

Spiritual Tourism to the Holy Land of Mecca: The Development of Hajj Services in Dutch East Indies, 1869–1930s

Rizal Rahmanto *

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
LPDP, Indonesia

Abstract

The increase in demand for spiritual tourism in Indonesia has caused the number of hajj and pilgrimage travel companies. This was not something new, because the phenomenon was visible during the Dutch East Indies era, when many foreign ships transported pilgrims from this region. Therefore, this paper will also review the regional connectivity and transnational history in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, Singapore, and the Malay Peninsula, in providing spiritual tourism services in the 1869-1930s. The year 1869 marks the opening of the Suez Canal, which significantly increased the number of hajj pilgrims. Meanwhile, the 1930s were chosen as an endpoint due to the global financial crisis that decreased the number. This paper used the historical research method, which consists of heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The sources used in this paper are from colonial archives, newspapers, books, articles, journals, and other supporting references. Several results from this research are: First, the entrance of foreign ships into the Dutch East Indies caused competition among hajj tourism agencies owned by the Dutch. Second, the existence of those ships influenced the policies issued by the colonial government regarding the hajj pilgrimage. Third, the existence of those ships also had a huge impact on Muslims in the Dutch East Indies.

Keywords

Spiritual Tourism, Transportation, Hajj, Southeast Asia, Dutch East Indies.