



## Prospects of Halal Tourism Development in West Aceh District

Dista Setyaningsih, Dyah Lituhayu, Budi Puspo Priyadi, Retno Sunu Astuti

Universitas Diponegoro, Jl. Prof. Sudarto No.13, Tembalang, Kec. Tembalang, Kota Semarang, 50275, Indonesia

<b>ARTICLE INFORMATION</b>	<b>A B S T R A C T</b> Halal Tourism is one of the sectors that is now expected to make a major contribution to the economy of a country. The concept of halal tourism aims to provide tourism services based on Islamic law. Not only Muslim countries are aggressively developing Halal Tourism, but several other non-Muslim countries are also now competing to open Halal Tourism packages, this is realized by a large number of the Muslim population in the world. Indonesia is no exception, especially Aceh, which is also currently developing Halal Tourism with all the potential it has so it is expected to become the world's main destination for Halal Tourism. This study aims to determine the prospects and challenges in developing Halal Tourism in West Aceh Regency. This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods using literature studies. The results of the study indicate that Aceh Barat Regency in developing Halal Tourism has collaborated with relevant agencies and stakeholders and provides services based on Islamic Sharia. The challenge of West Aceh Regency in developing Halal Tourism is to carry out strong collaboration between the central government, local governments, and industry players in the development of halal tourism, both related to promotion, branding, improvement of supporting facilities and infrastructure as well as efforts to change the mindset of the community and business actors regarding the importance of Developing Halal tourism
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<b>CORRESPONDENCE</b>	
Name: Dista Setyaningsih E-mail: <a href="mailto:distasetyaningsih@gmail.com">distasetyaningsih@gmail.com</a>	

### INTRODUCTION

Today tourism is one of the leading global economic sectors that make a major contribution to national income in the future. *United Nations World Tourism Organization* (UNWTO) states that in 2017 there were approximately 1.3 billion people who traveled between countries (Haryanto, 2019). Tourism is one of the prima donnas for countries in increasing their sources of income outside of oil and gas and taxes (Azizah, 2021). The contribution of the tourism sector to the world economy is currently quite significant, namely 10% of world GDP, 1/10 of the world's workforce, USD 1.34 trillion of world export value, and 30% of world export services. The Asia Pacific is the destination that attracts the second largest tourist, with 323 million tourists. It is estimated that in 2030 there will be 1.8 billion world tourists with 57% of them will be able to encourage economic growth in promising tourist destinations (Ministry of Tourism, 2019).

Likewise with the presence of the booming global Halal Market which has been increasing in recent years (Muhammad, 2017). The number of Muslim tourists grew quite significantly along with the increasing economy in several countries where the majority of the population is Muslim, they have an impact on the number of tourist visits to various countries that provide halal tour package services. (Irwansyah & Zaenuri, 2021). The 2019 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) report predicts the number of world Muslim tourists in 2020 will reach 160 million with a total spend of USD 220 billion with a growth of 6% per year. This growth will continue to increase until 2026 to USD 300 billion. GMTI also reported that the countries that became the most Muslim tourist destinations, Indonesia and Malaysia were ranked first in the world which included the availability of hotels, fashion, pharmacy, transportation, food, and services.

Table 1. Global Muslim Index (GMTI) Ranking 2019

No	Country	Travel Index
1	Indonesia & Malaysia	78%
2	Turkey	75%
3	Saudi Arabia	72%
4	UAE	71%
5	Qatar	68%

Source: GMTI 2019

Indonesia as the largest Muslim country in the world has a very high potential to become a major tourist destination. The regulations for halal tourism in Indonesia are regulated through a fatwa by the National Sharia Council of the Indonesian Ulema Council (DSN-MUI) Number 108/DSN/-MUI/X/2016 concerning Guidelines for Tourism Implementation based on Sharia Principles. In addition, it can refer to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 33 of 2014 concerning Guaranteed Halal Products (Ulfa et al., 2019). Since the introduction of halal tourism in 2014, Indonesia's level of competitiveness has reached the world's best ranking according to the GMTI 2019. Until 2018 the Indonesian halal tourism market grew by 15% with a total of 2.8 million foreign Muslim tourists and more than 30 trillion foreign exchange earnings.

The Ministry of Tourism (2015) in its report noted that 13 provinces in Indonesia are ready to become halal tourist destinations, namely Aceh, Banten, West Sumatra, Riau, Lampung, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, South Sulawesi, Central Java, West Nusa Tenggara, and Bali (Muis, 2020).

Table 2. Ranking of Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI) 2019

No	Province
1	Lombok, NTB
2	Aceh

3	Riau and Riau Islands
4	DKI Jakarta
5	West Sumatra

Source: *Crescent Rating-Mastercard 2019*

Aceh province is one of the three focus areas for the development of national halal tourism. Aceh Province is de facto and de jure the only province in Indonesia that has received legal recognition from the state for implementing Islamic Sharia. This certainly provides an opportunity for the Aceh Government to implement Islamic values in various sectors, including the tourism sector (R. Saleh & Anisah, 2018). This is stated in Article 3 point b explaining that the Implementation of Aceh Tourism is aimed at elevating the historical and Islamic values of Aceh's culture as a tourist attraction. Furthermore, Aceh also has Qanun Number 8 of 2016 concerning the Halal Product Guarantee System which ensures that all products circulating in Aceh are guaranteed to be halal (Irwansyah & Zaenuri, 2021). This means that this assistance/service is considered quite important to accelerate the birth of halal-certified products, especially in Aceh. Based on this regulation, to ensure the halalness of a product, the government has given authority to the Indonesian Ulama Council to carry out the product halal certification process (MUI). (Djakfar & Isnaliana, 2021).

The Ministry of Tourism is targeting Aceh Province as a halal tourism destination that is used to attract world Muslim tourists. The benchmark for whether or not the implementation of halal tourism in Aceh is good can be seen from the achievements in terms of tourism. Aceh won three categories in the 2016 national halal tourism competition, namely "Aceh as the best Muslim tourist-friendly cultural destination", "Sultan Iskandar Muda Airport as the best Muslim tourist-friendly airport", and "Baiturrahman Mosque as the best tourist attraction" (M. Saleh et al., 2022).

The concept of sharia tourism in Abdul-Sahib Al-Shakry's view must meet the following main points: First, the rise of culture and the spread of Islamic values. That is, sharia tourism has become an icon of Islamic cultural revival, as well as a form of cultural heritage. Second, sharia tourism must bring economic benefits to the Muslim community. That is, sharia tourism was developed to improve the welfare of Muslims. Third, we want sharia tourism to strengthen the self-confidence, identity, and belief of Muslims in dealing with negative stereotypes compared to other cultures and lifestyles. (Dvitasari et al., 2022). This means that traveling is not just a business, but a lifestyle, the standard of the prestige of a community group.

Research related to halal tourism has been widely carried out in several regions in Indonesia, such as research conducted by (Rozalinda et al., 2019) in his journal which looks at the potential, opportunities, and challenges of the halal tourism industry in West Sumatra. The research method used is the method of mixed method. The results showed, that West Sumatra has a very potential halal tourist destination, which has been supported by various supporting facilities for the halal tourism industry including the availability of hotels with sharia nuances and nonsharia nuances, comfortable worship facilities, to the availability of halal culinary centers that can be used. satisfy the tourists.

Research conducted by (Ezizwita et al., 2022) in his journal about the identification of sharia tourism potential and its development strategy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Pesisir

Selatan Regency. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The results show that the potential for sharia tourism in Pesisir Selatan Regency has more strengths and opportunities than weaknesses and threats. The results of the SWOT analysis show that the strategy that can be used to develop sharia tourism in Pesisir Selatan Regency is aggressive, namely utilizing all strengths to seize and take advantage of opportunities as much as possible. To that end, a strategy of market penetration, market development, and tourism product development is implemented.

Further research by (Faza, 2019). This study aims to review the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Halal Tourism in NTB Province through the SWOT Analysis Method. The results show that the strong encouragement of the local government, the availability of many tourist destinations and worship facilities, and the close orientation of the NTB community to Islam are the basis of its strength. The weakness is the lack of some halal-certified business activities and the provision of services for tourists is still not optimal. Meanwhile, the opportunity is relatively easy to access for tourists to visit NTB and the support from the central government. Then the threats are 'competing' countries that are also developing Halal Tourism, the possibility of incompatible cultures and negative attitudes related to environmental sustainability from tourists, and natural disasters.

Furthermore, there are several relevant studies conducted in Aceh Province, such as research by (Budi Santoso et al., 2021). With the title Halal tourism development in Banda Aceh City (2021). In their research, the researchers stated that the development of halal tourism in Banda Aceh City has not shown a performance that can be considered good. This is due to the lack of quality human resources of adequate apparatus capable of mastering the development of halal tourism and the lack of budget to complete the provision of infrastructure and facilities to support halal tourism. The Banda Aceh City Tourism Office needs to improve the aspects of services and facilities. The lack of socialization carried out by the Banda Aceh City Tourism Office to the community has resulted in a lack of public understanding regarding the implementation of halal tourism which is directed to be carried out by all tourism stakeholders in Banda Aceh City.

Furthermore, the relevance to the research conducted by (Heriani et al., 2019) in his journal on Collaborative and Synergy of stakeholders in the development of Halal Tourism Banda Aceh City. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with primary and secondary data. The results of this study by implementing several stages of Collaborative governance in the development of Halal tourism in Banda Aceh City already exist, but have not gone well, this is due to the different views of stakeholders who have different backgrounds. then the author proposes several inputs, namely; Developing and clarifying basic policy rules in the form of Qanun for halal tourism, improving communication between stakeholders so that the halal tourism program runs optimally, and clarifying the design of collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders in the form of a cooperation MOU.

However, currently, there is no research on the development of halal tourism in West Aceh Regency, which in essence West Aceh Regency is no exception in supporting the development of halal tourism in Aceh. If you look at the West Aceh Regency itself, it has not shown success in the development of Halal Tourism compared to other cities and regencies in Aceh

Province. Based on the number of domestic and foreign tourists in Aceh Barat Regency, is still relatively small compared to 12 regencies out of 23 regencies/cities in Aceh Province (Aceh Province in Figures 2021).

In addition, another problem is the absence of special regulations governing halal tourism, both within the scope of Aceh in general, and locally (Sandela et al., 2021), especially in West Aceh Regency itself, this regulation should be very necessary so that the implementation of tourism is truly referred to as halal tourism. Promotional activities carried out by the local government are still considered to be less than optimal, resulting in a lack of innovation and development of halal tourism in the West Aceh Regency. With the development of Halal Tourism Potential (Halal Tourism) in the West Aceh Regency, it is expected to be able to increase tourist visits, both local and foreign tourists.

**METHOD**

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research methods with literature studies where the authors obtained data through reading, recording, and processing materials from library sources, both from the mass media and relevant previous research. So this method helps researchers in finding solutions to problems found in the field. Based on the problems and research objectives that have been described above, this type of research uses descriptive qualitative, namely research that intends to analyze how the process of an event or case that occurs by using an explanation of words. The purpose of using the descriptive method is to produce an accurate picture of the prospects for the development of Halal Tourism in the West Aceh Regency.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Global Muslim Travel Index* (GMTI) as an institution that focuses on the development of world halal tourism explains that halal tourism is tourism that is carried out according to Islamic principles to provide friendly facilities and services to Muslim tourists. Several things that need to be considered in halal tourism are the fulfillment of adequate worship services such as prayer facilities, guaranteed halal-labeled food and drinks, fulfilled public facilities, services during the month of Ramadan, the absence of buying and selling alcoholic beverages, as well as the existence of services that limit the place between men and women. -male and female (Subarkah, 2018).

According to the *Ministry of Tourism* (2015), the term halal tourism began to be known since the World Halal Tourism Summit (WHTS) event was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE in 2015. Previously, the world of tourism was only known as the Moslem Tour or the like. In this event, WHTS tries to realize that the market for halal tourism is very large and needs to be continuously developed. Halal tourism terminology in several countries uses terms such as Islamic tourism, halal tourism, halal travel, halal lifestyle, or Muslim-friendly destination. (Suyatman et al., 2019). In terms of industry, halal tourism is a complementary product and does not eliminate conventional types of tourism (Noviantoro & Zurohman, 2020). As a new way to develop Indonesian tourism that upholds Islamic culture and values without losing the uniqueness and originality of the region (Kemenpar, 2015).

So far, the Aceh Government through the Aceh Provincial Culture and Tourism Office has made efforts to regularly

organize interesting events with various themes (Muis, 2020). Some of these events are featured agendas that are considered very productive and inspiring to attract tourists to visit Aceh, including the Aceh Coffee Festival, Aceh Food Festival, Selection of Aceh Tourism Ambassadors, and traditional horse racing in Central Aceh, and others. Based on data from the Aceh Calendar of Events in 2020, Aceh Province has carried out 107 annual events, while the Aceh Calendar of Events in 2021 Aceh Province has 65 annual events that are still ongoing. The many agendas of activities that are held every year indicate that there is a stretch in the development of the world of tourism in Aceh. The event is considered to have been able to increase the number of tourist visits to Aceh. The implementation of these various events is not only in the capital city of Aceh Province but also in several districts in Aceh. This indicates that the Aceh government has tried to introduce Acehnese culture as a whole, starting from the west coast of Aceh to the east coast of Aceh. Besides being able to increase tourist visits, by organizing a series of cultural agendas with various themes by local wisdom, the government continues to create new brands in enhancing the image of Aceh Halal Tourism, such as 'Aceh Halal Tourism', 'The Light of Aceh' and 'Aceh Great Through Variety. Tourism Enchantment'.

The event that was held also affected the increase in the number of tourists visiting Aceh.

Table 3. Number of International and Domestic Tourists to Aceh

Year	Number of Visits
2018	2,498,249
2019	2,636,916
2020	1,979,922

Source: *Aceh Province in figures* (2021)

In 2018, the number of tourists visited almost touched the 2,499,000 tourists to Aceh Province, then increased to 2,636,000 tourists in 2019, but in 2020 the number of tourists decreased to 1,979,000 tourists. The decline in the number of tourists was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that took place in 2020, not only in Aceh, even this pandemic resulted in a decrease in the number of tourist visits in all countries affected by COVID-19.

The same thing happened in West Aceh Regency, in encouraging the development of Halal Tourism, West Aceh Regency in 2020 already has 24 Sharia Hotels which in the previous year only amounted to 17 hotels. The number of halal restaurants increased to 403 restaurants in 2020. The number of tourists also increased, but in the same case, West Aceh Regency experienced a decline in tourists in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which only amounted to 42,000 tourists.

Table 4. Several Tourists Kab. West Aceh 2016-2020

Year	Traveler		Amount Total
	Domestic	overseas	
2016	43,857	26	40,883
2017	37,849	18	37,867
2018	36,853	13	36,866
2019	50,559	324	50,883
2020	42.107	15	42,122

Source: *Aceh Barat District in 2021 Figures*

From the table above, it can be seen that the number of local and foreign tourists visiting Aceh Barat Regency from 2016 to

2019 has increased every year, while in 2020 the number of local and foreign tourists has decreased, this is due to the Covid 19 pandemic which takes place during 2020 so tourists are prohibited and reluctant to travel.

### *Halal Tourism Prospect*

In increasing the economic growth of the community through Halal Tourism. The West Aceh Regency Government trains and forms a tourism awareness group (Pokdarwis). The West Aceh District Government through the Youth and Sports Tourism Office (DISPORA) trains tourism-aware groups to increase tourism in this area amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism awareness groups are self-help and self-help groups that grew at the initiative of the community, which aims to increase regional tourism development and succeed in national tourism development.

The West Aceh District Government together with all its staff, especially DISPORA as stakeholders who act as makers, determinants, and implementers of tourism policies in the field. Then as a guardian of tourism policies and implementation so that they do not get out of the corridor of the Islamic Sharia Qanun, which is under the authority of the Islamic Sharia Service and the Sharia Police (Wilayahul Hisbah). Furthermore, there is the Aceh Customary Court (MAA) whose task is to maintain and restore culture and customs that deviate from what has been regulated in the Qanun. The *Gampong* (village) government is also expected that every village in the coastal area must be able to develop tourism potential in their respective villages, to improve the economy and open new job opportunities for the community in the village.

PT Batubara Mifa Brothers also participated by providing business development assistance to several micros, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) based on tourism development in Meulaboh, West Aceh Regency which was allocated in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds. This assistance aims to help the community develop the economy and visit tourism in the region so that it is expected to be able to create new jobs for the community. This culinary business development assistance provided is a form of company support for the CBT (Community Based Tourism)-based community economy, especially in West Aceh Regency. CBT economics or basic community development for tourist visits includes partisanship in the form of programs and regulations, venture capital, partnerships, and community involvement.

The West Aceh District Government through DISPORA will focus on improving tourist attraction facilities to attract tourists to visit. Improvements are carried out using a rehabilitation program for some of the infrastructure at the location of tourist objects, which so far may have been incomplete and damaged. With the availability of the existing budget, the focus of improvement is only on some routine government facilities. Meanwhile, the management of tourist areas such as beaches, *geunang* (lakes), and even historical/religious tourism areas, has not been touched to be used as a source of PAD locations.

The Government of West Aceh Regency is now also starting to build intensive communication with the Japanese Government through the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Indonesia. The West Aceh Regency Government also offers cooperation to Japanese businessmen to participate in developing tourism potential in this area. This is stated in the

fourth mission of the West Aceh Regency Government, which is to develop and preserve spiritual, artistic, cultural, and traditional tourism objects which are supported by the West Aceh Regency Qanun Number 7 of 2018 concerning cultural preservation, then the West Aceh Regency Qanun Number 6 of 2018 about the Organization of Culture.

### *Challenges of Halal Tourism Development in West Aceh Regency*

One of the challenges in developing halal tourism is related to marketing because marketing halal tourism is not an easy thing. This is due to the difference between the demands of non-Muslim tourists and Muslim tourists. Non-Muslim tourists can decide not to travel to a tourist attraction without certain attributes. So one of the challenges of halal tourism is how to serve non-Muslim tourists and meet their needs without clashing with the concept of halal tourism. Halal tourism can be an obstacle in the tourism industry sector, but it can also be a business opportunity to use creativity and flexibility in serving the various needs of Muslim and non-Muslim tourists. This can also be a study or research to solve the problem.

Various efforts made by the Indonesian government in developing halal tourism are still facing several challenges. The challenges faced are obtained from the potential for halal tourism in Indonesia. Being one of the countries with a Muslim majority makes the Indonesian Muslim population consider everything around them to be included in the halal category. This perception continues to grow and makes the Indonesian people not aware of the importance of halal certification for restaurants or hotels and assumes that foreign Muslim tourists will continue to visit Indonesia (Kompas.com, 2016). Unlike the case with neighboring Malaysia, even though Malaysia has a majority Muslim population, efforts to increase halal tourism are still being carried out by providing various certified facilities to attract foreign Muslim tourists.

In Aceh, tourism is regulated in Aceh Qanun Number 8 of 2013 concerning Tourism, the Qanun also does not specifically explain halal tourism. In addition, there are no Governor regulations or Regional Regulations that discuss halal tourism, namely Aceh Jaya Regency Qanun Number 10 of 2019 concerning Halal Tourism. It regulates the scope of the regulation of halal tourism, the halal tourism industry, halal tourism institutions, marketing and promotion of halal tourism, the role of the community in developing halal tourism, fostering halal tourism, and financing halal tourism. Meanwhile, in the Banda Aceh City Government, Commission IV of the Banda Aceh City House of Representatives (DPRK) together with the Tourism Office and the Islamic Shari'a Service are currently starting to formulate policy concepts related to the development of halal tourism,

West Aceh Regency also has aspirations to develop Halal Tourism, but until now it does not yet have a special regulation on Halal Tourism. In the Qanun of West Aceh Regency Number 7 of 2018 concerning Cultural Preservation, it only discusses tourism and culture. The importance of the existence of regulations such as the Qanun which specifically regulates Halal Tourism as a standard for developing Halal Tourism in West Aceh Regency.



## CONCLUSION

The potential of the West Aceh Regency to become halal tourism is quite good, this is supported by historical factors and the condition of the people who are subject to the values of Islamic law. However, the tourism sector's resources are still very limited both in terms of quality and quantity. Government seriousness is needed to improve the quality of tourism resources to be able to compete with other regions. The tourism sector budget has not been maximized, so it can disrupt the development of the tourism sector. The government must increase the budget in this sector, especially for the development of facilities and infrastructure as well as increasing promotions at home and abroad to attract tourists to visit Aceh Barat Regency. The limited number of destinations and supporting accommodation facilities and the low implementation of halal certification, especially for restaurants and restaurants, are obstacles to developing halal tourism in West Aceh Regency. Concrete steps are needed from the West Aceh Regency government to be more serious in providing the various facilities and infrastructure needed such as clear rules, increasing the capacity of employees and business actors, allocating a large budget for the tourism sector, building destinations, and supporting activities as well as massive promotions for tourism. attract tourist visits.

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