

Negotiating the Needs and Readiness of Pondok Warga Emas as an Islamic Tourism Destination in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT--Since 1985, Malaysia has become a popular tourist destination and experienced consistent annual growth in foreign tourist. In parallel with the growth of Islamic tourism destinations, this study views Pondok Warga Emas (senior homes) (PWE) as a business opportunity for Islamic tourism in Malaysia. PWE has been increasing in number and demand, which leads to the question: to what extent can PWE become an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia? What are the potential needs and readiness level of PWE? This study thus identifies the needs and assesses the readiness of PWE as an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia. A qualitative approach is employed and data are obtained through in-depth interviews with the management of PWE and travel agencies that are randomly chosen from Selangor, Kelantan, Kedah, Johor and Perak. The collected information is analyzed using content and framing analysis. The needs are found to be emphasized on shariah compliance, tour packages and Islamic tourism itself, while the readiness refers to the content, fees, authority/monitoring and use of social media for marketing purposes. A further examination is suggested to include foreign tourists and publics on the potential marketability of PWE as an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia.

Keywords-- Negotiation; Needs; Readiness; Pondok Warga Emas; Islamic Tourism

I. INTRODUCTION

The global tourism stakeholders have opened their eyes and recognized Malaysia as one of the exciting tourism destinations. While there is an annual increase of foreign tourists, it can be amplified further by promoting the country to ensure tourists receive real information on tourism products and facilities. Among Malaysia's tourism products are attractive landscapes, unique cultural and artistic performances, sports tourism and the always-preserved historical heritage buildings. This positive performance has always been an agenda of Malaysia's economic development. The 10th Malaysia Plan (RMK-10) targeted a permanent growth of 8% for the tourism industry, and in 2020, the government has planned to bring in 36 million tourists for a total revenue of RM115 billion (Division Strategic Planning, 2018). To ensure success and sustainable growth, the government has

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introduced various tourism-related plans. These include the development of religious tourism packages and scientific activities that are deemed to have substantial potential and impact on Malaysia.

According to the Malaysia Tourism Attraction Profile prepared by the Islamic Tourism Center (ITC), there are 80 mosques throughout Malaysia that can become Islamic tourism destinations (Aniza, 2019). There is a demand for this “spiritual” tourism, which arise from various factors, including the desire of tourists to know more about Islam as well as to find peace and happiness. Especially for senior travelers, desire for religious studies in the Malaysian *pondok* (Islamic educational institution) is also emerging. The potentials and benefits of *Pondok Warga Emas* (senior homes; PWE) as an Islamic tourism destination should be further studied to develop the tourism industry further

Currently, the *pondok* system has not yet been recognized as an official educational institution even though new institutions are continually set up across Malaysia. In fact, there is an increase in the number of *pondok* system as an additional feature of *tahfiz* studies. There are a number of centers that provide both elderly care and commercial health care (for example, the Al-Jenderami Foundation in Selangor). In the 11th Malaysia Plan, the first thrust highlights six target segments, one of which is to support active aging for senior citizens in Malaysia. It was found that that the share of population aged 65 years and over (old age) has increased from 6.3 per cent in 2017 to 6.5 per cent in 2018 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). The rising share of working age population and the elderly has also increased the intermediate age in 2018 to 28.6 years. Additionally, the increasing number of pension recipients in Malaysia may also increase the demand for PWE. The number of pensioners is expected to grow to 1.5 million by 2050, taking into account the increase in life expectancy of Malaysians from 75 to 85 years (Kasmiah, 2019).

These shifts may impact the elderly and the demand for physical and spiritual care. The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified some major issues facing senior citizens, such as loneliness, depression and anxiety (Noor Hafizah, 2020). Noor Hafiza (2020) maintained that psychosocial support is crucial in helping the elderly handle these obstacles. Additionally, the aging readiness of the government and public pension recipients would encourage the need for a spiritual program, creating for it a place in the domestic market. As these institutions have the potential to be tourist destinations, the government must introduce a regulatory framework to manage their establishment and operations. Besides regulation, there is also the question of the readiness of PWE and travel agents. Are the travel agents aware about the needs of PWE in the tourism landscape? Are PWEs ready to become tourism destinations? Based on these questions, this article formulates two objectives:

1. To identify the needs of PWE in order to be promoted as an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia; and
2. To examine the readiness of PWE (i.e. participation, teaching modules, infrastructures and finance) to be an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study discusses the needs and readiness of PWE in becoming one of the destinations of Islamic tourism. The needs and readiness were examined from the context of negotiation, which defines the contrary that occurs in making PWE a success. PWE is viewed as a subject of negotiation, where the needs of PWE rely on the readiness

of PWE and vice versa. This study, therefore, conflates the concept of PWE with the concept of Islamic tourism; whether the two are similar or different and whether they can be negotiated remains ambiguous.

2.1 Negotiation of Needs

A negotiation can be defined as a tool for resolving conflicts, and it has been found to be critical and significant in conflict resolution. It is perceived as a process of resolving conflict arising from the difference in interests or needs between individuals or groups that cannot be satisfactorily dealt with (Long, 2016; Thompson et al., 2010). Negotiations are perceived as a means of communication with stakeholders, enabling policy makers to better understand issues, factors and dynamics behind policy issues. There are growing linkages, interconnectedness and rapid changes between various fields, such as economy, trade, governance and regional and international relations, calling for more effective negotiations (Alfredson & Cungu, 2008).

Negotiation is only possible whenever there is a need and motive to solve the differences among conflict actors (Alfredson & Cungu, 2008). An outcome refers to the ability to minimize the differences in interests or needs, which may fall into a win-win or win-lose situation. The solution is suggested to include behavioral and attitude changes and constructive or destructive outcomes (Bush & Folger, 1994). There are a number of strategies in conflict resolution, namely mediation, negotiation, conciliation and problem-solving.

Negotiation is very important for an organization (Thompson et al., 2010) because it compromises between two choices. Such is the case in this study: negotiation is necessary to compromise needs and readiness, both of which are beneficial for the two parties involved, PWEs and the tourism industry. Improvements in various aspects will elevate a company to a higher level and differentiate it from others. Furthermore, the implementation of negotiation will prepare both parties to reconsider the potential of developing PWE as an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia. Negotiation should be conducted after detailed information on the strengths and weaknesses has been equally gained. After that, it is possible to design strategies to fulfill the gap between the needs and readiness of PWE to become a part of Islamic tourism in Malaysia.

2.2 Needs and Readiness of Islamic Tourism

The needs and readiness of PWE can be likened to tourism needs in general. According to Mahadewi and Che (2017), Bandung tourism agencies consider the characteristics of village products. Most village tourism products in Bandung are unique attractions, such as Taman Ayun, PlagaAgro and Umabian homestay. The characteristics of these village products are known as education and interpretation, preservation and protection, authenticity and quality, local priority and capacity and partnership.

Tourist perceptions are found to be less obvious, such as the hospitality of the locals, the atmosphere resulting from certain events, the sense of fear, isolation, or other feeling that a particular destination can produce (Murphy et al., 2000). Destinations have different appeals to different markets. Some individuals love crowds, others love isolation and find crowded places unbearable. The appeal of the destinations may vary depending on the opportunities and market available in any country and in any region (Hall, 2008). Importantly, compliance to the regulations of State Islamic Departments should be placed as priority when it comes to the process of developing *pondok* institutions (Nur Syafawani Yusoff, 2017).

Camelleri (2018) found that tourists usually travel to see what a destination has to offer to them in terms of what they can see, do and experience. The features that attract a person to a particular destination are known as attractions. Attractions can be natural wonders, man-made attractions, special events, cultural or historic sites, arts and crafts, sport, music or dance, unusual or unique flora and fauna, night life, etc. Attractions are many and diverse. Therefore, a wide variety of attractions would possibly appeal to a large number of tourists. For a destination to be viable for tourists there must be some way to get to the country, the region and the various attractions (Camilleri, 2018). This does not mean that there has to be first class or mass transportation to everything, but it does mean that access must be made possible. Access relates to transport, but it can simply refer to a walking trail or a cycling track.

The length of the package is also significant when the tourists need accommodation for more than just a one-day visit. It is important for tourist destinations to offer a wide array of accommodation facilities with different price ranges. Sometimes, the accommodation is virtually part of the attraction of the destination, especially if it overlooks a spectacular scenery or landmark. Tourists may enjoy doing certain activities whilst at their destinations. These activities include shopping, eating out, using sports facilities and engaging in outdoor recreational journeys (Camilleri, 2018). Additionally, amenities are also a priority; these include electricity and water, sanitary facilities, safe drinking water, roads, police and emergency services, postal and communication facilities, media, etc. These structures ensure that the tourists stay safe and sound during their stay in a destination. Tourists need to have access to basic facilities to feel comfortable and secure.

2.3 Hierarchy of Needs

One of the most useful analyses of human motives is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. One of Maslow's assumptions is that needs fulfillment is progressive: one starts at the lowest level and only move to the next if the former has been fulfilled. Therefore, according to Maslow, one is not concerned with security or safety needs until their need for food has been fulfilled (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017; Benson & Dundis, 2003; Maslow, 1954; Niles & Marcellino, 2004). Importantly, the hierarchy of needs describes the importance of learning new information in order to understand the world. This information provides insightful lessons that motivate an individual to continuously climb the upper stages up to self-actualization.

This study applies Maslow's model on PWE which explains the lower hierarchical needs that must first be satisfied before an organization can move to higher ones. Lynn explained that the bottom-level needs found the steadiness and capability to move up the hierarchy. Internal and external changes occurring within and without PWE may cause adverse effects to its financial stream, and this can be demotivating (Scheurell, 2018). Before such a challenge, PWE must improve its networking, promotion, marketing and facilities.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative approach, and data were collected using interviews and a focus group discussion (FGD). A semi-structure questionnaire was used to guide the interview sessions. The interviews involved eight (8) respondents randomly selected from three regions, namely north (Perak and Kedah), south (Johor), and east (Kelantan). Four of them were the owners of PWE (labeled as PWE1, PWE2, PWE3 and PWE4)

and the other four were the owners of local travel agencies (labeled as TA1, TA2, TA3 and TA4). The regions were selected according to the population of PWE in each state. The data were analyzed using content analysis to identify the main frames and sub-frames related to the needs and readiness of PWE as an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia.

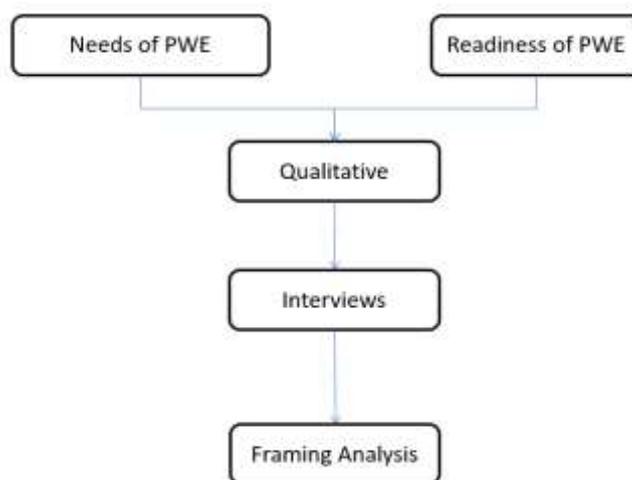


Figure 1: Research design

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Objective 1: To identify the needs of PWE in order to be promoted as an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia

Table 2 shows five identified main frames for the needs of PWE as an Islamic tourism destination. Of them, only three frames had sub-frames that explained their respective parent frames. The frames were assessed according to the number of references and frequency of quotes from the interviewed travel agencies. Quotes with a high number of references were perceived to have greater importance. The three frames were internal needs, external needs and concept of Islamic destinations. The remaining two frames were tourism in Islam and challenges faced by PWE to be one of the Islamic tourism destinations.

There were 13 sub-frames under the internal needs frame (see Figure 1). Three elements of needs were quoted from four respondents. In other words, all respondents shared similar concerns toward these items: tour package, Islamic tourism and shariah compliance. This finding aligned with a great amount of literature that found shariah law as the most important factor for Muslim travelers (Jafari & Scott, 2014). It should be noted that Islamic travelers highly adhere to shariah rulings, which guide them in their choice of tourism activities, destinations, hotels, tours and food (Kessler, 2015). Muslim tourists adhere to Islamic principles that directly or indirectly influence their decision in choosing travel destinations (Battour, 2011). Muslims are increasingly concerned about products and services that complement their confidence in making travel decisions (Battour & Ismail, 2014)

Table 1: The intensity of frames for the needs of PWE as an Islamic tourism destination based on the responses of travel agencies

Frames		Number of References	Frequency of Quotes
A. Tourism in Islam		2	7
B. Needs (Internal)			
1.	Islamic teaching	1	8
2.	Financial	1	2
3.	Accommodation	1	1
4.	Environment	3	3
5.	Halal Foods	2	1
6.	Activities	3	9
7.	Facilities	3	3
8.	Contents	3	5
9.	Shariah compliance	4	4
10.	Education	3	7
11.	Relaxation	3	3
12.	Package/Marketing/Promotion	4	35
13.	Ownership	1	3
C. Needs (External)			
1.	Relationship	2	6
2.	Demand	2	1
3.	Reputation/rapport	1	15
4.	Recognition	2	1
5.	Authorities/Licensing	1	4
6.	Security	2	1
7.	Logistic	1	2
8.	Safety	1	1
D. Islamic Destinations			
1.	Islamic Tourism	4	7
2.	Readiness	2	2
3.	Increase Knowledge	2	3
4.	Culture/Heritage/History	1	5
5.	Trends	2	3
6.	Potential tourists	1	5
E. Challenges		3	6

Shariah compliance (4) and package/marketing/promotion (35) frames were quoted by all four respondents. TA4, for example, asserted that “For foreign travel agents, we usually have B2B, so we must check... their... compliance... whether they practice it or not... the shariah compliance of their tours... because this involves people... so we must check these things in detail.” Itinerary also played a role in determining the value of a

package. TA2 said, “Oh... for example, if we do a tour... any kind of tour... mostly tours... mostly we’ll see first who’s the wholesaler... whether the company is shariah compliant or not... we usually check based on their itinerary”. The finding suggests that the tourism package that the PWE offers must fully uphold the values of Islam. As found by Muhamad et al.(2019), one of the needs for services is compliance with the requirements of Islamic teachings. The concept of Islamic tourism should be parallel with social development, infrastructure, spiritual, Islamic teachings and ethics (Siti Anis, 2015). The implementation of Islamic tourism is perceived as important to individuals, society and country.

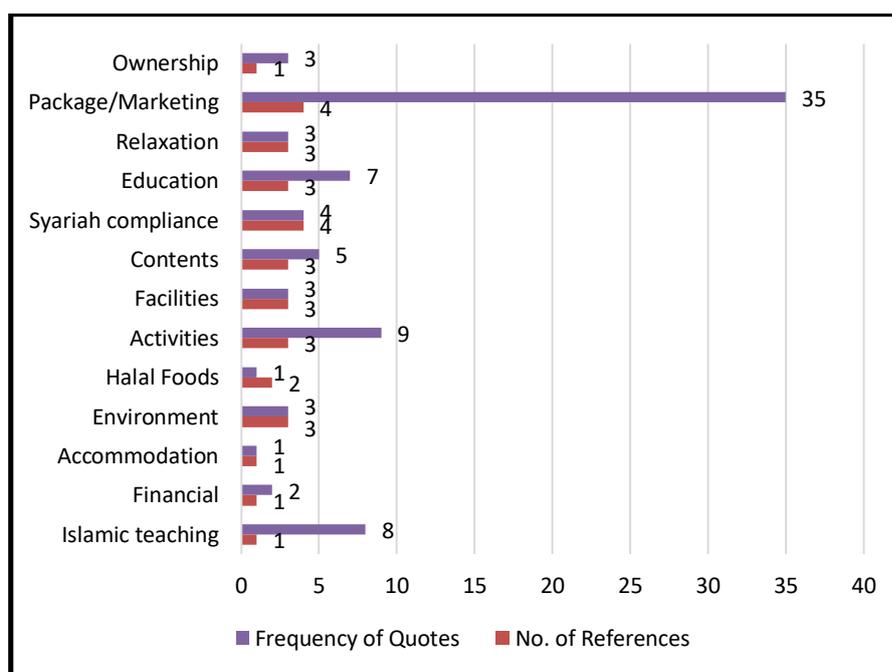


Figure 2: Internal needs of PWE

TA2 held similar opinions. According to her, “One of the things that Muslim tourists, especially Middle Easterners, like about Malaysia is shariah compliance. They say that we are very shariah compliant in a relaxed manner. We are not very restraining and at the same time we are shariah compliant. Shariah here is moderate and they seem to see it as very conducive.” The Shariah compliance frame was quoted from various perspectives (4; 4). TA1 said, “But as travel agents, what we do, we promise an environment that firstly must comply shariah.” TA3 shared his experience with non-Muslims, “Even non-Muslims say, ‘Brother, if it’s like this, it’s better to use Islamic law, we’re more satisfied.’ We, our families at home, we practice Islam and that’s actually better.”

Moreover, PWE should include recruit well-known trainers as a selling point, include important information like program duration and use social media (such as Facebook, Whatsapp) and branding to market their products. TA1 explained about the package based on her experience, “When we want to make a promotion, we have to see who’s the target audience, who are they looking for? Once we get that, we know what strategy and pricing to use, and then we know how to promote. Usually people will be interested if there’s a complete, comprehensive package, he knows the destinations, how long, and all available packages. All package promotion will be like this, complete, and then people will start looking.” TA2 agreed, highlighting similar points for Kedah, “Actually everything is similar, there’s a destination with an attraction, firstly is of course marketing because people must know what is

being offered by these PWEs, especially since we have social media.” As reported by Adtya (2017), social media such as Facebook or Instagram play a significant role among Malaysians when it comes to travel inspiration. Around 81% of the respondents agreed that social media are one of their major sources of online travel inspirations.

Findings from the interviews revealed six elements that were referred by the majority (three respondents): environment (3; 3), activities (3; 9), facilities (3; 3), contents (3; 5), education (3; 7) and relaxation (3; 3). TA1 commented on facilities, “We make sure as well as possible that the destination provides halal food. When someone travels, among the most important things in every destination is the food, activities and of course prayers. Those are among the most important things and should be included in our itinerary.” Sunlu (2003) mentions:

“Tourism can create great pressure on local resources like energy, food, and other raw materials that may already be in short supply. Greater extraction and transport of these resources exacerbates physical impacts associated with their exploitation. Because of the seasonal character of the industry, many destinations have ten times more inhabitants in the high season than in the low season. High demand is placed upon these resources to meet the high expectations tourists often have (proper heating, hot water, etc.)” (Page 264)

The Islamic tourism frame is frequently referred by the travel agencies (four respondents). This frame refers to the concept of tourism for PWE. The relaxation frame (see Figure 3) was found to be a significant criterion for tourists to choose PWE as their destination (Chen et al., 2016; Duman, 2011). According to Chen et al. (2016), relaxation is one of the most important attributes determining travel motivation. Since natural scenery in the destinations could provide a good environment that can help them to relax, pictures of the destination would motivate tourists to travel to those places. Zhu and Lu (2019) and Caldito et al. (2015) found that when some tourists are away from home, they tend to feel freer and more relaxed, allowing them to relieve themselves from physical and psychological stresses. These findings suggest that Muslim tourists may be motivated to travel for entertainment, sightseeing, spending leisure time or experiencing other cultures, all of which are forms of relaxation.

In addition, promotion plays an important role in making PWE an Islamic tourism destination. Chin (2017) opined to strengthen promotion in a tourism destination, the government should improve its tourism operations, which include licenses and capacity development of human capitals. According to the respondents, Islamic tourism is defined in terms of Islamic practices and culture of the religion itself. These include shariah compliance, prayer areas and halal food. TA1 and TA2 explained, “If we relate to Islamic tourism destination, I personally see, as a travel agent, from the start I’ve viewed this earth of Allah as a destination, and every destination is the possession of Allah. If we can travel everywhere, go... an environment that firstly has to be shariah compliant, for example we make sure as best we can that the destination offers halal food. When someone travels, among the most important things in every destination is the food, activities and of course prayers. Those are among the most important things and should be included in our itinerary.”

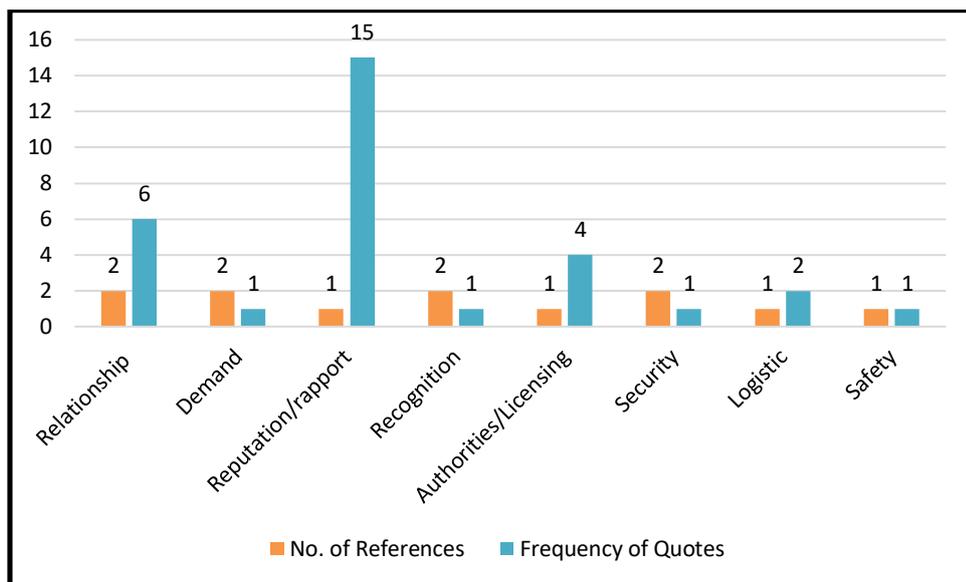


Figure 3: External needs of PWE

The respondents referred to all external factors equally, and the scores ranged between one and two. The factor with the most references (six quotes) was the importance of relationship. The act of travel is considered as a favorable action if it is done for Islamic motivations. Muslims are encouraged to visit their relatives and friends to strengthen the bond of silaturrahim (kinship) of the ummah (Muslim community) (Fahim & Dooty, 2014). Strengthening the bond of silaturrahim is the social goal of Muslims, and it would positively motivate them to travel (Jafari & Scott, 2014). Having a good time, building friendship and being with fellow Muslims are considered as social goals for Muslims whenever they go travel (Duman, 2011).

4.1.1 Islamic Tourism Destination Frame

There is a relationship between knowledge expansion and travel motivation of Muslims. Islam has motivated Muslims to travel to gain new experiences and maturity by performing religious duties and recording knowledge and disseminating it to others (Md. Anowar et al., 2011). They would be motivated to travel for the sake of gaining more knowledge. In Islam, travel is closely linked with seeking and spreading knowledge (Fahim & Dooty, 2014). Muslims are motivated to achieve social, physical and spiritual goals, such as expanding their knowledge, by travelling (Duman, 2011).

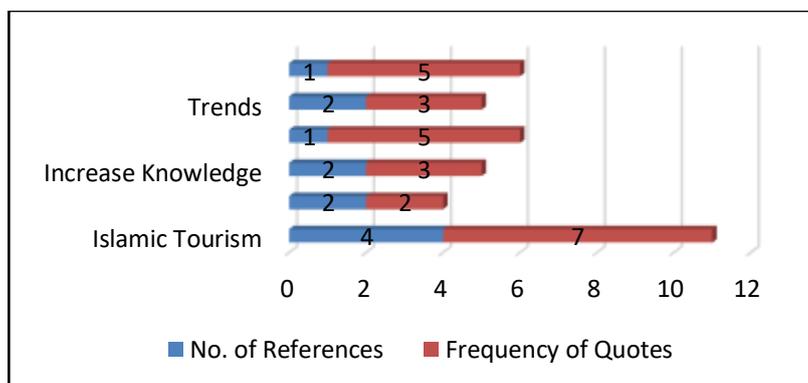


Figure 4: Islamic tourism destination frame

4.2 To recognize the readiness of PWE to be an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia

According to Table 3, there were four frames that were highly referred by the respondents. These were financial, marketing, legal and program for tourists. The first digit of the parentheses indicates the number of references made by the interviewees, while the second digit the frequency of quotes. The financial frame constituted fees (4; 34), donations (3; 6) and capital (3; 6).

The fees sub-frame related to expenses charged to the senior citizens. PWE4 explained that the fees cover accommodation, utilities and other such costs, “The room costs RM300 to enter as accommodation fee, then a monthly fee of RM30, RM10 for utilities.” He added that the remaining sum was used to help others, “Usually we look at the remaining collected fees, then zakat that we... it means that it’s not regular... means that we... we look at the collection... God willing we’ll always give them to the guests during Eid... at the start of the school year and whatnot... we want to help, especially schoolchildren.” He also explained that the amount of fees for guests were voluntary, except for meals, “Usually according to the voluntary contribution of each person. But for meals we usually give them a price, but for others there’s no charge.”

Another PWE has a different approach toward fees. PWE2 stated that guests has the option of paying for meals through the pondok’s canteen services, “The fee for a senior citizen is RM100 for tuition and RM150 for accommodation, no meals. But those who can afford can pay the canteen aunty to cook for them.” He agreed that the fees were low, but it was relatively sufficient if enrollments were high, “If there are many people, it can be profitable, but if there’s not, it’s a bit of a problem. It’s a bit difficult to pay wages if we depend only on the pondok, that’s why we have other institutions. Here, there are some who can’t afford it, but everyone’s staying here according to their own means.”

The fees, as explained by PWE3, were charged according to room size and costs. PWE3 said, “The fees depend on the room. Better rooms have lower fees. The rent of the new building is RM250, but it’s mostly the occupants themselves who endowed the rooms. The bottom room is RM36,000 and upstairs RM31,000. Some don’t stay here, so they endowed the rooms to the pondok.” PWE1 shared the same principle, saying, “Registration is charged a one-time RM200. Monthly tuition is RM50. We invite external teachers and their services must be paid, so we charge tuition.”

Table 2: The intensity of frames for the readiness of PWE as an Islamic tourism destination from the perspective of PWE managers

Frames	No. of References	Frequency of Quotes
A. Financial		
1. Capital	3	6
2. Donation	3	6
3. Fees	4	34
B. Marketing		
1. Rapport and reputation	3	8

2.	Promotion	3	8
3.	Social Media	3	11
4.	Networking	2	4
5.	Package	1	3
c. Legal			
1.	Authority/Monitoring	4	12
2.	Security	1	1
3.	Health	3	12
4.	Nurses Services	3	43
5.	Maintenance	1	2
D. Program for Tourists			
1.	Content	4	44
2.	Schedule	1	2
3.	Rules/Discipline	2	6
4.	Flexibility	1	3
5.	Relationship	3	5
6.	Commitments	3	9
E. Logistics			
1.	Facilities	2	5
2.	Accommodation	3	61
F. Challenges		3	10
G. Expansion Plan		2	4
H. Turnover		1	1
I. Counselling		1	2

The respondents placed much importance on marketing, legal and program for tourists. The findings revealed five elements needed for marketing, namely social media (3; 11), rapport and reputation (3; 8), promotion (3; 8), networking (2; 4) and package (1; 3). Rapport, reputation and promotion were also regularly quoted due to their complementarities. In other words, promotion usually relates to rapport and reputation. Based on the interviews, promotion relied greatly on the availability of the premises for the senior citizens. It related, as well, to fundraisings, done mainly during public talks at mosques.

Little reference was made for networking, as none of the interviewees collaborated or networked. Only two respondents were aware of the importance of networking, while only one mentioned the importance of package if PWE were to become an Islamic tourism destination. The legal aspects were concerned with five elements: authority/monitoring (4; 12), nurses' services (3; 43), health (3, 12), maintenance (1; 2) and security (1, 1). The authority and monitoring were different from one PWE to another. They included the Pahang Islamic Affairs Council (JAIP), Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), Giatmara and Islamic councils

Nurse services were the main concern under legal frames, quoted 43 times during the interviews. PWE1 elaborated, "We don't have many assistants here to take care of seriously ill senior citizens. But most families will

bring them back home. Throughout its three years of operation, 34 senior citizens have passed away. But they passed away at their own villages, so we didn't do much." PWE4 concurred, "The challenge for senior citizens is their welfare, sometimes their health condition requires an attendant, maybe there's an emergency, and their children worry that they will fall. So, there's a woman who voluntarily provide care... they find whomever that can help them go to the hospital. Usually we don't have nurses... because sometimes they resolve the health issue among them... so usually we'll call their family members."

Program for tourists were more focused on the contents (4; 44), commitments (3; 9) and relationship (3; 5). While commitment is related to the participation of senior citizens in the programs organized by the PWE, majority of the respondents were particular about the timetable and commitment to take part in every class. The senior citizens were also committed to looking after their relationships among themselves. Without cooperation, conflict usually occurs over unnecessary issues rather than major problems like theft and vandalism. The logistics frame was emphasized on accommodation (3; 61). However, challenges were quoted ten times. One of the challenges of making PWE into an Islamic tourism destination was the senior citizen tourists' knowledge and understanding of the mission.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is a market for PWE as an Islamic tourism destination in Malaysia. The market is not limited to only locals but also foreigners who wish to gain knowledge and experience of learning and living in the *pondok* system in their senior years. PWE has to understand its positioning in the tourism landscape, as well as its roles, functions and readiness. Both the needs and readiness should suit the concept of Islamic tourism. Various aspects of PWE operations should be improved if it were to be made into a tourism destination. These improvements should come from the PWE itself, local authorities, state religious councils, travel agents and ITC. All of these parties should collaborate to design a long-term plan for PWE, promoting its more sustainable and effective operations and mapping it into the Islamic tourism map.

This research suggests that PWE is potential for future market, especially considering that Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan are gradually becoming aging countries within the next few decades. Currently, Japan ranks first in terms of aging population. This study, thus, suggests a further examination to include the needs and expectations of foreign tourists and publics concerning the attractions, activities and facilities of PWE as an Islamic tourism destination. The findings will reveal a broader picture of PWE in the landscape of tourism in Malaysia.

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