Development of 3A Perspectives to Assessment of Mosque Tourism Readiness: At-Taqwa Grand Mosque in Bengkulu City as Case

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ABSTRACT

It was found that many past studies assessing tourism readiness, especially the profit sector, used the 3A perspective: attractions, amenities and accessibility. Unfortunately, existing studies are limited to testing without developing the concept. This research aims to develop indicators contained in the 3A perspective by assessing the readiness of the At-Taqwa Great Mosque in Bengkulu City as a halal tourism location. The case is dissected using qualitative work that relies on depth of information. Data collection utilized in-depth interviews, repeated observations, and online and offline documentation. All data is processed following the categorization determined from the start. This research found indicators that need to be considered for attractions in the form of permanent and temporary; amenities in the form of main tourism, supplementing tourism, and supporting tourism amenities; and accessibility in the form of access to services and transportation. The development of 3A can facilitate the work of practitioners and academics in assessing the readiness of halal tourism. Future studies need to continue this research by testing each indicator that has been developed.

Keywords: 3A Perspectives; Tourism Attraction; Tourism Amenities; Mosque Tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Halal Tourism has found a trend in the post-millennium era. The Mastercard-Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) predicts that in 2026, the contribution of the halal tourism sector to the global
economy will soar to 35%, with a value of USD 300 billion. Estimated tourist visits reach 230 million or more than 10% of international tourists. This figure is much higher than the 2020 contribution of USD 220 billion. The Indonesian government and tourism activists have captured the large niche of the halal market. Moreover, the tourism sector is the country’s most significant foreign exchange contributor. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows a jump in income from 2.05% in 2010, 4.25% in 2015, 4.80% in 2019, and 5.31% in 2022. One of the supporting factors for increasing Indonesian income is investment in the tourism sector, such as improving transportation facilities and developing tourist service facilities.

One of the halal tourism areas that receives special attention is mosque tourism. Muslim tourists generally need comfortable places and facilities for worship, primarily when mosques can provide other offers such as photo spots, recreation areas, cleanliness and comfort. Mosque tourism is a central component and a complement to other tourism. Unfortunately, mosque leaders often do not realize that the mosques they manage have tourism potential. This potential, however, has contributed to the prosperity of the mosque for a long time.

This study assesses the readiness of mosques as tourism destinations using the 3A perspectives. Eichhorn and Buhalis confirmed that attractions, amenities and accessibility (3A) are simple assessment instruments and can

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be easily applied at all levels of tourism.\textsuperscript{6} According to Camilleri, the 3A components complement each other.\textsuperscript{7} Providing one sub-product (transport) may only be beneficial if other sub-products are available (accommodation). Basic facilities are only helpful if attractions are open and vice versa. Experts have widely used the 3A approach to assess the feasibility of a tourist attraction in the profit and non-profit sectors. However, the assessment for mosque tourism is still relatively small. Four studies have been documented in the last five years: Andi and Pranggono,\textsuperscript{8} Palupiningtyas et al.,\textsuperscript{9} Hariawan, Abdillah, Hakim,\textsuperscript{10} Prayoga et al.\textsuperscript{11} This research argues that component 3A can assess tourism readiness in mosques. Thus, this article not only assesses the readiness of a mosque as a tourist destination, but also intended to create indicators.

As a case study, this research determines the At-Taqwa Grand Mosque in Bengkulu City. The mosque was considered worthy of research for various reasons. In one year, the average visit reaches 100,000 tourists, where weekends are preferred. Mosque management responded with additional attractions outside of worship and buildings: morning exercises, cultural actions, calligraphy exhibitions, important day ceremonies for the country, performances by art communities, and others. Furthermore, there are lifestyle demands from city tourists who require leisure and updates on social media. Although there is no acknowledgement from the mosque management that At-Taqwa is being directed towards tourism, the level of local and regional tourist visits provides sufficient evidence.

Researchers believe that the At-Taqwa Great Mosque can become a religious tourist spot or family recreation centre when the potential is mapped and a roadmap is drawn. Thus, this research aims to explain the potential of the At-Taqwa Great Mosque in Bengkulu City as a tourist


destination using the 3A approach. This study not only strengthens the argument that the 3A techniques can also assess the readiness of non-profit tourism but also provides essential input for managing the At-Taqwa Grand Mosque in Bengkulu City for future development.

2. METHOD

Type of qualitative research was chosen because it was considered the most capable of exploring in-depth indicators of attractions, amenities and accessibility. Qualitative also provides an opportunity for researchers to explain field conditions objectively. The approach used is a case study using the At-Taqwa Grand Mosque in Bengkulu City as a single case. Yin explained that the prerequisites for using points in a case study approach must be specific and unique.12 The At-Taqwa Great Mosque possesses these two prerequisites.

While in the field, researchers used three data collection techniques: interviews, observation and documentation. The total informants for this research were 12 people: five mosque managers and seven visitors. Observations were carried out 22 times to obtain information regarding the advantages of the mosque, availability of accommodation, supporting facilities, tourist attractions around the mosque, and tourist behaviour. Meanwhile, documentation was taken from mosque profile books and other online sources that were considered supportive.

In general, researchers are guided by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana.13 All data is processed using an interactive approach: transcription, determining keywords, categorization, and reflection to bring the results into a conceptual direction. This initial determination of perspective makes the categorization part easier so that the researcher follows suit. With this scientific work system, indicators from the 3A perspective can be presented in research results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Presence of the At-Taqwa Mosque in Bengkulu City

The At-Taqwa Grand Mosque is located at Soekarno-Hatta Street, Anggut Atas Village, Gading Cempaka District, Bengkulu City. The mosque was built during the administration of Governor Soeprapto in 1988. On July 1 1989, President Soeharto inaugurated this mosque as the most prominent Muslim place of worship in Bengkulu Province. The building gives the impression of colonial style. The mosque was renovated in July 2020 with a Middle Eastern Mosque theme. Displaying full white on all areas of the


walls to the dome and minimalist ceramics inside emphasize the identity of the At-Taqwa Mosque, which is different from other mosques at that time. The minimalist, grand and large concept continues to be maintained today. The total area is 1,105 m², and the mosque area is 879.2 m². With this area, the At-Taqwa Mosque can accommodate 3,000 worshipers at one time. If you use the mosque's foyer, it can accommodate up to 5,000 worshipers.

The At-Taqwa Grand Mosque in Bengkulu City is also referred to as an official mosque under the city government's command. Thus, renovation costs are covered by regional funds, and daily operational costs are taken from the congregation and community's funds. There are four work focuses for mosque management which Mayor Helmi Hasan directly commands:

a. *Da’wah Ilallah* which seeks to invite people to be devoted to Allah *subhanahu wata’ala*;

b. *Ta’lim Wata’allum*, which tries to provide a learning space for religious and social sciences;

c. Remembrance and Worship provides comfortable and enjoyable facilities for *i’tiqaf*, daily prayers, congregation, reading the Qur’an, *dhikr* and *sadaqah*;

d. *Khitmad* who tries to serve the congregation, such as being able to take and visit the congregation to the hospital, serving the *musafi* with mosque facilities, providing food, drink, lodging for poor pilgrims, and soon.

*Sources: Primary data, 2023*

In supporting the four programs, the management has provided several spaces to function as places of worship inside the mosque. Ablution areas, toilets and bathrooms are provided for travellers or tourists who want to refresh their bodies. The warehouse is available for funeral coffins, tarpaulins, backdrops for mass religious meetings, outdoor stages that can be mantled, carpentry and planting tools, bookcases, generators, and other valuable items that have not yet been used. Mosque guards have two special rooms as a place to rest. A public kitchen is used for...
congregations, travellers, or mass religious meetings. Often, the kitchen is used by groups of *Tablighi Jama’ah* who have lived in this mosque for some time. Lastly, the mosque garden is enormous and a tourist recreation area. This mosque garden is called Berendo or veranda. At the Berendo location, there is also a tower which visitors usually use to view the city of Bengkulu from a height of 25 meters.

**Assessing in 3A Perspectives**

This research has collected data from various sources: interviews, observations, and documentation. All data is processed using the categorization method: attractions, amenities and accessibility. Below are presented the results of this research.

**Perspective of Attractions**

Attraction is an activity or non-activity that creates attractiveness to impress tourists through satisfaction, comfort and enjoyment. Attractions consist of what first makes tourists interested in visiting an area. Researchers divide two attractions at the At-Taqwa Mosque: permanent and temporary.

*First*, permanent attractions are defined as attractions that have a form and continue to exist even though tourists have left the mosque. The attractions offered are 1) Mosque building design; 2) Ornaments in the main room as a place for prayer; 3) Berendo and tower; and 4) inner garden. The mosque's architecture follows the splendour of mosques in the Middle East. Informants 01 and 02 said

"…renovation funds are borne by the city government. Coincidentally, the mayor, Helmi Hasan, is a person who loves mosques, so during the renovation, he was directed towards models of Ottoman-era mosques. We imitated the building models of the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, Sultan Ahmed Mosque, and others. Its beauty is due to its large dome, high tower and entrance…"

"Since the beginning, this mosque has been a centre of worship. Until the renovation occurred, Mr. Helmi wanted something different at the At-Taqwa Mosque. Maybe make the mosque more welcoming. That's what he meant."
In Bengkulu Province, there are only a few large mosques. However, the At-Taqwa Mosque in Bengkulu City is the only mosque that follows Middle Eastern architecture. Its grandeur and beauty have succeeded in calling tourists to visit. When you come to Bengkulu City, this mosque becomes a tourist destination. Tourists mainly visit this mosque before sunset or after evening prayers. Informant 05 conveyed

"Previously, I didn't know about this mosque. I'm not from this city. My friend invited me to spend the night in Berendo. This is unusual. You can see the beauty of the lights and tower at night. There are places to sit. Lots of food traders. Suitable for free holidays."

The mosque's foyer looks spacious with the words 'Berendo Kota Bengkulu'. This area is a gathering point for tourists because of the exciting photo spots and the availability of seating and food court facilities. In this area, various activities are held: watching the World Cup, batik basurek exhibition, Islamic painting exhibition, and others. The mosque offers access to more beautiful views. Tourists can buy tickets and take the elevator to the highest peak of all parts of this mosque. Lastly, the permanent attractions are the inner garden and mosque hallway. The mosque garden is liked by
visitors who have families. They prayed in the mosque and enjoyed the air around the park. Meanwhile, the mosque hallway has become a photo spot for millennial tourists.

Second, temporary attractions are interpreted as activities inviting congregations or Muslims in general to enliven the mosque. Helmi Hasan and the management of the At-Taqwa Mosque have organized many activities throughout the year. The activities carried out target two sides: spirituality and socio-culture. The theme of the activities usually depends on the situation and conditions at the time of implementation. Trending topics seem to be a reference for mosque managers. The World Cup viewing activity was held in the mosque foyer by taking trending moments and bringing Muslims closer to the mosque. Other temporary attractions: eating together after Friday prayers, eating together with 1000 trays of kebuli rice, annual recitation with the national Ustaz, art performances, leisurely walks, and holding the Bengkulu City anniversary ceremony

Perspective of Amenities

Amenities are interpreted as supporting facilities tourists need while at a tourist location. One of the factors that can encourage tourists to carry out tourism activities is the adequacy of facilities and infrastructure that make travelling easier. Researchers have tracked and examined several facilities enabling the At-Taqwa Mosque to become a halal tourist destination. Then, divide amenities into three elements.

First, the main tourism amenities are in the form of accommodation. At-Taqwa Mosque provides two rooms equivalent to simple accommodation for pilgrims or travellers who need a place to rest for free. Figure 6 shows a bedroom containing a carpet, folding mattress, cupboard, and several pillows. The bedroom is separated by curtains and is filled with a round table, four chairs, a refrigerator, and an air conditioner. Tourists can get more comfort by choosing a hotel near the mosque. Within a radius of at least 500 meters, there are eight hotels of various classes and four guest houses. All hotels can be tracked using Google Maps and reserved by third-party applications.
Picture 6. Accommodation at At-Taqwa Grand Mosque

Source: Primary data, 2023

Picture 7. Supporting tourism around the At-Taqwa Grand Mosque

Bung Karno's House of Exile | Home of First Lady Fatmawati | Simpang Lima Ratu Samban

Source: various internet, 2023

Second, supplementing tourism amenities in the form of cultural and natural tourism. Only 150 meters away is the 'Ratu Samban' roundabout and a shopping centre. Two hundred meters from the At-Taqwa Mosque are the House of Exile Bung Karno (First President of the Republic of Indonesia) and the House of Fatmawati (First Lady of Indonesia). 3 km away on the west side, Fort Marlborough was built by the East India Company (E.I.C.) in 1714-1719 under the leadership of Governor Joseph Callet as a British defence fort. Furthermore, there is a long beach only 500 meters from the mosque for natural tourism.

Third, supporting tourism amenities in the form of culinary delights and the availability of souvenir shopping centres. Next to Berendo, there are two culinary locations, one of which has a permanent building and the other is a non-permanent or removable tent. So, tourists who spend time in Berendo can enjoy culinary delights. The culinary delights provided are typical Bengkulu food and drinks and something currently viral on social media. Meanwhile, the souvenir centre is 150 meters from the mosque, where tourists can walk to this location. The location of the souvenir centre...
is next to the Simpang Lima roundabout (the most giant roundabout in Bengkulu City).

Perspective of Accessibilities

Accessibility is interpreted as transportation, distance travelled, and adequate road access conditions to tourist locations. More broadly, accessibility can take the form of tourism services or management that are friendly to tourists. The centre of Bengkulu City is on Jalan Soeprapto, marked by buildings along the road, the Sunday market and the Ratu Samban roundabout. Thus, the At-Taqwa Great Mosque is in a strategic position, namely, only 500 meters from the Ratu Samban roundabout and 500 meters from the beach. The road to the location is excellent and exhaustive so that private vehicles or public and online transportation can easily reach the location point.

The service element is not yet visible at the At-Taqwa Grand Mosque in Bengkulu City. The mosque management provides services such as free drinks and food, a place to relax in Berendo, a prayer room and free accommodation. The presence of a guide or information centre only accompanies some of these services. Tourists cannot feel the presence of the mosque management as a party with authority. This section needs attention because it is considered a complement to tourism, which contains the values of friendliness and professionalism. When tourists need something, they have difficulty getting information. Informants 08 and 09 said

"I don't know whether this is a tourist spot. Visitors can come and go as they please. They don't have any information about this place. If you need something, then you have to look for it yourself."

"...We don't get that information if you want to know what mosque this is and its history. Even if you want to go to the toilet, you look for it yourself."

The management needs to think about access to information services for tourists. The mosque focuses only on the physical building and the availability of supporting facilities. This is a suggestion for future improvements that the need for information is one of the advantages of tourism at the At-Taqwa Mosque.

Discuss of indicators in 3A perspective

This research has revealed field findings regarding the 3A perspective to assess halal tourism readiness at the At-Taqwa Grand Mosque in Bengkulu City. Table 1 summarises the conclusions that the attraction
perspective can be broken down into two indicators: permanent and temporary. Permanent attractions are attractions that do not change and are considered the most crucial and foremost thing in a tourist attraction. Researchers assess that this indicator determines the success of a tourist destination. Meanwhile, temporary attractions can attract the attention of tourists for a minimal time. Temporarily only plays a role in supporting tourism and cannot maintain tourism for a long time.

Table 1. Summary of indicators in perspective 3A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sn</th>
<th>3A Perspectives &amp; Indicator</th>
<th>Availability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Permanent Attractions</td>
<td>1) Mosque building design; 2) Ornaments in the main room as a place for prayer; 3) Berendo and tower; and 4) inner garden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Temporary Attractions</td>
<td>1) Eat with 'Tempoyak Gulai' (traditional Bengkulu food); 2) Eat together 1000 trays of Kebulirice; 3) Annual study with the National Ustaz; 4) Regional arts performances; 5) Watch the 2022 World Cup; 6) Fine art exhibition; 7) 1001 drums, 1001 torches, 1001 gifts; 8) Red and white leisurely walk; 9) Bengkulu City anniversary ceremony; and 10) Basurek batik carnival</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amenities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Main tourism amenities</td>
<td>Inn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Supplementing tourism amenities</td>
<td>Bung Karno's House of Exile and Fatmawati's House as cultural tourism and 2) Panjang Beach as a natural tourist attraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Supporting tourism amenities</td>
<td>1) culinary delights around the mosque; 2) souvenir center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Access to transportation</td>
<td>Easy access to private, public and online transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access to services</td>
<td>Information services are not yet available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Primary data analysis, 2023
Amenities have a crucial role in supporting new tourism. Three indicators have been identified: main, supplementing, and supporting. They are very closely related to each other and are the reason for tourists to visit. However, supplementing tourism amenities is the main attraction for visiting the At-Taqwa Great Mosque in Bengkulu City. The more complete the amenities, the more comfortable it will be for tourists. Bernini, Cerqua and Pellegrini explained that improving amenities can consolidate destination competitiveness and increase tourist satisfaction. The availability of excellent and easy-to-access facilities strengthens tourist loyalty when visiting and provides opportunities for tourists to return to tourist attractions.

Furthermore, accessibility can be seen in transportation and service management availability. The At-Taqwa Great Mosque is strategically located so that many routes can reach road access. At a more complex level, managers of tourist destinations far from urban areas must pay attention to the location's access. Ease of reach is the primary consideration for visitors. Darcy, Cameron, and Pegg suggest that accessible tourism is an essential dimension of a series of interrelated, overlapping, and interdependent business arrangements extending beyond the business entity through social networks in the tourist destination. It is argued that to satisfy the accessible tourism market, a more sophisticated understanding of the accessible destination experience is required by tourism operators.

Research findings, however, show that the 3A perspective can assess a destination. This also indicates that preparing a goal requires various supports and sub-supports. Often, the sub-support section needs to be addressed by tourism managers. In this section, mosques need to have

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17 Eichhorn and Buhalis, “Accessibility: A Key Objective for the Tourism Industry.”
quality human resources. As a result, destinations are visited at one time and stopped at another, resulting in stagnation until they are closed. The assessment of indicators may differ from one location to another or the addition of one perspective. Many researchers believe that the Ancilliary perspective also needs attention. The fulfilment of all views is closely related to tourist experience and satisfaction. Meanwhile, a pleasant experience significantly affects the number of people travelling to a destination.

4. CONCLUSION

This research found seven indicator developments from the 3A perspective. This indicator is easy to form because the destination is in the middle of the city. Conditions differ when the tourism readiness assessment is located in a village or far from crowded places. The attraction perspective has two indicators: permanent and temporary. Permanent attractions are the most dominant part of attracting tourists to come to visit. The amenity perspective has three indicators: main, supplementing, and supporting. Supplementation indicators are the primary consideration, as well as attracting tourists to return. The accessibility perspective has two indicators: transportation access and services.

These seven indicators adapt to the cases used in the research. This section is considered a study limitation. So, future research needs to raise other issues or multi-cases. The addition of indicator options for attractions

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and accessibility needs attention because it can facilitate the work of practitioners and academics in assessing the readiness of tourist destinations. Finally, practically, this research suggests the importance of information services as reinforcement that the At-Taqwa Mosque is a tourist destination. The manager can provide a room near Berendo as a centre for information and guide availability. The guide can convey a lot of information: history of the mosque, mosque architecture, vision and mission, mosque activities, and others.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY


