

Prospects for Gampong-Based Halal Tourism Development in Aceh: An ANP Study

ABSTRACT - Halal tourism is increasingly recognized as a strategic sector in the global travel industry, particularly in regions that integrate Islamic values with community-based development. In Aceh Province, where Islamic law is formally applied, the potential of *gampong* (village)-based halal tourism is substantial but faces persistent structural challenges. This study aims to identify key obstacles to its development and provide policy insights for sustainable growth. A mixed-methods case study was conducted through literature review and in-depth interviews with stakeholders, including the Aceh Tourism Office, DPR Aceh, MPU, academics, business actors, and local communities. The Analytic Network Process (ANP) was employed to prioritize issues using pairwise comparison questionnaires. The findings indicate three major barriers. First, from the regulatory aspect, the absence of standardized halal tourism guidelines is the most critical challenge (33.27%). Second, under destination factors, inadequate infrastructure and accessibility represent the dominant issue (33.71%). Third, on the social side, limited government support, weak promotion, and neglected historical sites remain significant obstacles (23.99%). These results highlight the urgent need for cross-sector collaboration, improved infrastructure, and inclusive promotional strategies. Strengthening local stakeholder capacity is essential to accelerate sustainable halal tourism and support the Islamic economy in rural Aceh.

ABSTRAK - Prospek Pengembangan Pariwisata Halal Berbasis Gampong di Aceh: Studi ANP. Wisata halal semakin menjadi sektor strategis dalam industri pariwisata global, terutama di wilayah yang memadukan nilai Islam dengan pembangunan berbasis masyarakat. Di Provinsi Aceh, yang secara formal menerapkan syariat Islam, potensi wisata halal berbasis gampong (desa) sangat besar, tetapi dalam implementasinya masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi tantangan utama dalam pengembangan wisata halal berbasis gampong di Aceh dan memberikan masukan kebijakan untuk pertumbuhan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan *mixed methods* dengan desain studi kasus, melalui studi literatur dan wawancara mendalam dengan pemangku kepentingan seperti Dinas Pariwisata Aceh, DPR Aceh, MPU, akademisi, pelaku usaha, dan masyarakat lokal. Metode *Analytic Network Process* (ANP) digunakan untuk memprioritaskan masalah melalui kuesioner perbandingan berpasangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya tiga hambatan utama. Pertama, pada aspek regulasi, ketiadaan standar baku wisata halal menjadi masalah paling krusial (33,27%). Kedua, pada aspek destinasi, infrastruktur dan aksesibilitas yang belum memadai merupakan tantangan utama (33,71%). Ketiga, pada aspek sosial, minimnya dukungan pemerintah, lemahnya promosi, serta terbengkalainya situs sejarah menjadi hambatan signifikan (23,99%). Implikasi penelitian menekankan pentingnya kolaborasi lintas sektor, peningkatan infrastruktur, dan strategi promosi inklusif. Penguatan kapasitas masyarakat lokal sangat diperlukan untuk mempercepat pengembangan wisata halal berkelanjutan dan mendukung ekonomi syariah di pedesaan Aceh.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, halal tourism has carved out a significant niche within the global travel industry, evolving beyond its initial footprint in Muslim-majority countries to gain considerable traction worldwide (Battour et al., 2010). Designed to accommodate the religious observances and lifestyle preferences of Muslim travelers, this sector has seen mounting interest not just among traditional markets but also in countries with no Islamic governance. According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2019, Indonesia and Malaysia lead the charge, their top rankings reflecting deliberate, state-supported efforts to align tourism infrastructure with Islamic values.

As Rahman et al. (2024) observe, the industry's expansion is apparent in the rising number of halal-certified services—from hospitality and dining to travel logistics and even airlines. This growth trajectory is underpinned by robust Muslim consumer spending, which hit USD 2.29 trillion in 2022 and is projected to surpass USD 3 trillion by 2023 (Sharia Knowledge Centre, 2022; Statista, 2023). Motivated by this economic potential, both Muslim and non-Muslim nations are actively developing halal-compliant tourism products and services (Rasul, 2019). Yet, for all its momentum, the sector's global rollout is anything but uniform (Afriwanda et al., 2020). Implementation varies widely due to differing legal regimes, cultural sensitivities, and institutional readiness (Suryandari & Rahmawati, 2022; Muhamad et al., 2019), revealing a complex landscape where one-size-fits-all solutions fall short.

Indonesia, in particular, has demonstrated notable strides. In the 2023 State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) report, the country ranked third globally, just behind Malaysia and Saudi Arabia (DinarStandard, 2023). Key verticals like halal food, modest fashion, pharmaceuticals, and Islamic media continue to expand at pace (Ismanto & Devy, 2022). As Noviyani and Ratnasari (2021) point out, halal tourism is deeply interconnected with other sectors of the Islamic economy, making it a linchpin in broader development strategies. The terminology surrounding this field remains fluid—Islamic tourism, halal travel, Sharia-compliant tourism, and Muslim-friendly travel are all used somewhat interchangeably (Jaelani, 2017)—but the underlying concept remains rooted in compliance with Islamic ethics and jurisprudence (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Rahman et al., 2009).

Within this national context, Aceh occupies a unique position. It is the only Indonesian province with formal implementation of Islamic law, which significantly shapes its tourism framework. Through policies like Qanun No. 8 of 2013, Aceh promotes a form of tourism guided by principles such as faith, justice, sustainability, transparency, and respect for local tradition (Ibrahim, 2023). A standout initiative is its *gampong*-based tourism—essentially village-centered tourism—that marries Islamic teachings with the authenticity of rural life, cultural heritage, and direct community engagement (Syaripuddin, 2020). These villages aim to draw visitors seeking not only spiritual alignment but also a more grounded, locally-rooted travel experience.

That said, Aceh's halal tourism efforts are not without obstacles. The absence of unified halal tourism standards, limited infrastructure, weak promotional channels, and disjointed stakeholder coordination continue to hinder its full potential (Muhamad et al., 2019). While scholars have explored a range of related themes, from regulatory frameworks to destination branding and

policy implementation (Andriani, 2015; Huda et al., 2021; Pratama, 2022), several blind spots persist. There is still a lack of grassroots-level policy dissemination, underdeveloped village tourism management models, minimal international marketing strategy, and only sporadic focus on tourist experience and satisfaction.

To bridge these gaps, this study employs a mixed-method case study framework, integrating the Analytic Network Process (ANP) to assess stakeholder views and map priority challenges in *gampong*-based halal tourism. The ultimate aim is to generate strategic insights that can inform more sustainable, competitive, and economically meaningful halal tourism development in Aceh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Attraction Theory

In the Tourism Attraction Theory, MacCannell (2002) offers a foundational framework for interpreting tourist motivations—particularly the quest for authenticity in travel. According to MacCannell, tourists are not merely seeking leisure but are often in pursuit of “real” experiences—encounters that reflect the cultural, religious, and historical essence of a place. This framework is especially resonant when applied to halal tourism in Aceh, a province characterized by formal Islamic legal governance and rich Islamic cultural traditions. The province’s architecture, daily customs, and religious practices combine to shape what many Muslim travelers would deem an “authentic” Islamic tourism experience.

In this study, MacCannell’s theory informs the analytical design by underpinning the development of three interrelated clusters: Regulation, Halal Tourism Destinations, and Social Aspects—all evaluated through the Analytic Network Process (ANP). Each cluster reflects a dimension that directly shapes the perception of authenticity. For instance, regulatory inconsistencies—such as the absence of standardized halal certifications—can erode travelers’ confidence in the Sharia-compliance of services. Likewise, underdeveloped infrastructure (e.g., lack of appropriate lodging, inadequate worship facilities, or poor transport connectivity) may compromise the spiritual comfort expected by observant Muslim travelers. Furthermore, low community engagement and weak promotional strategies can obscure the cultural richness that often defines genuine tourist-host interactions. MacCannell’s theory, in this context, does more than explain traveler behavior; it sharpens our understanding of how structural and social conditions influence the perceived integrity of halal tourism in Aceh.

Halal Tourism

Halal tourism is broadly defined as tourism that complies with Islamic principles across service delivery, consumption, and experience. Battour and Ismail (2016) describe it as encompassing Sharia-aligned services—ranging from halal-certified food to prayer-friendly environments. Kamri et al. (2014) extends the definition to include ethical and moral dimensions, emphasizing holistic adherence to Islamic law. Henderson (2016) similarly notes that halal tourism ensures travel experiences free from prohibited (haram) elements, covering lodging, cuisine, and recreational activities.

Stephenson (2014) situates halal tourism within the broader Islamic economy, arguing that destinations must intentionally align their offerings with the values and expectations of Muslim travelers. Notably, Zamani-Farahani and Henderson (2010) challenge the assumption that halal tourism is exclusive to Muslims, suggesting it holds cross-cultural appeal for non-Muslim tourists interested in ethical or culturally immersive travel. Mohsin, Ramli, and Alkhulayfi (2016) highlight the emerging market potential of halal tourism, urging stakeholders in hospitality and destination management to tailor services accordingly. Rahman et al. (2024) further frame halal tourism as one that guarantees not only religious compliance but also safety, comfort, and convenience throughout the tourist journey. Collectively, these perspectives position halal tourism as a multidimensional model—anchored in Sharia, enriched by ethical practice, and expansive in its global potential.

Village-Based Halal Tourism

Village-based halal tourism—referred to locally as *gampong*-based tourism—combines community-led development with Islamic values across all facets of the tourist experience. This model emphasizes the integration of *halal* and *thoyyib* (wholesome) principles in accommodations, products, and activities. Adinugraha et al. (2018) describe it as a concept that elevates spiritual enrichment, empowers local economies, and educates visitors about Islamic heritage. Prawiro (2022) adds that such villages go beyond halal food provision to include religiously compliant lodging, modest dress codes, and interaction norms consistent with Islamic etiquette.

Battour and Ismail (2016) identify four essential components in these halal destinations: Sharia-compliant services, Muslim-friendly environments, strict adherence to Islamic principles, and marketing strategies designed to appeal to the global Muslim market. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) further emphasizes that such initiatives must also fulfill sustainability criteria—balancing economic growth with cultural preservation and environmental stewardship. In this light, halal tourist villages are more than niche products; they represent a holistic and ethical development model. They align government policy, community participation, and private sector investment to create meaningful, inclusive, and value-based travel experiences.

Development of Village-Based Halal Tourism

Despite its rapid growth, the halal tourism sector—particularly in rural or village contexts—still encounters notable implementation challenges. These range from conceptual ambiguities and inconsistent certification systems to weak marketing strategies and infrastructural deficits (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Various studies have probed both the opportunities and obstacles facing this evolving market. For example, Mohsin et al. (2016) argue that halal tourism presents substantial growth potential, particularly for countries seeking to tap into the expanding Muslim travel segment. However, they also caution that many global tourism providers still misunderstand or underestimate the nuanced needs of Muslim travelers.

Battour et al. (2010) underline the significance of key destination features—such as halal food availability, prayer facilities, and Muslim-friendly lodging—in influencing travel decisions. Henderson (2016) brings attention to the role of halal certification in guiding consumer trust,

especially in non-Muslim-majority countries like Japan and Singapore. From a marketing angle, Hussin (2018) analyze Malaysia's strategy in positioning itself as a global halal tourism hub, focusing on narrative framing and service differentiation. In parallel, Samori et al. (2016) highlight regional efforts in Asia to adapt tourism offerings to align with Islamic values.

However, structural and cultural hurdles persist. Musa et al. (2021) discuss the "halalification" of tourism and note the absence of globally harmonized regulations as a critical barrier. Ibrahim (2018) point out the difficulties non-Muslim countries face in adapting infrastructure and overcoming cultural biases. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new disruptions. Song et al. (2025) illustrates how pandemic-induced shifts in travel behavior have forced halal tourism stakeholders to recalibrate their strategies and prioritize health security alongside religious compliance. Ultimately, while the literature underscores the sector's vast potential, it also emphasizes the need for more robust frameworks in regulation, infrastructure, and cross-cultural engagement. As Hanafiah et al. (2022) suggest, the path forward hinges on deepening the industry's understanding of Muslim traveler expectations and reinforcing halal certification standards at an international level.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to explore expert and practitioner perspectives on the principal challenges involved in developing halal tourism within *gampong*-based (village) settings in Aceh Province. At the core of this methodology is the Analytic Network Process (ANP)—a decision-making model introduced by Saaty (1996)—which is particularly suited for analyzing complex problems involving interrelated components (Lee, 2010).

Unlike the more rigid structure of hierarchical models, ANP operates through a flexible network where relationships are not constrained to top-down or linear paths. In this framework, elements can influence one another in multiple directions, whether directly or indirectly (Lee, 2010). The ANP methodology is built upon three foundational principles. First, decomposition, where the problem is broken down into its essential elements and structured accordingly. Second, comparative judgment, achieved through pairwise comparisons between elements within each cluster, relative to their parent elements. Third, synthesis, or hierarchical composition, in which the local priority of each element is weighted by the global priority of its parent to produce a comprehensive ranking (Ascarya, 2005).

Research Sample

To capture diverse and context-specific insights, nine informants were selected through purposive sampling. Each participant was chosen based on their expertise and practical involvement in *gampong*-based halal tourism development. Table 1 outlines the composition and qualifications of the informant group. The selected participants represent key stakeholder groups—regulatory bodies, industry professionals, academics, and local actors—ensuring a well-rounded view of the field. Using an ANP-based questionnaire involving pairwise comparisons, the study elicited each informant's prioritization of factors affecting the success of halal tourism in *gampong* contexts.

Table 1. Profile of Informants Involved in the Study

No	Informant Group	Initials	Criteria	Total
1	Aceh Tourism Office	JE	Holds significant experience in the planning and promotion of halal tourism in Aceh	1
2	Aceh House of DPR	BS	Offers legislative insight into policy-making for village-based halal tourism	1
3	MPU Aceh	HM	Provides religious authority on Islamic law and halal tourism policy	1
4	Business Practitioners	PB, MR, SF	Bring hands-on industry knowledge regarding the implementation of halal tourism practices	3
5	Academics	TA	Specializes in tourism development with a focus on halal tourism research	1
6	Local Community	AS, MF	Involved in daily halal tourism practices at the village level	2
Total				9

ANP Evaluation Procedure

To guide respondents in making judgments, a verbal-numerical scale was employed for pairwise comparisons, ranging from equal to extreme importance. The scale used is outlined below:

Table 2. Verbal and Numerical Comparison Scale

Verbal Scale	Numeric Scale
Extreme importance	9
	8
Very strong importance	7
	6
Strong importance	5
	4
Moderate importance	3
	2
Equal importance	1

(Source: Saaty in Ascarya, 2005)

The application of the Analytic Network Process (ANP) in this study followed the three structured phases developed by Saaty and Vargas (2008), as illustrated in Figure 1. The figure is explained as follows:

1. Model Construction

The ANP model was designed as a network, grounded in both theoretical frameworks and empirical findings. To build this model, focused interviews were conducted with stakeholders including policymakers, industry practitioners, and scholars. These discussions helped identify real-world challenges specific to *gampong*-based halal tourism in Aceh and informed the structure of the clusters used in the analysis.

2. Model Quantification

At this stage, informants completed ANP questionnaires, consisting of pairwise comparisons between elements within the defined clusters. The goal was to determine which elements exert greater influence within the system. Responses were quantified using Saaty's 1–9 scale. Data from each informant was processed individually using Super Decisions software,

resulting in a personalized supermatrix—a data structure that reflects the weighted influence of all interconnected components.

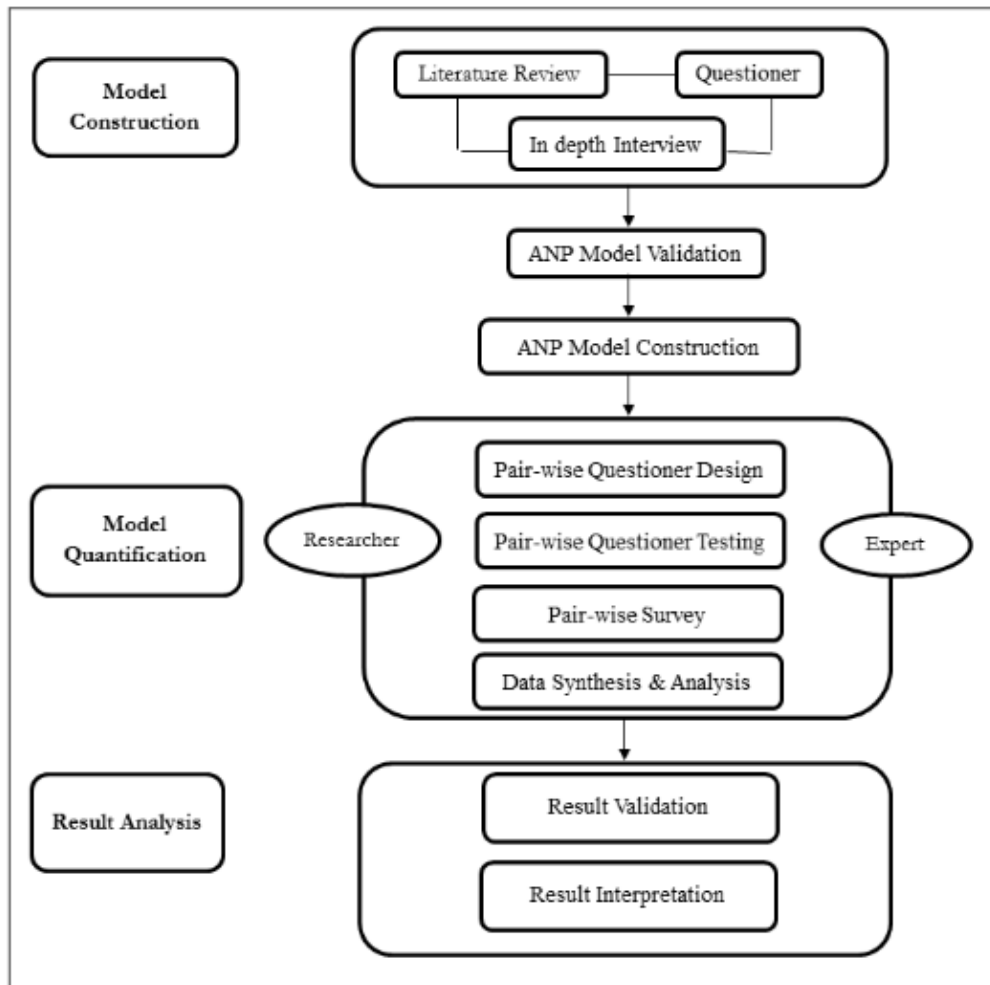


Figure 1. Stages of ANP Research
(Source: Saaty, Thomas L and Vargas, 2008)

3. Synthesis and Analysis

The final phase involved synthesizing the results derived from each informant's ANP network. Outputs from Super Decisions were exported to Excel for further aggregation and interpretation. Throughout this process, validation checks were conducted to ensure accuracy and consistency. The findings were then analyzed to extract strategic insights and propose actionable policy recommendations aimed at strengthening the development of halal tourism in Aceh's rural areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the critical challenges facing the development of *gampong*-based halal tourism in Aceh, drawing upon expert interviews and relevant literature. The analysis revealed three major thematic clusters: regulation, halal tourism destinations, and social aspects. These clusters were synthesized into a conceptual model that integrates both empirical insights and theoretical frameworks, as illustrated in Figure 2.

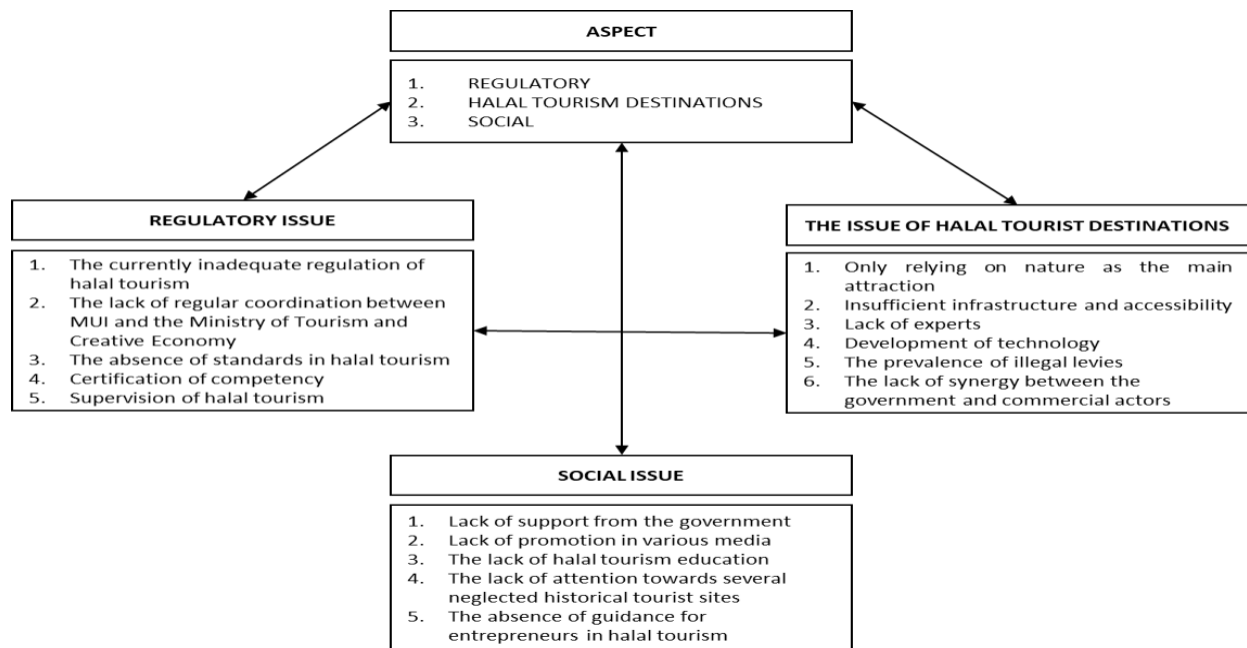


Figure 2. Framework for identifying aspects and issues
(Source: Author, Processed, 2025)

Building on this framework, the study employed the Analytic Network Process (ANP) using Super Decisions software to construct a decision-making model that captures the complexity of halal tourism development at the village level (Figure 3).

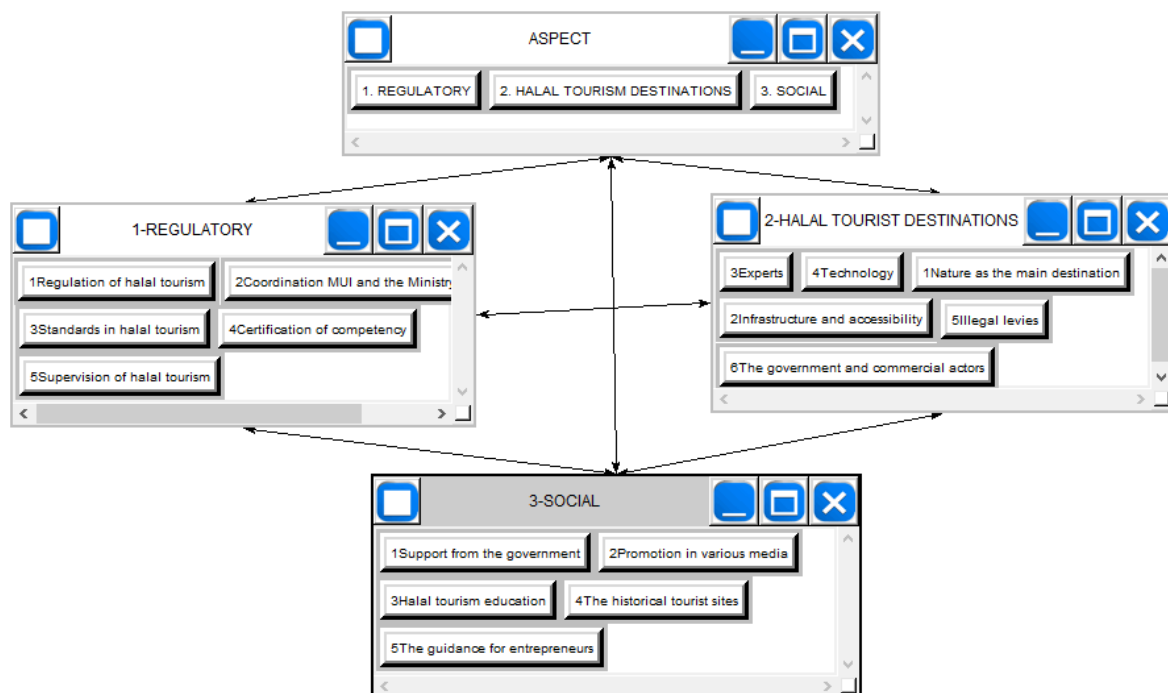


Figure 3. ANP Model Structure
(Source: Author, Processed, 2025)

Data from nine stakeholders—including representatives from the Aceh Tourism Office, the Regional People's Representative Council (DPR), religious leaders (MPU), business practitioners, academics, and local community members—highlighted that halal destination development and social aspects emerged as top priorities. Each was weighted at 37.66%, while

regulatory concerns followed at 24.67%. The level of agreement among raters was 3.8%, suggesting varied but overlapping perspectives. In the regulatory cluster, the absence of standardized halal tourism guidelines emerged as the most pressing issue (33.27%), followed by gaps in supervision and competency certification, with lack of coordination between the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Ministry of Tourism receiving the lowest priority (11.39%).

In the destination cluster, inadequate infrastructure and accessibility was identified as the dominant challenge (33.71%). Secondary issues—each sharing a 14.51% weight—included limited expertise, lack of technology integration, illegal levies, and insufficient collaboration between government and private sector. As for social issues, top concerns were the lack of government support, minimal promotion, and neglect of historic Islamic tourist sites, each scoring 23.99%. Lower-priority concerns included limited public awareness and inadequate training for halal tourism entrepreneurs (14.01% each).

Table 3. Geometric Mean Results for Clusters and Issues

Cluster	Element	Geomean	Kendall's W
Aspect	Regulation	0.24677	0.0381
	Halal Tourism Destinations	0.37661	
	Social	0.37661	
Regulatory Issue	Absence of halal tourism standards	0.33275	0.1707
	Inadequate regulation	0.21721	
	Lack of MUI–Ministry coordination	0.11397	
	Competency certification	0.11762	
	Supervision	0.02974	
Destination Issue	Overreliance on nature	0.08213	0.2220
	Inadequate infrastructure & access	0.33714	
	Lack of experts	0.14518	
	Poor tech development	0.14518	
	Illegal levies	0.14518	
	Poor public–private synergy	0.14518	
Social Issue	Lack of government support	0.23993	0.1165
	Lack of promotion	0.23993	
	Neglected historical sites	0.23993	
	Lack of education	0.14011	
	Lack of entrepreneurial guidance	0.14011	

(Source: Author, Processed, 2025)

Priority Aspects

Figure 4 illustrates that, based on the aggregated assessments of experts, the halal tourism component and the social element are identified as the primary priorities in the development of *gampong*-based halal tourism in Aceh. Both aspects received equal weights of 37.66%, followed by the regulatory aspect at 24.67%. However, the rater agreement value among all respondents regarding the prioritization of these three aspects is 0.038, or 3.8%, indicating a low level of consensus.

The development of halal tourism in Aceh is influenced by the interplay of environmental potential, cultural identity, and stakeholder cooperation. While Aceh's natural assets—such as Ekasoghi Beach—offer strong core attractions (Andriani & Jannah, 2022), limitations in infrastructure and community involvement hinder the sector's competitiveness. These findings

are aligned with the Destination Competitiveness Model (Ribeiro et al., 2020), which emphasizes that beyond natural appeal, destinations require effective institutional support, infrastructure, and stakeholder synergy.

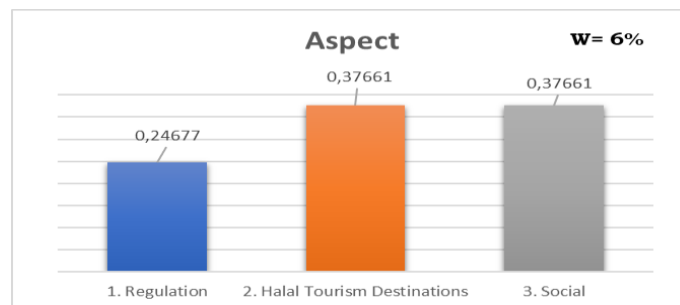


Figure 4 Priority Aspect of Issues Based on Average Value
(Source: Author, Processed, 2025)

Moreover, the need for collaborative governance is critical, as highlighted by Ansell and Gash (2008). Without structured cooperation among government agencies, private actors, and local communities, tourism development is vulnerable to resistance, fragmentation, and cultural friction—issues also explored through Doxey's Irritation Index (1975) and Butler's TALC Model (1980), which position Aceh in the early stages of tourism lifecycle development.

Priority Regulatory Issues

According to Figure 5, the highest-priority regulatory issue is the absence of halal tourism standards (33.27%), followed by weak supervision (21.84%), insufficient regulation (21.72%), and lack of competency certification (22.76%). The issue of limited coordination between the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy received the lowest priority (11.39%). The agreement level on regulatory priorities is also low, with a Kendall's W of 0.17 (17%).

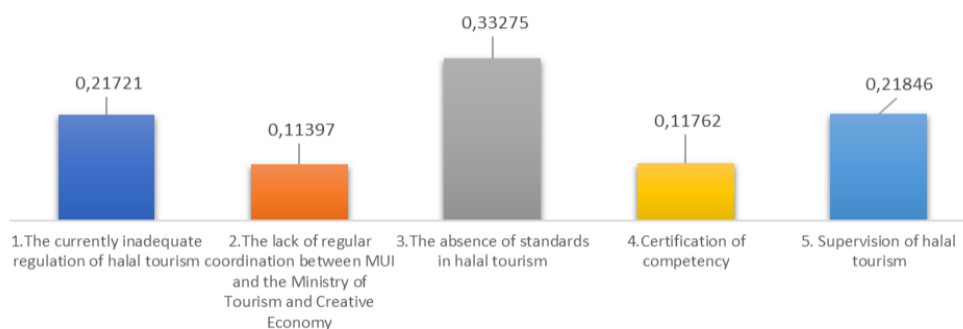


Figure 5. Priorities Regulatory Issues Based on Average Value
(Source: Author, Processed, 2025)

This outcome reflects the implementation gap identified in Implementation Theory (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984), where institutional weaknesses and unclear operational mechanisms inhibit the success of otherwise well-designed policies. Despite Indonesia's high ranking in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2023 (Mastercard & CrescentRating, 2023), regional disparities persist, primarily due to institutional voids (Khanna & Palepu, 1997). Without nationally enforced halal tourism regulations, local initiatives lack legitimacy and consistency.

From a trust-building perspective (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), the current lack of credible certification systems erodes tourists' confidence. The situation also signals a breakdown in destination governance (Bramwell & Lane, 2011), where unclear roles and fragmented coordination diminish policy effectiveness. Adopting a Collaborative Governance Model (Ansell & Gash, 2008) could address these gaps through structured, multi-actor cooperation.

Priority Destination Issues

Figure 6 shows that the most significant obstacle to developing halal tourist destinations in Aceh is inadequate infrastructure and accessibility (33.71%). Other equally weighted challenges (14.51% each) include lack of professionals, underdeveloped technology, illegal levies, and weak public-private coordination. Over-reliance on natural assets received the lowest concern (8.21%). Kendall's $W = 0.22$, again pointing to weak consensus.

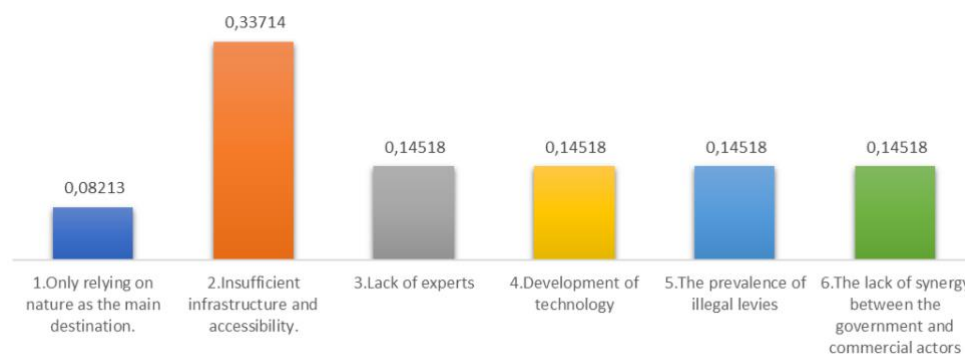


Figure 6. Priority Issues for Halal Tourist Attractions Based on Average Values
(Source: Author, Processed, 2025)

The prominence of infrastructure concerns echoes findings by Saleh and Anisah (2019) and Syaripuddin (2020), who note deficiencies in transportation, sanitation, prayer facilities, and accessibility—especially for women and people with disabilities. This aligns with the Destination Competitiveness Model (Ritchie & Crouch, 2022), which frames infrastructure as an essential enabling factor.

These challenges also signal that Aceh is in the early development stage of Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), where underinvestment limits scalability. Using the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1985), the gap between tourist expectations and the actual service experience—such as poor sanitation or inaccessible prayer spaces—threatens satisfaction and repeat visitation. Addressing these gaps requires integrated planning and collaboration between sectors (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Priority Social Issues

Based on Figure 7, the most pressing social challenges in Aceh's halal tourism development include the lack of government support, limited promotional efforts, and neglect of historical sites—each rated at 23.99%. Additional concerns include insufficient halal tourism education and lack of entrepreneurial guidance (both at 14.01%). The overall consensus level among respondents was 12%, reflecting very weak agreement.

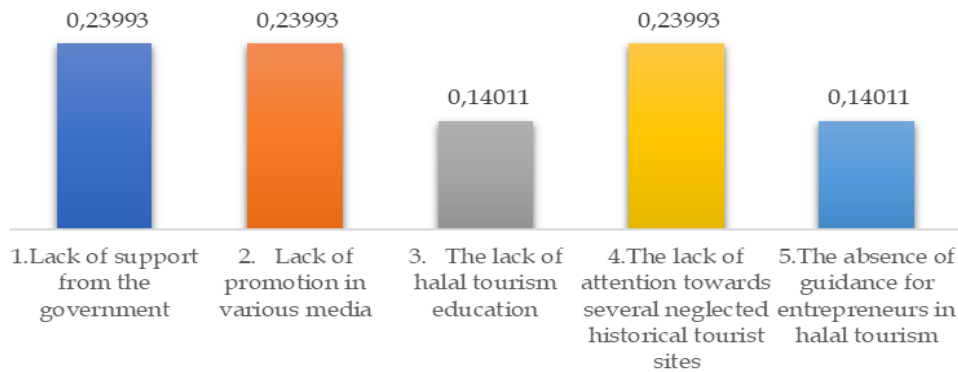


Figure 7. Priorities Social Issues Based on Average Values
(Source: Author, Processed, 2025)

Despite its strong Islamic identity, Aceh struggles to translate its potential into actual tourist arrivals. According to MacCannell's (1976) Theory of Tourist Attractions, Islamic heritage and religious sites serve as "markers of authenticity" that can be leveraged for tourism appeal. Yet, weaknesses in support systems—such as digital marketing, signage, and interpretation—impede effectiveness.

This disparity mirrors insights from the Destination Competitiveness Model (Ritchie & Crouch, 2022) and TALC Theory (Butler, 1980), both of which stress the importance of stakeholder collaboration, infrastructure readiness, and community education. The low awareness levels noted by Huda et al. (2021) reinforce this diagnosis. Effective social development requires robust collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), where government, private actors, and communities co-create inclusive strategies. Targeted public education, media promotion, and training for local entrepreneurs are crucial steps toward transforming potential into sustainable outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that the development of *gampong*-based halal tourism in Aceh is significantly constrained by challenges across regulatory, infrastructural, and social dimensions. Among the most pressing issues are the lack of standardized halal tourism regulations, weak oversight mechanisms, and underdeveloped infrastructure—particularly in terms of accessibility and basic tourist amenities. Additionally, the absence of consistent government support and insufficient promotional efforts have further limited the region's ability to attract Muslim travelers seeking experiences aligned with Islamic principles.

To address these challenges, the study underscores the need for comprehensive policy reform and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The formulation of national halal tourism standards, stronger institutional coordination, and targeted investment in infrastructure are essential to improving the sector's viability. Furthermore, promoting community engagement through education, training, and capacity-building initiatives can help cultivate more resilient and competitive halal tourism villages. These findings highlight the importance of aligning cultural authenticity with operational readiness to ensure sustainable tourism growth in Aceh.

While the study offers valuable insights, it is limited by its reliance on a relatively small group of expert informants, which may not reflect the full spectrum of stakeholder perspectives. The

analysis also focuses primarily on supply-side factors, without delving into tourist behavior or satisfaction. Future research should incorporate broader stakeholder input, including Muslim tourists and private-sector actors. Employing quantitative or mixed-method approaches could deepen understanding of demand-side dynamics. Further studies should also explore brand perception, visitor satisfaction, and the long-term effectiveness of halal tourism policies to strengthen Aceh's position in the global Islamic tourism market.

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