The investigation has highlighted the significance of improving halal tourism indicators, including facilities for worship, gender segregation in public amenities, and the provision of halal cuisine to fulfil Muslim travellers' expectations (Busaini et al., 2023). Comprehending and tackling these pivotal factors are essential for the enduring expansion of halal tourism in Lombok.

Research conducted on the advancement of halal tourism in Lombok has discovered multiple tactics to enhance the island's attractiveness to Muslim tourists. The tactics encompass enhancing the calibre of halal tourist products and services, advocating for halal tourism initiatives, and allocating resources towards infrastructure that aligns with the principles of halal tourism (Satria, 2022). By adopting and executing these tactics, Lombok can establish itself as a leading destination for tourism that caters specifically to the needs and preferences of Muslim travellers.

Lombok's efforts to establish itself as a centre for halal tourism require a comprehensive approach that includes focusing on service excellence, implementing effective recovery plans after the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring stability in the halal tourism industry, and pursuing strategic development projects. By synchronising these endeavours with the requirements and inclinations of Muslim travellers, Lombok may establish and strengthen its status as a prominent hub for Muslim-friendly tourism.

Tourism Lombok with the Pesantren

The incorporation of Pesantren, Islamic boarding schools, into the tourism industry of Lombok offers a distinct chance to merge religious instruction with travel encounters. Studies have emphasised the potential advantages of integrating Pesantren activities into tourism services to offer visitors a more profound comprehension of Islamic culture and traditions. Prawiro (2022). By utilising the existence of Pesantren in Lombok, tourism projects may provide immersive experiences that meet the spiritual and educational requirements of travellers seeking genuine Islamic encounters. Among the potential factors that may attract visitors to pesantren in Lombok are the identity of pesantren as a religious centre which offers educational programs and short workshops for tourists who want to understand Islam, the rich historical buildings and architecture, the opportunity to learn cultural activities and experience the region's unique traditional cuisines (Hernawardi, 2023).

Within disaster resilience, research has examined the consequences of natural disasters on tourism enterprises in Lombok, focusing on the significance of fortifying resilience within the tourism industry (Rahmatullah, 2023). Ensuring the sustainability of tourism operations relies heavily on the capacity of tourism enterprises to effectively adjust and bounce back from disasters, such as the issues faced by Lombok, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Additionally, the study has investigated the integration of Islamic principles and socio-cultural identity in the development of halal tourism in Lombok. This research highlights the interdependent connection between religion, culture, and the tourism business on the island, emphasising the positive support among these factors within the framework of halal tourism. By harmonising Islamic principles with cultural identity, Lombok has the potential to offer a distinctive tourism experience that appeals to Muslim travellers who are looking for genuine and spiritually fulfilling journeys.

Furthermore, a study has been conducted to evaluate the extent to which tourism players in Lombok adhere to halal standards when applying halal tourism rules. It is crucial to comprehend the compliance of businesses in Lombok with halal tourist rules to uphold the authenticity of Muslim-Friendly tourism products and guarantee that visitors receive services that follow their religious convictions.

Ultimately, incorporating Pesantren into tourism endeavours in Lombok while prioritising disaster preparedness, aligning religious principles, and adhering to halal tourism guidelines has the potential to improve the entire tourism experience in the area significantly. By incorporating these elements, Lombok can establish itself as a prominent hub for Muslim-friendly tourism that combines cultural integration, spiritual enhancement, and environmentally conscious methods.

Muslim Tourism Based Pesantren Market in Malaysia

The Pesantren-based Muslim tourism sector offers places a distinct opportunity to meet the unique requirements of Muslim travellers, including those hailing from Malaysia. Wibawa et al. (2021) argue that comprehending the significance of halal tourism for Indonesian Muslim travellers might offer valuable insights into the choices and behaviours of Muslim tourists while visiting areas that are not primarily Muslim. By identifying the primary requirements of Indonesian Muslim visitors, places can customise their services to appeal to and keep Muslim travellers from all backgrounds.

The solutions employed in Lombok can provide significant insights for destinations seeking to revitalise their Muslim-friendly tourism sector in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the context of Sharia tourism business recovery (Sudirman, 2023). Studying the qualitative research on Sharia tourism stakeholders in Lombok can provide insights for developing recovery strategies that prioritise the safety and well-being of tourists while preserving the authenticity of halal tourism services.

Furthermore, studying the effects of disasters, the ability to recover, and the potential for long-term viability in locations such as Gili Trawangan, Indonesia, might provide valuable insights into the difficulties and achievements of incorporating Pesantren activities into tourism projects (Partelow et al., 2022). By comprehending the methods that communities have employed to handle catastrophic situations and construct resilience, destinations can formulate ways to augment the sustainability and attractiveness of tourism products that cater to the needs and preferences of Muslim visitors. Examining the network behaviour of tourism enterprises in Lombok offers valuable information on the impact of natural catastrophes on these businesses and the measures taken to reduce risks and maintain operations (Sulhaini et al., 2023). By examining how tourist businesses react to disasters, destinations can enhance their readiness and flexibility in facing external obstacles, promoting a more robust tourism industry.

Ultimately, the scholarly research on Muslim tourism centred around Pesantren in locations such as Lombok provides vital knowledge for advancing the Muslim tourism industry in Malaysia. Destinations can customise their services to cater to the preferences of Muslim travellers from Malaysia by utilising the insights and tactics discovered in these studies. This will create a hospitable and culturally immersive experience for this market segment.

Methodology:-

This study aimed to explore Muslim-Friendly Tourism based pesantren criteria for Malaysian tourist attraction in Lombok and to analyse the feasibility of Pesantren tour as a place of attraction and inclusive of the Muslim-Friendly Tour Packages. To achieve the objective, the study adopted a qualitative method where the data is collected through library research to identify the information on Muslim-Friendly tourism industries, its packages and services provided for tourists especially in Indonesia. The data was gathered from books, journals, bulletin, newspaper,

annual reports, records and other related to the scope of research. Analysis on Muslim-Friendly tourism packages within the task associate member of this group. A qualitative approach was adopted to obtain in-depth and detailed data to support and complete the data gained from field work involving face to face interviews with representatives from related travel agencies and three (3) founders of Pesantren in Lombok. Instrument of semi structured interview has been utilised for achieving the objective of research. Observation on Pesantren has been conducted for the identification of attractive aspects to suggest value added to the existing packages. Three selected Pesantren at Lombok were observed to oversee activities offered in the Pesantren visit, food, etc that are suitable to attract Malaysian tourists to visit Pesantren in Lombok. The collected data were analysed using two methods i.e content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis used for analysing the data gathered from policy, books, journal, directive etc. In addition, collected data from interviews and observations were analysed using thematic analysis. The interview was transcribed verbatim and coded according to the specified theme for easy analysis.

Result and Analysis:-

This part consists of an analysis on the data collected from semi structured interviews of three informants who are representative of three selected Pesantren in Lombok as well as representative of Muslim-Friendly Tourism Agencies. The analysis was divided into three parts i.e the demographic profile of three selected pesantren that has been observed, the Muslim-Friendly tourism based pesantren criteria and feasibility of pesantren as a place of attraction.

Demographic profile of selected Pesantren in Lombok

Pondok Pesantren Nurul Hakim

TGH. Abdul Karim began establishing the Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School (Pondok Pesantren Nurul Hakim) in 1924 M as a small prayer room (musholla) to facilitate Islamic studies. The formal establishment of Nurul Hakim was inaugurated in 1387 H or 1948 M. After TGH. Abdul Karim passed away in 1976 M, the leadership of the boarding school was succeeded by his son, TGH. Safwan Hakim.

TGH. Safwan Hakim led Pondok Pesantren Nurul Hakim by continuing his father's legacy, implementing a balanced approach to education. He integrated religious education through halaqah (study circles) with general education, giving equal portions to both. In the morning, starting at 7:00 AM, students (santri) gather in their respective classrooms to engage in muhadatsah (practical Arabic conversation exercises) for 15 minutes before classes begin at 7:15 AM. General education follows the standard curriculum regulated by the government and continues until 2:00 PM, after which students have a break for rest.

Religious studies begin after the afternoon prayer (Asr), during which students resume learning with a focus on Islamic texts such as Tawheed, Fiqh, Seerah Nabawiyah, Nahw, Sarf, Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Hadith interpretation, and other Arabic-related subjects. In the field of Fiqh, students study books like Fiqhul Wadhih, Fathul Qarib, and Riyadus Shalihin. For Nahw, they learn texts like Matan al-Jurmiyah and Amsilah At-Tashrifiyah. For Tafsir, they explore Tafsir Jalalain and Tafsir Imam Ibn Kathir. In the field of Hadith, they study Arba'in An-Nawawi, Maqarrul Hadith, Bulughul Maram, and others.

With the motto "Unity in Aqidah and Tolerance in Furu' (branches of religion)", Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School has become an independent educational institution without affiliation to any group or mass organization. This independence allows Nurul Hakim's students to adapt to various social and organizational contexts.

To support its institutional development, Nurul Hakim has expanded its educational offerings from kindergarten level (Taman Kanak-Kanak) to Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (elementary school), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (junior high school), Madrasah Aliyah (senior high school), Vocational Schools (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan), Special Education Programs, Ma'had 'Aly (advanced Islamic studies), and the Nurul Hakim Islamic Institute (Institut Agama Islam Nurul Hakim). As of 2024, the institution accommodates 5,200 students living on campus, supported by 515 teachers residing both within and outside the boarding school premises.

Pondok Pesantren Abu Darda'

Most of the community in Balin Gagak Hamlet works as farmers and farm laborers. They need educational institutions to fulfil the learning needs of their children. Those with slightly better financial means send their children to schools in Kediri, Praya, or Pancor. However, financial constraints often prevent many from sending their children to school, leading to a high dropout rate. Boys typically join the workforce in the fields or migrate to other regions such as Bali and Malaysia, while many girls marry at an early age, contributing to the high divorce rate in the community.

This situation requires a solution. Therefore, we invited the community to discuss the future of their children's education at the Al-Falah Mosque. During the meeting, it was agreed to establish an educational institution in the form of an Islamic boarding school (pesantren) to provide both Islamic and general education. On the agreed day, the community worked together in a spirit of cooperation to clear the site and set markers, followed by the foundation digging process. On that day, the first stone was ceremoniously laid by the late TGH Shafwan Hakim, the leader of Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School in Kediri, who also became the chief patron of the foundation.

The first institution established at PondokPesantren Abu Darda' was the Madrasah Tsanawiyah, which received its operational license in 2014. This was followed by the establishment of other institutions, such as Kindergarten, MadrasahIbtidaiyah, and Madrasah Aliyah. Currently, there are 575 students enrolled across all institutions at PondokPesantren Abu Darda', with 57 teachers. Among these students, 373 reside in the boarding school.

The curriculum at PondokPesantren Abu Darda' is like other pesantren, combining Islamic and general education. Religious studies are taught from before dawn prayers until 10:00 PM, while general education classes are held from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM. A unique aspect of PondokPesantren Abu Darda' is its location within a community skilled in crafting rattan into beautiful and intricate handicrafts. Visitors to the pesantren can directly participate in making rattan crafts, adding a distinctive cultural experience.

PondokPesantrenAn-Nuru Alan Nuri

An-Nuru Alan Nuri Islamic Boarding School is inPengembur Village, Pujut Subdistrict, Central Lombok Regency. The pesantren (Islamic boarding school) was founded by TGH. Lalu Awi Jibril Nur, S.HI in 2009 M, initially as a religious study group (majlis taklim). His majlis taklim was regularly attended by communities from two subdistricts, Praya Barat Daya and Pujut. Following the advice of his mentor, TGH. Muharrar Mahfudz, who is also the leader of Nurul Hakim Islamic Boarding School, he was encouraged to establish a pesantren to promote Islamic teachings through education.

This advice was followed by holding a discussion with his study group members. The outcome of this discussion was a positive endorsement from the community to establish an educational institution under the pesantren. Alhamdulillah, in 2020 M, the first institution he established was An-Nuru Alan Nuri Islamic Junior High School. Observing the growing interest among students to study under his guidance, in 2023 H, he expanded the institution by opening An Nuru Alan Nuri Islamic Senior High School.

The pesantren offers both religious and general education to its students. Religious studies begin after the Fajr prayer and continue after the Asr prayer until 10:00 PM. Meanwhile, general education takes place from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We design this schedule to equip students with a comprehensive knowledge base and prepare them for life beyond the pesantren.

Muslim-friendly tourism based on Pesantren criteria for Malaysian tourists in Lombok

Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) in Lombok, Indonesia may integrate Muslim-friendly tourist practices with their distinctive cultural, educational, and gastronomic offerings. The research, which focuses on Malaysian tourists, illustrates how pesantren can serve as centres of cultural integration and spiritual development while additionally encouraging sustainable tourism and Islamic principles. Pesantren in Lombok creates an ecosystem of Islamic-based services. These services encompass facilities for daily prayers and adhere to Sharia compliant hospitality standards. The administration of these pesantren places an emphasis on flexibility, ethical standards, and the integration of Islamic principles into operating activities, assuring Muslim visitors' comfort and happiness. Pondok Nurul Hakim's administration highly values and anticipates the arrival of international tourists to witness the modest lifestyle of the local people while enhancing their religious understanding. The services provided to travellers at PondokPesantren Nurul Hakim include basic accommodation, participation in religious study sessions, and tour guide services for discovering the beauty of Lombok Island.

During a visit to Pondok Nurul Hakim, pesantren Abu Dardha' and PesantrenAn-Nuru Alan Nuri, tourists at the pesantren can engage in several activities, like attending Quran study sessions, doing calligraphy, and participating in the daily routines of the student to immerse themselves in pesantren life. Furthermore, students may familiarise themselves with the local culture and traditions through Islamic music, acquire culinary skills in Lombok's distinctive delicacies, and comprehend the Sasak customs. Engagement in social activities, such as volunteering or cultural contact with the pesantren community, yields significant experiences. Travelers seeking spiritual fulfilment may engage in i'tikaf programs, dhikr circles, or Islamic life advice. The pesantren, situated in a natural setting,

provides leisure activities, including excursions to historical landmarks, eco-tourism in agricultural areas, and appreciation of the scenic beaches and waterfalls nearby.

Culture and heritage are among the treasures of diversity that Indonesia, including Lombok, offers. The architecture reflects the diversity of the culture and history of the whole of Lombok. Culture and architecture have been highlighted as one of the unique attractions to market the pesantren as tourism packages for foreign visitors especially from Malaysia. It has been observed that Pondok Pesantren An-Nuru Alan Nuri highlighted Berugak, which was built without using any steel, as a distinct architectural value which holds their aristocratic identities. The berugak is an open-air structure which is separated from the house as a venue of receiving casual guests, having meals with family which is part of life of the island's indigenous Sasak people. Berugak is square or rectangular with a thatch roof, timber floor and either has four poles (sekepat) or six poles (sekenam). The roof of Berugak has been weaved using weeds. The tradition of Berugak maintains that specific carvings carry its own intention. Though the function of berugak is the same, Berugak owned by aristocrats varied in characteristic and art compared to others. Other interesting aspects concerns the storytelling of Lombok community beliefs on the existing practice of magic in the graves of Muslims, buddha dan hinduculture, history of Majapahit, the ancient mosque would be an attraction to the tourist.

Gastronomy tourism has emerged as one of the main attractions for tourists to Lombok, Indonesia, enticing gastronomes keen to savour the island's distinctive indigenous cuisine. In marketing pesantren as a tourism package for international visitors, one of the attractions that can be offered is the experience of local traditional cuisine. Findings indicated that all three pesantren are willing to incorporate local cuisine as one of the attractions for the tourists. While Pondok Pesantren An-Nuru Alan Nuri offers simple traditional snacks for visitors, Pondok Pesantren Nurul Hakim being more established, offers local cuisines as part of the stay-in food menu as they have the facility for tourists to stay overnight. Similarly, Pesantren Abu Dar Da' also offers traditional local cuisine for their stay-in visitors such as sambal (spicy paste) with different ingredients including sambal terong (aubergine), sambal tahu (tofu) and sambal tempe (fermented soybeans). They also have other local delicacies as part of their menu, such as pindang peleceng pecel, kandok pereseng, kandok manis, manok and telur peleceng. It must be noted that some pesantren, such as Pondok Pesantren Nurul Hakim has its own local delicacy product, which is sambal tempe, a spicy fried fermented soybean, which can be sampled and bought by tourists.

It is further suggested that other traditional local cuisines can be incorporated into the menu for pesantren tourists, subject to the readiness of the pesantren management. Among Lombok's traditional cuisines are ayam taliwang, plecting kangkong (spicy water spinach), nasi merangkat (rice cuisine), sate rembiga (spicy beef satay) and bebalung (beef rib soup). For example, ayam taliwang is a notable meal, characterised by spicy grilled chicken from the Sasak people, marinated in a robust mixture of chilli, prawn paste, garlic and lime juice, then cooked over a charcoal grill. Lombok traditional cuisines offer a glimpse of the island's dynamic culture, genuine flavors and unique local experience which is part of what tourists are looking for. This can be corroborated with the study conducted by Soeroso & Susilo (2014) which has shown that 82.67 percent of the tourists greatly enjoyed Indonesian local food specialties and almost one-third of their budgeted expenditures are for food. Given that all the pesantren management showed enthusiasm, culinary attraction may be explored further and incorporated as part of the Muslim-Friendly tourism Pesantren package.

Feasibility of Pesantren tour as a place of attraction and inclusive of the Muslim-Friendly Tour Packages

The concept of integrating Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) into Lombok's tourism industry as part of Muslim-Friendly tour packages holds considerable potential, both as an educational and spiritual experience for visitors, particularly those from Muslim-majority countries. There are several factors that need to be considered to assess the feasibility of such an initiative. Based on the result of interviews with travel agents and representatives from ASTINDO (Indonesia Travel Agent Association), there are several factors that need to be considered to assess the feasibility of such an initiative.

Cultural and Religious Context

Pesantren as Educational Institutions: Pesantren are traditionally religious boarding schools that focus on Islamic teachings, including the Quran, Hadith, Islamic law (fiqh), and Arabic. These institutions serve as centers of Islamic education and community, and they often have deep historical and cultural significance in Indonesia, particularly in Lombok where Islam plays a major role in local society.

Interest in Muslim-Friendly Tourism: Muslim-Friendly tourism is a growing segment of the global travel market, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. Tourists often seek destinations that offer opportunities for spiritual reflection, learning about Islamic history, and engaging in cultural experiences. Lombok, with its predominantly Muslim population, is an ideal candidate for such tourism, especially if it can offer experiences that are enriching from a religious perspective.

Potential Benefits of Pesantren Tours

Educational and Spiritual Enrichment: For Muslim travelers, visiting a Pesantren could provide an opportunity to engage with the local Islamic community, learn about traditional Islamic teachings, and observe the daily routines of students. This kind of immersive experience would appeal to tourists seeking to connect more deeply with Islamic culture and practices.

Promoting Local Culture and Heritage: Lombok is already known for its stunning landscapes and cultural traditions, such as weaving, Sasak language, and traditional ceremonies. Pesantren tours would add another layer to Lombok's cultural offerings, showcasing the rich Islamic heritage of the island.

Supporting Community Development: By integrating Pesantren into the tourism package, local communities could benefit economically. This would provide students and staff with an opportunity to share their knowledge, offer accommodations, sell local handicrafts, and even provide meals or traditional experiences for visitors.

Sustainability and Ethical Tourism: There is growing interest in ethical and sustainable tourism that benefits local communities. Tours focused on education, cultural exchange, and religious learning can attract tourists who value sustainable travel practices and who are interested in supporting local economies while gaining cultural insights.

Charity experience

A Charity Experience Tour in Pesantren in Lombok provides tourists with a unique, meaningful way to engage with the local community, contribute to social good, and learn about the importance of charity (known as zakat, sadaqah, and wakf in Islam). This type of tour could appeal to travelers who want to combine their spiritual or cultural journey with acts of giving and supporting local communities, particularly those in need. Lombok's Muslim culture and community spirit make it an ideal location for such a concept. Interestingly, a charity program to Pesantren is often requested and included in the tour itinerary.

Transportation and Accessibility

Direct Flights: Ensuring direct flights between Malaysia and Lombok is a key factor in attracting Malaysian tourists. Currently, direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to Lombok make the journey easier for Malaysian travelers.

Local Transportation: Ensuring that transportation between pesantren and other tourist destinations is comfortable and accessible is essential. Hence, Tour Operators and local tour guides must be familiar with the needs of Muslim tourists to enhance the overall experience.

Muslim-Friendly Tour Package Design

To create a successful Muslim-Friendly tour package that incorporates Pesantren visits, the following components should be considered:

1. **Tour Package Design:** Packages should ensure that all food, accommodations, and services provided to tourists are halal-compliant. This includes access to halal restaurants, prayer facilities, and ensuring that the overall environment is accommodating for Muslim practices such as daily prayers.
2. **Cultural and Spiritual Programming:** In addition to visiting Pesantren, Muslim-Friendly tour packages could include other Islamic heritage sites, such as historical mosques, tombs of religious figures, and Islamic art exhibitions. Tourists could also participate in traditional Islamic activities such as group prayers, Quran recitations, and Islamic lectures.
3. **Community Engagement:** Collaborating with local Islamic organizations, community leaders, and local tour guides can help ensure that the packages reflect the true spirit of Lombok's Islamic traditions. Workshops on Islamic art, calligraphy, or local history could be incorporated into the tours.

Conclusions & Recommendations:-

The study concluded that Muslim-Friendly tourism based on Pesantren has a significant potential to support the tourism industry in Lombok and Indonesia as a whole. By incorporating pesantren tours into Muslim-Friendly tourism packages attract particularly Muslim travelers whose seek authentic and culturally-rich experiences. By combining educational, religious, and cultural tourism, pesantren can become valuable attractions within the broader Muslim tourism market. Preparedness and readiness of the Pesantren management to be involved is very important to ensure they manage to cooperate and take part in Muslim-Friendly tourism activities by providing religious activities, architecture and culture value. The uniqueness criteria of pesantren regarding the product, services and Management, education activities offered, culture and architecture values and cuisine delight need to be seen as the value added to promote tourism culture. The study also concluded that various cultural and religious activities in pesantren and opportunity for charity experience with design of Muslim-Friendly tourism tour packages could attract Malaysian to visit Lombok as Muslim destination. However, this idea must be carefully managed to respect the traditions and purposes of pesantren, ensuring that the experience enhances rather than disrupts their educational mission. With proper planning, collaboration with local authorities, and thoughtful marketing, pesantren could be successfully integrated into the Muslim-Friendly tourism landscape. Thus, the study recommended for the Tourism stakeholder and Indonesian authority to provide a sustainable ecosystem for pesantren to support the future growth of Muslim friendly tourism industry in Lombok.

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