

Tourism development strategy in Jember Regency: Islamic economic perspective

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the development of the tourism sector in Jember Regency through a Sharia economic perspective, addressing the challenges hindering optimal growth despite the region's rich potential in religious, cultural, and natural tourism. The research identifies key issues in current tourism management and explores how Islamic economic principles can contribute to sustainable and inclusive development. The significance lies in integrating Sharia-compliant strategies into regional tourism planning, offering an alternative model for economic empowerment in predominantly Muslim regions.

Method: A qualitative descriptive approach is employed, supported by SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to evaluate internal and external factors affecting tourism development in Jember Regency. Data were collected through field observations, interviews with local stakeholders, and document reviews. The analytical framework integrates Sharia economic principles with strategic planning tools to assess viable pathways for halal tourism development.

Practical Applications: The findings provide actionable strategies for policymakers and local communities, including the promotion of halal tourism, empowerment of Sharia-based micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), improvement of tourism infrastructure, digitalization of promotional efforts, and utilization of Sharia finance for investment. These measures are expected to enhance tourism competitiveness while fostering inclusive economic growth aligned with Islamic values.

Conclusion: The study concludes that integrating Sharia economic principles into tourism development offers a sustainable and ethically grounded approach to regional progress in Jember Regency. By leveraging its unique potentials through halal tourism and Islamic financial mechanisms, the region can achieve not only economic resilience but also social inclusivity, contributing to a broader understanding of faith-based sustainable development in Indonesia's local economies.



Introduction

Indonesia is the largest island country in the world with an area stretching from Sumatra to Papua. This country is rich in various natural resources, biodiversity, historical sites, traditions, and arts and culture. Because it is located on the equator, Indonesia has a tropical climate that produces many types of amazing plants and animals. This diversity is an attraction for the people of Indonesia and also the whole world. The strong culture and friendliness of its people are many of the things that make Indonesia widely known. Every region in Indonesia has potential that can continue to be improved. The various potential natural resources owned by Indonesia, in the end the government encourages the development of tourism areas. The government is trying to develop this sector, in the development of existing tourism facilities and infrastructure and the development of new tourist attractions. The development of tourism potential in each region must be increased in order to attract more local and foreign tourist visits. Tourism is a significant source of income to improve the welfare of the surrounding community.

Tourism is one way of utilizing natural resources that can generate high economic for a region by transforming natural resources into attractive tourist attractions for local and foreign visitors. According to Siswanto and Moeljadi (2015), "The involvement of local communities in the development of ecotourism is a prerequisite for the success of sustainable tourism development" (p. 190). This shows that in order to achieve sustainable development goals, it is very important to involve the community in every step of tourism development. One of the tourism and cultural institutions in Jember aims to increase regional income and preserve existing culture. In addition to providing economic benefits, tourism can also foster a sense of pride in Jember Regency, so that people become more concerned about the environment they utilize. Tourism is of interest to everyone because it can eliminate boredom, stimulate creativity, and increase individual productivity.

This research was conducted in an effort to analyze the development strategy of potential tourism sites in Jember Regency, East Java. Although many studies discuss tourism development strategies, this study focuses on efforts to analyze the right strategy that can be used by the Jember Regency Government to focus on tourism development. The Tourism and Culture Office in Jember Regency is a government agency located in East Java Province. This institution has several fields, including Tourism Product Development, Tourism Marketing and Cooperation, and Culture. In each of these fields, it is led by a head of field (kabid) who is responsible for guiding employees to work well and in accordance with the tasks given. Performance evaluation can be done based on the success of employees in carrying out their duties.

In accordance with the regulation on regional autonomy stated in Law Number 22 of 1999 which was later amended to Law Number 32 of 2004, regional governments have the authority to regulate and handle their own government affairs. This authority aims to accelerate change for the welfare of the community through improving the quality of services that also involve community participation. With regional autonomy, each region can explore the potential that can be developed so that progress in each region can increase rapidly. There are various sectors that can be developed, such as trade, services, agriculture, tourism, and others. Researchers are more interested in the tourism sector, because Jember Regency has great potential in this field for further development.

The tourism sector allows for business development because of the many tourism potentials and support from the local government through regulations. According to one of the tourism coordinators of Jember Regency, tourism is dynamic, where there will be times when visitors feel bored with the existing conditions, which of course affects the level of tourist visits to certain locations, thus having a direct impact on the Regional Original Income from the tourism sector. According to the study of Paco & Martinho (2017), tourism is a large system that includes a series of complex activities consisting of various components such as economic, political, social, cultural, and ecological. This is reinforced by Lahap et al. (2016),

which states that tourism analysis cannot be separated from other systems. The success of tourism development in Jember Regency requires collaboration between the government, community, and private sector. Without the support of these three components, tourism business activities cannot run well, and the expansion and development of tourism carried out only by the government will fail to achieve optimal performance.

Method

The implementation of this research begins with finding important elements for the development of tourist destinations in Jember Regency. After that, the next stage is to examine the profile and evaluate the local community's access control over the existing potential. Observations in this study were conducted through qualitative descriptive research methods. The analysis was carried out by examining the conditions of the research subjects descriptively, namely by providing explanations, understandings, or information about the conditions of the location being studied. Data collection was carried out through observation and interview methods with respondents selected according to predetermined criteria. The data collection process is based on various previous studies that are relevant to explaining the indicators of tourist destination development strategies in Jember Regency.

The location of this research is at the Jember Regency Tourism and Culture Office. Jember Regency has many tourist destinations, and researchers want to collect data from the location of the object being studied to understand the actual situation or phenomenon. Tourism in Jember Regency has great potential to be developed. In terms of location, time, and cost, everything is relatively easier to access, making it easier to collect data. Researchers believe that the location holds important information needed in research and data analysis. To obtain data that is in accordance with the focus of this study, researchers conducted interviews, observations, and documentation. Furthermore, data collected in the field were analyzed using the interactive analysis method from Miles Hubberman, which requires researchers to collect data, edit data, present data, and draw conclusions.

Result

Jember Regency, located in East Java, has many potential places to be made into tourism, including nature, culture, and religious tourism. There are several tourist attractions such as Watu Ulo, Kebon Agung, and Puncak Rembangan. However, to make this sector grow well and in accordance with Islamic economic principles, a strategy based on sharia values is needed.

The development of Jember Regency tourism with a sharia economic approach is an important step to create a sustainable, fair industry that prioritizes community welfare. By emphasizing halal tourism, empowering sharia MSMEs, investment based on Islamic finance, improving human resources, and promoting through digitalization, Jember can become a superior tourist destination both domestically and abroad. The implementation of this strategy will not only improve the tourism sector, but also encourage regional economic growth that is more inclusive and based on Islamic values.

The Jember Regency Tourism and Culture Office is one of the government institutions in East Java Province. This office has several fields, namely Tourism Product Development, Marketing and Tourism Cooperation, and Culture. Each field is led by a head of field (kabid) who is tasked with directing employees to carry out their duties properly. Performance assessments are carried out based on the success of employees in carrying out these tasks.

Discussion

To formulate techniques in developing tourism potential in Jember Regency, East Java, it is very important to establish a methodology for developing tourism strategies. This involves considering internal and external elements. Internal elements include the strengths and

weaknesses. Meanwhile, external factors can be opportunities and threats. By conducting a SWOT analysis, we can find the characteristics needed to develop tourism potential in Jember Regency, East Java.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Tourism Place Development Strategy in Jember Regency

External Factors/ Internal Factors	Strength	Weakness
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are 65 tourist attractions in Jember Regency which offer various kinds of tourist attractions. 2. Transportation to tourist destinations is very convenient. Tourists can choose public transportation and private transportation so that accessibility is affordable. 3. Entrance tickets for tourists at quite affordable prices so as to maintain tourists' purchasing power. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are tourist attractions that are not yet included in the BUMDes management list. 2. Tourism facilities and infrastructure are more concentrated in the city center.
Opportunities	S&O Strategy	W&O Strategy
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of social media and the internet for promotional purposes. 2. The increasing needs of society position tourism as a means of fulfilling these needs. 3. Jember Regency's location is very strategic because it is close to the airport, station and terminal. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruiting experts to promote tourism in Jember Regency through social media and websites. 2. Offering holiday packages with free transportation and tourism ticket packages. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing the number of tourist attractions with the concept 2. Develop supporting facilities and infrastructure.
Threat	S&T Strategy	W&T Strategy
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural disasters can damage tourist attractions. 2. Lack of cultural actors. 3. Another area that is improving tourist attractions to attract tourists. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing tourism spots in Jember Regency based on regional arts. 2. Collaborating with other sectors. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate and provide insight or rescue boards when natural disasters occur. 2. Strengthening in guiding residents around tourist attractions.

Source: Author's Work, 2025.

It can be seen from the form of the description above in improving tourism in Jember Regency based on the SWOT analysis in table 1, we can design ways to improve tourist attractions in Jember Regency. There are various strategies that can be described from table 1 above, including:

- S&O strategy is a way to utilize existing advantages to explore opportunities in the external environment. In this approach, it can also be done by using S&O Strategy to develop tourist destinations in Jember Regency. For example, by recruiting experts to promote tourism on social media and websites, and offering vacation packages that provide free transportation and free tourist tickets.
- S&T strategy is a way to use existing strengths in facing challenges. As well as for the development of tourist attractions in Jember Regency, this S&T strategy can also be applied by developing regional art-based tourist attractions and establishing cooperation with other sectors.
- The W&O strategy can be used to reduce existing weaknesses by utilizing opportunities. In addition, in this context, the W&O strategy for developing tourism in Jember Regency can also involve adding more destinations with new concepts and developing supporting facilities and infrastructure.

The W&T strategy focuses on reducing weaknesses by avoiding threats. For the development of tourism in Jember Regency, this W&T strategy can also be implemented through education and providing information on disaster rescue measures, as well as strengthening guidance for the community around the tourist spot.

Conclusion

The strategy for developing tourism destinations in Jember Regency begins with fostering communities around tourist destinations by establishing Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) that manage the tourist destinations as themes and tourist objects. Furthermore, to improve the quality of tourism products such as souvenirs as regional characteristics produced by communities around tourism through self-financing programs. Furthermore, organizing tourism activities that are integrated with other sectors such as transportation, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), trade and services, and health. This study has limitations in the scope or coverage of the research area. This research can be developed into other research with a wider scope, namely the East Java region.

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