
Halal Tourism Potential, Challenges, and Development Strategies at Jatimpark 2, Malang City

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Abstract: *Halal tourism is a rapidly growing tourism segment globally, driven by the increasing number of Muslim tourists. Indonesia has a significant opportunity to optimize the halal tourism market, including in man-made tourist destinations like Jatim Park 2 in Malang City. This study aims to analyze the potential, challenges, and strategies for developing halal tourism at Jatim Park 2 in Malang City. The research approach used was descriptive-qualitative, with data collection techniques including observation, in-depth interviews with managers, local government officials, and Muslim tourists, and documentation. The results indicate that Jatim Park 2 has significant potential as a halal tourism destination due to its strategic location, large Muslim market segment, and educational tourism theme aligned with Islamic values. However, several challenges remain, including the lack of halal certification for food court tenants, suboptimal prayer room facilities, a lack of human resource understanding of the halal tourism concept, and the absence of halal tourism branding in destination promotions. Based on the SWOT analysis, potential strategies for halal tourism development include optimizing prayer facilities, facilitating halal certification for food tenants, training human resources on halal tourism, strengthening halal tourism branding, and developing halal tourism education programs. This study recommends collaboration between Jatim Park 2 management, the local government, halal certification bodies, and the community to develop Jatim Park 2 as a leading halal tourism destination in East Java.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a strategic sector in regional and national economic development. This sector plays a crucial role in creating jobs, increasing public income, and driving the growth of related sectors such as transportation, trade, and the creative industry (UNWTO, 2021). In recent years, global tourism trends have shown increasing interest in

Sharia-compliant tourism, known as halal tourism.

According to the 2020 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), the number of Muslim tourists worldwide is estimated to have reached over 160 million, with Muslim tourism spending reaching USD 220 billion and projected to continue growing in the coming years (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2020). This demonstrates that halal tourism is not merely a temporary trend, but rather an urgent global market need that requires appropriate policies and development strategies, particularly in countries with large Muslim populations like Indonesia.

Indonesia has significant potential for halal tourism development due to its predominantly Muslim population and diverse natural and cultural riches. The government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf), has launched a program to strengthen Indonesian Halal Tourism by designating several leading halal destinations in various provinces (Kemenparekraf, 2019). However, the implementation of halal tourism on the ground still faces various challenges, particularly in man-made tourist destinations such as theme parks, educational parks, and family recreation areas that have not fully implemented Muslim-friendly tourism principles.

One of East Java's leading tourist destinations is Jatim Park 2, located in Batu City, Malang Raya. Jatim Park 2, consisting of the Animal Museum, Batu Secret Zoo, and Eco Green Park, offers an integrated educational, conservation, and recreational tourism concept. This destination is visited by thousands of tourists daily, both domestic and international, and is equipped with modern facilities such as a food court, hotel, prayer room, shuttle service, and souvenir center.

However, from a halal tourism perspective, several aspects remain suboptimal. Some restaurants or food courts lack official halal certification, the capacity and amenities of prayer rooms are still limited during peak seasons, and there is a lack of specific promotion of halal tourism for domestic or international Muslim tourists. In fact, according to Battour et al. (2014), halal tourism encompasses not only the provision of halal food and places of worship, but also encompasses Muslim-friendly services, cleanliness, comfort, and moral values in accordance with Sharia principles.

In addition to strengthening the spiritual value of tourism, halal tourism development also has the potential to increase destination competitiveness and expand the global tourist market (El-Gohary, 2016). Proper halal tourism management can enhance the destination's selling point, increase the number of Muslim tourist visits, and open up opportunities for collaboration with halal travel agents, sharia hotels, and halal certification bodies.

Based on initial observations and related literature, the potential for halal tourism development in Jatim Park 2 is significant due to its strategic location, high accessibility, positive image as an educational family destination, and local government support in developing Malang Raya's leading tourism destination. However, challenges remain that require further study, such as limited understanding of the concept of halal tourism among tourism operators, the cost of adapting halal facilities, and minimal promotion and

branding of halal tourism.

Therefore, qualitative descriptive research is needed that is able to explore potential, identify challenges, and formulate realistic and applicable halal tourism development strategies for Jatim Park 2. This research is expected to contribute to strengthening the halal tourism management model in Indonesian-made destinations.

Problem Formulation

Based on this background, the research questions are as follows:

1. What is the potential for halal tourism development in Jatim Park 2, Batu City?
2. What are the challenges faced in developing halal tourism in Jatim Park 2, Batu City?
3. What strategies can be implemented to develop halal tourism in Jatim Park 2, Batu City?

Literature Review

The concept of halal tourism generally refers to travel activities that align with Islamic principles and values, including consumption, facilities, and services (Battour et al., 2014). Halal tourism emphasizes three main components: (1) the provision of halal food and beverages; (2) adequate prayer facilities; and (3) services that uphold Islamic ethical values (El-Gohary, 2016).

According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) compiled by CrescentRating and Mastercard (2020), halal tourism destinations are assessed based on four main indicators: Access, Communications, Environment, and Services. Indonesia has been ranked the world's top halal tourism destination since 2019, demonstrating the industry's significant potential.

Several previous studies have also shown that the development of halal tourism has positive implications for the competitiveness and sustainability of tourism. Oktadiana, et al. (2016) emphasized that a deep understanding of the needs of Muslim tourists is crucial for the successful development of halal destinations. Meanwhile, Battour et al. (2014) stated that destination attributes that align with Islamic values, such as cleanliness, safety, and comfort, play a significant role in increasing the satisfaction of Muslim tourists.

In the Indonesian context, research by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2019) emphasized the importance of collaboration between local governments, business actors, and the community in implementing the halal tourism concept. Collaborative Governance and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) approaches are considered effective in encouraging the involvement of various parties in creating Muslim-friendly and sustainable tourist destinations.

By referring to various theories and previous research findings, this study seeks to provide an empirical overview of the potential, challenges, and strategies for developing halal tourism in artificial destinations—specifically Jatim Park 2, Batu City—which is

expected to become a best practice model for halal tourism development in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach that aims to describe and understand the phenomenon in depth based on facts found in the field. This approach was chosen because it allows for exploring the potential for halal tourism development at Jatim Park 2, identifying challenges faced by various stakeholders, and formulating a comprehensive development strategy based on actual conditions (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection Techniques

To obtain accurate and in-depth data, this study employed three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

1. Observations were conducted directly at Jatim Park 2 using a structured observation sheet based on standard indicators from the GMTI (Global Muslim Travel Index) and Tourism Ministerial Regulation No. 11 of 2017. The focus of the observations included the availability of halal facilities such as prayer rooms, ablution facilities, halal restaurants, clean restrooms, and Muslim-friendly service provided by staff.
2. In-depth interviews were conducted with three groups of key informants: Jatim Park 2 managers, representatives of the Batu City Tourism Office, and Muslim tourists. The interviews were semi-structured to allow for broader and more flexible data exploration based on field conditions.
3. Documentation was conducted to support the results of observations and interviews by collecting photos of halal facilities, promotional brochures, and policy documents or halal tourism development programs from the management and local government.

Data Sources

This study used two types of data sources:

1. Primary data, obtained directly from observations and interviews.
2. Secondary data, derived from literature, scientific journals, previous research reports, halal tourism textbooks, and official documents from the Jatim Park 2 management and government regulations.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted interactively, following the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The data reduction stage involved selecting and simplifying data from interviews, observations, and documentation. The data was then presented in descriptive narratives and tables for easier interpretation. The final stage was conclusion drawing and verification to obtain findings regarding the potential, challenges, and strategies for halal tourism development in Jatim Park 2.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Jatim Park 2 Destination Profile

Jatim Park 2 is one of the leading tourist destinations in Batu City, Malang Raya, East Java, managed by the Jawa Timur Park Group. This destination is known as an educational recreation center with three main attractions: the Animal Museum, Batu Secret Zoo, and Eco Green Park. The Animal Museum displays thousands of preserved animals from around the world, arranged in ecosystem dioramas and replicas of dinosaur fossils. Batu Secret Zoo is a modern zoo with an interactive educational concept, while Eco Green Park emphasizes environmental and renewable energy themes as a learning tool for conservation.

As a major tourist destination, Jatim Park 2 is equipped with various supporting facilities, such as a food court, public restrooms, a prayer room, a hotel (the Tree Inn Hotel), a shuttle service, and a souvenir center. Tourist numbers reach thousands per day, especially during weekends and school holidays. The majority of tourists come from East Java and Central Java, while a small number come from international countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and the Middle East. This fact shows that Jatim Park 2 has a strong appeal and has the potential to be developed into a regional and international halal tourism destination.

Field Findings and Literature Review

Potential for Halal Tourism Development

Observations and interviews indicate that Jatim Park 2 has significant potential for halal tourism development. This aligns with the findings of Battour et al. (2014) and Oktadiana et al. (2016), who stated that destinations with strong infrastructure and a positive image have a significant opportunity to adopt halal tourism principles.

Some of the key potentials identified include:

1. Strategic Location. Jatim Park 2 is located in the main tourist area of Batu City, easily accessible from Malang City and Abdulrachman Saleh Airport.
2. Large Muslim Market Segmentation. The majority of visitors are domestic Muslim tourists, thus creating a high demand for halal facilities.
3. Availability of Prayer Rooms. Prayer facilities are available in several locations, although capacity needs to be increased during peak seasons.
4. Educational Value and Family Friendliness. The educational and conservative themes align with Islamic values regarding knowledge, the environment, and social responsibility.
5. Positive Destination Image. Jatim Park 2 is widely recognized as the largest educational destination in East Java, offering excellent service and a family-friendly environment.

With this potential, Jatim Park 2 has the potential to become a model for halal family tourism in Indonesia, integrating aspects of education, conservation, and spirituality.

Challenges in Implementing Halal Tourism

Despite its significant potential, several challenges need to be addressed to ensure optimal halal tourism development. Field findings indicate that not all food tenants in the Jatim Park 2 area have official halal certification from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), although most claim to provide halal food. Furthermore, prayer facilities remain limited in size and amenities, particularly during the holiday season when visitor numbers increase sharply.

In terms of human resources, some employees do not yet fully understand the concept of halal tourism. Their understanding is limited to the provision of prayer rooms, not including Muslim-friendly services and operational policies based on halal values. Another challenge is the lack of explicit halal tourism branding promoted through the Jatim Park Group's official media, as well as the cost constraints of the halal certification process for smaller tenants.

These findings align with research by Oktadiana et al. (2016), which states that the main obstacles to implementing halal tourism in Indonesia are a lack of awareness among tourism industry players and a lack of internal regulations at the destination management level.

SWOT Analysis

Based on observations, interviews, and literature review, a SWOT analysis of the halal tourism development situation at Jatim Park 2 can be explained as follows:

1. Strengths: strategic and easily accessible location; positive image as a family educational destination; and availability of prayer rooms in several locations.
2. Weaknesses: lack of halal certification for food tenants; limited prayer room capacity during peak seasons; and lack of human resource understanding of halal tourism principles.
3. Opportunities: the large Muslim tourist market, both domestic and international; and government support in encouraging halal tourism development.
4. Threats: increasing competition with other destinations that have implemented the halal tourism concept and the high cost of halal certification for small businesses.

This SWOT analysis indicates that development strategies need to focus on leveraging internal strengths to capture market opportunities, while minimizing weaknesses to avoid being affected by external threats.

Jatim Park 2 Halal Tourism Development Strategy

Based on the SWOT analysis and the halal tourism development model (CrescentRating, Community-Based Tourism, and Collaborative Governance), several key

strategies were identified, as follows:

1. Strength-Opportunity (S-O) Strategy:

- a. Optimizing prayer facilities by expanding the size of the prayer room, adding prayer equipment such as prayer robes (mukenas) and prayer mats, and improving the ablution area to accommodate the elderly and people with disabilities.
- b. Building halal tourism branding by integrating the halal tourism concept into official promotional media, both online (website and social media) and offline (brochures, banners, and information boards).

2. Weakness-Opportunity (W-O) Strategy:

- a. Providing human resource training to frontline staff and tenant managers regarding Muslim-friendly services and halal tourism principles.
- b. Collaborating with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Indonesian Food and Beverage Authority (BPJPH) to facilitate the halal certification process for food and beverage tenants in the Jatim Park 2 area.

3. Strength-Threat (S-T) Strategy:

- a. Optimizing the educational and environmental image by developing halal tourism education programs, such as the Halal Food Education Corner or Halal Lifestyle Exhibition in the Animal Museum and Eco Green Park areas.

4. Weakness-Threat (W-T) Strategy:

- a. Collaborating with the government and certification bodies to reduce cost barriers and expedite the halal certification assistance process for small businesses in the destination area.

The implementation of this strategy is expected to strengthen Jatim Park 2's position as a Muslim-friendly educational destination, while supporting Batu City's vision as a nationally competitive halal tourism destination.

Conclusion

Based on research on the potential and strategies for developing halal tourism at Jatim Park 2 in Batu City, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. Jatim Park 2 has significant potential to be developed as an educational and family-friendly halal tourism destination. This potential is supported by its strategic location, a dominant Muslim tourist market segment, a positive destination image, and the availability of basic facilities such as prayer rooms and halal restaurants. The educational and conservation concepts promoted by Jatim Park 2 also align with Islamic values of knowledge, environmental stewardship, and balance in life.
- b. The main challenges in developing halal tourism at Jatim Park 2 include the lack of official halal certification for most food vendors, limited prayer facilities, especially during peak seasons, low employee understanding of the halal tourism concept, and the lack of integrated halal tourism branding in destination promotions. Furthermore,

the cost and procedures for halal certification remain a barrier for small businesses within the destination.

- c. The SWOT analysis shows that internal strengths and external opportunities can be leveraged to accelerate the development of halal tourism. Recommended strategies include improving prayer facilities, strengthening the promotion of halal tourism, training human resources on Muslim-friendly services, and collaborating with the government and halal certification bodies (MUI and BPJPH). Collaborative Governance and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) approaches can be effective models for ensuring sustainability and the participation of various stakeholders in the development process.
- d. Overall, halal tourism development at Jatim Park 2 needs to be directed at integrating halal values into all aspects of service and destination management. This step will not only improve Muslim tourist satisfaction but also expand international market share and strengthen Jatim Park 2's position as a leading, competitive halal destination at the national and global levels.

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