

**THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGEMENT IN
DEVELOPING HALAL TOURISM INDUSTRY IN JAPANESE
“SMEs” (2012-2017)**

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explain the strategies of the Japanese government in developing the halal tourism industry in Japanese SMEs. In this research, the researchers using qualitative research methods and library research as data collection. By examining the contents from all sources, in enhancing the halal tourism industry, the Japanese government requested the Japanese SMEs should participate to develop the halal tourism industry by making a cooperation with the Muslim countries like Malaysia and Indonesia in increasing halal food products as well as provide some Muslim friendly facilities to fulfill the needs of Muslim tourist while in Japan.

Keywords: Halal in Japan, Halal Tourism, Japanese SMEs

BACKGROUND

Japan is one of the countries in the East Asia region known as the State of the Rising Sun or the State of Sakura. Japan is also the third largest archipelagic country in the world after Indonesia, and the Philippines. Japan has 4 large islands namely Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu where Honshu Island is the largest island in Japan. Seen from its geographical location, Japan is the country that located so far away from the countries that embrace Islam. In Japan, Islam has not long been recognized by some Japanese people so that the number of people who embrace Islam is very small. However, the Muslim people that live in Japan was increased the time by time and Japan become one attractive destination for foreign tourists, especially Muslim tourists like Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries in the Middle East (Rachmawati, 2016).

According to the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), in 2012, foreign tourists visiting Japan amounted to 8 million people. Meanwhile, a significant surge occurred in 2013, where the number of foreign tourists penetrated the figure above 10 million people for the first time. On the other hand, the increasing number of foreign tourists in 2014 to 2017 reached 28 million people (JNTO, 2016). Among these foreign tourists, an estimated 250,000 people are Muslim tourists, which by in 2020 are predicted that the number of Muslim tourists in Japan will increase to 1 million (Bahardeen, 2014).

Based on the increase of foreign tourists that coming to Japan, one of the things that are being heavily studied by the Japanese government is the halal tourism industry where it has experienced significant growth in recent years. Even

though the number of people who embrace Islam is very small, Japan is really serious about developing the halal tourism industry. This can be proven by the award given to Japan as “World Best Non-OIC Emerging Halal Destination” at the 2016 World Halal Tourism Award held in Abu Dhabi, UAE (Greenwood, 2016).

For some people who do not familiar with the halal, it will be confusing. Therefore, it is necessary to explain the word ‘halal’ briefly. Basically, in Arabic, the word ‘halal’ means permissible or allowed and also usually used as a lawful based on Islamic law. The opposite of halal is haram which means not allowed or prohibited and unlawful. Halal is often related to foods and beverages that Muslim people are allowed to consume. However, halal also covers many things like cosmetics, and another aspect of Muslims’ way of life and behavior (Battour, 2015).

In developing this halal industry, Japan invites several countries with the majority Muslim population such as Malaysia and Indonesia to be able to cooperate in producing halal food through small-medium enterprises (SMEs). In addition, not only collaborate in producing halal food, but the Japanese government also wants to develop this halal tourism industry by providing some facilities that needed by Muslim tourists such as prayers room, Muslim friendly hotels, cosmetics, and other halal products.

This study aims to analyze the extent of halal developments in Japan and also what strategies are carried out by the Japanese government through Japanese

SMEs in developing their halal tourism industry. The period of time that will be analyzed is in the year 2012 when the Japanese government increased again its tourism industry after stopping due to the tsunami disaster and also the year 2013-2017 when the Muslim tourist came to Japan always increased and the halal tourism in Japan always developed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

National Interest

According to Hans J. Morgenthau, the national interest is the minimum ability of states to protect and preserve the physical, political and cultural identity of other countries. In the book Miroslav Micnic (1999) entitled “The National Interest and Its Interpretation”, Morgenthau argues that the national interest is the same as the state’s efforts to pursue power, where power is anything that can develop and maintain a country’s control over other countries. In addition, the national interest can be interpreted as the goal that must be achieved by each country in carrying out its foreign policy where the national interest is the result of political compromise between various parties in a different state of interest. The national interest is usually found in every state constitution so it must be championed by every entity in the country (Morgenthau, 1978).

The Japanese national interest to other countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia is in improving their economy through the halal tourism industry by increasing halal food products from Malaysia and Indonesia. With the increasing of the halal food products, the Japanese government expects more that it will automatically attract the attention of Muslim tourists to come to Japan in a large

number. In addition, the Japanese government also collaborated with Malaysia and Indonesia by the promotion of halal tourism attractions that conducted by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO). The promotion was carried out by organizing travel fairs in several countries such as Indonesia, inviting tourists directly from Japan, and also through advertisements in various media such as television and official sites, also active on social media.

Besides that, the Japanese government efforts in increasing the number of foreign tourists especially Muslim tourists is by providing many facilities that are able to fulfill the needs of Muslim tourist while in Japan. For this reason, besides providing halal food products, the Japanese government also provides other Muslim friendly services. One of the way of the Japanese government that attracted the attention of the world community, especially Muslim tourists is by organizing seminar of halal and *sharia* hotels in Tokyo in January 2014 where the seminar is handled by Halal Development Foundation Japan (HDFJ) which discusses the potential of *sharia* tourism and the provision of menus that have ingredients and through the process of cooking that qualify as halal.

The other efforts of the Japanese government in attracting Muslim tourists are seen from a range of breakthroughs including sending a number of people that being staffs to a predominantly Muslim country such as Malaysia and Indonesia to see what the needs of Muslim tourists are in Japan. By making halal industry a current market phenomenon and trend, many businesspeople are working on the Japanese government's move in its strategy to encourage the economy of the tourism sector where they hold event like Halal Development Council (HDC) that

organizes training for business people, as well as events Japan Halal Summit 2014 (HDFJ, 2014).

Soft Power

Soft power is a concept of diplomacy that emerged after the 21st century. One of the famous figures with the concept of soft power is Joseph S. Nye. According to Nye, soft power is the ability of a country to achieve desired interests in a persuasive way through various aspects such as social, cultural, and values. Not through the use of violence so that it does not lead to the military, division, to war. The concept of power as outlined by traditional people is no longer the mainstay or the only power possessed by the state as a tool to pressure other countries to agree on the needs and interests of the country (Nye, 2008).

With the passage of time, the Japanese government is currently very often promoting its culinary as a value of attraction so that the international community is able to know its country through culinary. The activity to promote culinary is known as “Gastro Diplomacy”. Basically, Gastro Diplomacy is adopted from the word gastronomy, which if interpreted into Indonesian, Gastro Diplomacy does not have an understanding similar to culinary terms. As stated by Indra Kataren, President, Indonesia Gastronomy Association, that culinary is the “Art of Cooking” or serving food by a chef, while gastronomy is the “Art of Eating” namely serving food which is associated with cultural values. So that culinary connoisseurs can understand that culinary also has elements of history, values, and culture.

Therefore, it is hoped that through Gastro Diplomacy or culinary diplomacy can be an instrument for a country to be able to launch its interests in establishing good relations with other countries. Nowadays, the phenomenon and opportunities in the aspect of tourism are very suitable to be associated with Japanese culinary development, and seeing the number of Muslim tourist arrivals coming to Japan increases every year, making the Japanese government more aggressive in promoting Gastro Diplomacy as the country's soft power. In 2005, through a program called "*Shoku-Bunka Kenkyū Suishin Kondankai*", Japan intensively introduced Sushi as a Japanese specialty to international dating through Gastro Diplomacy. The Gastro Diplomacy efforts that carried out by the Japanese government then had an impact on prestige for Japan to be known internationally (Rahman, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODS

In writing this thesis, the author uses a qualitative research method. In general, qualitative research method is a type of scientific research where the scientific research consists of some investigations such as seeks answer to a question, collect the evidence, uses a set of procedures to answer the question, etc (Sukmadinata, 2005). In addition, another method that used is the library research where this method is carried out by collecting available data in the form of books, articles, journals, the internet, and other official sites that related to the main problem (Koentjaraningrat, 1983).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The strategies of Japanese government in developing halal tourism industry in Japanese Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Establish Cooperation with Muslim Countries

Developing the halal tourism industry is one of the ways the Japanese government provides services to Muslim tourists to be able to fulfill their needs while in Japan. In the past few years, this halal tourism industry has experienced a significant development. In improving halal tourism industry, Japan is cooperating with the countries that are predominantly Muslim, like Malaysia and Indonesia. The cooperation is not just to provide halal food facilities but the Japanese government also wants to develop its halal tourism industry through the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Japan.

Japan's Cooperation with Malaysia

As it is known that Japan is very serious in developing its halal tourism industry. The efforts to increase the number of Muslim tourists through this halal industry will be more active and effective after Japan wants Malaysia to participate. Japan is very comfortable with the high standards of halal applied in Malaysia which are considered capable of fulfilling their aspirations and hopes in developing this industry. Malaysia is a pioneer in the certification, production, and distribution of halal food to non-Muslim countries. In addition, the Japanese government also plans to send some of its employees to Malaysia to learn more about the halal industry. With the Japanese government pushing for the growth of this halal industry, Japan wants entrepreneurs from Malaysia to be able to

participate in the halal industry sector of goods and services. This is a help for Japan because it can facilitate Japanese investment in the halal industry sector in Malaysia. Malaysian companies are also interested and have a strong desire to participate in cooperation with Japan knowing that Japan is hosting the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics Games (Budiawati, 2016).

With Malaysia's high participation in developing the halal tourism industry, Malaysia has signaled its readiness to help Japan ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Malaysia offers assistance in managing and providing halal products and services in Japan. According to the Malaysia External Trade Development Corp. (MATRADE), Malaysia is the only country in the world that provides a comprehensive ecosystem for the development of halal industries. The Malaysian government is pleased to help Japan in sharing expertise and experience regarding the halal industry and also helping to promote and develop the halal industry. Malaysia also wants to encourage more Japanese companies to be involved in the halal sphere. Therefore, MATRADE also plans to collaborate with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) so that Malaysian and Japanese companies can cooperate in running suitable business programs especially in the halal tourism industry (Murdaningsih, 2017). The Japanese government also hopes that halal products will contribute greatly to Japan's economic growth and by making Tokyo as the host of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics capable of providing a great opportunity for the development of the halal sector where Muslim tourists who come to Japan can benefit from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics is in the form of expanding their halal business.

Japan is the fourth largest export destination for Malaysia after China, Singapore, and the United States. The halal products exported by Malaysia to Japan are food, beverages, coconut oil, and pharmaceutical products. In 2016, exports of halal products from Malaysia to Japan reached 2.7 billion ringgit, which accounted for around 6.4 percent of Malaysia's total exports of halal products worth 42.2 billion ringgit sent worldwide. Japan will buy halal products from Malaysia which will be sent via the Chinese route and will be distributed to 1,800 Aeon supermarkets, starting from Chiba prefecture. These products will receive halal certificates from the Islamic Development Department in Japan in collaboration with the Malaysian Ulama Council (Puspaningtyas, 2018).

Japan's high demand for halal products from Malaysia makes Malaysian SMEs consider how to be able to enter the halal market in Japan. Indeed, currently, the halal food industry sounds popular in the Land of the Rising Sun. Japan has a strong purchasing power for halal products, so Small and Medium Enterprises are expected to be able to export halal products and services to encourage the halal industry globally. In 2018, the value of Malaysian exports reached 68.48 billion Malaysian ringgit. Malaysia's main exports are liquefied natural gas, wood and iron, and steel products. A number of SMEs are also successful in exporting frozen seafood, coconut nectar sugar, building materials, and wood products to Japan (Ogilvy, 2018).

In addition, to be able to improve the quality of Small and Medium Enterprises both Japan and Malaysia, MATRADE in collaboration with JETRO held a halal seminar that enables local SMEs to take advantage of the

opportunities offered in welcoming the 2020 Tokyo Olympics to promote halal products and services in particular of halal food because nowadays consumes halal food has become a trend in Japan. With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, many Japanese and Malaysian companies take the opportunity to include halal food as the targeted sector (Maharani E. , 2018).

Japan's Cooperation with Indonesia

Besides cooperating with Malaysia, in the development of its halal tourism industry, the Indonesian government and the Japanese government agreed to establish cooperation in the trade and investment sector, especially for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This business is a big economic contributor to the two countries. The form of cooperation carried out between the two countries is forming a special task to assist SME entrepreneurs from Indonesia and Japan in doing business. One of the collaborations carried out by the Indonesian government to foster the development of halal tourism industry in Japan is to attend various events organized by the Japanese government in introducing halal products, especially halal food to Japanese people.

For instance, in 2017, Indonesia as a Muslim-majority country participated in the annual agenda held by Halal Media Japan at the 2017 Halal Expo which took place at the Taito Asakusa Tokyo Metropolitan Industrial Trade Center, Japan. This event is an Exhibition or Business matching, Tourism Expo, Modest Fashion Show, Muslim Recruit Fair, Visiting Halal Restaurants in Asakusa, etc. In helping Japan to improve its halal tourism industry, the Indonesian government facilitates approximately 24 SMEs from Indonesia to be able to participate in the

Halal Expo Japan event. The SMEs introduced a variety of halal products that became Indonesian flagship starting from halal food, fashion, to halal tourism. Not only that, the Halal Corner Foundation as a community that has concern for halal products, especially halal food, also attended the Halal Expo Japan 2017 (Muslimah, 2017).

On the other hand, the halal product market is a great opportunity for the Indonesian government to be able to export various halal products to Japan because the Japanese government began to take into account the halal product market after Tokyo was chosen as the host of the 2020 Olympics which is predicted to have a positive impact on halal products. Therefore, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia are asked to be more active in cooperating with Japanese Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). In addition to being able to benefit each other, the cooperation that can be carried out by the two countries is by sharing experience or knowledge, as well as being a supplier of raw materials needed by Japanese companies to produce halal products (Dwi, 2016).

Provide Muslim Friendly Facilities

Halal food

For Muslims, food consumed must fulfill the requirements of two things, both health and halal according to the instructions written in the Qur'an. Nowadays, the halal food business is growing rapidly in Japan. In October 2017, there were 788 registered restaurants that provided food that could be consumed

by Muslims, but among them restaurants that had halal certificates there were only 161 places.

Table 4.1 The Number of Restaurants that Provide Halal Menu

No.	Prefecture	Provide Halal Menu	Halal certified
1	Tokyo	362	73
2	Osaka	52	14
3	Hokkaido	45	-
4	Kyoto	39	23
5	Aichi	37	5
6	Kanagawa	36	1
7	Hyogo	33	7
8	Chiba	26	10
9	Fukuoka	20	2
10	Saitama	17	2
11	other locations	121	24
Total		788	161

Source: Jurnal Gama Societa, 2018

The huge number of restaurants that are halal certified is quite significant. According to NAHA (Nippon Asia Halal Association), one of the three halal certification bodies in Japan, in 2011 and 2012 only issued halal certificates for five companies, but from 2013 to 2016, there were approximately 110 companies

that received halal certificates from this associations. With the increasing number of halal-certified restaurants, Muslim tourists can now enjoy Japanese food calmly (Smith, 2016).

Picture 4.1. Halal Labels in Japanese Halal Restaurants



The strategy of the SMEs itself in assisting the service of facilities for Muslim tourists is to put on a halal label in front of the restaurant or display the evidence of the halal certification that has been obtained by the restaurant. As in the example image above.

Prayer Rooms

There are currently around 241 prayer rooms spread throughout Japan. The oldest mosque is located in the city of Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture. In addition, other prayer rooms are also available in strategic places such as Tokyo station, Osaka station, Kansai international airport, and Narita airport.

Table 4.2 List of Prayers Room

No.	Prefecture	Mosque	Prayer Facilities	Total Prayer rooms
1	Tokyo	33	17	50
2	Hokkaido	18	3	21

3	Osaka	14	2	16
4	Aichi	5	9	14
5	Kyoto	11	1	12
6	Chiba	7	5	12
7	Saitama	2	9	11
8	Tochigi	7	4	11
9	Kanagawa	5	3	8
10	Nara	7	-	7
11	Ibaraki	-	7	7
12	Okinawa	6	1	7
13	Hyogo	4	1	5
14	Gunma	-	5	5
15	Shizuoka	2	3	5
16	other locations	21	29	50
Total		142	99	241

Source: Jurnal Gama Societa, 2018

For instance, in developing of prayers room, in 2015, the tourist village of *Iyashi no Sato* was a village that was not Muslim friendly. Over time, with the increasing number of Muslim tourists that coming to Japan, the village became a Muslim-friendly village. So that local SMEs in the village are invited to work with large companies in Japan to be able to make small prayer rooms in these SME restaurants or shops. However, seeing the opportunities for the development

of halal tourism industry are very large, the local SMEs chose to develop the mosque even bigger.

Bathroom with Water Availability

Water is very important for Muslims in terms of purity and cleanliness because both are core aspects of faith. For Muslim tourists, the unavailability of water in the bathroom is an unpleasant thing. Over time, currently, bathrooms in Japan already provide bidet technology that allows Muslims to clean themselves with water after using the bathroom. So the need for bathrooms with water can be met almost everywhere in Japan (Lufi Wahidati, 2018).

Hotels

In addition to halal food, other facilities that are needed by Muslim tourists are Muslim-friendly hotels. Nowadays, the Japanese government has provided several Muslim-friendly inns such as Richmond Hotels (located in Osaka and Tokyo) and Kyoto Century Hotel (located in Kyoto). The Muslim-friendly hotel in question is an inn that is halal-certified and provides a prayers room.

Other Halal Products

The needs of other Muslim tourists are not only limited to halal food and lodging, but also other service sectors such as fashion and cosmetics. Currently, there are already several fashion companies that have produced clothing in accordance with Islamic law such as Uniqlo Fashion Company collaborating with Hana Tajima (a Japanese Muslim designer) who has launched clothing for Muslim women since July 2017. In addition, for cosmetic products has been produced by the Greato Corporation Company which is a local company that is a training of

large companies in Japan which launched cosmetic products with Indonesian-language brands, namely Melati. These products have received halal certificates from the Japan Islamic Trust (JIT) in 2017. Other halal products that are available in Japan are Japanese cooking spices such as miso and sukiyaki sauce. Currently, in Japan, there are also souvenir shops that produce halal souvenirs, one of which was established by Yamadaya, a souvenir shop in Hiroshima (Lufi Wahidati, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The seriousness of the Japanese government in improving the development of the tourism industry is seen from the strategies carried out by the Japanese government. The strategy is intended to be able to attract more and more Muslim tourists who come to Japan and ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics which allows foreign tourists, especially Muslim tourists, to come to Japan. The Japanese government's strategy in developing its halal tourism industry is through collaboration with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Japan. As it is known that SMEs have a very big role in the economy in Japan.

The strategies or the efforts that made by the Japanese government through Japanese SMEs are to establish cooperation with SMEs in Malaysia and Indonesia provide Halal facilities such as halal food, prayers room, toilets, etc. Japan's collaboration with Malaysian and Indonesian SMEs in the form of exports of halal food products such as frozen seafood and coconut sugar nectar which will later be distributed to 1,800 Aeon supermarkets in Japan. In addition, another strategy from the Japanese government in developing a halal tourism industry through

Japanese SMEs is to provide Muslim-friendly facilities where the role of Japanese SMEs themselves is to be able to provide halal restaurants by installing halal labels or the availability of halal certification. Besides halal food, Japanese SMEs also help facilitate halal restaurants in Japan with prayers room and a toilet that provides water.

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