



MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR HALAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BLITAR

Received: 03/06/2024; Revised: 15/04/2025; Accepted: 15/06/2025; Published: 30/06/2025

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ABSTRACT

Halal tourism has become the main focus for many tourism destinations around the world, including Blitar, Indonesia. Blitar has enormous tourism potential with its natural, historical, and cultural riches. The aim of this research is to formulate effective strategies needed to develop Blitar as a halal tourism destination. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach to understand the halal tourism development strategy in Blitar. Data was obtained through literature study and direct observation of research objects. The results of this research are that Blitar has a lot of potential to be developed into a halal tourism destination. Starting from a wealth of natural tourism, artificial tourism, religious tourism, culinary tourism, to cultural history tourism, which is a special attraction for tourists. The development of halal tourism in Blitar can be seen through several aspects, including tourist objects and destinations, provision of infrastructure and accessibility, as well as human resource development. The potential for halal tourism development is analyzed through the strategic approaches SO (strengths-opportunities), WO (weaknesses-opportunities), ST (strengths-threats), and WT (weaknesses-threats). Appropriate strategic management is the key to success in developing halal tourism in Blitar.

Keywords: Management, Strategy, Halal Tourism, Blitar

How to cite: Farizan, F. A., Hartini, S. 2025. Management Strategy For Halal Tourism Development in Blitar. Journal of Halal Product and Research. 8(1), 35-46, <https://dx.doi.org/10.20473/jhpr.vol.8-issue.1.35-46>

INTRODUCTION

Pariwisata adalah salah satu industri dengan pertumbuhan tercepat di dunia dan merupakan penggerak perekonomian di banyak negara berkembang, termasuk Indonesia (Andika dan Subanu, 2023). Indonesia terkenal akan keindahan alam, budaya yang beragam, dan wisata sejarah yang menjadi daya tarik wisatawan seluruh dunia. Perkembangan pariwisata di Indonesia sangat dinamis selama beberapa dekade terakhir. Keadaan ini berdampak pada perekonomian nasional dan meningkatkan devisa negara. Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif (Kemenparekraf) melaporkan bahwa hingga September 2023, jumlah kunjungan wisatawan mancanegara mencapai 8,51 juta atau mengalami peningkatan sebesar 143,41% dibandingkan dengan periode yang sama pada tahun 2022. Peningkatan ini sejalan dengan pertumbuhan devisa pariwisata yang tercatat sebesar 10,46 miliar USD atau meningkat 146,69% dibandingkan tahun sebelumnya (Kemenparekraf, 2023).

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world and serves as an economic driver in many developing countries, including Indonesia (Andika and Subanu, 2023). Indonesia is renowned for its natural beauty, cultural diversity, and historical attractions that draw tourists from around the globe. The development of tourism in Indonesia has been highly dynamic over the past few decades. This situation has had a significant impact on the national economy and has increased the country's foreign exchange earnings. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) reported that as of September 2023, the number of international tourist arrivals reached 8.51 million—an increase of 143.41% compared to the same period in 2022. This growth aligns with the rise in tourism-related foreign exchange revenues, which reached USD 10.46 billion, marking a 146.69% increase compared to the previous year (Kemenparekraf, 2023).

The tourism sector in Indonesia holds significant potential for economic growth and job creation. Each region in Indonesia possesses its own unique tourism potential that needs to be developed to support the local economy. Blitar, a city in East Java, Indonesia, is well known for its diverse tourist attractions. With its rich cultural, historical, and natural heritage, Blitar has become an appealing destination for travelers seeking to explore the beauty of Indonesia.

According to the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports (Disbudpar), the number of tourist visits to Blitar Regency in 2022 reached 2,597,470, surpassing the target of 1,754,333 visitors. This achievement represents a surplus of 48 percent over the projected target. Tambakrejo Beach in Wonotirto has become one of the most popular natural tourist destinations, while Blitar Park in Garum was the most visited artificial attraction in 2022. Meanwhile, the highest number of cultural tourism visits was recorded at Penataran Temple in Nglegok (Disbudpar, 2022).

The growing public awareness and understanding of the halal concept have significantly contributed to the expansion of the halal industry (Abdul Rahman et al., 2013; Satriana & Faridah, 2018). This development has also given rise to a new trend in the tourism sector—halal tourism (Samori et al., 2016). In various studies, halal tourism is also referred to by several other terms such as sharia tourism, sharia travel, Islamic tourism, halal-friendly tourism destination, halal travel, halal lifestyle, and friendly travel destinations (Noviantoro et al., 2022; Satriana & Faridah, 2018). Halal tourism refers to the provision of travel services based on sharia principles, including halal food and beverages as well as tourism services that uphold and respect Islamic moral and ethical norms (Marlinda et al., 2023). Halal tourism has its own unique appeal and has experienced significant growth in the global tourism industry. With the increasing number of Muslim travelers, halal tourism is gaining popularity, prompting many countries to begin incorporating halal tourism concepts into their destinations (Al Mustaqim, 2023).

The development of halal tourism, both in Indonesia and globally, has shown rapid progress and is projected to become a major player in the tourism industry. Indonesia possesses a wide range of tourist attractions that draw considerable interest, creating a strong opportunity to position itself as a world-class halal tourism destination (Cadith et al., 2022). Strategic development efforts in the halal tourism sector have become a key element in boosting regional revenue (Sari et al., 2024). Therefore, effective strategies are needed to develop halal tourism in a way that enhances its appeal and attracts more visitors to these destinations.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to understand the development strategies of halal tourism in Blitar. Data were obtained through library research as a source of secondary information related to tourism in Blitar, as well as through direct observation of the research objects. This study employs the SWOT analysis method, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This technique serves as an analytical tool that helps identify various factors in a structured manner to formulate appropriate strategies (Mashuri & Nurjannah, 2020). By using SWOT analysis, both potential and challenges can be recognized, which in turn influence decision-making in determining the programs to be implemented, and serve as the basis for designing future development improvement steps (Cadith et al., 2022).

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Halal tourism holds a unique appeal for Muslim tourists, both domestic and international (Noviantoro et al., 2022). Indonesia has immense potential in developing halal tourism, as reflected in its numerous tourist destinations and its large Muslim population. Effective strategic management is needed to develop tourism potential in each region, including in Blitar. Blitar is one of the well-known tourist cities in Indonesia, often referred to as the "City of Patria." It is notably the burial place of the First President of the Republic of Indonesia, Ir. Soekarno.



The Potential of Blitar as a Halal Tourism Destination

Halal tourism is an effort to apply Islamic principles in all aspects of travel. The core principle of halal tourism is to incorporate Islamic values into tourism activities, ranging from culinary offerings and prayer facilities to accommodation services (Priyadi, 2016). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the sharia tourism market is not limited to Muslim travelers but also includes all types of tourists, including non-Muslims, who are interested in experiencing local cultural diversity (Jaelani, 2017). Halal tourism is a tourism destination concept designed to provide comfort and appropriate facilities for Muslim tourists, while remaining inclusive and open to non-Muslim visitors (Luthfiyyah, 2022).

The high demand for halal tourism in Indonesia has highlighted the need for regulation through normative and positive legal frameworks. As a response, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued Fatwa Number 108/DSN-MUI/IX/2016 concerning Guidelines for Organizing Tourism Based on Sharia Principles (Wijaya et al., 2021). However, many regions in Indonesia still lack local regulations that specifically govern the implementation of halal tourism (Wibowo, 2020).

Blitar possesses diverse potential that makes it an attractive destination for tourists. In terms of cultural heritage, the city offers a rich historical legacy through archaeological remains such as Penataran Temple, one of the largest archaeological sites in East Java. In addition, Blitar also has strong ecotourism potential with its natural beauty, exemplified by Tambakrejo Beach and its diverse natural features (Afandi, 2015).

Blitar's tourism potential is also supported by the continued preservation of various cultural activities and traditional arts, which add value for visitors interested in exploring local culture. With a comprehensive understanding of this potential, sustainable tourism development in Blitar presents a significant opportunity to promote local economic growth while preserving cultural and environmental values. The following aspects supporting Blitar's tourism potential are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Supporting the Capacity of Halal Tourism Potential in Blitar

Aspect	Potential
Prayer facilities	According to data from the East Java Ministry of Religious Affairs, in 2023, the City of Blitar had a total of 1,481 mosques and 968 prayer rooms (musholla). This large number of worship facilities significantly supports the convenience of Muslim tourists in performing their religious obligations (Kemenag, 2023).
Religious Tourism	Blitar is home to the grave of the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, Ir. Soekarno, which serves as a prominent historical and religious tourism destination. In addition, there are also graves of Islamic scholars who played a role in spreading Islam in the region, which have the potential to be developed as religious tourism sites (Sa'diyah et al., 2023).
Destination	Tourist destinations in Blitar are highly diverse, encompassing natural tourism, artificial attractions, cultural tourism, religious tourism, culinary tourism, and historical tourism. This variety offers a unique and enriching experience for visitors (Rudianto & Diella, 2022).
Accommodation	Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency of East Java (BPS), the number of hotel and lodging rooms in Blitar and Regency in 2021 reached 958 rooms, indicating the city's capacity to accommodate a relatively large number of tourists (BPS, 2021).
Muslim Population	The majority of Blitar's population is Muslim. According to the SIMPEDAK database of Blitar, in 2023, the number of Muslim residents was recorded at 147,651 individuals. This majority Muslim population contributes to a welcoming environment for Muslim travelers, as they are more likely to feel culturally and religiously connected to the local community. Additionally, locals are more inclined to offer religiously appropriate facilities and services (SIMPEDAK, 2023).



Aspect	Potential
Accessibility	Blitar is a relatively accessible city, served by a railway station and a bus terminal located in the city center. The nearest airport is Abdul Rachman Saleh Airport in Malang, which can be reached by land within approximately 2 to 3 hours from Blitar.
Climate	Geographically, Blitar is located on the slopes of Mount Kelud, approximately 160 kilometers southeast of Surabaya, the capital of East Java Province. This location provides Blitar with a cooler climate, with average temperatures ranging between 24°C and 34°C.

Tourism potential in Blitar consists of natural tourism, man-made attractions, religious tourism, and historical-cultural tourism, as shown in Table 2. These tourist destinations can be further developed into halal tourism destinations by providing facilities and services that comply with halal principles—such as halal-certified restaurants and accommodations, prayer areas, and programs tailored to the needs of Muslim travelers. By incorporating these halal aspects, Blitar holds considerable potential to attract more Muslim tourists and position itself as one of the leading halal tourism destinations in Indonesia.

Table 2. Tourist Destinations and Visitor Statistics in Blitar

Tourism	Attraction	Visitor Numbers	Year
Nature Tourism	Tambakrejo Beach	135.699	2020
	Sumala Lake	2.494	2022
	Serang Beach	35.884	2020
Artificial Tourism	Sentul Park	13.569	2022
	Waterpark Sumber Udel	82.410	2022
	Taman Kebon Rojo	459.233	2022
	Blitar Green Park	15.325	2022
	Fish Garden	1.687	2022
	Blitar Green Park	15.325	2022
	Kampung Coklat/Chocolate Village	552.702	2019
	Agrowisata Belimbing Karang Sari	23.635	2022
	Arrohman Mosque	585.419	2022
Religious Tourism	Makam Bung Karno	75.937	2020
Historical Tourism	Istana Gebang	16.449	2022

Blitar holds a unique appeal for both domestic and international tourists, as evidenced by the relatively high number of visitors. This influx of tourists presents a significant opportunity and potential that can positively impact the local economy. The tourism sector can create employment opportunities for the surrounding community, ranging from tour guides to restaurant and hotel entrepreneurs. Revenue generated from this sector can contribute to driving regional development.

Development of Halal Tourism in Blitar

a. Development of Tourist Attractions and Destinations

Indicators under this aspect include tourism destinations that support halal tourism programs, such as the availability of comfortable prayer facilities, easy access to halal food and beverages, art or cultural performances that do not violate Islamic principles, and a clean and orderly environment.

The implementation of halal tourism programs in Blitar is currently in the development stage. Halal tourism attractions are expected to go beyond places of worship and religious tourism, encompassing all types of tourist destinations. There is a need for infrastructural support, including the provision of adequate and comfortable prayer facilities, halal-certified



food and beverages, and activities or performances that comply with Islamic law. The development of halal tourism programs is expected to enhance the city's appeal, particularly among Muslim tourists.

Regarding prayer facilities, the majority of tourist attractions have already provided mosques or prayer rooms (musholla). Some locations feature large mosque buildings, and their terraces or verandas often serve as rest areas for visitors. Other sites provide small prayer rooms located in corners of the venue.

The availability of halal food is a crucial element in supporting halal tourism programs. Based on field observations, there are numerous food options available at tourist sites; however, most of them have not yet obtained halal certification. While the food sold in these areas generally appears to be made from halal ingredients and does not contain non-halal elements, it would be preferable if such products were officially certified. This is especially relevant considering that, starting in January 2023, the government has launched a free halal certification program (SEHATI) for micro and small enterprises (MSEs), with a quota of one million applications. Religious conviction and the role of halal certification are considered to have a significant influence in fostering halal awareness among the public (Pramintasari & Fatmawati, 2017).

b. Provision of Infrastructure and Accessibility

Indicators for the provision of infrastructure and accessibility focus on supporting prayer facilities and the availability of safe transportation for all visitors. Some of the facilities that facilitate ease of worship include comfortable ablution areas, clear Qibla direction signs, clean prayer equipment, and the availability of the Qur'an. In practice, supporting facilities for halal tourism at several tourist destinations still require improvement. For example, the availability of clean ablution facilities separated for men and women needs enhancement. Often, ablution areas at tourist sites consist of small booths used alternately by both genders. Building separate ablution facilities for men and women would increase comfort, especially for female tourists. Other facilities that need attention include clean and fragrant prayer equipment. Since not all tourists bring their own prayer items, these should be provided in prayer rooms or mosques at tourist locations. However, sometimes the condition of the available prayer equipment appears less clean. Another facility that can create a Muslim-friendly atmosphere in halal tourism is the presence of the Qur'an in places of worship (Satriana & Faridah, 2018).

Blitar offers many transportation options to reach tourist attractions. For instance, pedicabs (becak) are widely available around the Bung Karno Mausoleum area. Tourists often use pedicabs because the distance between the parking area and the mausoleum is quite far. Other transportation modes available include motorcycles or cars via online ride-hailing services.

c. Human Resource Development

The concept of halal tourism is still relatively unfamiliar to many people. Generally, the public understands religious tourism as traveling to places of worship (mosques) or sites related to religious history or figures. Meanwhile, halal tourism has a broader meaning, referring to tourist destinations that meet standards in accordance with Islamic Sharia. At a minimum, this includes ease of performing worship and the availability of facilities that support the needs of Muslim tourists, such as halal food options.

Socialization efforts regarding halal tourism are needed among stakeholders involved in the tourism sector, including private entities and local communities. Through this socialization, it is hoped that a shared understanding and synergy will be achieved to support the development of halal tourism in Blitar.



SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is an effective tool for evaluating the potential and challenges in developing the halal tourism industry in Blitar. By focusing on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, this analysis provides an in-depth view of the factors that can influence the growth and sustainability of the halal tourism sector in the area. With a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external factors affecting it, SWOT analysis can serve as a strategic foundation for identifying appropriate strategies to enhance competitiveness and maximize the potential of halal tourism in Blitar. The SWOT analysis of halal tourism in Blitar is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. SWOT Analysis Halal Tourism in Blitar

<i>Strengths</i>	- Blitar offers a diverse range of tourist attractions, including natural tourism, artificial tourism, religious tourism, and historical tourism. - Blitar is strategically located and has easy access to various tourist destinations via available transportation modes. - The majority of Blitar's population is Muslim, creating a culturally familiar environment for Muslim tourists. - Many mosques and prayer rooms (musholla) are available throughout the city. - Public facilities are also equipped with prayer rooms to support religious practices.
<i>Weakness</i>	- There are limitations in the quality of infrastructure and facilities that support halal tourism programs. - There is a lack of understanding among local communities and business operators regarding halal tourism standards. - Halal-certified restaurants or eateries are still limited, and information about the availability of halal food options is insufficient. - International promotional efforts have not been optimized.
<i>Opportunity</i>	- The increasing awareness of the importance of halal tourism among global Muslim travelers presents a significant opportunity to attract more Muslim tourists to Blitar. - Opportunities exist to establish partnerships with the halal tourism industry and related organizations to promote and develop halal tourism destinations in Blitar. - According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2019, Indonesia and Malaysia ranked at the top as leading halal tourism destinations worldwide.
<i>Threat</i>	- Competition with other halal tourism destinations, both within and outside East Java, may pose a threat to the attractiveness of Blitar's halal tourism. - Environmental threats such as pollution, ecological degradation, and climate change may reduce the appeal of Blitar's natural tourism attractions.

After understanding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats present in Blitar's tourism area, the next step is to develop a SWOT matrix. This matrix is used to formulate SO (Strengths-Opportunities), WO (Weaknesses-Opportunities), ST (Strengths-Threats), and WT (Weaknesses-Threats) strategies as outlined below:

1. SO Strategy (*Strengths-Opportunities*).

- Actively enhance the promotion of halal tourism in Blitar.
- Expand halal tourism infrastructure by increasing the number and improving the quality of facilities that meet halal tourism standards.

2. WO Strategy (*Weaknesses-Opportunities*).

- Collaborate with halal tourism industries and related organizations to assist in developing



infrastructure and improving halal tourism services in Blitar.

- Increase training and education for local communities and business actors regarding the needs and preferences of Muslim tourists.
3. ST Strategy (*Strengths-Threats*).
- Strengthen cooperation with the government and related institutions to improve security and comfort for Muslim tourists in Blitar.
 - Raise awareness about the importance of environmental preservation to maintain ecological balance.
 - Conduct socialization programs to increase halal awareness among the community, encouraging active participation in halal tourism programs.
 - Promote the formation of halal tourism communities and guide the local population.
4. WT Strategy (*Weaknesses-Threats*)
- Conduct comprehensive evaluations of existing infrastructure and services to identify and address weaknesses that may pose threats to the development of halal tourism.
 - Build networks of cooperation with other halal tourism destinations to mutually support and strengthen the competitiveness of the halal tourism industry in East Java and Indonesia.

By effectively implementing these strategies, Blitar can maximize the potential of its halal tourism, becoming a leading halal tourism destination that attracts Muslim tourists from various countries and provides positive contributions to the local economy and culture.

Readiness to Support Halal Tourism

Blitar has great potential to become an attractive halal tourism destination. Its rich history, culture, and natural beauty can draw the attention of travelers, especially Muslim tourists. Muslim travelers are becoming increasingly aware of halal tourism and are seeking travel experiences that align with Sharia principles (Yuningsih et al., 2023). To realize this potential, Blitar's readiness to support the development of halal tourism is crucial. This readiness encompasses various aspects, including infrastructure, worship facilities, government policies, and awareness among local communities and tourism industry stakeholders.

One of the key aspects that determines readiness to support halal tourism is tourism infrastructure (Baharudin, 2023). In general, Blitar already has some basic facilities to support tourism development, such as hotels, lodgings, and restaurants. However, in the context of halal tourism, the quality and quantity of these facilities need to be improved.

There needs to be an increase in the number of Muslim-friendly accommodations that offer specific facilities for Muslim travelers, such as easily accessible prayer areas and clearly certified halal food options (Boğan, 2020). Currently, many lodging places pay little attention to these aspects, which can be an obstacle for Muslim tourists who require comfort in fulfilling their religious obligations during their trips.

Additionally, the number of halal-certified restaurants and food stalls in Blitar must be increased, and the halal status of food more thoroughly validated. While some restaurants in the city already offer halal menus, only a few have official halal certification. This certification is vital to provide a sense of safety and comfort for Muslim tourists, who seek assurance that the food they consume complies with halal standards (Bahrudin et al., 2024).



Blitar is home to several mosques, including the Grand Mosque of Blitar, which serves as the city's main mosque. However, the development of worship facilities at tourist destinations is also essential to support halal tourism. Every tourist destination should be equipped with prayer rooms, ablution areas (wudhu), and comfortable spaces for Muslim visitors to worship (Putri & Wakhid, 2023).

Moreover, there is an opportunity to build more small prayer facilities (musholla) in popular tourist areas such as city parks or nature-based attractions, to improve the convenience of religious practices for Muslim visitors. The development of such facilities is essential to ensure that Muslim tourists feel respected and accommodated during their travels.

Readiness to support halal tourism heavily depends on the policies implemented by local governments. At present, Blitar holds significant potential for developing halal tourism, especially considering the national government's support for halal tourism development across Indonesia. The local government of Blitar needs to formulate more comprehensive and integrated policies to support the halal tourism sector.

The government should also collaborate with halal certification bodies to ensure that all tourism service providers—such as restaurants, hotels, and tourist sites—comply with applicable halal standards. In addition, promoting halal tourism must be part of the regional government's efforts to attract more Muslim tourists, both domestic and international (Fitriyyah, 2022).

Public awareness and the involvement of tourism industry stakeholders are equally important factors in the development of halal tourism. The predominantly Muslim community holds the potential to support the sustainability of halal tourism if they are involved in every stage of its development—for example, through training on how to serve Muslim tourists and fostering an understanding of the importance of halal principles in tourism. Moreover, tourism industry players such as hotel managers, restaurant owners, and service providers should receive more intensive training regarding the standards and principles of halal tourism. Halal certification for businesses in the tourism sector, such as restaurants and hotels, is also essential to ensure that Muslim tourists feel safe and comfortable.

Internal Factors Influencing the Development of Halal Tourism in Blitar

Halal tourism serves as a distinctive identity that attracts tourists, particularly Muslims, to visit Indonesia. The halal image reflects the availability of facilities that enable Muslim travelers to perform religious duties, access halal food and beverages, and stay in accommodations that align with Sharia principles (Widyarini, 2020). The development of halal tourism requires significant attention to various internal factors that may either support or hinder its progress. These internal factors include infrastructure, service quality, availability of facilities, and the readiness of industry stakeholders.

Tourism infrastructure is one of the key components affecting the success of halal tourism development. In Blitar, although the city boasts various attractions such as the Tomb of Bung Karno and other historical sites, the quality and quantity of Muslim-friendly infrastructure still need improvement. Halal-compliant accommodations, such as hotels equipped with prayer rooms and ablution facilities, are essential for Muslim travelers. Many lodgings in Blitar have yet to recognize the importance of providing these facilities, even though they play a critical role in ensuring comfort for Muslim tourists during worship.

Additionally, the culinary sector is a vital part of halal tourism development. Blitar offers a rich culinary potential, yet few restaurants or eateries have obtained halal certification from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). Halal certification serves as an important guarantee for Muslim tourists, ensuring that the food they consume aligns with Sharia principles. Therefore, the development of Muslim-friendly tourism infrastructure, including an increase in the quality and number of halal-certified restaurants, is necessary to support the growth of halal tourism in Blitar.



Worship facilities also represent a critical internal factor in supporting halal tourism. Prayer spaces at tourist sites must be increased and improved. Many attractions still lack adequate musholla or prayer rooms. Thus, the construction of prayer facilities at tourism destinations is essential to provide comfort for Muslim visitors.

The quality of human resources in the tourism sector also plays an important role in the development of halal tourism. Tourism industry players in Blitar—including hotel managers, restaurant owners, and travel agencies—need to be trained and educated on the specific needs of Muslim travelers. They must understand halal standards and principles in providing services, such as offering halal food, maintaining a clean and comfortable environment, and ensuring accessible worship facilities.

Furthermore, strong awareness among the local community regarding the potential of halal tourism can enhance Blitar's readiness to develop this sector. As a predominantly Muslim community, local residents can serve as key supporters by helping create a conducive environment for Muslim travelers—such as offering accurate information about worship places, halal culinary options, and Muslim-friendly tourist destinations.

Supportive policies from the Blitar local government are also a vital internal factor in halal tourism development. The local government can offer incentives to tourism industry actors who commit to providing halal services, such as simplifying the process of obtaining halal certification for hotels and restaurants. In addition, government policies related to halal tourism promotion are essential in attracting tourists. The implementation of destination branding strategies is crucial. Halal tourism promotion can be aligned with the rapid development of information and communication technologies. As such, social media plays a significant role in the destination branding process. Through branding strategies, various marketing and promotional activities can help create a recognizable identity—such as a name, symbol, or logo—that distinguishes halal tourism from other types of tourism destinations (Syam et al., 2023).

The Blitar local government should also formulate regulations that support halal tourism development, such as the provision of worship facilities at tourist sites and the dissemination of halal tourism information through various media channels. These efforts will help shape a positive image of Blitar as a Muslim-friendly halal tourism destination.

External Factors Influencing the Development of Halal Tourism in Blitar

Halal tourism has become one of the fastest-growing market segments in the global tourism industry. With the increasing number of Muslim travelers seeking destinations that align with Sharia principles, various regions in Indonesia are working to develop their halal tourism potential — including Blitar. Located in East Java and renowned for its rich historical and cultural heritage, Blitar possesses the potential to grow as a halal tourism destination. However, the development of halal tourism in Blitar is not solely influenced by internal factors such as infrastructure and human resources, but also by external factors stemming from the city's broader environment. These external factors include global trends, competition among destinations, government regulations, and wider social and cultural dynamics. This article explores the external factors affecting the development of halal tourism in Blitar.

One of the most significant external influences is the global trend in halal tourism. Globally, halal tourism continues to experience strong growth, with the number of Muslim travelers rising steadily each year. Reports from various international organizations, such as Mastercard-CrescentRating, indicate that halal tourism has become one of the largest and fastest-expanding sectors, driven by increasing awareness of the need for Muslim-friendly destinations that offer halal accommodations, food, and adequate worship facilities.

As a city with strong historical and cultural appeal, Blitar has the potential to tap into this trend by developing tourism products tailored to the needs of Muslim travelers. Blitar's competitiveness as a



halal tourism destination is closely tied to its ability to keep pace with global trends — including marketing strategies, halal certification, and the provision of facilities that meet international halal tourism standards.

Another key external factor is competition with other well-established halal tourism destinations in Indonesia, such as Yogyakarta, Aceh, and Lombok. These cities are already well known as halal tourism hubs, equipped with facilities that meet halal standards. For example, Yogyakarta offers a wide range of religious and cultural attractions, supported by halal-certified accommodation and culinary options. Similarly, Aceh and Lombok, with their strong Islamic cultural foundations, have successfully attracted Muslim travelers from both domestic and international markets.

To remain competitive, Blitar must identify its own unique selling points that set it apart from other halal tourism destinations. This can be achieved by leveraging its local strengths — such as historical tourism related to Indonesia's independence struggle or religious tourism that integrates spiritual values with the region's rich cultural heritage. Additionally, Blitar must diversify its halal tourism offerings and improve the quality of its existing facilities to meet the expectations of Muslim tourists.

Government support, both at the local and national levels, plays a critical role in the development of halal tourism in Blitar. The government is instrumental in establishing supportive regulations, including policies that offer incentives to tourism businesses that adopt halal standards. Moreover, government-led training programs aimed at improving industry stakeholders' understanding of halal tourism are equally important.

Policies implemented by the Blitar local government related to infrastructure development, tourism promotion, and collaboration with relevant institutions — such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the Ministry of Tourism — can accelerate the development of halal tourism. Support through national and international promotional campaigns is also essential in positioning Blitar as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination.

Social and cultural factors also influence Blitar's readiness to embrace halal tourism. As a city with a Muslim-majority population, local residents are already familiar with Islamic values, making the transition to halal tourism smoother. However, the diversity in cultural and social backgrounds within the population must be considered. Public understanding of the importance of halal tourism — not only from an economic standpoint but also from the perspective of cultural inclusivity — must be enhanced.

Creating an inclusive and Muslim-friendly atmosphere can be challenging, especially given the varying degrees of awareness among community members. Thus, involving the local community through training and education programs related to halal tourism is crucial. This will foster increased awareness and collective commitment to developing tourism that is not only economically beneficial but also respectful of religious and cultural values.

Technological advancements and the rise of social media are additional external factors that significantly affect halal tourism development in Blitar. In the digital era, social media platforms serve as primary tools for promoting tourism destinations (Rizal et al., 2024). Muslim travelers around the world increasingly rely on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and travel review websites to seek information about halal-friendly destinations.

Blitar must capitalize on this opportunity by actively promoting itself as a halal tourism destination through digital platforms. Visually engaging content — including photographs of tourist attractions, halal culinary experiences, and available worship facilities — can attract the interest of Muslim tourists worldwide. Moreover, collaboration with influencers or travel bloggers who specialize in halal tourism can enhance Blitar's global visibility (Saleh et al., 2022).



In conclusion, external factors play a significant role in shaping the development of halal tourism in Blitar. These include global halal tourism trends, competition from other destinations, supportive government policies, socio-cultural conditions, and technological advancements. Blitar must leverage these external drivers to strengthen its image as a Muslim-friendly tourism destination. Synergy among local communities, key stakeholders, and tourism industry players is essential to actualize halal tourism as a strategic effort to support national economic development (Putri & Wakhid, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The development of halal tourism in Blitar can be achieved through effective strategic management. This process should begin with the dissemination of information regarding the concept of halal tourism to all stakeholders involved in the tourism sector. Once these stakeholders have acquired accurate knowledge and understanding of halal tourism, awareness of its importance will naturally emerge. Furthermore, the development should be supported by the enhancement of tourist destinations, the improvement of facilities that support halal tourism, and the provision of better accessibility to tourist sites. A SWOT analysis is conducted to identify existing potentials and challenges. In the end, this will enable the formulation of appropriate strategies to advance the development of halal tourism in Blitar.

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