Research Article

Understanding the Tourism Business Ecosystem for Pondokstay

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia remains among the top 5 Muslim destinations in 2019, and the demand for Islamic tourism products has attracted much attention from international and domestic tourists. In response to this and to revitalize Islamic tourism landscapes, the concept of pondokstay will be introduced for the first time in 2019. Initially, the concept of pondokstay refers to the availability of facilities and a series of activities conducted in schools that are close to the well-known concept of homestay. Guests have the opportunity to immerse themselves in an authentic Islamic environment, but to date, there is no universally accepted definition. However, there are many challenges for the school. Previous research has found that an additional element is required during production because the main business of the school is education, which is only teachers and students, but pondokstay requires more elements. So, an existing education entrepreneur transitioning to a tourism entrepreneur needs a different business ecosystem. Articles from three types of tourism, namely Islamic, educational and spiritual tourism, are revised to characterize pondokstay. Face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with five qualified informants based on documents of the state religious authority. They are selected according to specific criteria, such as the school's establishment period and the number of employees and students. The responses were manually transcribed, grouped, coded, and thematized. Based on the analysis conducted, three themes emerged to describe pondokstay, namely the establishment factors, the programs, and the facilities required. In addition, there are ten subthemes that were categorized into fifteen indicators.

Keywords: Pondokstay; Business Ecosystem; Islamic Tourism; Spiritual Tourism; Educational Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Based on the findings of previous studies, the potential for schools to become tourist attractions in Malaysia and Indonesia is promising (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Fadil et al., 2013; Fadil &

Derweanna, 2021; Zabidi et al., 2022; Purnama et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022). The accommodation, activities and accessibility are some of the features of the product that have been repeatedly described either in Malaysia or Indonesia. This study aims to examine the relationship between the characteristics of pondokstay and the business ecosystem, using stakeholder attitudes as a moderator. Moderation occurs when the impact of a business ecosystem on the characteristics of pondokstay changes depending on the stakeholder's attitude (Farooq & Viji, 2017). The study discovered fourteen criteria: entrepreneurial orientation, situational strengths, industry type, perceived organizational support, competitive intensity, and many more (Farooq & Viji, 2017). However, the listed criteria do not moderate the relationship for this study. Interestingly, the study suggests that the criteria should be selected from the available outcomes. Therefore, the stakeholder's attitude is selected as the conceptual framework of this study, as shown in Figure 1.

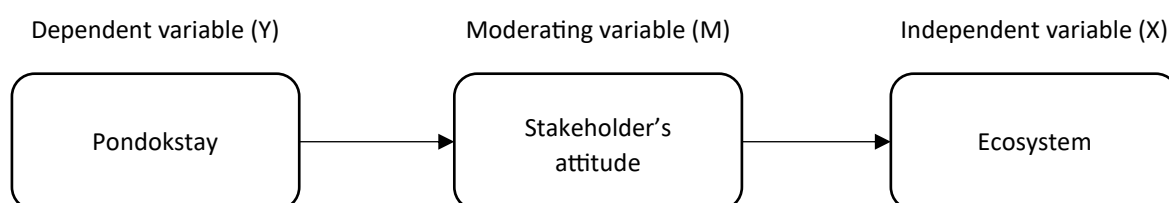| Dependent variable (Y)	Moderating variable (M)	Independent variable (X)
Pondokstay	Stakeholder's attitude	Ecosystem

Figure 1. Conceptual Model for Pondokstay Production

Previous research shows that production is promising due to the availability of numerous elements such as serene ambiance, the main reference point, Islamic celebrations, and more, but some challenges restrict the production. Insufficient facilities and limited financial resources are some of the listed challenges in both countries. It is believed that stakeholder attitude can reduce challenges and accelerate production.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Types of tourism

This study attempts to combine three types of tourism in describing pondokstay, namely Islamic tourism, educational tourism, and spiritual tourism. Islamic tourism means observing the requirements of religion and is different from ordinary tourism. According to the findings of (Amir Abdullah et al., 2021), the absence of immoral and prohibited acts, tranquillity and cultural diffusion are some of the components of Islamic tourism. Meanwhile, in another study by (Suid et al., 2017), Islamic tourism is characterized by three concepts, namely economic, cultural, and religious. The findings state that tourism can improve the economy of the destination, promote Islamic traditions, and integrate religious components into the product, which makes it different from other ordinary types of tourism (Suid et al., 2017). In addition, the study by (Zainol et al., 2017) found that the availability of prayer rooms, halal food, gender-segregated rooms, prohibition of alcohol, adultery, gambling, and revealing clothing are the Islamic attributes of the place. For this reason, pondokstay should have Sharia-compliant and religious amenities, clear dress guidelines, and Islamic celebrations. These features distinguish pondokstay from other forms of ordinary Islamic tourism in the country, such as visiting historical mosques.

On the other hand, (Voleva, 2020) defines educational tourism as a combination of educational products and tourism products. Educational products can be seminars, research trips, conferences, and summer camps. Tourism products are essentially static elements such as attractions, accommodations and restaurants. In another study (Tri, 2020), educational tourism is divided into three dimensions: the main product, the actual product, and the additional product. The main product refers to a product whose primary purpose is educational gain and learning. In the meantime, the main product, which is bundled and offered in a tourism product to meet the needs of tourists, is called the actual product. Lastly, swimming pools, sightseeing tours and gastronomic services are classified as additional products (Tri, 2020). Due to this fact, as described by (Voleva, 2020; Tri, 2020), educational programs should include outdoor activities such as sightseeing to increase excitement. The facilities, such as classrooms and rooms for educational programs, remain the same as in Islamic tourism, except for the points related to gender mixing.

Finally, spiritual tourism is an act of soul healing. It involves a holistic approach that encompasses the outer and inner journeys to achieve balance in life. By integrating spiritual dimensions into the actual journey, a person's connection to a higher source or creator can be restored, thus strengthening their faith (Gambhir et al., 2021; Poggendorf, 2022). This form of tourism is expected to secure and build a better future for the planet, profit, and people (Gambhir et al., 2021; Poggendorf, 2022). Visiting churches, shrines, mosques, or meditation programs at specific religious sites are some examples of spiritual tourism activities. Therefore, the pondokstay should offer both indoor and outdoor activities provided that the Islamic narratives are included. The activities can bring them closer to the Creator and create a casual but firm memory. Table 1 shows the elementary differences between the three types of tourism. Some relevant variables, namely activities and facilities, are used in this study because they are recurrent.

Table 1. Elemental Differences

Types/Elements	Islamic	Educational	Spiritual
Attributes	Sex-separated room	Not specified	Not specified
Foods	Halal	Not specified	Not specified
Prohibition	Alcoholic drinks, gambling, adultery, revealing clothes	Not specified	Not specified
Activities	Any program that observes the requirements of religion	Any program that contributes to education	Any program that can strengthen their faith
Place of worship	Prayer space	Not specified	Varying according to the religion
Product of tourism	Museums, Islamic heritage sites, galleries	Hotel, terminal, restaurant	Specific spots such as Nachi Falls

The potential is bright; the school could be motivated by the opportunity as discovered in past research (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Fadil et al., 2013; Fadil & Derweanna, 2021; Zabidi et

al., 2022; Purnama et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022). However, the explanation of why the school decided to participate in the new ventures (Alhammad, 2020) requires confirmation. Whether they want to generate additional revenue by using their lifestyle to grab the business opportunity because tourists demand unique experiences (Alhammad, 2020; Ratten, V, 2020) or something else. It could be true that the school is facing a financial problem, but to some extent, further studies are needed because the matter is controversial. In addition, pondokstay offers unlimited opportunities to the school as it is relatively easy to enter the sector due to minimal start-up requirements (Dias et al., 2023).

Despite that, the production requires a different business ecosystem, as the new business differs from the existing one. The function of an ordinary school is expanded into a tourism product. The business ecosystem is an interplay of actors, institutions, social structures, and cultural values that support entrepreneurial endeavors, such as physical infrastructure, financial infrastructure, business support services, human capital, network opportunities, social capital, education and training, governance, community culture, quality of life, and general context (Kline & Clark, 2022). In addition, the study by (Jaafar, M et al., 2011) shows that external factors such as funding opportunities and a supportive business ecosystem influence the project's success. Once the relevant stakeholders are identified, and the barriers are removed, one could think of pondokstay as staying in school and participating in indoor or outdoor programs. However, all activities and facilities should be bound by Shariah principles.

Chronology and challenges of the school

The idea of pondokstay has been discussed since 2013 until today, but before that, we should understand the challenges of the school. The chronology is divided into five periods, which are shown in Figure 2.
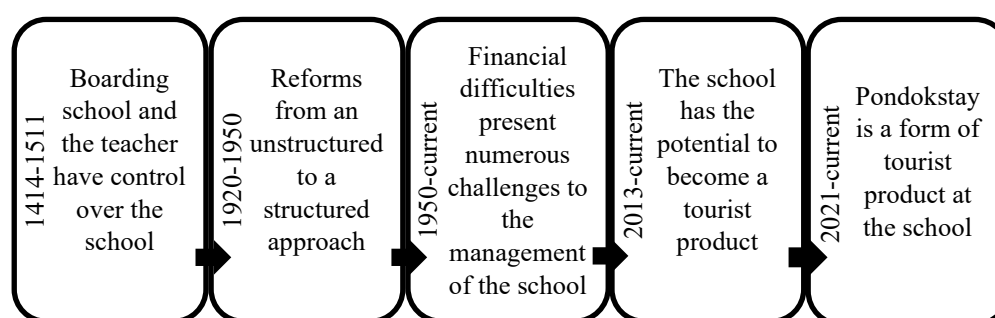

Figure 2. Chronology And Challenges

From the 14th century onwards, financial difficulties arose, which affected the school's administration. The school relies on school fees, donations in the form of land or buildings and monetary donations from local residents (Abd Rahim et al., 2016; Fadil et al., 2021; Fazial et al., 2021; Zabidi et al., 2022) to keep it running. In addition, the operators regularly accept financial support from the state religious authority (Ahmad et al., 2018; Fazial & Bahari, 2018). Insufficient funding is another problem for the teachers, who receive inadequate salaries and are therefore limited in their abilities. This is one reason why most of them cannot stay at school for long (Fazial et al., 2021; Fadil & Derweanna, 2021). In the past, donations were used to fund projects that benefited the community in many ways, such

as building schools, mosques, hospitals and other facilities for the needy according to the donor's original intention. (Fazial & Bahari, 2018; Fazial et al.,2021).

The benefits of the project include the construction of better facilities, such as the creation of a conducive and systematic learning infrastructure. Second, these projects can strengthen the financial aspects of the school. Thirdly, the project could train the school management in managing the fund and promote students' entrepreneurship in dealing with real business and make them pious entrepreneurs in the future (Fazial et al., 2021). Finally, social opportunities for school and community members could be enhanced through educational sponsorships (Fazial et al., 2021). Simply put, the school accepts donations but does not strive to generate revenue and profits from the donations it receives, leading to a false perception of the school (Fazial & Bahari, 2018; Fazial et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022; Zabidi et al., 2022). In addition, trust is also influenced by the school's transparency in managing donations. The project's success indicates the school's transparency because the administration does not use the public's donations effectively, which causes them to lose faith or trust in the administration and discourages them from supporting the school financially in the future (Fazial & Bahari, 2018).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, there are funding problems, especially regarding the availability of funds due to low allocations from stakeholders. They rely on self-funding, which comes solely from students' tuition fees (Ramdhansyah et al., 2022). This is due to the lack of competent or trained staff to write proposals and the neglect of information about possible grants. Low staff motivation to work results from the low salaries or other benefits they receive, and incompetent staff hinder the search for funding opportunities and affect school performance (Ramdhansyah et al., 2022).

As mentioned above, the original business is different from the proposed project, so some configurations are needed, as the school's potential to become a tourist product is promising, as previously mentioned.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a semi-structured interview. According to (Showkat & Parveen, 2017), this method enables the collection of an enormous amount of information from informants. The order of questions is not rigid as long as it covers the framework (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). The responses are transcribed and coded, the codes are thematized, and the themes are described (Esfahani & Walters, 2018). As this is a cross-language analysis, special care must be taken during the process to ensure that the informants' original responses are not altered (Showkat & Parveen, 2017).

ANALYSIS

This part looks at the results and relates them to the business ecosystem. It examines how the business ecosystem enables production. It is assumed that characteristics are a dependent variable, the business ecosystem is an independent variable, and stakeholder attitudes are a moderating variable, as shown in Figure 1. The recorded responses are divided into two categories: financial support systems and partnerships. As mentioned earlier, the relationship between the characteristics and the business ecosystem is influenced by the attitude of the actors.

Informant 1 stated that "more toilets, parking, spaces and spacious dining areas are needed" if they wanted to accommodate a larger audience. The same response is also recorded by Informant 3; the informant said, "guests can rent the chalet near the school and attend religious classes. But more toilets, parking lots, and dining areas are needed". The last response of Informant 4 states that "incomplete facilities like chalets prevent them from running the program on a larger scale". From the recorded responses, the availability of funding mechanisms such as grants and project funding opportunities from state and private sources at the state or federal level are some of the practical examples that encourage production. In addition, tax exemption is another practical mechanism to encourage investors to develop the required facilities.

Second, partnerships with other companies are essential, especially for outdoor activities. Informant 3 mentioned that" "guests are taken to the durian orchard during the season and need to be arranged prior to the trip". Moreover, Informant 5, which prioritized destination gastronomic offerings for its guests, also stated that "local delicacies are being introduced to the guests during outdoor programs"." The third response from Informant 2 stated that "horse riding can be offered as part of the outdoor program for the guests. Based on these three responses, it is clear that partnerships with others are essential to ensure outdoor activities run smoothly, as this plays a critical role in guest satisfaction. Finally, strong partnerships between the school and operators in organizing outdoor activities could encourage further consumption at the destination.

FINDINGS

The results of this study indicate that additional conditions are needed, namely the availability of financial support systems and partnerships. Based on the considerations in the previous section, the commitment of stakeholders, whether government or private sector, is vital to the production. Moreover, partnerships are important, especially for outdoor activities. Therefore, the presence of these two constructs could influence production in the future. Finally, the pondokstay should include outdoor activities and not just focus on indoor programs. Interestingly, this study shows that stakeholder attitudes moderate the relationship between pondokstay and the business ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

Based on the two constructs described earlier, it is crucial to identify relevant stakeholders, especially in terms of financial support systems and partnerships, to mitigate existing challenges during production. As mentioned earlier, identifying the relevant stakeholders from the government or private sectors is indispensable. Therefore, it is recommended that Pentha–Helix or multi-stakeholder models be developed for pondokstay. For example, government agencies (e.g., the state religious department, significant tourism associations), tourism-related businesses (e.g., tour operators, restaurants), academia, residents, and media partners (e.g., magazines and newsletters) are some of the relevant stakeholders, but further work is needed to define their respective roles.

Pondokstay is expected to revitalize the Islamic tourism landscape in Malaysia. The concept is currently gaining popularity in the country due to the establishment of the Islamic Tourism Centre. So far, Islamic tourism has been associated with trips to Islamic museums, mosques, and Sharia certification of accommodations. Perhaps pondokstay could be offered to broader groups in the next few years. In addition, another moderator should be used in future research to examine the relationship between dependent and independent variables. In addition, a cost-benefit analysis should be conducted to determine if the benefits of production outweigh the associated costs. In addition, an analysis of the range of tourism opportunities is recommended as it may be associated with the development of outdoor programs. Finally, the study area could be expanded to the state and federal levels, and selection procedures could be tightened in the future.

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