

Social Infrastructure and Halal Tourism Village: A Study on Communities Around Lon Malang Beach, Madura

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Abstract

By optimizing social infrastructure, it is expected that changes will occur in the community. The aim of this research is to provide an important input regarding tourism development, especially halal tourism villages in Sampang Regency through optimizing social infrastructure in the community around Lon Malang Beach, Sampang Regency. One of the expected changes is the development of Bira Tengah Village as a halal tourism village. This research was conducted in Bira Tengah Village, Sokobanah District, Sampang Regency. The research employed a qualitative case study method. The research participants (IM, N, and MA) were selected according to the following criteria: 1) Residents of Bira Tengah Village; 2) Employed as tourism actors for at least one year. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling methods. The data were collected through observations and interviews. The data then were analyzed by using the Miles & Huberman interactive model, starting with data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying. The validity of the data was assessed by testing its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This research found 3 themes, including: (a) The beginning of Lon Malang Beach; (b) Suboptimal social infrastructure; and (c) Limited knowledge about halal tourism villages. Suggestions for tourism stakeholders at Lon Malang Beach, including the Sampang Regency Government and the Sampang Regency Culture and Tourism Office, are expected to promote the development of halal tourism in Bira Tengah Village, Sokobanah District, Sampang Regency.

Keywords: halal tourism village; Lon Malang beach; social infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

Background

The main foundation for a country to be called a developed or developing

country, can be seen from its infrastructure development. It can be said that infrastructure development is the driving force of a country's economy. However, the success of development itself is not only seen from

the strength of physical infrastructure but also social infrastructure. According to Zaelany (2022) social infrastructure is supported by the three big pillars: connectivity, sharing and collaboration.

Infrastructure development in Indonesia has evolved from the era of President Soekarno's to the present. In the present era of globalization, development in every sector is taking place very rapidly, including in the social and economic sectors. In addition, infrastructure development is also very necessary so that the process of developing human resources in an area can run well. The development process accompanied by rapid technological developments requires a truly appropriate approach in human resource development programs (Kurniadi in Annaafi, 2020).

As explained previously, the development of social infrastructure can drive a

country's economy. One of them is by optimizing the three big pillars of social infrastructure in the tourism sector. In Madura, especially Sampang Regency, the tourist attraction is Lon Malang Beach which is located in Sokobanah District. The distance to Lon Malang Beach is about 30 minutes from Bangkalan Regency. Initially, Lon Malang Beach did not have the stunning views it boasts today. In the past, Lon Malang Beach was one of the neglected coastal areas. Previously, Lon Malang Beach was overgrown with shrubs until it was finally opened as a tourist attraction. The bushes were cleaned and replaced with Pine Shrimp trees, like those planted in Lombang Beach, Sumenep (Astuti & Rosyadi, 2021). Currently, Lon Malang Beach is one of the main tourist attractions in Sampang Regency.



Figure 1. View of Lon Malang Beach
(Source: Private Collection (September 10, 2022))

According to Muliawan (in Hayat & Zaini, 2018) a tourist village is a community that showcases unique potential and

attractions, managed and presented in an appealing and natural manner. This approach prepares the village to welcome

tourist, ultimately enhancing the welfare of the local community. Village tourism is a form of community-based tourism that is being considered as an alternative for achieving sustainable tourism. This approach emphasizes the active involvement and role of local communities in tourism development in the region (Utami, et al in Andryani et al., 2023).

In order to attract tourists to visit certain tourism villages, actors in the world of tourism have come up with the concept of halal tourism, where the tourists who visit their villages are Muslim tourists. Thus, the concept of the tourism village is a halal tourism village. To establish Indonesia as the world's halal tourism mecca, several strategies can be implemented, a development strategy that refers to fulfilling the tourism competitiveness index as the main indicator is needed, including improving infrastructure, promotion, preparing human resources, and increasing the capacity of tourism business actors (Lubis et al., 2023).

The role of the government, religious leaders and business actors is very influential in developing this destination

into a leading destination in Sampang Regency, especially in Madura Island. Quoted from the media publication Radar Madura, Aji Waluyo, Head of Disporabudpar Sampang said that there had been an agreement with religious leaders and the local community to eliminate "all activities that are not Islamic" (Hariyanto in Putri & Qadariah, 2021).

An example includes food and drink, which must adhere to halal guidelines. Food and drinks are essential for tourists, who can find nearby restaurants to meet their needs. For Muslim tourists, it sometimes raises concerns regarding halal food and drinks. This means that they are worried about getting food and drinks that are not halal, so they need to guarantee that the food and drinks they consume are halal (Anugrah et al., 2017; Heriani et al., 2018).

Referring to the description above, efforts need to be made to develop the tourism village at Lon Malang Beach, Sampang Regency, into a halal tourism village. One effort that can be made is to optimize the social infrastructure (connectivity, sharing, and cooperation).



Figure 2. Horse Riding and ATV at Lon Malang Beach
(Source: Private Collection (September 10, 2022))

In optimizing social infrastructure, there needs to be cooperation between stakeholders and the community. A number of data show that collaboration

between stakeholders and the community is able to develop tourism in the area (Kurniawati et al., 2022; Masrurun & Nastiti, 2023).

This research will answer the question, does social infrastructure have a role in developing halal tourism villages? The general aim of this research is to provide a comprehensive picture of the development of halal tourism villages on Lon Beach, Malang, Sampang Regency through optimizing social infrastructure.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. In the realm of methodology, a case study is known as a study that is comprehensive, intense, detailed, and in-depth and is more directed as an effort to examine contemporary, contemporary problems or phenomena (Aziz, 2003).

The research was conducted in Bira Tengah Village, Sokobanah District, Sampang Regency. This location was chosen to conduct the research because this village is the location of Lon Malang Beach. The research participants (IM, N, and MA) were selected according to the following criteria: 1) Residents of Bira Tengah Village; 2) Employed as tourism actors for at least one year.

The data collection techniques were observation and interviews. In collecting the data triangulation, defined as a data collection technique that combines various data collection techniques and existing data sources, was employed to test the credibility of the data.

Furthermore, the data analysis was carried out by using the interactive model of Miles & Huberman started by data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusions drawing/verifying. The following figure illustrates the data analysis technique.

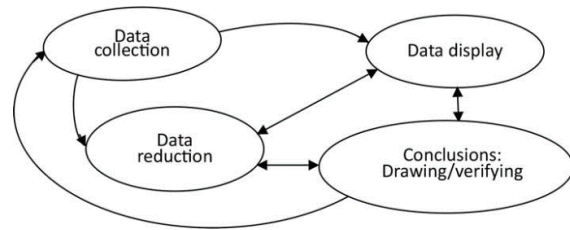


Figure 3. The interactive model of Miles & Huberman (Source: Satori & Komariah, 2017)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For an area or region to be said to be a tourism village, it must have certain criteria, including (Muliawan in Hayat & Zaini, 2018): (1) Having unique potential and distinctive tourist attraction, encompassing both the physical features of the rural natural environment and the social and cultural life of the community; (2) Having the support and readiness of tourism support facilities related to rural tourism activities, which may include: accommodation/lodging, community interaction spaces with tourists/guests, or other supporting facilities; (3) Engaging with the market through interactions with tourists, as seen in their visits to the village; and (4) Supporting, initiating, and participating in tourism-related activities, the local community is actively involved in the development of the village.

It can be concluded that a tourism village is a village that has a unique tourist attraction, which is managed and packaged in an attractive and natural way by developing tourism support facilities, which are ready to receive and mobilize tourist visits to the village so as to improve the welfare of the village community. In order that tourists are interested in visiting certain tourism villages, actors in the world of tourism have brought up the concept of halal tourism, where the tourists who visit the village are Muslim tourists. Thus, the concept of a tourist village is a halal tourism village.

In this research, the researchers found 3 themes, including: (a) The beginning of Lon Malang Beach; (b) Suboptimal social infrastructure; and (c) Limited knowledge about halal tourism villages. The following is a description of the three themes:

a. The beginning of Lon Malang Beach

Initially, Lon Malang Beach did not have as beautiful a view as it does now. In the past, Lon Malang Beach was one of the coastal areas that was not maintained. Previously, this place was overgrown with bushes until it was finally opened as a tourist attraction. The bushes were cleaned and replaced with Pine Shrimp trees, the same trees as those on Lombang Beach, Sumenep. Within two years, the beach was transformed into the busiest tourist destination in Sampang (Astuti & Rosyadi, 2021). The following is an excerpt from the interview:

"Lon Malang Beach was the first place I visited when I arrived here, right? I was still a village midwife, but still a village midwife... the beach didn't look like that back then. The children often went there. When we relax in the afternoon, we would sit there. People would warn me, saying, 'Don't go there, ma'am, there are a lot of demons, and many dangers', but I enjoyed it there, it was a quiet place with no people. Eventually, the fathers of those children... in short, he became a *klebun* (a village leader) and began developing the area, applying for help to plant cypress trees. A thousand fir trees, were planted, but only a portion of them survived, not many, right? Still, it became lush and beautiful. The young people there engaged in community service and made signs. At that time, there was a 'Lake of Romance'-that's what inspired me.. I happened to be the one who funded it all from scratch, so I started it, but the local youth were the ones creating beautiful signs. Back then, they just wrote 'beach' in slang, but I bought the wood for it.. I used to

get one truckload.. It all started when the father of the children became the village head in 2015.. yes, in 2015, he began with one truckload, around seven hundred to eight hundred pieces of wood, which were cut and made into beautiful things like benches. Eee.. I wonder how many truckloads it took? Maybe around five truckloads" (N051222, lines 53-76).

Based on the description and quotation above, it can be said that Lon Malang Beach used to be neglected. However, since 2015, Lon Malang Beach has begun to improve and has become a reliable tourist destination in Sampang Regency. Moreover, the tours offered now no longer depend solely on the beauty of the beach; they also incorporate culinary tourism (Kholiq, Bawono, & Wahyuni, 2023; Parijatha, Bawono, & Wahyuni, 2023).

The efforts to brand a place by maintaining the nature have been quite a challenge. Likewise, Madura with its beautiful nature makes Madura different and unique from other regions. Branding in Madura tourism thus the tourists get to know Madura and become travel and tourism reference to visit (Harits et. al., 2023).

b. Suboptimal social infrastructure

Social infrastructure is supported by three big pillars: connectivity, sharing and collaboration (Zaelany, 2022). In describing social infrastructure, Zaelany (2022) gave the following example: how can we unite a society that is pluralistic in terms of religion, ethnicity, race, and groups and is spread across various regions separated by seas, mountains, rivers, and other geographical boundaries? The radicalism and intolerance movements that have often occurred so far show how connectivity is a complicated matter. Sharing is an attitude to develop mutual solidarity in society. The willingness to share wealth, knowledge, and opportunities is fundamental. Collaboration or cooperation or known as *gotongroyong* in Indonesian is a word that is often

bandied about, but is difficult to implement. People may appear to be carrying out work together, but if you look closely, they are working individually, weak in coordination and less willing to complement each other.

This research found that the existing social infrastructure was not yet optimal. However, in terms of cooperation, the community around Lon Malang Beach has shown their efforts to mutually cooperate. The following is an excerpt from the interview:

"What's the *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation)? Usually, what kind of pine... collapses..." (IM051222, line 90). "*Gotong royong*, there are also cleaning workers..." (IM051222, line 112).

This was also stated by N (43 years old):

"Tourism in Lon Malang, during the rainy season, usually sees crashing waves, which is part of what has been built. For example, we developed it with funding from me, but the construction was done collectively through community service. Eventually, though, the waves damaged what we built, so we had to clean it up together. We started again to build gazebos and other structures, but the waves would destroy them again. What can we do about community service? It's a geographical issue.. what's the term for that geography? We received assistance from the government, like concrete support, to help prevent erosion, but the implementation was flawed. Their own participation and teamwork have allowed the community to thrive as it is now, even though the natural conditions remain challenging" (N051222, lines 100-113)

c. Limited knowledge about halal tourism

Initially, the use of the word "halal" in the term "halal tourism" became a polemic. The Ministry of Tourism since 2015

has actually reduced the tension, which initially used the term "Sharia Tourism" to become "Halal Tourism", then became "Muslim Friendly Tourism" and shortened to "Friendly Tourism" or "Family Tourism". After using these terms, the Ministry of Tourism then introduced the term Muslim Friendly Tourism (PRM) (Maris, 2019).

It is possible that the use of the term PRM is not synonymous with halal tourism specifically for Muslims, even though there is the word Muslim in the term. This was obtained from an interview with MA (21 years) as follows:

"Eee... in my opinion, halal tourism is all halal in terms of food, so nothing contains lard or anything, dog meat and so on... and there are no alcoholic drinks..." (MA031022, line 64 -67).

"Eee.. in my opinion, halal tourism.. halal tourism villages are the food also didn't contain pork or dog oil, the drinks did not contain alcohol either. The toilets are also separated for men and women..." (MA031022, lines 69-73).

"Eee... in my opinion and my observations here, I think a halal tourist village has been implemented..." (MA031022, lines 76-77).

"I have not found food here that contains lard or other non-halal animals, moreover there are no alcoholic drinks and here the toilets are also separated for men and women..." (MA031022, lines 79-82).

Based on the description and excerpt above, it can be concluded that halal tourism encompasses more than just the avoidance of items prohibited in Islam. It extends to a broader understanding of lifestyle choices and cultural practices that align with Islamic values. As Maris (2019) notes, the use of the term 'PRM' (Perception of Responsible Muslims), serves several important purposes that: (1) It helps

avoid turning halal tourism into a contentious topic that only focuses on surface-level issues; (2) The concept of PRM is more about lifestyle choices than it is about religious beliefs; (3) It encompasses two essential elements: the availability of halal culinary options and the provision of worship facilities, such as mosques, prayer rooms, designated Qibla directions, and ablution areas; (4) It recognizes that tourism is fundamentally a service industry; (5) There is a need for effective branding to promote Muslim-friendly tourism; and (6) Importantly, even if a place is certified halal, non-Muslim travelers are still welcome to visit.

CONCLUSION

For Lon Malang Beach tourism, individuals and stakeholders, including the Sampang Regency Government and the Sampang Regency Culture and Tourism Office, it is expected that the findings of this research can lead to the development of halal tourism in Bira Tengah Village, Sokobanah District, Sampang Regency through optimizing social infrastructure.

This optimization needs to be done especially because this village is already known as a village that has beautiful white sandy beaches. Therefore, with the potential it already has, these two government agencies can jointly develop halal tourism in Bira Tengah Village, Sokobanah District, Sampang Regency.

For future researchers who wish to conduct similar research, it is recommended to collect data in the three other districts in Madura apart from Sampang Regency, namely Bangkalan Regency, Pamekasan Regency and Sumenep Regency. This data is essential for enhancing the literature on beaches in Madura, as the three other districts also feature unique beaches that differ from those in other regions.

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