

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF HALAL TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN PEKALONGAN, CENTRAL JAVA

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ABSTRACT - Pekalongan City is known for its creative city and religious people, which can be a competitive advantage in developing halal tourism destinations. However, having that alone is insufficient; infrastructure readiness is also crucial. This paper seeks to describe public perceptions of Pekalongan City's readiness to become a halal tourism destination in terms of its infrastructure. Primary data was collected through the random distribution of questionnaires. Using the accidental sampling method, a total of 65 people were selected as a sample. Data was also gathered through interviews with key informants, who were selected using a purposive random sampling method. The criterion is that the informants have visited tourist attractions in Pekalongan City. The secondary data was gathered through a review of books, journal articles, research reports, websites, and other sources pertinent to the research topic. This study reveals that the community has a favorable view of Pekalongan City's tourism infrastructure in terms of attractions, access, environment, and amenities. From this perception, it is concluded that Pekalongan City deserves to be a halal tourism destination. Although a positive impression is made, there is still room for development in areas like worship facilities, public restrooms, tourist attractions' safety and comfort, and more. This study recommends that the local government invest in infrastructure to improve tourism services. A successful regional halal tourism industry will produce a tourist-attractive halal industry. Thus, establishing a good halal tourism destination begins with ensuring the location has the necessary infrastructure in place.

Keywords: halal tourism; tourist destinations; tourism infrastructure; public perception; urban tourism

ABSTRAK – Persepsi tentang Infrastruktur Pariwisata Halal di Pekalongan, Jawa Tengah. Kota Pekalongan dikenal dengan kota kreatif dan masyarakatnya yang agamis yang dapat menjadi keunggulan kompetitif dalam membangun destinasi wisata halal. Akan tetapi, tidak cukup hanya itu, kesiapan infrastruktur juga menjadi bagian yang sangat penting. Tujuan tulisan ini adalah mengeksplorasi persepsi masyarakat tentang kesiapan Kota Pekalongan menjadi destinasi wisata halal, terutama infrastrukturnya. Data primer diperoleh melalui penyebaran kuesioner secara acak kepada 65 responden yang dipilih dengan teknik accidental sampling. Selain itu, data juga diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dengan narasumber yang ditentukan secara purposive sampling dengan kriteria pernah berkunjung ke objek wisata di Kota Pekalongan. Data sekunder diperoleh melalui telaah buku, artikel jurnal, laporan penelitian, website, dan sumber lainnya yang mendukung tema penelitian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat memiliki persepsi yang baik terhadap infrastruktur pariwisata Kota Pekalongan, baik pada komponen atraksi, akses, lingkungan, maupun amenities. Dari persepsi ini diperoleh deskripsi bahwa Kota Pekalongan layak menjadi destinasi pariwisata halal. Meskipun demikian, masih ada ruang perbaikan yang diperlukan, seperti kelayakan fasilitas ibadah, kebersihan toilet, keamanan dan kenyamanan destinasi wisata, dan sebagainya. Kajian ini merekomendasikan agar pemerintah daerah berinvestasi dalam infrastruktur untuk meningkatkan layanan pariwisata. Industri wisata halal daerah yang berhasil akan menghasilkan industri halal yang menarik bagi wisatawan. Oleh karena itu, pemilihan destinasi wisata halal yang baik harus dimulai dengan memastikan adanya infrastruktur yang memadai di lokasi dimaksud.

Kata Kunci: pariwisata halal; destinasi pariwisata; infrastruktur pariwisata; persepsi publik; pariwisata perkotaan

INTRODUCTION

The idea of halal tourism has expanded and developed in various parts of the world today. This business trend has also been adopted by nations with a majority non-Muslim population, such as Japan (Henderson, 2016b), South Korea (Han, Al-Ansi, Olya, & Kim, 2019), and Thailand (Wahidati & Sarinastiti, 2018). For instance, the demand for halal tourism in Thailand is more concentrated on halal lodging, halal cuisine, and spas that cater to Muslim visitors (Chookaew, Charatarawat, Sriprasert, & Nimpaya, 2015). In contrast to Thailand, Russia has seen a rise in halal travel as the country's Muslim population has increased. It is simply that the development must coincide with other elements, such as food, hotels, halal services, Islamic banks, etc (Gabbrakhmanov, 2017). This idea has also been put into practice in Japan (CrescentRating, 2017), South Korea (Han, Al-ansi, Olya, & Kim, 2020), and Singapore (Henderson, 2016a).

To attract visitors from countries with a large Muslim population, they have included amenities like halal food and religious facilities, while also making an effort to accommodate a wider range of visitors. Malaysia (Isa, Chin, & Mohammad, 2016) and Indonesia are among the countries with a majority Muslim population that have developed halal tourism (Jaelani, 2017). In terms of halal tourism, West Nusa Tenggara (Hidayat, Awaludin, & Candra, 2018) and Aceh (Musa et al., 2021) are the most aggressively developing provinces in Indonesia. However, some other areas, including Solo and Banjarmasin (Budiman et al., 2019), have prospects, opportunities, and viability to develop halal tourism (Saeroji, Wijaya, & Wardani, 2018).

Numerous scholars have studied halal tourism from a variety of theoretical perspectives, but discussions of public opinion on the topic remain scarce, particularly in Pekalongan. Research on halal tourism from a variety of vantage points has been done in Indonesia and elsewhere. Some examples include Battour et al. (2018), Jackson (2008), Mahdzar (2018), Rahman et al. (2020b), and Supaijo & Fermansyah (2019). A number of studies have been conducted on a variety of tourism-related topics, including sharia hotels (Mahrnasari et al., 2020; Saad, Ali, & Abdel-Ati, 2014), visiting loyalty (Bazazo et al., 2017), tourist behavior (Huda et al., 2021; Suhaeni et al., 2022; Susminingsih et al., 2022), tourist objects/attractions (Kessler, 2015), tourism prospects (Kian, Chianeh, & Aghdam, 2017; Peristiwo, 2020), and tourism motivation (Pahlufi & Paturusi, 2021).



The studies above are still focused on internal tourism, which has not been linked to public perceptions. The study of perceptions of feasibility is essential because people are users of tourist objects (Isa, Chin, & Mohammad, 2016). The development of halal tourism, seen from public perception, is significant because the tourism business is related to visitor satisfaction (Adirestuty, 2019; Rahman et al., 2019). If a destination can create satisfaction, it will make tourists loyal and return visits (Chiu, Zeng, & Cheng, 2016). Repeated visits will have a good impact on the destination and local government (Rajaratnam, Nair, Pahlevan Sharif, & Munikrishnan, 2015).

Pekalongan is a sacred city (*Kota Santri*) with many Islamic students in local Islamic boarding schools; besides, most of the population in this city is Muslim (Ma'shum, 2017). In addition, in this city, there are many Islamic clerics such as Kyai, Habib, Ulama, and also ustadz. This city also has a variety of exciting tours to visit, such as nature tourism, culinary, religion, et cetera. In 2021, the Batik Museum was visited by 6139 tourists. The number is added more than other tourist attractions, such as water and cultural tourism (BPS, 2021). As an attraction for halal tourism, the city is also often used for local and international religious events, such as the worldwide Ulama meeting organized by *Jam'iyah Ahlit Tariqah Al-Mu'tabarah An-Nahdliyah* (JATMAN), which was attended by Muslim scholars from all over the world (Muiz, 2019). To support the implementation of halal tourism, the local government is revitalizing tourist areas such as the Sapuro Tomb religious tourism (interview with Mayor, 23 March 2021).

Some research results show that Pekalongan deserves to be a halal tourism destination (Nurwilda, 2020 & Ghofur & Ismanto, 2022). This study is critical because the concentration in Indonesia is very high. On several occasions, Indonesia has received awards for its achievements in developing halal tourism. Of all the existing studies, a study on public perceptions of the feasibility of halal tourism infrastructure in Pekalongan City has not been carried out. It even beats some of the first countries to organize halal tourism, such as Malaysia. Due to this condition, Indonesia is increasingly developing halal tourism, such as Aceh (Budiman, Kamal, & Tarlis, 2019) and West Sumatra (Asyari, 2016). If this opportunity is not appropriately used, other countries will take it. Tourism is an effective sector to boost foreign exchange and support the country's economy (Setiawan, 2015). Therefore, Pekalongan can attract tourists and investors, as in Lombok (Firdausi, Marantika, Firdaus, & Sajidah, 2017). Based on the variety of tourism and religious activities in this city, it is possible



to become a Muslim-friendly tourism destination. Pekalongan has several potential-like other cities, such as Solo (Saeroji et al., 2018), Banjarmasin (M. A. Budiman et al., 2019), Pontianak (Amalia, 2018), Lombok (Firdausi et al., 2017), and other cities in Indonesia.

Halal tourism can offer tourists a service that fulfills their religious obligations (Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). Halal tourism does not limit the market but expands the market. The basic concept is the expansion of facilities and services. There is no need to create something new but rather to meet the needs of Muslim tourists with what the industry already has (Laras & Gunawijaya, 2016). According to tourism observer Sapta Nirwandar, halal tourism extends services to travelers who need it, so it tends not to refer to exclusive tourism (Purba, 2019). According to Azuma (Wahidati & Sarinastiti, 2018), halal tourism can be a new concept in the tourism industry that offers packages and tourist destinations designed to serve the needs of Muslim tourists.

The government of Indonesia has made broad efforts to promote the growth of halal tourism. This provides an excellent opportunity for Pekalongan to cultivate halal tourism (Palupi, Romadhon, & Arifan, 2017). To become a halal tourism destination, three characteristics must be present: natural beauty, a Muslim majority, and a distinct culture and religion (Fahham, 2017). Therefore, Pekalongan City, with its unique characteristics, merits the chance to be developed as a halal tourism area (Ismanto, 2019). Pekalongan City is known as a creative city with “Batik” shopping tourism. On the other hand, it is also called a religious city with religious activities and tourism (Ghofur & Ismanto, 2022). These features, have attracted many tourists, both local and international. Therefore, this paper investigates the feasibility of Pekalongan City as a halal tourism destination from a tourist standpoint, utilizing parameters from the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) (CrescentRating, 2020) and Fatwa DSN-MUI No. 108/X/2016 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Sharia-Based Tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theme of halal tourism has been researched by previous researchers with various theories and approaches. A study of the concept has been carried out by Erhan Boğan and Mehmet Sarıışık (2018), Hatem El-Gohary (2016), Geetanjali Ramesh Chandra (2014), Tareq Rasul (2019), Vargas-Sanchez, A.,



& Moral-Moral, M. (2018), Asad Mohsin, Noriah Ramli, and Bader Abdulaziz Alkhulayfi (2016), Samori, Md Salleh, and Khalid (2016), Tetty Yuliaty (2020), Nurul Izzati (2017). The study of development and practice is done by Joan C. Henderson (2010), Erhan Bogan (2020), Nur Sa'adah Muhamad et al. (2019), Asad Mohsin et al. (2010), Fadilah Abd Nordin, Nor Syahirah AmerRahman (2018), and Heriani (2019).

There is no single definition of halal tourism, but various opinions can be summarized that the components of halal tourism consist of attractions, access, and amenities (Yuliani & Riyadi, 2019). However, CrescentRating specifically formulates aspects of halal tourism consisting of access, communication, environment, and service (Mastercard-CrescentRating, 2019). In halal tourism, there may not be unclean food, liquor, immorality, polytheism, or others (Halbase, 2020). Halal tourism provides sharia hotels, sharia financial services, good places of worship, and no hatred of Islam (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Conceptually, tourism must bring economic and social benefits to the community (Hazari & Sgro, 2004; Ibrahim et al., 2021). Likewise, halal tourism must benefit society (Subarkah, 2018). Thus, halal tourism must provide security and comfort for tourists in various aspects, including tourism in urban areas (Rahman, Moghavvemi, Thirumoorthi, & Rahman, 2020; Ibrahim, 2020).

For this reason, this study focuses on public perceptions of its implementation in the regions. According to Chambers (2009), tourism is a system that includes tourists and the services provided (in the form of facilities, attractions, transportation, and accommodation) to satisfy and support their trip. Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral (2019) interprets halal tourism as an effort to consider Islamic values in tourism ranging from accommodation, and restaurants, to tourism activities that constantly refer to Islamic norms (Tourism Review, 2013). Halbase (2015) defines halal tourism as "offering tour packages and destinations that are particularly designed to cater to Muslim considerations and address Muslim needs."

METHODOLOGY

This study falls under the category of field research with a qualitative approach. Pekanbaru was chosen as a research site because it is unique, namely because it is known as the world's creative city and as a religious city with Islamic religious activities. The city's potential as a halal tourism destination has been argued for by a number of researchers in the past (Ismanto, 2019). The



readiness of Pekalongan City to become a halal tourism destination was determined based on tourist perceptions of four tourism aspects: attractions, access, environment, and amenities. Previous researchers have also employed these elements (Andriani, 2015; Budiman, Sadewa, Handayani, Nurzaman, & Hastiadi, 2019; Saeroji, Wijaya, & Wardani, 2018; Surya, 2018).

The feasibility assessment was thoroughly conducted using a combination method. To gather more information about the infrastructure-related topics under investigation, researchers first conducted a survey and then interviews. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with the informants to elicit more information from the respondents. This study employed a random sampling strategy. This study utilized a technique of accidental sampling to select samples from individuals who were most easily located or accessed (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). The distribution of questionnaires yielded information from up to 65 responses (see table 1). Interviews were successfully conducted with five informants who were selected by purposive sampling on the basis of having visited a tourist attraction in Pekalongan.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Aspect	Sub Aspect	Amount
Religion	Islam	65
Age	< 20 years old	10
	21 - 30 years old	15
	31 - 40 years old	17
	> 41 years old	23
Education	High School	25
	Diploma/Graduate	40
Earning	< IDR2 billion	19
	IDR2 - IDR5 billion	30
	> IDR5 billion	16

Sources: Data processed 2022

The data were descriptively analyzed in order to draw broad conclusions. The descriptive-analytical method systematically describes the investigated variables and their relationships. It was accomplished through data collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation (Bowen, 1997). The information was collected using likert scale criteria, with responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (Morrison, 2012). An eligibility ranking is determined by calculating a percentage based on the responses.



RESULT

In general, the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) by Mastercard CrescentRating is used to determine which travel destinations meet the criteria for halal tourism. As guidance for the implementation of Sharia-based tourism, Indonesia refers to Fatwa of DSN-MUI No.108/DSN-MUI/X/2016. (DSN, 2016). To evaluate the viability of a halal tourist destination, four factors are typically considered: attractions, accessibility, amenities, and institutions (Andriani, 2015; Pratiwi, 2016). Meanwhile, MasterCard CrescentRating in the GMTI index, adds environmental aspects (CrescentRating, 2020). These factors are used to measure the public's perception of Pekalongan's viability as a halal tourism destination.

Attraction

Tourist attractions are places, areas, tourist facilities, tourist activities, or parts of certain phenomena that have certain qualities. These are things that can be seen, experienced, or enjoyed by tourists in the area of a tourist destination (Surya, 2018). The tourist destinations' uniqueness influences the desire to visit.

Table 1. Data of Attraction

Question/Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The description of the tourist attraction is explained on the website	23%	49%	25%	2%	2%
I feel treated well by the tour manager	25%	40%	32%	3%	0%
I feel comfortable with people's welcome	23%	48%	26%	3%	0%
The attractions that I visited have a uniqueness that is interesting to visit	28%	48%	23%	2%	0%
The cleanliness of the tourist attraction is always maintained	25%	29%	25%	17%	5%
Total Average	24.8%	42.8%	26.2%	5.4%	1.4%

Source: Processed Data (2021)

Table 1 displays the opinions of visitors about attractions, with which as many as 24.8% of respondents strongly agreed and 42.8% agreed. According to this data, Pekalongan has a high tourist attraction. With the presence of amenities like sharia hotels, sharia restaurants, and attractions like sharia-based attractions based on long-established local culture, the city of Pekalongan has



a significant opportunity to develop into a hub for halal tourism (Saeroji et al., 2018).

To further investigate this result, the researcher conducted interviews with multiple sources. The researcher conducted an interview with informant 1 (age 25), who had been to Pasir Kencana Beach and Mangrove Tourism. He mentioned something interesting about the Pasir Kencana Beach tourist attraction, which he described as a nice place that was rarely cleaned. He also wants to return to enjoy it again on another occasion, as there is not enough time now due to the tidal flood.

Another opinion was conveyed by informant 2 (age, 23), a resident of Pekalongan City who has been to Bahari Beach, Pasir Kencana, Mangrove, and Pekalongan City Square, who expressed her opinion:

“ ... The attractions in Pekalongan City are pretty interesting, such as the *Alun-Alun* visitors can take selfies, and play with children, some hold traditional game events to reduce people playing with gadgets. For beach tourism, I want to go back there again to refresh.”

Informant 3 (age 45), a Kendal resident, expressed a different opinion as follows:

“ ... Pekalongan tourism is not interesting. There is nothing special. It is normal if there are only waves on the beach. In the museum visitors only sees the past and present batik. That is it”.

It appears from the above that Pekalongan City has a tourist attraction, despite the fact that some visitors may have a different opinion. Natural tourism in the form of Pasir Kencana Beach, Boom Beach, Bahari Beach, and Mangrove Forests has tourist attractions; all that is needed are supporting facilities.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a factor that demonstrates how simple it is for tourists to travel to destinations. According to Mason and Poerwanto (Surya, 2018), accessibility refers to the ease of gaining access to or reaching tourist destinations such as tourism organizations (travel agents). This case involves transportation conditions that facilitate tourism-related activities. In this study, respondents are asked questions via a questionnaire, which are then elaborated upon through



interviews with the informants. The obtained data regarding this aspect of accessibility are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Data of Accessibility

Question/Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Public transportation to get to tourist objects is easy	28%	38%	12%	17%	5%
The condition of the road to the tourist attraction is good	26%	31%	28%	15%	0%
Directions to attractions are clear	29%	55%	8%	6%	2%
Tourist objects are clearly explained	25%	55%	15%	5%	0%
I'm easy to communicate with the tour manager	22%	29%	32%	3%	14%
I can easily communicate with other parties from tourist sites	18%	37%	40%	5%	0%
Total Average	24.6%	40.8%	22.5%	8.5%	3.5%

Source: Processed Data (2021)

According to Table 2, 40.8% of respondents "agree" that tourism accessibility in Pekalongan City is good, while 24.6% of respondents "strongly agree" that tourism in Pekalongan City is easily accessible. This information demonstrates that the majority of Pekalongan City's tourist attractions are accessible. According to Buhalis (in Andriani, 2015), accessibility is the capacity to reach a location via a variety of transportation methods. The problem of distance and time is one of the factors that influences tourists to travel, so tourism activities are dependent on accessibility.

The following are the results of interviews with several sources. The interviewee, 36-year-old informant from Semarang, stated that it is easy to reach the tourist attractions in Pekalongan City using both public transportation and private vehicles. Another interviewee from Pekalongan Regency, Nasrullah, expressed the same viewpoint.

Another interviewee, informant 2 (age 25), expressed the following opinion:

"...How to get there, to tourist attractions, is easy if you use a private vehicle. Public transportation is also possible because the road is good. The directions to get there are quite easy. However, for those who have not been there, it is a bit difficult."



Informant 3 (age 34), a resident of Pekalongan City, expressed the following opinion, which is essentially the same:

“... I think it is easy to reach tourist sites. Directions to the location are quite clear because there are directions on the road. Public transportation can also, the road is not narrow. It is easy to get public transportation, such as *angkot*.”

Regarding this aspect of access, informan 4 stated as follows:

“... access to beach tourist sites and museums is good, and easy to reach, such as Boom Beach is good, as long as it does not flood. Because there is a google map, it is made easy. The signboard on the street is not clear to outsiders.”

On the basis of the preceding description, it is reasonable to infer that Pekalongan City's tourism accessibility has a positive rating. Just a few things need to be addressed by the authorities in order to improve their existence.

Environment

This environmental aspect of tourism provides security and comfort in tourist destinations (CrescentRating, 2020). With a favorable environment, tourists will be assured of their safety and comfort, which is likely to affect their satisfaction and visit frequency (Aunalal, 2017). The distribution of questionnaires to respondents yielded the following responses:

Table 3. The Data of Environment

Question/Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel safe at tourist sites	25%	42%	29%	3%	2%
Security personnel work optimally at tourist sites	23%	31%	35%	9%	2%
I feel comfortable being in a tourist location	18%	57%	23%	2%	0%
I feel safe and comfortable when staying in Pekalongan City	17%	43%	39%	0%	0%
Total Average	20,75%	43%	31,5%	3,5%	1%

Source: Processed Data (2021)

As shown in Table 3, 43% of respondents "agree," and 20.75% "strongly agree" with the provided statements. According to the author, this condition does not



adequately describe Pekalongan City as a safe and comfortable tourist destination.

According to informant 1, when it comes to security at tourist attractions, tourists feel free to do whatever they want while also feeling safe and comfortable, despite the absence of security officers. According to informant 2, the issue of security is refocused on the tourist. However, security officers are required in coastal tourism to prevent accidents such as a tourist being dragged by waves.

According to informant 3, an academician, stated the following:

“ ... In terms of security, safe both at the location. There needs to be a security guard. There is already a *Satpol PP* operation against dating couples. Security against tourist accidents is relatively rare because the beach is gently sloping.”

The results of interviews with multiple respondents regarding Pekalongan's readiness to become a halal tourist destination demonstrate a number of facts. Regarding the ease of access for tourists to locate tourist attractions in Pekalongan, the locations are typically straightforward to locate. This is because, in the modern era, it is made easier by increasingly sophisticated technologies, such as Google Maps, which can detect locations, including restaurants and tourist destinations in Pekalongan.

Online transportation services such as Gojek and Grab, which can transport tourists to tourist destinations, have also made it easier for them to reach these destinations. In order to get to the various tourist attractions in Pekalongan, visitors need only give the address into the provided app, and the driver will take them there without needing to explain the route.

Amenities

An amenity is a facility that is required to support tourism activities in a location (Khotimah & Wilopo, 2017). This amenity aims to meet the practical needs of tourists in a tourist destination, such as lodging, entertainment, and catering services. The results of distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews with informants were as follows.



Table 4. The Data of Amenities

Question/Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I can easily get halal food and drinks	35%	52%	12%	0%	0%
It's easy for me to find a place of worship	32%	51%	15%	2%	0%
The facilities of worship provided are adequate	26%	55%	17%	0%	2%
There are clean toilets and ablution places	25%	42%	26%	3%	5%
I can easily find sharia inns near tourist sites	18%	31%	37%	9%	5%
Total Average	27,2%	46,2%	21,4%	2,8%	2,4%

Source: Processed Data (2021)

Table 4 shows that, in general, 27.2% of respondents strongly agreed with the amenity component, while 46.2% strongly agreed. This means that the halal tourism support facilities in Pekalongan City must be expanded, both in quantity and quality. The conditions in Pekalongan appear to be similar to those in Banjarmasin, where potential exists but supporting factors in the form of tourist services have not been maximized (Budiman et al., 2019). Because of the availability of amenities, Solo has the potential to be a halal tourism city (Saeroji et al., 2018). Sleman, a city near Solo, has the potential to become a Sharia tourism village because supporting facilities, such as adequate religious places and easy access to halal food, are available (Priyadi, Dahri, & Atmadji, 2016). The availability of certified halal restaurants must not only be available, but also adequate, in order to support halal tourism (Anugrah, Mokodongan, & Pulumodoyo, 2017).

Informant 4 (37 years old) stated that Pekalongan city has a good tourist attraction, but the facilities need to be added and the arrangement of the facilities needs to be improved so that it is more enjoyable to enjoy. According to Syaiful Hidayat, there is a prayer room and public toilets at Pasir Kencana Beach. The condition is good, but insufficient, and must be repaired again. He also stated that the Pekalongan City Government should provide facilities to improve the tourism destination.

According to informant 2, Pekalongan's existing tourist facilities are quite good. He also hopes that tourist facilities will be improved:

“... In Pekalongan Square there are seating facilities, mosques, and public



toilets. The condition of the mosque is very good. Even the toilets in the square are often dirty, because of the rainy season. Hopefully, it can be repaired. Furthermore, at the Mangrove, there are facilities that are worn off and less maintenance, finally empty of visitors. ”

Meanwhile, informant 3 claims that Pekalongan city has good tourism facilities:

“ ... In general, tourism facilities are inadequate, including at tourist sites. The hostelry is quite much and less sharia-based. Also supported by the area outside the city such as in Wiradesa. Places of worship are easy to find for Muslims. Toilet facilities at tourist sites are inadequate. Halal food is easy to find, as long as there is no pork element because *megono* is a vegetable dish, not animals.”

Regarding the accommodation in Pekalongan City, a number of respondents are concerned with its proximity to other locations. Because tourists do not have to travel a great distance to reach tourist destinations, they feel at ease. The hotel's strategic location is highly advantageous for tourists. In Pekalongan City, there are numerous hotels and homestays, so tourists need only select their desired location and price range. This variety of options represents a wonderful opportunity for Pekalongan to expand its tourism industry, particularly halal tourism.

It is common to find tourist destinations in religious sites. According to interview results, it is very simple to locate places of worship, prayer rooms, and mosques near and within tourist destinations. Some tourist destinations have also provided clear directions to places of worship. Even a respondent who has visited halal tourism in Pekalongan multiple times stated that because Pekalongan is known as the city of santri, there are nearly places of worship in every location. So that tourists enjoying tourism in Pekalongan do not have to be concerned about the location of places of worship that may interfere with tourist worship times. However, there are a few complaints about the cleanliness and odor of available places of worship, such as mukena. The available mukena tend to stink, causing discomfort for tourists who wish to perform religious rituals.

Regarding the availability of halal food and beverages in the area, all respondents stated that it was simple to find them in tourist areas or areas surrounding tourism. Those who wish to enjoy the tour need not be concerned about hunger or thirst. They need only choose the foods and beverages they



enjoy without regard to halal status. This is due to the fact that the vast majority of products sold are halal, particularly for those who sell near the Sapuro tomb or other halal tourist attractions; they must ensure that the products they sell are halal.

DISCUSSION

In general, Pekalongan has the potential and feasibility of becoming a halal tourism destination. With all of its tourism aspects or components preparedness based on public perceptions and opinions. The community has a favorable opinion of the Pekalongan City-owned tourist attractions, as 25% of respondents "strongly agree" and 43% "agree" with the provided statements. It can be deduced that tourists have a more positive perception of the ease of access to tourism in Pekalongan City. The community's assessment of environmental components is also favorable, with "strongly agreed" 21% and "agreed" 43%. In addition, community perceptions of amenities are positive, with 27% "strongly agree" and 46% "agree." It means that the general public and tourists think Pekalongan City's halal tourism infrastructure is good enough to make it a halal tourism destination in Indonesia. The findings add to the list of cities in Indonesia that are already prepared to become halal tourism destinations, including Lombok (Firdausi, Marantika, Firdaus, & Sajidah, 2017), Padang (Maryati, 2019), Solo (Budiman, Sadewa, Handayani, Nurzaman, & Hastiadi, 2019). The results strengthen the previous research that Pekalongan deserves to be a halal tourism destination (Ismanto, Ghofur, & Fakir, 2020; Nurwilda, 2020).

On the other hand, it confirms the significance of public perception in the development of halal tourism, as indicated by previous findings (Bismala & Siregar, 2019; Nik Muhammad, Isa, & Kifli, 2009; Rahman, Moghavvemi, Thirumoorthi, & Rahman, 2020). Full-service halal tourism will increase customer retention and satisfaction. Due to their importance as end-users, tourists' opinions are a vital resource for the development of the tourism industry. Therefore, it is important to take into account the diversity of people's perspectives, experiences, and assessments. This condition has at least some similarities with people's perceptions in Pekanbaru and Padang, both of which have high ratings (Putriana & Rimer, 2019), Lombok (Susanty, 2020), Banyuwangi (Fawaid & Khotimah, 2019), and Nusa Tenggara Barat (Permadi, Darwini, Retnowati, Negara, & Septiani, 2018).



CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it is concluded that Pekalongan City is well-positioned to become a halal tourism destination. This perception focuses on the region's readiness for tourism infrastructure, including attractions, accessibility, amenities, and the environment. The infrastructure was viewed positively by the majority of respondents. Since they are users or consumers, the community's assessment of the local halal tourism infrastructure is crucial as a gauge of readiness. Based on the readiness of regional tourism infrastructure, Pekalongan City has the potential to become a halal tourism destination. The general public's opinions should be taken into consideration when developing regional halal tourism because they are users. A well-developed infrastructure for halal tourism will have an effect on tourists' levels of satisfaction, which will, in turn, increase their likelihood to return.

The feasibility of the location as a halal tourism destination based on the perceptions of the general public has been deemed to be excellent. As a result, the concept of halal tourism enables its use in numerous Indonesian cities. The global halal tourism industry can grow quickly if many regions are feasible. For this reason, it is the responsibility of the government and the stakeholders in the tourism industry to correct any deficiencies in the implementation of tourism, which will hopefully result in an increase in visitation and a positive impact on the welfare of the community.

This study is limited in two ways: the number of respondents who participated and the number of people who were interviewed. Because of this, subsequent research will require the addition of respondents and informants.

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