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Implementing Halal Tourism in Mount Rinjani National Park: An Analysis of Sembalun and Torean Trekking Routes

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Abstract: *This study examines the implementation of halal tourism within Mount Rinjani National Park, focusing on the Sembalun and Torean trekking routes. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered through direct observations and interviews with local residents and tourists. Data analysis was conducted based on the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2019 framework, categorizing needs into "need to have," "good to have," and "nice to have." Findings indicate that essential requirements (need to have), such as halal food options and worship facilities, are generally met, although some infrastructural improvements remain necessary. The good to have and nice to have categories reveal potential areas for further enhancement, particularly in providing more nuanced services aligned with Sharia principles. The study recommends bolstering infrastructure and fostering collaboration among governmental bodies, Mount Rinjani National Park management, and local communities to advance sustainable halal tourism in the region.*

INTRODUCTION

According to The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections 2010-2050 (Pew Research Center, 2015), Islam is the fastest-growing religion worldwide, with its followers estimated to reach 2.7 billion by 2050. This rapid growth inherently influences the diverse needs of Muslims globally, including an increased demand for halal tourism options (Nurozi, 2021). Forecasts from the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI, 2019) indicate that the number of Muslim travelers worldwide is expected to reach 230 million by 2030.

Data from Indonesia's Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024) show that International tourist arrivals in January 2024 amounted to 927.75 thousand visits, reflecting an increase of 16.19% from the previous year. This upward trend is anticipated to positively impact Indonesia's halal tourism industry, driving improvements in facilities that align with Sharia principles. These enhancements aim not only to attract more visitors but also to strengthen Indonesia's position as a leading global halal tourism destination.

The development of halal tourism has evolved rapidly, establishing itself as a key sector in multiple countries and garnering significant research interest (Rukiah, 2023). Research by

Rasul (2019) highlights halal tourism's potential to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, Sutono (2023) notes that the tourism sector can enhance foreign exchange, productivity, economic growth, and employment rates while drawing increased investment. Since 2015, Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism has designated West Nusa Tenggara Province (NTB) as a halal tourism destination in Indonesia (Fahham, 2017). In recognition of this, NTB received the "Best Halal Tourism Destination" award at the 2016 World Halal Tourism Awards in Dubai.

Mount Rinjani National Park, a UNESCO-designated Global Geopark, is one of Indonesia's prominent destinations, integrating elements of geo-culinary, geo-homestay, geo-souvenir, and geo-tourism. The region thus holds significant potential for local economic empowerment. In line with Provincial Regulation No. 2 of 2016, NTB's halal tourism development aims to provide infrastructure and services that comply with Sharia standards. However, the potential in the Sembalun area remains underdeveloped, hindered primarily by limited active community participation and support from related institutions.

Halal tourism has become an essential component in fulfilling Muslims' spiritual and social needs. This concept not only involves providing services adhering to Sharia principles, such as halal food and access to worship facilities (Nassar, 2015), but also caters to the desire of Muslim tourists for experiences that support their religious practices. Facilities and Sharia-compliant services designed to fulfill the spiritual needs of Muslim tourists contribute to their satisfaction. This satisfaction not only enhances the quality of their travel experience but also encourages repeat visits (Fleischer, 2000). The Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI, 2019) identifies Muslim tourist needs across three categories: need to have, good to have, and nice to have. In line with the GMTI standards, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) have agreed upon these criteria to inform the 2019-2024 Islamic Economy Mas-terplan for Indonesia (Yuanita, 2018). Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the fulfillment of Muslim tourists' needs in halal tourism at Mount Rinjani National Park based on these GMTI categories. The findings of this study are expected to benefit all stakeholders involved in the development of the halal tourism sector in West Nusa Tenggara Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa No. 108 of 2016, tourism is defined as a journey undertaken by individuals or groups visiting specific locations for recreation, personal growth, or learning about unique attractions. Halal tourism is further categorized as tourism that adheres to Sharia principles. A Sharia tourism destination is a geographical area within one or more administrative regions that features attractions, places of worship, public facilities, tourism amenities, accessibility, and a community that collectively supports the practice of Sharia-compliant tourism (Indonesia Patent No. DSN-MUI Fatwa No. 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016, 2016).

Previous studies indicate that halal tourism refers to travel activities undertaken by Muslim tourists (Herianingrum, 2020). Battour (2016) describes halal tourism as all tourism activities that align with Islamic values, thereby promoting an environment that upholds Sharia laws (Jafar & Scott, 2014). While several sources equate halal tourism with Islamic values, it is distinct from Islamic tourism. According to Sánchez (2020), Islamic tourism is intended for ritual journeys, such as pilgrimage tourism for Hajj or Umrah, while halal tourism is oriented towards recreational activities supported by services and facilities that facilitate worship. The demand for worship facilities and services is further categorized within the Global Muslim Travel Index

(GMTI), which classifies halal tourism needs based on belief-driven criteria (CrescentRating, 2019).

The GMTI (2019) defines three priority-based categories of halal tourism needs. The first, Need to Have, includes essential, fundamental requirements that must be pro-vided by halal tourism services and facilities. These necessities include halal food, worship facilities, an Islamophobia-free environment to ensure safety, and water-based sanitation facilities essential for Muslim travelers.

The second category, Good to Have, encompasses needs that are not obligatory but enhance the experience if available. These include social impact improvements for the local community, opportunities for interaction with local residents, and services tai-lored to specific needs during the holy month of Ramadan.

The third category, Nice to Have, refers to needs that are not critical but add value if provided (Herianingrum, 2020). This includes the absence of prohibited services and products and gender-segregated facilities for men and women, such as beauty salons, gyms, and swimming pools. As such, the development of halal tourism in Indonesia, aligned with GMTI standards, should ideally implement these Muslim tourist require-ments across designated halal tourism destinations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an indepth understanding of the experiences of tourists and local residents regarding the implementation of halal tourism in Mount Rinjani National Park. According to Sugiyono (2017), descriptive qualitative research aims to portray the characteristics of the research subject in detail without generalizing the findings. This approach is appropriate for studies focusing on social phenomena in the field, especially in exploring human-environment inter-actions. Moleong (2017) adds that this approach aids in comprehending the subjective perceptions of respondents directly involved in a phenomenon, thus providing a holis-tic explanation of the data collected.

Primary data collection involved direct observation in the study area, specifically along the Sembalun and Torean trekking routes and Segara Anak Lake. Observations were conducted over five days, focusing on interactions among tourists, porters, and guides within the halal tourism framework. Spradley (1980) explains that participant observation enables researchers to engage directly and observe behavior and social contexts authentically (Participant Observation). This observation method offers valuable in-sights into how the local community and tourists adapt to and respond to rules and facilities supporting halal tourism in the area.

In addition to observation, interviews were conducted to gather firsthand information from informants selected through purposive sampling. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling is highly suitable for qualitative studies requiring specific insights from individuals with relevant characteristics (Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods). Interviews were conducted with local residents working as guides and por-ters, as well as Muslim tourists who had traveled through the area. Respondents were chosen for their deep understanding of the local context and Muslim tourists' needs, allowing for the collection of rich, pertinent data aligned with the research focus.

To supplement the primary data, this study also gathered secondary data through literature reviews and documentation of policies related to halal tourism in Mount Rinjani National Park. Secondary data sources included government reports, legislation, regional regulations, and available tourism statistics. Creswell (2018) states that secondary data collection is essential in qualitative research for understanding the policy context and broader perspectives underlying the

phenomenon under study. Additionally, Yin (2018) highlights that secondary data often complements primary data, providing researchers with a more comprehensive perspective.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on direct observations conducted along the Sembalun, Segara Anak Lake, and Torean trekking routes within Mount Rinjani National Park, the findings are analyzed using the categories defined in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2019: Need to Have, Good to Have, and Nice to Have.

Table 1. Result of Observation

Category	Muslim Needed	Achievability	Detail Information
Need to Have	Halal Food	√	
	Worship Facilities	√	
	Water-Based Toilets	√	Not Fully Availabel
	Safety (No Ethnic or Religious Threats)	√	
Good to Have	Social Impact	√	
	Ramadan Services	-	
	Interaction with Local Residents	√	
Nice to Have	Separate Recreational Facilities	-	
	Absence of Haram Product Services	-	

The GMTI 2019 prioritizes the Need to Have category as the most fundamental requirements for halal tourism services. Observations reveal that visitors can easily access halal food and beverages in the Mount Rinjani National Park, particularly along the Sembalun, Pelawangan, Segara Anak Lake, and Torean routes. This accessibility is facilitated by the predominantly Muslim local population, which ensures that food and beverages provided by vendors are halal. However, few food stalls or restaurants possess official halal certification. Studies by Akim (2018) and Oemar (2022) indicate that understanding the importance of halal certification remains limited among small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which impacts their motivation to obtain it. A 2023 report from the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) confirms that only 2.9 million SMEs, representing less than 5% of all SMEs in Indonesia, have received halal certification. Thus, although halal food needs are met, the certification of restaurants and products still presents a challenge.

Regarding worship facilities, visitors can find simple yet accessible worship spaces. Local settlements in Sembalun provide access to mosques and prayer rooms. Along the Rinjani trekking routes, such as at Post 2, facilities like gazebos, toilets, and flowing water support worship needs. Additional prayer facilities are available at Segara Anak Lake, a destination for Rinjani climbers, though existing toilet facilities are largely non-functional, with visitors relying on lake water for purification. This situation underscores the need for government efforts to improve the quality of worship and restroom facilities, upholding halal tourism principles as outlined in West Nusa Tenggara Regional Regulation No. 2 of 2016, which mandates separate ablution facilities for men and women, as well as accessible prayer spaces and gender-segregated restrooms.

Regarding safety from SARA (ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup relations) threats, observations confirm a secure environment free from religious discrimination. Lombok Island,

known as the "island of a thousand mosques," is predominantly Muslim, minimizing the risk of SARA-related threats. This safe environment extends to non-Muslim visitors, with foreign tourists coexisting peacefully with the local Muslim community. This inclusivity aligns with the Islamic principle of *rahmatan lil'alamin*, fostering mutual respect and security for diverse visitors.

The Good to Have category includes desirable but non-essential elements that contribute to a conducive halal tourism environment. Observations along the Sembalun-Torean routes indicate a positive social impact on local residents, who benefit from the increased employment opportunities in the tourism industries, such as mountain porters, drivers, guides, local vendors, and rental services. Data from the Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation (Ministry of Environment and Forestry, 2022) highlights that the growth in tourist visits to Mount Rinjani National Park has directly contributed to increased economic income for the surrounding communities. Similarly, research conducted by Al-Azhar University and the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) in 2024 shows that Rinjani Geopark tourism significantly impacts local economic growth (Kharirıyatun, 2024). Thus, in addition to the social impact, local interactions are well-established between tourists and residents.

Special Ramadan services, however, have yet to be implemented. Services within the Rinjani Geopark area operate as usual, except during January, February, and March, when the Rinjani trekking routes are closed for ecosystem restoration and weather safety precautions. These closures are not related to Ramadan and reflect a gap in specific services for Muslim visitors during the holy month.

The GMTI (2019) defines the Nice to Have category as requirements that align with faith values. While these services are not a primary necessity, they add value by upholding religious practices and beliefs. Observations indicate that gender-segregated facilities, though beneficial, are not feasible within the open terrain of Mount Rinjani due to the environmental risks involved. Nabila (2024) references QS. Al-Qasas, verses 23 to 25, noting that interactions between men and women are permissible under certain conditions, such as safety concerns or when a mahram (legal guardian) is present. Rohman (2018) also suggests that mixed-gender interactions involving three or more people are generally accepted.

Additionally, the availability of non-halal products remains a challenge. Field observations revealed the sale of low-alcohol beverages, particularly catering to international tourists. Interviews with a 13-year veteran porter, Agus (2024), confirm that alcoholic beverages are sold at premium prices due to high demand from foreign visitors. This issue aligns with findings from Yusuf (2021), which documented numerous alcoholic beverage containers found along Rinjani trails. Although the local government has enforced a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) prohibiting alcohol in Mount Rinjani National Park since 2019, effective halal tourism requires stronger alignment among the regional government, park management, local communities, and tourists to establish a sustainable halal industry that adheres to Sharia standards as outlined in West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Regulation No. 2 of 2016 on halal tourism.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the implementation of halal tourism in Mount Rinjani National Park largely meets the basic needs of Muslim visitors, including the availability of halal food, prayer facilities, and a secure environment. Nevertheless, certain areas warrant improvement, particularly in optimizing restroom facilities and formalizing halal certification for eateries. Within the good to have category, the interaction between tourists and local residents has demonstrated positive social and economic impacts, although specific services during Ramadan

have not yet been formally integrated. For the nice to have category, findings indicate that gender-segregated facilities and the exclusion of non-halal products are areas that remain largely unaddressed, underscoring the need for greater attention to these aspects. This study advocates for strengthened synergy among government, park management, and local communities to provide halal tourism services that uphold international standards while respecting local cultural values, thereby fostering an inclusive and sustainable tourism experience.

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