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Developing a Strategic Model for Halal Tourism in Aceh

Nurul Huda

University of YARSI, pakhuda@yahoo.com

Nova Rini

STIE Muhammadiyah Jakarta, nvrin207@yahoo.com

Muslikh Muslikh

University of YARSI, muslikh@yarsi.ac.id

See next page for additional authors

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Developing a Strategic Model for Halal Tourism in Aceh

Cover Page Footnote

Acknowledgement We thank the Directorate of General for Strengthening Research and Development, the Ministry of Research and Technology Republic Indonesia, Higher Education (DIKTI) for providing this research. ***** Prof. Dr. Nurul Huda, SE, MM, M.Si, is The Head of Magister Management Programme at YARSI University, Jakarta. His current research interests include Islamic Economics and Finance. He has published many articles in newspapers and magazines about Sharia economics, also scientific papers on the Islamic Economics theme, which has been published in a national and international scientific journal. He has published several books, such as An Exclusive Introduction to Islamic Economics, Islamic Capital Market Investment, Islamic Macroeconomics: Theoretical Approach, Current Issue of Islamic Financial Institution, Islamic Financial Institution: Theoretical and Practical Review, Islamic Public Finance Approach Abu Yusuf Al-Kharaj, etc. He is also active as a speaker at national forums in theme related to Islamic Economics. ***** Nova Rini, SE, M.Si, She is currently has a lecturing position at STIE Muhammadiyah, Jakarta, since 2009. She also had a position as The Chairman of STIE Muhammadiyah Research Institute until 2015. Her current research interest is on Islamic Economics, involved in several scientific research and community engagement programs related to Sharia Economics funded by DIKTI and Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta. ***** Dr. Muslikh is currently has a lecturing position at YARSI University. His current research interest is in Islamic Economics, involved in several scientific research and community engagement programs related to Sharia Economics and management. ***** Slamet Hidayat, ST, M.Si is recently graduated from the School of Global Strategic Studies, University of Indonesia. He is a business and research development manager at PT Digital Media Labs (DMLabs) ***** Nova Rini is the Corresponding Author for this paper

Authors

Nurul Huda, Nova Rini, Muslikh Muslikh, and Slamet Hidayat

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Nurul Huda

YARSI University Jakarta
pakhuda@yahoo.com

Nova Rini*

STIE Muhammadiyah Jakarta,
nvrin207@yahoo.com

Muslikh Muslikh

YARSI University Jakarta
muslikh@yarsi.ac.id

Slamet Hidayat

Universitas Indonesia
slamhidayat1@gmail.com

This article clearly establishes identifiers of halal tourism in Aceh, emphasising the three aspects of evaluation: government, local community and enterprise (hotel, travel, and halal food entrepreneurs). It explores and expands on various issues that emerge in the field related to halal tourism in Aceh from different perspectives, focusing on identifying the main problems and providing solutions to those problems. The article also determines and proposes a halal tourism development strategy based on expert insight. The article opted for a comprehensive study using qualitative and quantitative approaches, including in-depth interviews and expert group discussions with the local tourism board, academics, community leaders, hotel entrepreneurs, culinary and travel entrepreneurs, and tourists representing halal tourism stakeholders. This research uses data from research questionnaires, compiled under the Analytic Network Process (ANP) method, using SuperDecision as the data processing tool. The article provides empirical insights about halal tourism in Aceh, which focuses on the root issues, the outcome of solutions, and the determination of a strategy for future development. Government-related issues are the main priority, followed by community and then business related issues. The rules of implementation regarding halal tourism in Aceh have not reached the community. Therefore, socialisation, communication, and massive promotion efforts by the central and local governments are essential. By implementing a functional synergy between government, businesses and local community in Aceh, halal tourism goals can be realised.

Key Words: halal tourism, strategic model, tourism Aceh, tourism development

Introduction

Muslim consumers are among the fastest-growing segments of the tourism market, and their desires cannot be unheeded by tourism marketers and commercial enterprise operators (Battour & Ismail, 2014; Battour *et al.*, 2014). Based on the 2018-2019 *Global Islamic Economic Report* data taken from 75 countries by Thomson Reuters and Dinar Standard, the total expenditure of the world's Muslim population in 2017 for halal food and beverage was in the region of US\$1.3 trillion. This figure was predicting to rise to US\$1.87 trillion in 2023. In the tourism sector, Muslim spending reached up to US\$177 billion in 2017. This was expected to increase by 7.6% to

US\$274 billion in 2023. The amount of spending in the area of halal media and recreation in 2017 was US\$209 billion, and this was predicted to increase by 5.5% to US\$2.88 billion in 2023 (Reuters and Standard, 2018).

As a nation with differing religions and societies, Indonesia has many verifiable relics and conventions. The overall characteristics cannot be isolated from the religious perspectives and practices of the local community. With a diversity of tribes, ethnicities, languages, and traditions, the social and spiritual legacy has major potential within any future developments in tourism. Notably, as the most significant portion of Indonesia's population, Muslims have a uniqueness that

Map 1: Location of Aceh in Indonesia (Aceh marked in red)

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e8/Aceh_in_Indonesia.svg

characterises the country and links with the existing tourism goals, such as the royal residence, mosques, heritage, burial places, and culinary traditions (Jaelani, Setyawan, & Hasyim, 2017). Cultural diversity and Muslim religious practices can become attractions for tourists to visit this country, and when this happens, it is referred to as religious tourism. Religious tourism is increasingly developing, along with the development of the global Islamic economy. Previously the term sharia tourism was used, and in more recent times the term has shifted again to focus on halal tourism (Jafari & Scott, 2014). According to Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral (2019), halal tourism is a field of study which is still in a very early stage. Despite this and the uncertainty around the term, halal tourism can be seen as a solicitation of tourism services designed to meet Muslim tourists' needs by following their religious obligations (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019).

The province of Aceh (see Map 1) is one of Indonesia's main areas with potential to be a global halal tourism destination (Heriani *et al.*, 2018). The majority of Aceh's population are Muslims, and Islam profoundly influences the area's culture and way of life. Supported by the majority of its Muslim population and influential religious culture, Aceh provides facilities and guarantees tourists, especially Muslims, that they will get halal food and drink as well as having access to worship facilities such as prayer rooms and mosques. The availability of halal food, places of worship, and support by other religious cultures are key factors to attract Muslim

tourists, and thus they become the essential elements for tourism development (Vargas-Shancez & Moral-Moral, 2019; Jaelani, Setyawan, & Hasyim, 2017; Oktadiana, Pearce & Chon, 2016).

Meanwhile, Aceh is a most distinct area among the regions of Indonesia. Aceh is the only province to apply Islamic law (Sharia) officially based on Law No. 44 of the Year 1999 concerning the Implementation of Aceh Province Special Feature. In 2013, Aceh set up the Aceh law (Qanun Aceh) concerning tourism, endorsed in Qanun Number 8 the Year 2013. This Qanun controls tourism approaches according to Sharia. Following this Qanun, tourism is characterised as a term related to activities conducted to support individual tourism sites and incorporates specific tourism trade and other related commerce activities (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2016).

Implementing Sharia law in Aceh was part of an important agreement which brought peace to the region. This created a new start for tourism growth, and encouraged Aceh to introduce halal tourism as both its brand and its mission (Rindarsih, 2019). Therefore, addressing Aceh as a world halal tourism goal is not without reason. Aceh is unique among the provinces of Indonesia, and has everything required to realise that dream. Located as Sumatra's island's northernmost region and the westernmost tip of the Indonesian territory. Aceh is located in a key position, and has been a gateway for global exchange and culture since the 16th century (Hadi, Hamzah & Syechalad, 2014; Syafiera, 2016). Geographically, Aceh province is

between 2°- 6° North Latitude and 95° - 98° Longitude, with an average height of 125 meters above sea level. The total area of Aceh province is almost 12.26% of the site of the island of Sumatra.

After the tsunami disaster that struck Aceh in 2004, the tourism sector transformed and developed rapidly (Rindarsih, 2019; Sufika, 2019; Fadillah, Dewi & Hardjanto, 2012). Some tourism attractions related to the tsunami, such as the memorial park, museum, and educational park, attract many domestic and international tourists to visit Aceh (Nazaruddin & Sulaiman, 2013). In addition, some local attractions, such as traditional cuisine, are becoming main attractions for domestic and foreign tourists (Turgarini & Abdillah, 2017). Aceh also claims to have the biggest variety of biodiversity within the Asia Pacific region (Cochard, 2017; Ghazali & Nurdin, 2017; Muchlisin *et al.*, 2017; Muchlisin *et al.*, 2016). In this manner, Aceh is a destination with major potential regarding its virgin nature.

The Indonesian Government has promoted halal tourism at Halal Expo and the Global Halal Forum in Jakarta in 2013. Along with the provinces of West Nusa Tenggara and West Sumatra, Aceh has become the leading tourist destination focusing on halal tourism development in Indonesia since 2016 (Republika, 2016). In line with this, the Aceh Government declared halal tourism to be its main tourism product and supported its development and promotion that time. The Aceh Tourism Board also recognises halal tourism as Aceh's leading tourism brand. However, in practice, halal tourism development still faces issues and obstacles, some of them considerable.

The complexity of the problems and challenges need appropriate solutions and strategies for further developing of halal tourism in Aceh, making the need for a strategic model relevant. Any potential strategic model must involve all stakeholders, such as the central government, state governments, local communities, local hotels, travel, and food entrepreneurs. Therefore, there is a critical need for Indonesia's central government (The Ministry of Tourism) and Aceh's Tourism Board to employ a strategic model regarding halal tourism. This requires an initial identification of the root causes and solutions, and the determination of a strategic plan for future development.

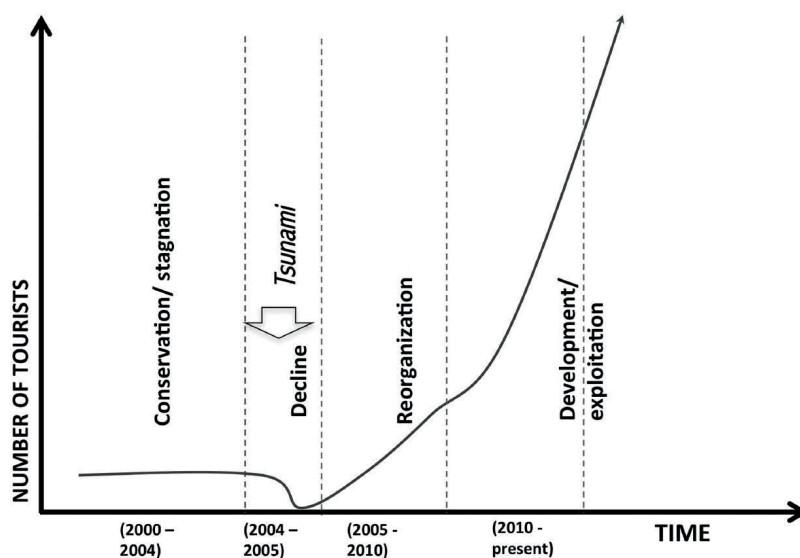
This paper aims to establish a clear initial identification regarding halal tourism in Aceh, emphasising the three aspects of evaluation: government, local community, and the Hotel, Travel and Halal Food entrepreneurs. It explores and expands on various issues that emerge in the field related to halal tourism in Aceh from different perspectives, focusing on identifying the main problem and providing the solution. Firstly, we review the literature on halal tourism's current issue, the opportunities and challenges, transformations, and strategies for future development. We then discuss the methodology of data collection and analysis, followed by explaining the current research's findings and results, identifying the main issues, and providing solutions to the problems. Furthermore, this article aims to determine a halal tourism development strategy in Aceh based on knowledge from experts, field informants, literature review, and questionnaires.

This research is the first to be carried out which maps halal tourism in Aceh. This mapping is based on three aspects, namely problems, solutions, and strategies. Our study will help develop tourism science in general and the development of halal tourism in particular, with an emphasis on the factors that can increase tourists visiting for halal tourism. The benefits of this study's results for tourism practitioners, especially those dealing with halal tourism in Aceh, are overcoming existing problems by offering the products of this research in the form of a strategy to develop halal tourism. This strategy applies to the work of government, society, and the Hotel, Travel and Halal Food industries.

Conceptual Framework

Previous research by Rindarsih (2019) led to a discussion on the need to understand halal tourism's transformation phases in Aceh. Indeed, the prolonged conflict period and the 2004 earthquake and tsunami (Figure 1) locked tourism into conservation and stagnation and harmed Aceh's overall tourism performance. Fortunately, tourism in the area has been transformed and revived in just a decade. This transformation in Aceh can be divided into four phases: conservation/stagnation; decline; discovery and reorganisation, and; development/exploitation (Rindarsih, 2019). The transformation phases of Rindarsih are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Tourism Transformation Phase of Aceh



Source: Rindarsih, 2018

The period of **conservation/stagnation** was characterised by a minimal number of tourists, mainly caused by the media portraying Aceh as a daunting place to visit due to the military occupation and news of violence committed by the separatist movement and the resultant military response.

Tourism performance and the overall economy **declined** even further in a subsequent phase - to add to the negative image, the 2004 Aceh earthquake and tsunami were highlighted in national and international news, further framing Aceh as unsafe.

About a year after the tsunami, the **reorganisation** stage started. The crucial moment came in August 2005 when the peace agreement between The Indonesian Government and the Aceh separatist movement leader was signed. This event significantly increased the number of international and domestic visitors.

The **development/exploitation** stage is characterised by increasing numbers of tourists, and various actors becoming involved in promoting and developing tourism destinations. This stage shows a significant increase in the volume of tourists. During this stage, halal tourism sees a new transformation model - becoming more inclusive and developing goals which are consistent with what the Aceh people want.

Halal tourism is a complementary product and does not eliminate the traditional/conventional tourism approach. Instead in Aceh it represents a new way of developing tourism that upholds Islamic culture and values without removing its singularity and originality. Halal tourism is defined as anything permissible under Islamic law (the Sharia), thus, adapting the supply of tourism products and services according to Sharia (Battour and Ismail, 2016; Mohsin *et al.*, 2016). Halal tourism in Aceh, however, still faces several problems that have arisen since its inception. Some of the critical issues are related to site selection, political conflict, community resistance, halal tourism branding (Rindarsih, 2019) and implementing rules (Qanun Number 8 of 2016) about the assurance of halal products (Heriani *et al.*, 2018). Previous studies suggest some solutions to ensuring and maintaining the continuity of halal tourism. Providing a conducive and attractive Islamic environment has become a hot issue, and this requires more investment in Islamic tourism attractions and infrastructure (Amalia & Yahya, 2018). Additionally it is noted that implementing intellectual and spiritual capital is highly important (Ariyanto & Chalil, 2017) as is soft diplomacy in conducting international cooperation, which is urgently needed. A recent study by Fadhilah, Widyastuti & Rizqullah (2020) suggests that a synergy between stakeholders is essential for ensuring the development of halal tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia and the Aceh Tourism Board must have excellent collaboration to build a strategic model for halal tourism development. They need a strategy that can loosely translate from ancient Greek as ‘the art of the general’ or stratagem, which can translate into ‘an operation or act of generalship’ - this captures some of the essence of the term’s use concerning marketing management. The Strategy needs to link to a leader who must exercise good judgment about future actions (Gilbert, 1990). Research by Evans (2016) proposes a strategic model representing a logical step towards sustainable tourism’s competitive advantage. It suggests that tourism stakeholders need to be aware of services and tourism’s particular characteristics, and these need to be combined, so that one can understand the strategic management concepts which have been derived from across the literature.

This study builds on the conceptual framework of halal tourism development by Huda *et al.* (2020). Their study highlighted halal tourism from a different perspective, emphasising the root challenges, the solution provided, and the proposed halal tourism development strategies. There are three aspects of evaluation: the government, the community, and the entrepreneur, representing halal tourism stakeholders. According to Freeman’s (1984), pioneering stakeholder theory, an organisation is characterised by its relationships with various groups and individuals, including employees, customers, suppliers, governments, and community members. Freeman suggests that an organization’s stakeholder is any group or individual who may affect or be affected by achieving its goals (Freeman, 1984). Therefore, a party qualifies as a stakeholder if it has a compelling interest in aspects of the organisation’s operations (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Thus, the construction of halal tourism in Aceh must involve all parties, notably the entrepreneurs, the government, and the local community.

Research by Huda *et al.* (2020) conducted in Indonesia’s South Sulawesi regions proposed a strategic model for halal tourism development. Their model identifies the main priorities, ranks the solutions, and selects the best strategy for further development. The priority problem in developing halal tourism in South Sulawesi from the government aspect is the infrastructure. Simultaneously, information is the main problem from the community

aspect, and promotion is the key issue for the Hotel, Travel and Halal Food entrepreneurs. Priority solutions in overcoming the priority problems are improving infrastructure, increasing information about halal tourism sites, and building a massive online media campaign. An effort to increase halal food promotion is the main priority for the hotels, travel, and halal food businesses. The strategies formed are to improve infrastructure and create a synergy between the government and entrepreneurs (Huda *et al.*, 2020). Different findings from a related study by Huda *et al.* (2020, May) highlight the best strategy for the hotel, travel, and food entrepreneurs. In this instance the focus is more on improving the number of sharia hotels, in addition to travel, and halal food products.

Methods

On-site observation

The empirical research was performed in Aceh from November to December 2019 and consisted of focus group discussions, comments, and in-depth interviews. Group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducting with seven informants, who represented the Aceh Tourism Board, academics, community leaders, sharia hotel entrepreneurs, culinary entrepreneurs, travel entrepreneurs, and tourists. The informant selection was based on purposive sampling with the essential requirements being the capability of informants and their respective background competencies.

In-depth interviews were conducted in the City of Banda Aceh with local community leaders (Ulama), and hotel, travel, and food entrepreneurs. Separate meetings were conducting with representatives of the Aceh Tourism Board, and two experts from the University of Syah Kuala, and the UIN Ar-Raniry - representing academics. Several tourists were interviewed. Interviews and focus group discussions took place in the native language since the researcher is fluent in Bahasa. During the in-depth interviews, data were collect and then transformed and compiled into the proposed framework, which was taken from Huda *et al.* (2020).

During the in-depth interviews, informants described tourism in Aceh during the conflict period, the reconstruction period, and the post-peace agreement

period. They were also free to discuss the economy, the markets and the challenges they faced. They were asked to explain the current halal tourism issues and problems, and how implementing the rules of halal tourism and processes has been performed since it was initiated. Lastly, the informants were asked about potential solutions and strategies regarding tourism growth in Aceh, including possible future challenges. The interviews and focus group discussions were recorded, transcribed, coded, catalogued, and analysed initially in Bahasa, and then translated for the purpose of publishing this paper.

The Analytic Network Process (ANP) approach

The collected verbatim data was transformed into the strategic model’s conceptual framework taken from Huda *et al.* (2020). The model identifies the root causes (Problems), the Solutions, and the Strategies regarding halal tourism in Aceh. The data were then inputted into the *Analytic Network Process (ANP)* network model. According to Saaty (1999), the Analytic Network Process (ANP), is a general theory of relative measurements used to derive composite priority ratios from an individual ratio scale, reflecting the comparable measure of the influence of interacting elements concerning control criteria.

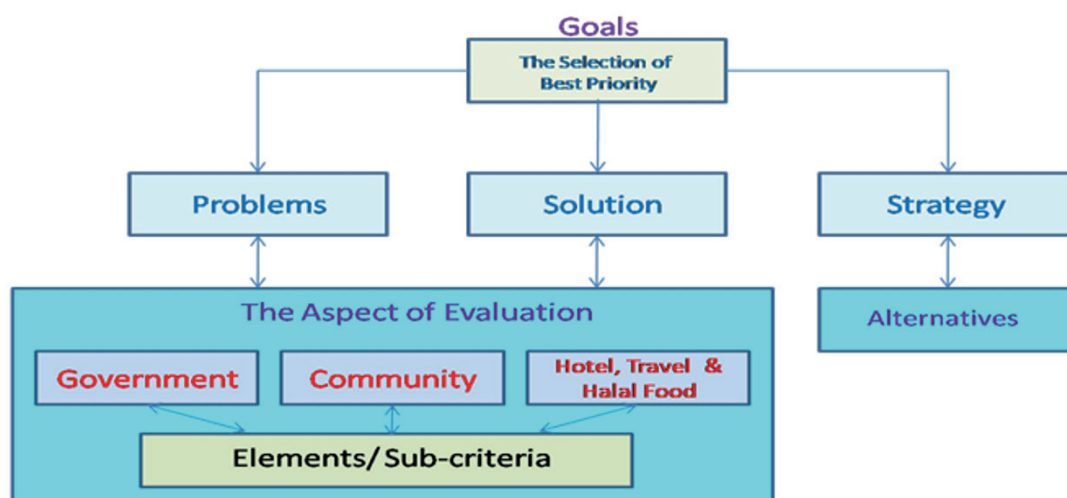
The Analytic Network Process (ANP) is a mathematical theory that systematically helps one deal with dependence and feedback, capturing and integrating tangible and intangible variables using a comparative scale (Saaty & Vargas, 2006). The ANP is also a method used to manage

complex decision-making, including dependency and feedback, evaluated in terms of advantages, incentives, costs, and risks, applied in many situations, both actual and hypothetical (Saaty, 2013).

The ANP uses the SuperDecisions software. It can be applied to deal with both decision-making and to demonstrate the current paradigm applications for specific problems. The ANP is a two-piece coupling. It consists of a hierarchy of control or network of criteria and sub-criteria that govern the studied system’s interactions. The second piece is a network of elements and clusters with influences. The web of connections varies, and each control criterion is calculated within a supermatrix of limiting impacts. The results can be synthesised for all the control criteria by addition (Saaty & Vargas, 2006).

The ANP research framework is illustrated in Figure 2. Determination of the best priority is based on the highest average score. The highest average rating has the highest priority for each criterion/ alternative. Figure 2 illustrates the ANP network structure, which consists of the Goals, Criteria, and Alternatives (Sub-criteria) concerning the Goals. In this research, the Goals are to select the priority Problems, Solutions, and Strategies in relation to halal tourism development in Aceh. The Problem and Solution criteria are classifying into three elements: Government, Community, and Hotel, Travel and Halal Food - representing the halal tourism stakeholders. The Strategy divides into several kinds of alternatives that are linked to the informants.

Figure 2. The ANP research framework



Source: Authors’ Analysis

Saaty's 1-9 Scale of Pairwise Comparisons		
Intensity of importance	Definition	Explanation
1	Equal Importance	Two activities contribute equally to the objective
2	Weak or Slight	
3	Moderate Importance	Experience and judgment slightly favor one activity over another
4	Moderate Plus	
5	Strong Importance	Experience and judgment strongly favor one activity over another
6	Strong Plus	
7	Very Strong	An activity is favored very strongly over another
8	Very, very Strong	
9	Extreme Importance	The evidence favoring one activity over another is of the highest possible order of affirmation

Having established a framework, the research can proceed to the next stage, which evaluates elements (the ANP pair-wise comparison) using a research questionnaire generated from the SuperDecisions software.

This research utilises a questionnaire tool based on the questionnaire developed by Ascarya (2005). The benefit of the questionnaire instrument compiled by Ascarya (2005) is its simplifying of the questionnaire in easier-to-understand visuals, pictures, or narrative forms than the original questionnaire instrument created directly from the Super Decisions software pair-wise comparison. When completing questionnaires, having vast amounts questions that informants must answer makes it difficult for researchers and informants, and can lead to high informant inconsistency levels. This simplified questionnaire instrument is useful for reducing disparities in each informant's questionnaire (Ascarya, 2005).

In the research, the informants are asked to complete the simplified research questionnaires based on Saaty's 1 - 9 scale (Saaty, 2003) of the ANP method. This aims to prioritise (rank) each of the Problem, Solution, and Strategy criteria, which match the convergence criteria of each evaluation aspect of Government, Community, and the Entrepreneur (Hotel, Travel & Halal Food) based on the elements rating. Table 1 shows Saaty's 1 – 9 scale of pair-wise comparison description and explanation. The lowest score is equal to 1, which means that both activities / elements / criteria contribute equally to the objective. The highest score is 9, which suggests that there is the highest possible evidence for favouring one activity over another. We also have more neutral rating scores ranging from 2 to 8.

SuperDecision Pair-Wise Comparison

Paired comparisons are a natural process whereby people can express their sense of preference, importance, or likelihood concerning a specific property that the compared elements have in common. As paired comparisons are made at the conscious level, they include reflection and thought and are thus distinct in time. Continuous paired comparisons are, therefore, part of our natural endowment. Our conscious behaviour mechanisms are widely believed to derive from and are outward manifestations closely linked to our subconscious (Saaty, 2001).

In this research stage, each informant was allowed to provide a numerical scale of 1-9 for an assessment. It is allowed to give the same value for each question on the provided research questionnaire. After completing and collecting the questionnaire, the results are moved to an Excel file to be measured and quantified. The processing of data then continues by using the SuperDecisions software to measure the weight of assumptions and goals in the ANP system. ANP weighting includes a model representing the relationship between requirements, elements (sub-criteria), or alternatives. In this weighting phase, the thing to remember is the 'control' function. The hierarchical-control shows the interrelationship between elements and sub-elements. The linkage-control shows the interrelation within the components or sub-elements.

The combined weights are obtained through supermatrix creation (Saaty & Vargas, 2006). The results of all the pair-wise comparisons are entered into the unweighted supermatrix. In real-life problems, one must know the importance of the groups or clusters to which the elements

Figure 3: Aspects of Evaluation

Government	Community	Hotel, Travel & Halal Food
Brand	Cleanliness	Sharia Hotel
Infrastructure	Knowledge	Sharia Travel
Implementing Rules	Obedience	Halal Food
Specification of Rules	Custom	Promotion
Penalty	Information	
Standardisation		

belong because that results in the absolute priorities. However, sets may not be equally important within a network. To establish the weights in the cluster matrix, they are compared. Weighing all the elements in each unweighted supermatrix component by the corresponding cluster matrix cell, whether set by the default 1/n value described above or comparing the clusters and using the derived benefits, causes the matrix to be column stochastic. That is, each column sums to one. The output/result from the SuperDecision is then converted to MS Excel to produce graphically better outputs.

Results

Determination of evaluation criteria

According to the research framework, the evaluation aspects are classified into three bars: the Government, the Local Community, and the Hotel, Travel and Halal Food entrepreneurs. The verbatim data obtained during the on-site observation and in-depth interviews with informants were translated and structured into the respective criteria. The results of this research stage are presented in Figure

3. There are six elements or sub-criteria of halal tourism in Aceh in the Government aspect, which are brand, infrastructure, implementing rules, specification of rules, penalty and, standardisation. There are five criteria in the Community aspect: cleanliness, knowledge, obedience, custom and, information. In the Hotel, Travel and Halal Food criteria, four elements are evident: sharia hotel, sharia travel, halal food, and promotion.

According to the informants during the in-depth interview and group discussion, four strategies correspond to halal tourism development in Aceh. Each strategy can be classified into three alternatives / sub-criteria. The determination of this halal tourism strategy is shown in Figure 4.

The **synergy strategy** refers to interactions between the government and the entrepreneur, which has become a critical issue. Most of the strategy is connected with the establishment of rules and the cooperative management of halal tourism local sites. The other significant focus relates to the synergy between the

Figure 4: Halal Tourism Strategy Construction

Synergy	Infrastructure	Promotion	Hotel, Travel & Halal Food
Government – entrepreneur synergy to establish rules	Road infrastructure construction / reconstruction budgeting	Central government promotion budgeting	Sharia hotel enhancement
Government – local community synergy	Bridge construction / reconstruction budgeting	Soft diplomacy and promotion cooperation	Sharia travel enhancement
Government – Entrepreneur synergy for halal tourism management	Port / airport construction / reconstruction budgeting	Low promotional cost of online / off-line media	Halal food and beverage enhancement

government and local community leaders, mostly for disseminating information and promoting halal tourism in the community. This effort can significantly increase community awareness regarding halal tourism sites and provide excellent halal tourism integration in the community.

The **infrastructure strategy** refers to the construction of new roads, airports, harbours and other supporting infrastructure such as bridges accessing local halal tourism sites, in addition to the reconstruction of existing infrastructure. The concern has to do more specifically with the allocation of budget.

The **promotion strategy** is the most crucial issue during the halal tourism transformation period in Aceh. As halal tourism still represents a new way of developing tourism in the region, it needs a massive promotion effort to build public awareness.

The **Hotel, Travel and Halal Food strategy** is mostly related to the possibility of enhancing halal hotels, halal travel, and the amount of halal food served.

The ANP network structure is then constructed based on evaluating the Problem, Solution, and Strategy and considering Government, Community, and the Hotel, Travel and Halal Food aspects. This ANP network structure is then translated and built into the SuperDecision software. The ANP research questionnaire generates automatically from SuperDecision software or a manually created simplified questionnaire. The current research uses the simplified ANP research questionnaire, which was introduced by Ascarya (2005).

The ANP SuperDecisions Result

The results from the SuperDecision software showed the priority elements / criteria from each of the evaluation aspects.

According to the **Government** aspect, the problem's highest priority is the Implementing Rules, followed by Brand and then Infrastructure. The preferences regarding the issues related to the Government aspect are presented in Figure 5. According to the informants, the solution to solving the Implementing Rules problem is *socialisation about the rules* regarding halal tourism and an engagement with the community and other stakeholders.

Figure 5: The Priority Problem of Government Aspect



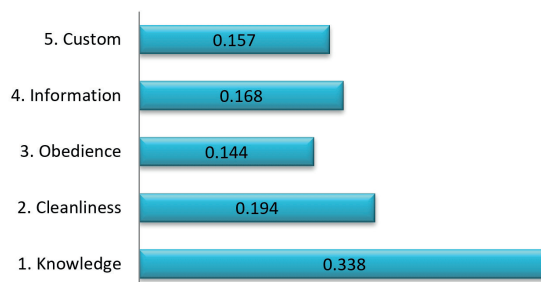
Source: Author analysis, 2020

This socialisation compliments the solution to solve the community problem related to halal tourism's lack of knowledge. The solution is also related to the massive promotion of halal tourism sites, rules, and benefits to wider audiences.

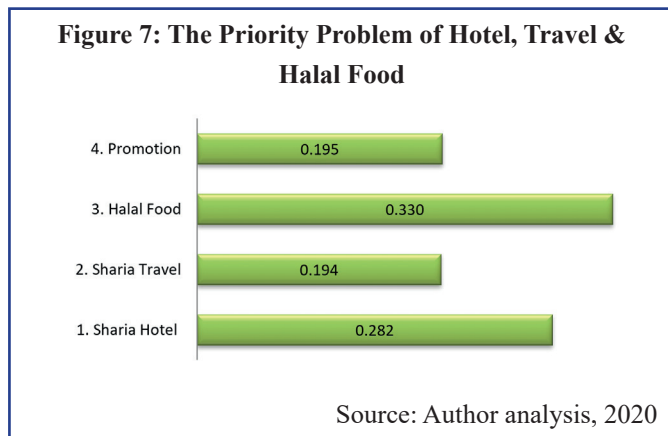
The highest priority under the **Community** aspect is the issue related to Knowledge. This problem has the highest score (0.338). Cleanliness has become the second priority issue, with a score of 0.194, followed by the third (0.168) information issue. This information shows in Figure 6. As stated above, a potential solution to these concerns is the sharing of information and an overall socialisation about halal tourism and its related rules.

Halal food is the highest priority, with a 0.330 score, for the **Hotel, Travel and Halal Food** aspect. This information is presented in Figure 7. Thus, *halal food and product standardization* are the main foci of the

Figure 6: The Priority Problem of Community Aspect



Source: Author analysis, 2020

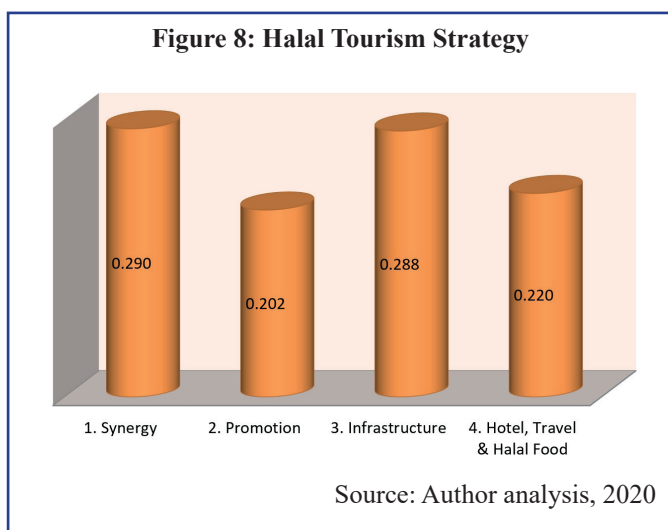


Hotel, Travel and Halal Food aspect, and thus, these are the highest priority when it comes to implementation.

When it comes to **Strategy** which is categorised into four elements / criteria, *synergy* is identified as the highest priority, as it gets the highest score (0.290). It is following by the need for more *infrastructure-related* (0.288) strategic measures and then *Hotel, Travel and Halal Food enhancement* strategy (0.220). Figure 6 presents the strategy priorities according to the informants and data processing results from SuperDecision software.

Discussion

The regulation of tourism is outlined in Qanun Aceh Number 8, the Year 2013. According to this Qanun, tourism refers to any terms related to traveling activities carried out to enjoy individual tourism sites and includes specific tourism businesses and other related businesses



(Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2016). The Qanun is the legal umbrella that forms the basis of the concept of halal tourism in Aceh. Sharia law is not the only culture for the local people, but it attaches to people’s hearts since it connects with Aceh history (Yusuf & Ibrahim, 2016). However, halal tourism in Aceh still faces obstacles. The Government is facing resistance from the community. Aceh is regulated by the Qanun (Sharia), which means that individual acts (e.g., the consumption of intoxicating food and drink, immoral behaviour, gambling, etc.) are prohibited, and the prohibition applies to all, including tourists. Halal tourism regulations from central and local governments are needed to prevent misperceptions within the community. This regulation must be translated and integrated into the implementing rules.

Unfortunately, there is still a gap between the concept and the reality of implementation. Rules for the implementation of halal tourism are not reaching the wider community. Therefore, the local community does not understand halal tourism, the location of halal tourism objects, the benefits of halal tourism for the local community, and the rules that apply concerning halal tourism in Aceh. That is why massive promotion efforts are needed. The provincial government must collaborate and create synergy with the central government, as well as local entrepreneurs, to build public awareness regarding halal tourism, including the implementing rules. The synergy between halal tourism stakeholders is seen to align with Jaelani *et al.* (2020), who stated that tourism activities tailor to the needs and coordination of contacts between the government, business people in the tourism industry, employees, and tourists.

Future generations will benefit from economic, social, and environmental growth - resulting from the needs of tourists, the tourism industry, and the local community. According to Murphy (1998) in Purnamasari (2011), tourism activities are community activities; the resources and uniqueness of indigenous communities are bound up in the form of physical or non-physical factors (traditions and culture). On the other hand, the indigenous population that grows and lives alongside tourist attractions cannot be neglected in an interconnected ecosystem. Hence, community participation in halal tourism’s success in the area, especially the local community, is essential.

One of the keys to success in growing market share in halal tourism is the support of halal ecosystems from all stakeholders, and which considers the availability of reliable infrastructure (roads, international airports, premium hotels, etc.). This aligns with Kim and Ritchie (2014), who explored a tourist destination's characteristics related to memorable travel experiences that may affect returning tourists. These characteristics include mental images of the attractions, including local culture, diversity of activities, hospitality, infrastructure, environmental management, access, service quality, and physiology (Kim & Ritchie, 2014).

Our findings relate to Jaelani's (2017) research on 'Halal Tourism Industry in Indonesia: Potential and Prospects' which found that Indonesia has good economic potential for halal tourism as part of the national tourism industry. The tourism industry's objective is to provide material and psychological aspects to tourists and contribute to increasing government revenue. This halal tourism is not exclusive, it can include all tourists (Muslim and non-Muslim). Halal tourism emphasises Sharia principles in managing tourism, and services that are courteous and conducive to all tourists and the surrounding environment. Therefore, to make Indonesia a global halal tourism hub, its development strategy aims to meet the Tourism Competitiveness Index as one of its key indicators, including infrastructure improvements, promotion, human resource preparedness, especially tourism capacity building for businesses.

On the other hand, the availability and guarantee of halal food is one of the most important things that plays a role in supporting halal tourism. So, it is crucial and urgent to encourage tourism companies to obtain halal certification to attract the Muslim market segment (Nurdiansyah, 2018; Oktadiana *et al.*, 2016; Suharko *et al.*, 2018; Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019a; Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018). Halal food certification guarantees compliance with Islam's requirements (Henderson *et al.*, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019b). However, contrary to the tendency to use halal certification, Wilson (2017) considers that a stronger position would be if all tourism products and services were obliged to be halal in Muslim countries unless otherwise specified.

Conclusion

This paper provides empirical insights about halal tourism in Aceh, which focuses on the root cause, a set of proposed solutions, and a determination of a strategy for future development. The government-related issues become the main priority, followed by community and the Hotel, Travel and Halal Food entrepreneur issues. The rules of implementation regarding halal tourism in Aceh have not been successfully communicated to the community. Therefore, socialisation, communication, and massive promotion efforts to build acceptance must be conducted by the central and local governments. The synergy between government and the people of Aceh is vital for if the practical development of halal tourism is to be achieved. This article is not the final recommendations for a strategy to develop halal tourism in Aceh. Subsequent research could involve all stakeholders to undertake further study of halal tourism development strategies.

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