



The Relationship of Entrepreneurs and Ruler in SPA Prostitution Business Practices during the Covid-19 Pandemic in the Nodal Region

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Abstrak

Bisnis SPA semakin bertambah pesat di Indonesia, hampir setiap kota di Indonesia terdapat prostitusi SPA. Keberadaan prostitusi SPA sebenarnya melanggar aturan UU Pariwisata. Namun para pelaku bisnis prostitusi SPA ini tahu strategi bagaimana agar bisnisnya tetap berjalan, termasuk saat masa pandemi Covid-19. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan oleh peneliti dalam penelitian ini yaitu penelitian kualitatif. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada tahun 2022 di wilayah nodal Jabodetabek. Adapun jenis sampling yang digunakan peneliti dalam penelitian ini yaitu non-probability sampling, karena tidak semua orang dalam kajian penelitian ini dapat dijadikan sampel dalam penelitian ini. Sedangkan teknik penarikan sampling dalam pemilihan informan pada penelitian ini menggunakan teknik penarikan purposive sampling. Pengumpulan data primer dilakukan melalui wawancara (interview) dan observasi. Sedangkan pengumpulan data sekunder dilakukan dengan menggunakan sumber data melalui studi literatur dan dokumentasi. Berdasarkan hasil temuan lapangan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa para pengusaha prostitusi SPA ini membangun relasi dengan para penguasa yang berada di sekitar bisnis prostitusi SPA dilakukan. Penguasa ini dapat berupa oknum pemerintah daerah dan juga para oknum ormas. Relasi yang dibangun pengusaha prostitusi SPA kepada para penguasa tidak lain untuk tujuan melindungi dan mengamankan praktek bisnis prostitusinya agar tidak diganggu. Relasi pengusaha dan penguasa dalam perputaran roda bisnis bukanlah soal baru dalam konteks akademisi, namun konsep ini menarik untuk di perbincangkan.

Kata Kunci: Relasi, Penguasa, Pengusaha, Bisnis, Prostitusi, SPA, Pandemi.

Abstract

The SPA business is proliferating in Indonesia, almost every city in Indonesia has SPA prostitution. The existence of SPA prostitution violates the regulations of the Tourism Law. However, the SPA prostitution business actors know strategies on how to keep their business running, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. The type of research used by researchers in this research is qualitative research. This research was conducted in 2022 in the Jabodetabek nodal area. The type of sampling used by researchers in this research is non-probability sampling because not everyone in this study can be used as a sample. Meanwhile,

the sampling technique for selecting informants in this study used a purposive sampling technique. Primary data collection was carried out through interviews and observations. Meanwhile, secondary data was collected using data sources through literature studies and documentation. Based on the field findings, it can be concluded that these SPA prostitution entrepreneurs have built relationships with the authorities around which the SPA prostitution business is carried out. These authorities can be local government officials and also members of mass organizations. The relationship that SPA prostitution entrepreneurs build with the authorities is for no other purpose than protecting and securing their prostitution business practices so that they are not disturbed. The relationship between entrepreneurs and those in power at the wheels of business is a problem introduced previously in the academic context, but this concept is interesting to discuss..

Keywords: Relations, Rulers, Entrepreneurs, Business, Prostitution, SPA, Pandemic.

Introduction

The development of SPA in Indonesia already existed when Europeans arrived in the Dutch East Indies (the name of Indonesia at that time). As stated by historian Lombard (1996), steam bath therapy developed since the discovery of hot springs in Cipanas in 1745. In the 1960s, a modern spa was developed in Jakarta, carrying the Turkish bath concept. The SPA business development in Indonesia initially only involved steam baths; in 1972, the SPA concept emerged, which adopted the practice of Thai massage called Thai Massage. That is when SPA in Indonesia not only had a steam bath concept but also provided massage therapy services and even practiced sexual services. Until 1978, the Indonesian government closed existing SPA places because they were suspected of carrying out hidden prostitution practices behind the SPA business. Even though the SPA business was banned at that time because it was suspected of carrying out covert prostitution practices, in reality, many SPA business people continued to run their businesses illegally.

The large number of SPA businesses in Indonesia means that the Indonesian government needs to regulate SPA businesses legally (Arijesni et al., n.d.). Finally, in 2009, through Law No. 10

concerning tourism, the SPA business was included as one of the tourism service businesses. These legislative regulations provide good news for SPA business players in Indonesia. Since 2009, the SPA business has increased, considering it has been formally recognized legally (Utama & SE, 2015).

Based on data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency, which released SPA data in Indonesia in 2015, it was stated that Bali Province has the largest SPA business, recorded at 34.82 percent of the total SPA business throughout Indonesia. The second position is occupied by DKI Jakarta Province, where it was recorded at 29.04 percent. West Java Province occupies the third position with 7.63 percent. East Java Province is in fourth position, with the number of SPA businesses amounting to 5.18 percent of all SPA businesses in Indonesia. The Yogyakarta Special Region Province occupies the fifth position with 4.56 percent. Apart from the five provinces mentioned, the percentage of existing SPA companies/businesses is below 2 (2) percent (Suryadinata & Junaedi, 2017).

The SPA business in Indonesia continues to grow, but not all SPA businesses in Indonesia have business permits. Based on data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency

regarding SPA data in Indonesia in 2015, it can be seen that SPA businesses that have a Tourism Business Registration Certificate (TDUP) were recorded at 40.09 percent, then those with a Permanent Tourism Business Permit (ITUP) were around 30 percent, and other permits around 17%. Then, those who do not have an operational permit are 13 percent (Margaret & Raihan, 2022; Utama & SE, 2015).

The development of the SPA business must be recognized because the economic prospects for this business are so great. This can be seen from data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency regarding SPA data in Indonesia in 2015, which stated that 51.89 percent of SPA businesses in Indonesia had incomes of less than 5 million rupiah per year. There are 21.33 percent of SPA businesses in Indonesia whose income is between 5 million rupiah to 1 billion rupiah per year. Then, 16.24 percent of SPA businesses in Indonesia have incomes between 1 and 2 billion rupiah per year, and 10.45 percent have incomes above 2 billion rupiah per year.

Based on data, developing the SPA business in Indonesia has given rise to various economic competitions to attract visitors' interest. Of the various SPA businesses in Indonesia, almost every city in Indonesia has SPA prostitution. The existence of SPA prostitution violates the regulations of the Tourism Law. However, the SPA prostitution business actors know the strategy on how to keep their business running.

These SPA prostitution entrepreneurs build relationships with the authorities around which the SPA prostitution business is carried out. These authorities can be local government officials and also members of mass organizations. The relationship that SPA prostitution entrepreneurs build with the authorities is

for no other purpose than protecting and securing their prostitution business practices so that they are not disturbed. The relationship between entrepreneurs and those in power at the wheels of business is a problem introduced previously in the academic context, but this concept is interesting to discuss.

Apart from the explanation above, the researcher intends to research the construction of relations between entrepreneurs and authorities in SPA prostitution business practices. In this research, researchers conducted research in the nodal areas, namely Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi or Jabodetabek. Nodal regions are regions based on the concept of heterogeneity. This area occurs if there is a relationship between symptoms in the area concerned. This relationship will result in mutual dependence and form specific interaction patterns. According to Budihardjo (1995), the nodal region itself is a regional concept that functionally has the nature of interdependence between the center (core) and the areas behind it (hinterland).

Meanwhile, this research was carried out because of several backgrounds related to research gaps. The state of the art of this research, namely the results of this research, also provides refinement or improvement in studies regarding the topic of the SPA prostitution phenomenon, which means that the SPA business enters the tourism business area. However, quite a few SPA entrepreneurs also run prostitution businesses in order to attract and increase sources of income. For this reason, as far as researchers have studied, there is still no research that examines this construction of relations between entrepreneurs and authorities in SPA prostitution business practices.

Method

The type of research used by researchers in this research is qualitative research. This research was conducted in 2022 in the Jabodetabek nodal area. The type of sampling used by researchers in this research is non-probability sampling because not everyone in this study can be used as a sample. Meanwhile, the sampling technique for selecting informants in this study used a purposive sampling technique. Primary data collection was carried out through interviews and observations. Meanwhile, secondary data was collected using data sources through literature studies and documentation. The data analysis used in this research is as stated by Neuman (2017), namely as follows: (a) Data organizing stage; (b) Data processing stage; (c) Data interpretation stage; and (d) Conclusion stage.

Results and Discussion

A. The Development of the Deep Shadow Economy SPA Prostitution Business

Sanus Per Aquamor, usually called SPA, is a method of fitness, beauty care, and even healing therapy. SPA therapy has existed since ancient Greek and Roman times when bathing in water was considered a popular way to treat illness. Bathing in warm or cold water is hoped to cure several diseases (van Tubergen & van der Linden, 2002). As time goes by, SPA is not only limited to bathing using warm or cold water, but SPA is starting to use treatment methods combined with various elements. There are 10 SPA elements: water, food, movement, touch, integration, aesthetics, environment, cultural expression, social contribution, time, space, and rhythm. All these elements are interconnected and interact dynamically (R Zill, 2002)

In the Indonesian context, SPA has existed since the Singasari era through the ancient Javanese beauty concept

Rupasampat Wahyabyantara. Rupasampat Wahyabyantara is a harmonious blend of inner and outer beauty depicted through the figure of Goddess Saraswati. Based on this ancient Javanese concept, beauty and wellness can be created through external or physical treatments such as massage, body scrub, aroma therapy, and internal treatments such as meditation and bioenergy. Apart from massage, body scrub baths, aromatherapy, meditation, and bioenergy, SPA in Indonesia also includes hydrotherapy or water therapy (Kusumadewi Sutanto, 2016)

SPA in the form of water therapy accompanied by herbal medicine drinking is carried out in an open-air bathing area so that the feeling of relaxation and restoration of vitality can truly be experienced. Some bathing places with a SPA concept that still exist today include the Taman Sari baths in Yogyakarta, the Ngreksi Purno baths from Banyudono in Surakarta, the Lumbang Bandengan baths in Keputren, and the Tapak Siring baths in Bali (Pasla & Dinata, 2004)

SPA, which initially only functioned as a body care technique carried out at home individually, slowly began to be commercialized in Indonesia in the early 1990s. At that time, the SPA business was a complementary facility to fitness clubs or fitness centers in five-star hotels and was limited to sauna facilities. Meanwhile, massage services in the SPA business are only traditional, without aroma or water therapy. The actual SPA business concept was implemented only at the end of 1990. In line with the demand from hotel guests, especially foreign guests, body and beauty treatment facilities and menus began to be added to SPA (Johan, 2000). The SPA business is a complementary facility or fitness club facility in five-star hotels and a source of income for hotels.

The SPA business became increasingly enthusiastic in 2000-2001

when SPA became a trend for city residents amid their busy lives. This aligns with the community's need to maintain health, beauty, and fitness (Pasla & Dinata, 2004). Following the trend of city residents; star hotels are starting to add SPA facilities and offer room packages as well as SPA facilities. Besides hotels, salons, and beauty clinics, entrepreneurs are also interested in following urban trends.

SPA itself has several categories. According to the International SPA Association (ISPA), there are at least 7 SPA categories (Harahsheh, 2002), namely: (1) Club SPA. In this category, there are usually more fitness facilities that offer services for the use of sports equipment, fitness centers, body care, and beauty services based on membership; (2) Cruiseship SPA. In this category, SPA is carried out on cruise ships with professional services, and personal training (personal trainer) and beauty salon services are available; (3) Day SPA. In this category, SPA services are carried out professionally and are offered in 1 day, with services from hair styling to foot care; (4) Destination SPA. In this category, SPA services focus on improving lifestyle and health through professionally organized services, providing physical fitness, educational programs, and accommodation facilities. Usually located in remote places and requires staying for several days; (5). Medi SPA. In this category, SPA is carried out individually, in groups, or institutionally, combining medical treatment and traditional SPA under the supervision of a doctor; (6) Mineral Spring SPA. In this category, SPA services are provided with hydrotherapy using natural minerals or hot water or sea water at the source of the location; and (7) Resort Hotel SPA. In this category, SPA services are carried out in one location at a resort or hotel, with professionally organized spa services with various service options other than SPA, as well as healthy

food available, which can be done in a matter of hours, a day, or several days.

Based on the explanation above, several areas in DKI Jakarta have a lot of SPA businesses. The Jakarta area has started to develop the SPA business since 2000 (Arjana, 2017). The SPA business in Jakarta starts with hotel services and is followed by beauty salons.

The development of the shadow economy in SPA prostitution practices is starting to develop in DKI Jakarta in line with high demand from consumers. This is as expressed by several informants below:

"Yes, here (Jakarta) there are lots of consumers, from students to officials. That's why I think that's what makes other people want to open businesses like this too." (KT, interview 4 July 2022).

"There is a business like this because there is demand from consumers. Besides, there are also many officials, police, and even soldiers playing in this business area." (WA, interview 7 July 2022).

"Initially, SPA was generally a regular massage, but because there was bargaining between the consumer and the therapist, SPA services have started to develop in that direction (sex)." (RD, interview 20 July 2022).

"SPA Plus emerged because many people asked for more than massage services. Over time, open up a massage service while having sex." (FH, interview 21 July 2022).

"I don't know exactly what year SPA Plus came into existence, but what I know is that SPA PLU appeared because massage parlors initially opened plus services, then SPA also opened additional services besides massage." (GT, interview 27 July 2022).

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that the development of the shadow economy in SPA prostitution practices cannot be separated from demand from consumers outside of

massage services in general. SPA owners then use this to develop their services other than massage and increase the SPA's income.

B. Social Network Between Entrepreneurs and SPA Prostitution Therapists

Social networks are relationships created between many individuals in a group or between one group and other groups. The relationships that occur can be in formal or informal forms. In seeing the activities of a group of individuals become a social action, that is where social network theory plays a role in social systems. Almost all sociological problems are problems of aggregation, namely how the activities of a group of individuals can cause observable social effects.

Based on the results of field research, researchers found a social network formed in the case of women who became SPA Plus therapists. The forms of social networks formed in the case of women who become SPA Plus therapists are partial social networks and interest social networks. According to Laily (2020), partial social networks are owned by individuals limited to certain areas of life. Meanwhile, an interest social network is one where the social relationships that form it are filled with interests. Meaningful relationships to specific goals form this network of interests.

From the field findings, the informants became SPA Plus therapists in the partial social network because they had social contact with people who invited them to work. After all, it was related to the economic and social fields. This is as expressed by informant KR,

"Yes, I contacted the person who invited me here because I needed income to help support my family life..." (KR, interview 1 August 2022).

In line with KR, informant BB also stated that he first started working as an

SPA Plus therapist because of economic problems. Here is the narrative,

"...Oh, when I remember why I work like this, because I really need money to support my children and parents..." (BB, interview 25 July 2022).

Apart from economic problems, social problems are also the basis for the formation of social networks between SPA Plus therapists and perpetrators. The following is what the VN informant said,

"I could work like this at first because I was fed up with my family. My father and mother had been fighting for a long time, but I discovered that my father had savings. Yes, instead of having a headache at home, when a friend offered me a job like this, I immediately accepted it; besides, I have already done this several times with my girlfriend, so there was no problem. What is more, I get more money..." (VN, interview 26 July 2022).

Based on the narrative of this research informant, the basis for forming social networks between SPA Plus therapists and perpetrators is based on the economic and social fields. This is why SPA Plus therapists build a social network with the perpetrator. Here, we can see that one of the reasons why women become SPA Plus therapists is due to the economic and social problems faced by the victims.

Meanwhile, in the social interest network, the informants became SPA Plus therapists from the field findings because they had social contact with people who invited them to work because it was related to their work interests. This is as stated by the WA informant,

"In 2018, I had just graduated a year from school and still had not gotten a job; I had applied for jobs here and there, but it was hard to get one. Coincidentally, I got information about work from a friend, but I was told to contact Kang Yudi, so I contacted him. Yes, get a job straight away. At first, I did not know his job, but he said

he had work. Yes, I have been working....." (WA, interview 18 July 2022).

In line with WA, informant BB also stated that he initially worked as an SPA Plus therapist because of the need for work. Here is the narrative,

"...Oh, if I remember why I work like this, it's because I just need a job. That's why when there was a job offer, I immediately wanted it. You know this kind of work..." (BB, interview 25 July 2022).

Based on the narrative of this research informant, the basis for forming a social network between SPA Plus therapists and perpetrators is based on work interests. This is why SPA Plus therapists build a network with the perpetrators. Here, we can see that one of the reasons why women become SPA Plus therapists is because it is difficult to access employment opportunities.

Access to employment opportunities is an example of a problem that still needs to be resolved; rather than being resolved, this problem is increasing. Unemployment is a complex problem to solve. No solution can overcome or reduce the growth in unemployment rates, which are fluctuating.

Based on BPS data, unemployment is a complex problem in each province in Indonesia. Many factors cause unemployment itself. Namely, unemployment can arise due to laziness of the human resources concerned, disability or old age, a limited number of job opportunities, lack of education, and lack of skills. Unemployment consists of frictional unemployment/temporary unemployment caused by time, information, geographical conditions, and the inability to meet the requirements set by job openings. The more advanced the economy in a region, the greater the need for better human natural resources than before. Then, there is cyclical unemployment, namely unemployed

people who are unemployed due to the ups and downs of the economic cycle. Hence, the demand for labor is disproportionate to the number of existing jobs.

The unemployment problem can be detrimental not only from an economic perspective but also from a political, security, and social perspective, thereby disrupting growth and development. In the long term, this will result in a country's GNP and per capita income decline. So, this can threaten a country's economy.

Population density is one-factor causing unemployment because the higher the population in an area, the more people of productive age will be looking for work to support themselves and their families. This is unbalanced because the number of jobs available and the population in Indonesia are very different. Meanwhile, with the increase in population, if they do not have expertise and skills, they will not get a job because, in this era of globalization, expertise and skills are potential human resources needed. Many high school and vocational school graduates are unemployed due to intense competition in getting a job. Their lack of skills and work experience makes it difficult for them to get a job. Therefore, the government should provide additional training for students entering the world of work. Suppose the student has a higher potential to continue his education at university but needs more money. In that case, the government will increase the comfort and convenience of obtaining scholarships to help students who need tuition fees. At the very least, it can also help the Indonesian economy in the future. Therefore, the government's role is vital in reducing Indonesia's high unemployment rate. They were also assisted by the community's willingness to support the efforts provided by the government. Cooperate to quickly reduce the

unemployment rate and improve the community's welfare in the economic sector.

Apart from the partial social network that was formed, another social network was the interest social network. In this social network of interests, the social relationships that form it are filled with interests. Meaningful relationships to specific goals form this network of interests. In this study, researchers discovered the fact that cases of women becoming SPA Plus therapists were caused by an element of interest that developed between the perpetrator and the SPA Plus therapist. In this case, the interest is in the form of work.

C. Social and Economic Impact of SPA Prostitution Business During the Deep Pandemic Implementation of Public Policy in the Relations between Entrepreneurs and Authorities

Based on the results of the researchers' research, it is known that the socio-economic impacts felt by SPA prostitution business actors during the pandemic are as follows:

1. There are few visitors to the SPA prostitution scene

During the pandemic and the implementation of restrictions on activities in various sectors of life, the SPA prostitution business felt the impact. Visits from SPA prostitution business consumers have decreased drastically; this is as admitted by the informant that the pandemic has reduced visitor attendance by up to 70%. Of course, this decline in visitors occurred due to various factors, such as fear that visitors would be infected with COVID-19, restrictions on activities, and a decrease in visitors' income, which made visitors have to be smart about managing their finances.

2. Declining income from the SPA prostitution business

The lack of visitors has a direct impact on the decline in SPA prostitution business income. All research informants acknowledged that their businesses experienced a very significant decline in income. In fact, due to low income and high operational costs, SPA prostitution businesses have temporarily closed their businesses. This is so that perpetrators of the SPA prostitution business do not experience extraordinary losses.

3. Therapists are worried about contracting Covid-19.

Apart from the lack of visitors and the decline in income from the SPA prostitution business, apparently, during the pandemic, therapists or SPA prostitution business workers were also worried about contracting COVID-19 at work. The informant admitted that the therapists interacted with various people, and the health protocol was limited to temperature checks. So, it cannot be known whether visitors who come are positive or negative for COVID-19. The therapists felt this worry because they were afraid that he would infect his family when he came home from work, and on the one hand, he was also afraid that he would have to be treated for COVID-19 and that, of course, would require quite a lot of money. This worry also makes SPA prostitution business therapists always afraid at work, and some even stop working temporarily because they are afraid of contracting COVID-19.

D. Survival Strategy for SPA Prostitution Business Actors During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Based on the results of the researcher's research, it is known that the survival strategies of SPA prostitution

business actors during the pandemic are as follows:

1. Reducing the number of SPA therapists

During the pandemic and the implementation of activity restrictions in various sectors of life, to minimize losses due to the pandemic, SPA prostitution business actors implemented a strategy by reducing the number of therapists. According to the informant, this aims to minimize existing operational costs. It is felt that reducing the number of SPA therapists will help SPA prostitution businesses in reducing losses due to the pandemic.

2. Receive a therapist's call to be taken out to SPA.

To continue to increase income from the SPA prostitution business, according to the informant, the management, during the pandemic, received therapist call services to hotels and affordable apartments from the SPA location. By accepting calls from SPA therapists, the informants felt that this was quite helpful in increasing the income of the SPA prostitution business.

Conclusion

There are various SPA businesses in Indonesia; almost every city in Indonesia has SPA prostitution. The existence of SPA prostitution violates the regulations of the Tourism Law. However, the SPA prostitution business actors know strategies on how to keep their business running, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These SPA prostitution entrepreneurs build relationships with the authorities around which the SPA prostitution business is carried out. These authorities can be local government officials and also members of mass organizations. The relationship that SPA prostitution

entrepreneurs build with the authorities is for no other purpose than protecting and securing their prostitution business practices so that they are not disturbed. The relationship between entrepreneurs and those in power at the wheels of business is not a new problem in the academic context, but this concept is interesting to discuss.

Based on the results of the field findings, the researchers formulated the following suggestions: (1) For the Government, namely: (a) To further increase access to education and employment for citizens in Indonesia, both in urban and rural areas; (b) To be able to monitor prostitution practices that occur at SPA premises; (c) Imposing severe sanctions on the perpetrators who ensnare women to become SPA Plus therapists; and (d) Increasing outreach and education to the community (especially young women or girls) to be aware of work practices that lead to prostitution. Then, for the community, namely: (1) Increasing anticipatory parenting patterns for girls so that they do not become victims of work practices that lead to prostitution and (2) Increasing the sense of concern and supervision for girls so that they do not become victims of work practices that lead to prostitution.

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