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Japan's Multi-Track Diplomacy in Increasing Its Halal Tourism Branding

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Abstract

This study aims to examine and describe how Japan's Multi-Track Diplomacy enhances its Halal Tourism Branding, using the concepts of Multi-Track Diplomacy, Nation Branding, and Halal Tourism. The study employs a descriptive research method with library research data collection techniques, using secondary data from books, journals, and articles, analyzed qualitatively. The results show that out of the nine actors involved in Japan's Multi-Track Diplomacy to improve Halal Tourism Branding, six actors have been actively engaged. These include Government Institutions such as JNTO and JETRO, Instagram celebrities from Private Citizens, Muslim Communities in Japan, Business Actors, and the media as intermediaries, specifically Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) World Japan. The findings indicate that various actors play crucial roles in promoting Japan's halal tourism and enhancing its branding image among the public.

Keywords

Multi-Track Diplomacy, Nation Branding, Halal Tourism, Japan

1. Introduction

Tourism can be one of the most important aspects to improve the country's economy (Utama, & Rai, 2013; Tanjung & Panggabean, 2022). Apart from the economic side, the tourism sector also plays a major role in creating a positive image of a country. Japan is one of the countries that continues to develop its tourism potential. The diversity of cultures and the exoticism of Japan's nature make Japan listed in UNESCO because there are cultural and natural sites that show extraordinary universal value. There are 25 world heritage sites in Japan consisting of 20 cultural sites including Mount Fuji and the Genbaku Dome Hiroshima Peace memorial, and 5 natural sites, one of which is the natural tourist attraction of Ogasarawa Island. The natural beauty of Japan then attracts foreign tourists so that Japan continues to improve its tourism sector because tourism is a vital sector for Japan's progress (Mabrurin & Latifah, 2021). During the second term of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, namely in 2012-2020, Abe made tourism a main pillar in economic growth in Japan (Navickas & Malakauskaite, 2009). Apart from the economic side, the tourism sector also plays a major role in creating a positive image of a country. Japan as one of the world's leading tourist destinations, continues to strive to develop its public diplomacy through the tourism sector.

The great encouragement from the government under the leadership of Shinzo Abe who actively promotes tourism development including halal tourism (Widagdyo, 2015). Japanese society has a friendly and tolerant nature towards the Muslim community. Japan is a homogeneous country where Islam is a minority religion with 185,000 adherents or around 0.5% of the total population of Japan, the majority of the population 51.2% are Shinto, 43% are Buddhist and 1.0% are Christian. Despite being a country with Muslims as a minority, Japan is very serious about developing its halal tourism. Japan launched the Visit Japan Campaign 2010, this campaign was created by Japan as an effort to increase its tourism promotion, through efforts to target 10 million tourists in 2010 (Handler & Ito, 2008). In 2016, the New Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan 2012-2016 Policy was issued as an innovation to promote its tourism, and make Southeast Asia a potential target market (Mlit et al., 2012).

Halal tourism then became an important sector that continued to be developed by Japan. The increase in the halal industry, especially in the tourism sector, is also one of the preparations for the Japanese government in welcoming the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. In developing its halal tourism industry, Japan cannot work alone (Maharani & Darmawan, 2018). Therefore, in order to achieve its national interests, such as to increase Japan's economic growth, the Japanese government is trying to cooperate with other countries in developing the tourism industry because it is known that the tourism industry greatly influences economic growth in Japan with the number of foreign tourists, especially Muslim tourists. Indirectly, with the increasing number of Muslim tourists coming to Japan, the Japanese government must also improve the halal tourism industry as a way to appreciate Muslim tourists who come to meet their needs while in Japan (Gumulya et al., 2021). From this explanation, it can be seen that the Japanese government has carried out a series of active efforts to create a positive image as a Muslim-friendly country to the international community by improving the quality and quantity of the halal tourism industry in Japan.

2. Literature Review

Multi-track diplomacy was initiated and introduced by Louise Diamond and John McDonald based in Arlington, Virginia, United States or known as the Institute for Multi Track Diplomacy, founded in May 1992 with the aim of building peace. Multi-

track diplomacy, as defined by Louise Diamond and John McDonald, is a theory of diplomacy that uses government, group, and individual diplomacy to describe the peace process in the international system. Then Louise Diamond created the term multi-track to involve all parties from society to the highest level, namely the head of state or government. This multi-track concept is interrelated and equally important in conducting diplomatic relations (Nugraha, 2023). The actors who carry out their diplomacy to achieve a country's interests from multi-track diplomacy are as follows (McDonald et al., 2018).

Track one Government, namely diplomacy where the government and institutions in a country are involved in formal communication and interaction channels as well as official diplomacy channels. Track two (Non-Government), namely carrying out its diplomacy by analyzing, preventing and resolving it with communication and understanding to build good relations, and carried out by non-state actors. Track three (Business), carrying out its diplomacy through business groups by carrying out business activities to the international or national community by generating profits later. Can also support other parties to carry out their diplomacy. Track four (Private Citizen), this track carries out or carries out its diplomacy through individuals or communities. For example, it is carried out with citizen diplomacy, voluntary private organizations, student exchange programs, the existence of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or from a number of interest groups.

Diplomacy through learning, which can be carried out by educational institutions such as schools or universities, can also be carried out through group research centers and so on related to learning. Track six (Activism), a diplomacy path whose actors have a role in realizing peace, namely through advocacy. Track seven (Religion), diplomacy through religion, can be through communities such as the Indonesian American Muslim Community (Afrina, 2020). Track eight (Funding), this diplomacy is usually carried out or run by communities or groups that provide funds. Track nine (Media and Communication), diplomacy through communication and media, or through Information. Through all the tracks that have been described, there are several tracks that are the focus and limitations of the discussion in this study, namely track one by the Government, track three by business actors, track four by celebrities as private citizens, track five by learning organizations, track seven by Muslim organizations and communities, and track nine by the media (Alfarizi, 2022).

Nation Branding is a concept in the study of international relations that is still developing, but this concept has a significant contribution to the country, because this concept focuses more on the use of soft power than hard power in achieving a country's national interests. In Nation Branding there are several definitions and main objectives, namely to reshape the nation's identity, increase the nation's competitiveness, and promote economic and political interests at home and abroad, to change, improve, or enhance the image or reputation of a country (Keith, 2008). Anholt (2011) explains that every country must have a positive image, because that image then shows that a country has a competitive advantage as a strong brand so that every country is required to compete with other countries in terms of getting an image, attention, confidence, investors to consumers from other countries. However, if a country does not have a positive image, then the country will not be able to compete to attract consumers, tourists, investors and attention from other countries, because this is very important for countries to be able to work together and achieve their national interests (Simon, 2013).

The emergence of the term halal tourism or halal tourism was initially an activity carried out by tourists on the basis of cultivating the motivation of religious feelings or values in themselves by visiting places of worship, cemeteries, or historical places that have religious values something with the religion they adhere to. Initially, this

tourism was also called religious tourism. This religious tourism was first introduced by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 1967 when holding a meeting with the theme *Tourism and Religions: A Contribution to the Dialogue of Cultures, Religions and Civilizations* (Misno, 2018). This religious tourism then experienced development because the segment of this tourism is not limited to a particular religion. Values that are more universal and have benefits for society, such as educational values, and local wisdom values are also not left behind (Basyariah, 2021).

While the public perception of halal tourism is an activity carried out by tourists to visit mosques or graves, whereas halal tourism itself includes cultural tourism, nature tourism, and artificial tourism that are combined with Islamic principles and values. What is important for Muslim tourists is the need for privacy as a Muslim such as the provision of swimming pools, sports facilities, and tourist attractions that can provide boundaries between men and women. Several important things to note in halal tourism services, namely: (1) must meet at least two aspects such as prayer facilities and halal food, (2) toilet facilities with good water are met and there are services and facilities during the fasting month, (3) in addition it is recommended that there are no alcoholic beverage activities and of course good recreational services.

3. Method

This study uses a descriptive research type, namely describing how Multi-track Diplomacy is used to improve Halal Tourism Branding in Japan. Using secondary data types in the form of report documents, books, journals, theses and news articles or information published via the internet. The data collection technique used is library research, namely collecting data related to the problem being studied which is obtained from various literature in books, journals, the internet, and various media. Data analysis techniques, data analysis techniques used are qualitative, namely analysis by explaining data that describes the results of the study through a number of data obtained by the author without using numerical calculations through statistical and mathematical formulas, but based on existing facts from the data that has been collected which can then be drawn into a conclusion.

4. Results

In improving halal tourism branding and helping to introduce halal tourism in each region, the Japanese government through government organizations, namely JNTO and JETRO, which are spread across several countries around the world, has several strategies in introducing and promoting halal tourism and Japanese hospitality (Choy, 1993). The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), an independent administrative institution of the Japanese government under the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism, is tasked with promoting Japanese tourism both domestically and abroad. JNTO has made an innovation in the form of a special travel guide aimed at Muslim tourists who want to visit Japan, which contains information about things that are really needed by Muslim tourists, namely information about restaurants or places to eat that have been certified halal, places of worship, and hotels or lodgings that are Muslim-friendly (Murakami, 2017).

JNTO also participates in various travel events held in various countries in the Middle East such as the Arabian Travel Market exhibition. The first time Japan participated in the Arabian Travel Market was in 2017 in Dubai. This event then became a place for JNTO to interact with professionals in the Middle East tourism sector, and was part of JNTO's strategy to attract more visitors from the Middle East. Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) is a government organization

under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (METI) with the aim of promoting Japanese trade and investment in other countries (So & Morrison, 2004). JETRO promotes halal products "made in Japan" and Japanese culture such as halal food, Japanese fashion to anime and sports in other countries through several events organized by the Japanese government and society such as the Japan Halal Expo, Halal Food Project in Indonesia, and Halal Market Fair an exhibition to bring together companies from Japan and abroad that focus on halal products by inviting representatives from Muslim countries to participate in the event (Eriany, 2023; Damayanti, 2023). JETRO Helps Japanese manufacturers to Export and Import halal products through Int. cooperation related to halal product import activities from Malaysia in helping Japanese manufacturers to meet the demand of Muslim tourists attending the 2020 Tokyo Olympics the Official Portal of MATRADE, 2016.

Imelda (2023) Halal Media Japan (HMJ) is a private company founded in 2014, Tokyo Japan, and the world's first website that provides halal information in Japan for the international community in several languages, the aim of which is to make Japan one of the countries that is friendly to Muslims. HMJ creates an information contained in the form of an application, namely "Halal Gourmet Japan" which can be downloaded or accessed directly on the Halal Media Japan website, where the application or website contains information about the location of places of worship, halal restaurants, sharia hotels and the position of the direction of the Qibla. Halal Media Japan also holds halal events such as the Japan Halal Expo which is held every year in Tokyo and participates in halal events at the international level, one of which is at the (MIHAS) Malaysia International Halal Showcase (Eriany, 2023).

Yasuharu Inoue, Through the narrative he conveyed that Yasuharu wanted to share the idea of Omotenashi (Japanese Hospitality) to the Muslim community. Yasuharu also pays close attention to the needs of Muslim visitors, especially regarding places of worship, one of them. Yasuharu hopes that in the future, Japan's relations with countries with a Muslim majority can work together. This Track was implemented by Yasu Project. Co. Ltd, to meet the needs of Muslim tourists, Yasu Project created a mobile mosque (Mobile Mosque) which is a truck container that is modified into a place of worship for Muslims, and is used during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Yasu Project has created an innovation that is very useful for foreign Muslim tourists or local Muslim communities in Japan, this innovation is in the form of a modified prayer room facility from a Truck Container into a mobile mosque called the Mobile Mosque, which is a 48m² prayer room that can accommodate up to 50 worshipers, and can move and move from one place to another. This innovation was developed as a new symbol of Omotenashi that transcends religious differences and will be used during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

On this track I was done by Zulaikha & Rahmat (2023) Selebgram, who is a Japanese Muslim Instagram celebrities who also promotes her country's halal tourism through her Instagram and Youtube accounts Nazaya Zulaikha who helps promote halal tourism among millennials. On Nazaya's Instagram account there are neatly arranged highlights, in which she has included information about halal food, places of worship and other Muslim-friendly facilities according to her region. With the details of each post made, it then makes it easier for her followers to find out important information about halal tourism and use it as a guide when visiting Japan (Imelda, 2023). On this track, it was done by JHA (Japan Halal Association) by providing halal certification to Japanese producers so that they can run halal businesses, educating the Japanese people to maintain a Muslim-friendly environment without relying on halal certification. In terms of learning, JHA strongly supports student activities related to Islam and halal, and accepts everything related to it as desired by students such as making surveys for graduation reports, Q&A sessions for student research assignments in high schools, workshops

and exchanges between Japanese students and Muslim students from abroad (Jha, 2014).

Japan Muslim Association (JMA) is a change from the Friendship Association, until now JMA has been established as an Islamic organization in Japan that has the goal of helping Muslim minorities in conveying Islamic teachings by collaborating with the Japanese community (Imam & Muhyidin, 2024). To achieve this goal, one of the programs run is International Exchange, where JMA facilitates the exchange with Muslims around the world. Then each member of JMA will be sent to Islamic countries to learn more about Islam itself and must return to Japan to spread Islam such as preaching. JMA also routinely carries out seminars or public lectures, writing activities, translating, printing and distributing books about Islam in Japanese to schools and public libraries, through social activities by holding public lectures or seminars, and distributing books "about Islam to schools or public libraries (Jha, 2014). The activities carried out by this community are to create study groups regularly as a forum for other members to learn about Islam and interact with each other. This community does not close to non-Muslims who want to join. In 2019, this Community started opening a shop that provides various daily halal product needs, from fresh food products to frozen food products.

Japan Islamic Trust (JIT) is a religious organization registered in Japan, this organization serves and supports Islamic communities for several years. This organization has a mission to foster harmony and mutual understanding with non-Muslim residents. JIT builds relationships with the global Muslim community through its activities and continues to interact with Muslims around the world (Fathil & Fathil, 2011). One of the social activities carried out by JIT is Tarbiyah Camp which is an annual camp open to Muslims and non-Muslims. The camp is held for 3 days 2 nights and participants gather with their families in the facilities provided. The activities include religious lecture sessions, reading the Qur'an for children, art performances to social events such as mountain climbing and playing games. Social media which then becomes an actor on this track is an intermediary in promoting halal tourism and as a means that will convey information about all activities that have not been, are being and have been carried out by previous actors. Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) World-Japan is an international television channel owned by the Japanese public broadcaster that presents Japanese content in various languages to a global audience. NHK World has contributed to efforts to improve halal tourism in Japan through various programs and initiatives that it has implemented.

In 2015, NHK World created a special program called 'Muslim Travelers,' this program is about visiting tourist destinations in Japan that are friendly to Muslim tourists, such as historical mosques in Japan and cities that are known as Muslim-friendly places because they have facilities available for tourists including Muslim tourists (NHK). The "Newsroom Tokyo" program also highlights the efforts of the Japanese government and tourism industry in developing halal facilities and services to attract Muslim tourists, namely improving services in several areas that are frequently visited by tourists and tourist destinations that are starting to be made more facilities that are friendly to Muslim tourists in terms of the provision of prayer rooms to the provision of halal food.

5. Conclusion

In improving the Nation branding of Japanese Halal Tourism which in this study was implemented by Multi-Track Diplomacy actors from the six tracks that have been explained. Various strategies were carried out by the Japanese government through JNTO and JETRO, which include promotions in various countries. The role of the private sector, such as Halal Media Japan in creating applications that can be easily used by Muslim tourists and business actors Yasu Project, Co. Ltd in creating

new innovations, namely mobile mosques. Halal certification issued by the Japan Halal Association helps Japanese producers to market halal products both domestically and abroad. Activists and celebrities such as Nazaya Zulaikha through posts on her Instagram account were able to improve Halal Tourism Branding in Japan and Muslim communities in Japan, such as the Japan Muslim Association (JMA), Tokyo Camii Young Muslim Club, also contributed to promoting halal tourism and providing support to Muslim tourists. As well as the role of the media as a global information connector carried out by Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) World Japan.

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