

The Development of Halal-based Local Tourism in Gampong Nusa, Aceh

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Abstract

In Acehnese society, religion and customs play a significant role in influencing the social structure and order. This is exemplified in one of the *hadith madja*, which reads, '*Adat bak Poe Teumeureuhom, Hukom bak Syiah Kuala, Qanun bak Putroe Phang, Reusam bak Lakseumana*'. From a tourism perspective, Aceh's customary practices offer a framework that allows tourism activities to be conducted in a respectful manner that aligns with local traditions. Meanwhile, principles drawn from Islamic law (*sharia*) ensure that tourist services meet the needs of travelers in ways that align with the religious values and principles of those travelers. *Qanun*, as local regulations, provide guidelines for destination management, while *reusam* reflect customs that can be integrated into the tourism experience. This research employs a qualitative approach with case study analysis in Gampong Nusa to evaluate the efficacy of integrating these values in the development of authentic and sustainable tourism experiences. The findings demonstrate that incorporating these elements in the advancement of halal tourism not only enhances traveller satisfaction but also preserves and reinforces Acehnese culture. By establishing a precise target market and implementing an appropriate marketing strategy, Gampong Nusa has the potential to enhance its reputation as a halal tourist destination.

Keywords: *Aceh Culture; Local Wisdom; Local Communities; Halal Tourism; Social Advantages*

A. INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry is undergoing a period of rapid growth, driven by an increase in human mobility and diversification of travellers' interests (Ho et al., 2009; Shi et al., 2017; Zhao, 2018; Bidin et al., 2021). One market segment that has been identified as a potential area for further development is halal tourism. Alternatively known as Islamic tourism or Muslim-friendly tourism, this sector has been the subject of recent research (Priyatmoko & Maulana, 2022; Battour et al., 2017; Abror et al., 2020). The term 'halal tourism' denotes the integration of Islamic values into all aspects of tourism activities (Carboni et al., 2014). The concept of halal tourism has been the subject of extensive research in various parts of the country in recent years. This includes studies in Jordan (Harahsheh et al., 2019), Malaysia (Hanafiah and Hamdan, 2020; Rahman et al., 2020), Indonesia (Winarti, 2017; Wibawa et al., 2023) and Turkey (Battour et al., 2018; Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019).

As reported by the Global Islamic Economy Gateway, a project of the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas (2019), the halal tourism sector has undergone a period of substantial growth. This encompasses a variety of sectors, including halal food, halal travel, modest fashion, and halal media and recreation. In Indonesia, 10 cities have been developed into halal tourism pilot projects, one of which is Aceh. Aceh is considered a particularly promising area for halal tourism due to its government system, which is guided by the application of Islamic law and its distinctive social system. Islam is a significant aspect of Aceh's identity and serves as a key element in its branding. Aceh has received numerous accolades in the realm of halal tourism. These include the World's Best Airport for Halal Travellers and the World's Best Halal Cultural

Destination, as honoured by the World Halal Tourism Award (Setiawan, 2019). This Islamic value and halal tourism represent a distinctive attraction, particularly in Aceh. As Farahdel (2011) observed, individuals from diverse religious backgrounds possess disparate cultural, social, and behavioural norms, beliefs, and practices, largely shaped by their respective religious traditions.

Islam has had a significant influence on the cultural identity of the Acehnese people, integrating religious norms into the existing local traditions. In Aceh, religion and local customs serve as the two fundamental pillars that shape the social structure, a concept reflected in an Acehnese proverb: '*Adat bak Poe Teureuhom, Hukom bak Syiah Kuala, Qanun bak Putroe Phang, Reusam bak Lakseumana*'. This proverb underscores the significance of adat, qanun (regulations) and reusam (customs) in Aceh's daily life. In the context of local wisdom-based halal tourism, Aceh's rich culture and religion provide a robust foundation for authentic and sustainable tourism development. For instance, local adat can serve as the foundation for tourism practices that respect local norms and customs, offering experiences that align with Acehnese traditions. Furthermore, the implementation of sharia law principles in the provision of tourist services, such as food and accommodation, will guarantee that the requirements of Muslim travellers are fulfilled in a manner that is consistent with their religious values. The incorporation of qanun, the local regulations of Aceh, into the advancement of halal tourism will necessitate the adaptation of the regulations to reflect the local practices and policies, thereby providing clear guidance for destination management. Concurrently, reusam, or local customs, can be exhibited in tourism activities, such as dress code and interaction etiquette, to guarantee that the tourism experience remains consistent with Acehnese values.

This study aims to analyse the potential of local wisdom-based halal tourism development in Gampong Nusa, with a particular focus on the factors that influence the success of halal tourism destination development and the role of the community in preserving local cultural values. Previous research has examined the integration of local wisdom in the context of halal tourism. Nevertheless, research on halal tourism village development models based on local wisdom remains scarce. This renders the topic both relevant and important for scientific investigation. Given Aceh's rich culture and traditions, tourism development that respects local values can have a positive impact on both the community and tourists. This research is necessary to understand how elements of local wisdom can be integrated in tourism practices, as well as to formulate effective strategies in creating authentic and sustainable tourism experiences.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of halal tourism development based on local wisdom in Gampong Nusa. The qualitative approach was selected for its capacity to facilitate the collection of comprehensive and detailed data, thereby enabling a deeper understanding of the social and cultural context that shapes tourism in the village. The data will be collected through in-depth interviews with local stakeholders, including members of the community, tourism managers, and tourists. Participatory observation will also be employed to gain insight into the practices occurring in the field. The data will then be analysed using thematic analysis techniques, whereby patterns and themes will be identified from the interviews and observations. This approach was selected because it can provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities encountered in the development of halal tourism in Gampong Nusa.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In 2005, Gampong Nusa initiated a community-based movement focused on waste management. This initiative successfully transformed waste into a variety of products, demonstrating the potential for sustainable development in a community setting. This initiative was part of an effort to rebuild the community after it was devastated by the tsunami, in which Nusa was one of the villages severely affected by the disaster. Through this programme, Gampong Nusa has not only successfully addressed the waste problem, but has also stimulated the entrepreneurial spirit and creativity among its residents, and created new opportunities for economic and environmental recovery.

At that time, the waste management programme was comprised of two principal missions. The initial objective was to alter the community's perception of waste, which had traditionally been regarded as worthless, and to recognise its potential value and utility. Secondly, the programme served to reinforce the social cohesion that had been eroded by the tsunami, which had resulted in a decline in traditional forms of social interaction, such as *gotong royong* and community gatherings. In the context of a proliferation of NGOs in Aceh, there was a discernible shift in cultural values, with an increasing emphasis on material value and financial gain. This led to a tendency to evaluate all gatherings based on their potential for generating income.

During the period between 2007 and 2013, Gampong Nusa received numerous visits from individuals from both domestic and international backgrounds, who were interested in learning about the village's waste management practices, traditional dance, and other aspects of its cultural heritage. In 2015, Gampong Nusa was officially designated as a tourism village through the '*Saweu Nusa*' programme, which marked the beginning of the development of increasingly diverse destinations and attractions. The welcoming attitude and openness of the local community have been instrumental in the growth of this tourism village, which is now regarded as one of the most developed in Aceh. By consistently innovating and offering distinctive experiences, Gampong Nusa has succeeded in attracting the attention of tourists and consolidating its position on the regional tourism map.

Potential Cultural Values and Local Wisdom of Gampong Nusa

Gampong Nusa represents one of the local tourist destinations developed on the basis of the promotion of cultural values. These include the socio-cultural life of traditional communities, rural natural panoramas, cultural arts, traditional food diversity, and waste recycling crafts. In Gampong Nusa, visitors have the opportunity to experience first-hand the daily lives of local people who still uphold traditions and customs. Interaction with locals allows travellers to gain insight into their way of life, which is characterised by a rich set of norms and values.

One of the wisdom values that has been preserved is the concept of '*idang talam*'. This concept pertains to the presentation of traditional Acehnese cuisine served in a large *talam*, which is typically filled with an assortment of specialties. The food is typically consumed in the company of family, neighbours or visiting guests. This concept represents the values of togetherness, equality and sharing. In Gampong Nusa, this dish is provided to tourists. Initially, *Idang talam* was often organised in the context of significant events, such as weddings, *kenduri*, commemorations of the Prophet's birthday (*kenduri maulid*) and Islamic holidays.

In traditional wedding customs, the *idang talam* is a significant obligation that the groom is expected to fulfil. This is typically conveyed to the bride during the reception. The *idang talam* is

usually carried with great respect by the groom and handed over to the bride's family as a symbol of respect and commitment. The *idang talam* usually contains speciality foods and items for the bride, such as *songket* cloth, as well as various cosmetics.

For the Acehnese people, *idang talam* represents not only a tradition but also a symbol of local wisdom that conveys the values of togetherness and sharing in everyday life. This style of food presentation is not merely a means of enjoying culinary delights; it is also a gesture of respect and honouring guests. This tradition has been observed by the Acehnese people for generations and is still observed in Gampong Nusa. This tradition may also be seen as an implementation of one of the *Hadih Maja*, namely: '*Mulia jamee ranup lampuan, Mulia rakan mameh suara*'. The *Hadih Maja* is an expression of ancestral heritage that describes the values and philosophy of the Acehnese people in a concise and poetic manner.

The *Pemulia Jamee* custom has been observed by the people of Aceh since the period of the Aceh Darussalam kingdom. One of the most well-known narratives posits that Ibn Batutah, a Moroccan Muslim explorer, made an impromptu halt in Aceh during that period. Upon his arrival, Ibn Batutah and his entourage were greeted with hospitality by the reigning monarch and the kingdom's subjects. The kingdom dispatched a contingent of mounted attendants to convey the group of visitors. Subsequently, they were presented with *ranub*, which in Acehnese society is regarded as a symbol of 'glory' or 'honour'. For the people of Aceh, *ranub* has a profound significance. It is not merely regarded as a culinary item; rather, it is a symbol of honour and acceptance. In this context, *ranub* is not only a symbol but also an inspiration for the creation of *Ranub Lampuan* Dance, which depicts the honourable reception of guests through graceful and meaningful movements. This dance reflects the noble values of Aceh, namely respect and openness to all who enter.

This principle is also observed in Gampong Nusa, where all visitors are greeted in a cordial manner and served traditional dishes as a gesture of respect and hospitality. Visitors will be treated to a selection of traditional Acehnese cuisine, including *kuah on murong*, *peungat*, *keumamah*, *asam pliek*, and other local specialities. The dishes are prepared directly by the residents of the village and served in *Jambo Anyak*, which is a *saung* where the local community gathers and relaxes together. Furthermore, tourists have the option of participating in cooking classes, which provide an opportunity to learn the preparation of a variety of traditional Acehnese dishes. By serving these specialty dishes, Gampong Nusa not only introduces guests to Aceh's culinary heritage but also preserves long-established traditions. This serves to strengthen the sense of community and connection between the local community and visitors, while enriching the educational and transformative tourism experience.

Furthermore, Gampong Nusa plays a pivotal role in fostering artistic and cultural growth, particularly through the Al-Hayah organisation, which is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Acehnese dance. The organisation serves a dual function, acting as a training ground for dancers and assuming an active role in the organisation of performances and cultural events involving the local community. With a focus on traditional dance, Al-Hayah's objective is to educate the younger generation about the significance of Aceh's cultural heritage and to reinforce local identity in the context of modernisation. Such activities enable the community to reacquaint themselves with the richness of their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride in the traditions that have been passed down through generations. Gampong Nusa is home to several iconic dances, which are typically performed to welcome tourists. These dances serve not only as a gesture of

hospitality but also as an integral component of the cultural experience offered to visitors. In addition to observing the performances, travellers have the option of selecting a tour package that allows them to learn to dance in a manner consistent with traditional Acehese style.

A further example of local culture is the practice of traditional games, which are played by children of primary school age. In this village, children are not inclined to engage with digital devices, but rather prefer to socialise and interact with friends through traditional games that have become a defining feature of this community. Some of the traditional games played include Game Boy and *Galah*, which are not only entertaining but also serve to strengthen social bonds. For tourists, this attraction is a highlight, as the traditional games offer a distinctive experience and an opportunity to interact with the local culture.

Implementation of Halal Tourism Principles in Local Wisdom

Halal tourism can be defined as an activity that provides a sense of well-being, relaxation, and tranquility, as well as fostering positive emotions. Furthermore, halal tourism has the potential to alleviate feelings of sadness and fortify one's resolve by adhering to Islamic principles and practices. In this context, Islam is not a rigid religion; rather, it is highly flexible in its ability to adapt to different circumstances and to accommodate a range of perspectives on the nature of truth and the value of a good life. In the Quran, Allah SWT states: "Proceed to travel on Earth and observe the fate of those who deny." One might inquire as to the proprietorship of the celestial and terrestrial realms. The answer is that these belong to Allah, who has mercy upon Himself. He will gather all people on the Day of Resurrection, which is an inevitable occurrence. Those who have lost their souls will not believe (Surat Al-An'am, 11-12). In this verse, Allah SWT makes the claim that He is the sole proprietor of all things in the heavens and on earth. One aspect of Islamic tourism is to gain insight from the consequences of disobedience to Allah's commands. Muslims are encouraged to travel as a means of witnessing the greatness of Allah's creation, with the objective of strengthening mental and spiritual health and appreciating the beauty of nature created by Him. To illustrate, travelling to Mecca, whether for the purpose of pilgrimage or Umrah, is a practice that is highly encouraged in Islam. These halal tourism activities not only refresh the mind and bring peace, but also provide in-depth knowledge of the cultural heritage and history of Muslims.

In addition, the Islamic recommendation to engage in travel and tourism activities is consistent with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who is quoted as saying, "There are three things that can please the eye: green, flowing water, and a kind face." This reinforces the significance of harmonious relationships with nature and fellow humans, which is consistent with the tenets of halal tourism that prioritise sustainability and ethical conduct. Halal tourism offers the chance to explore natural splendour, culture, and virtuous principles while adhering to the tenets of Shariah. By promoting these values, travellers can enjoy a holiday that is not only pleasurable, but also has a beneficial impact on their overall health and well-being.

In the context of the development of halal tourism in Aceh, the activities associated with this form of tourism are subject to regulation and supervision at the national level, as well as at the local level, where they are governed by both tourism law and Sharia law. Furthermore, the principle of tourism development is also based on a regulation at the village level, or what is referred to as the *qanun* Gampong. This serves as the basis for reference or guidance in preparing various village activities, including the programme to designate the village as a tourist destination. In its progression, all activities must adhere to the values delineated in the *qanun*. The following regulations provide supplementary guidance for the implementation of halal tourism in Aceh:

Table 1. Regulations for the Development of Halal Tourism in Aceh

Laws/Government Regulations	Local Regulation/ Aceh Qanun
Law (UU) Number 10 Year 2009 on Tourism	Aceh Qanun No. 11 of 2002 concerning the implementation of Islamic law in the fields of aqidah, worship and syi'ar islam
Law (UU) No. 9 of 1990 on Tourism.	Aceh Qanun No. 9/2008 on the Development of Adat and Customary Life
Government Regulation No. 67 Year 1996 concerning the Organisation of Tourism.	Aceh Qanun No. 8 of 2013 on Tourism
Presidential Regulation No. 2 Year 2007 on the Ratification of the ASEAN Tourism Agreement	Aceh Qanun No. 6 of 2014 on Jinayah Law
Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantee	Aceh Qanun No. 8 of 2015 on the Guidance and Protection of Aqidah

Source: Aprullah and Sayuthi, 2023

In order to facilitate the development of halal tourism in Aceh, it is essential to consider the values of goodness (maslahah), which are designed to foster prosperity and equality within the tourism sector. The values espoused in the development of halal tourism also align with the principles of Maqashid Sharia, which encompass five key aspects: the preservation of religion (al-din), the protection of the soul (al-nafs), the maintenance of intellect (al-'aql), the safeguarding of offspring (al-nasl), and the protection of wealth (al-mal). It is imperative that tourism and its constituent elements do not contravene the values and ethical standards of sharia pertaining to the concepts of halal and haram within Islamic doctrine.

The concept of halal practices is not limited to aspects of food and beverages; it also encompasses various aspects of daily life that reflect ethical and moral values. In the context of behaviour, halal practices emphasise the importance of actions that are socially acceptable and in accordance with religious teachings. Furthermore, the way of dressing is also an important aspect of halal practices. In a culture that upholds halal values, dressing modestly and in accordance with prevailing norms is a fundamental tenet. This not only demonstrates respect for oneself and others, but also reflects cultural and religious identity.

The Acehnese people evince a profound attachment to the tenets and traditions of their religious culture. In their everyday lives, religious symbols are an integral part of their identity, manifesting in various aspects such as attire, communication patterns, and other facets of their lives. The community of Gampong Nusa has adopted a community-based tourism model that integrates local wisdom and Islamic values in a variety of aspects of tourism. One of the primary tenets guiding the advancement of halal tourism in this village is monotheism, which is operationalised through the segregation of male and female travellers. This measure is taken in order to maintain and respect the values of Islamic law, thus creating an environment that is in accordance with local religious and cultural principles. This rule is particularly pertinent when camping at Lhok Mee Hill, where travellers reside. In order to uphold the values of sharia, the camping areas for men and women are separated. Meetings between men and women are only permitted on specific occasions, overseen by village youth, and must conclude before 10 p.m. Consequently, after 10 p.m., all activities cease, and campers are obliged to return to their designated camp areas.

The separation between men and women is also observed in the context of traditional game activities, whereby women are confined to interact solely with their own group, as well as with men. Furthermore, all tourists visiting Gampong Nusa are obliged to comply with the dress code, which applies to both local and international visitors. This policy is designed to safeguard the values of local wisdom, and thus every guest is expected to respect the local culture. In the event that tourists from abroad are observed to be wearing shorts or not wearing headscarves, the LPN will provide headscarves and sarongs so that guests can adapt to the dress code in Gampong Nusa.

All visitors to Gampong Nusa will experience the traditional Acehese atmosphere, characterised by the presence of children and teenagers engaged in a competitive recital of the verses of the Qur'an within the village bale. In addition to the recitations for children and teenagers, the mothers in this village are also active in the Majelis Ta'lim group, where they hold recitations every fortnight in rotation in their respective homes. This activity represents a significant point of interest for tourists, as the recitation following Maghrib represents a deeply entrenched tradition among the Acehese people. This practice is observed in nearly every household with the objective of cultivating moral character within the family.

Furthermore, Aceh is home to numerous religious ceremonies imbued with local wisdom traditions, one of which is Kenduri Maulid. Kenduri Maulid represents a significant tradition within the Acehese community, serving to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. The festivities commence on the 12th day of Rabiul Awal, which coincides with the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, and continue for a period of three months, encompassing a multitude of activities that engage the entire community. The Kenduri Maulid celebrations typically comprise communal dining, recitation of poems of praise (dhikr) and the recital of prayers. The atmosphere is characterised by a sense of solemnity and togetherness. In addition to the recital of dhikr and the delivery of religious sermons, the Kenduri Maulid tradition is also characterised by the consumption of specific culinary items. These include Kuah Beulangong and Bu Kulah, which have attained iconic status within the context of this celebration. In Gampong Nusa, the Kenduri Maulid has been developed into a tour package. Participants can experience first-hand the uniqueness and richness of Acehese traditions by actively participating in this celebration. In addition to enjoying Gampong Nusa's signature dishes, tourists can also experience the warm community atmosphere and religious fervour. However, as this activity is time-limited, tourists can only enjoy this experience during the celebration period.

In addition to Kenduri Maulid, one significant event that exemplifies the tenets of local wisdom in Gampong Nusa is Kenduri Blang. This event is a tradition held to celebrate the rice harvest, which represents a significant source of livelihood for the local community. Kenduri Blang, which translates to 'paddy field thanksgiving', is a ceremony held by farmers to offer prayers and gather together while partaking in a meal at the commencement of the planting season. The event is conducted in several phases, commencing with the planting of rice seeds and concluding with the harvesting of the crop. Each phase is accompanied by a specific kenduri. In addition to being an integral part of the local tradition, Kenduri Blang has been transformed into an intriguing tour package, offering tourists the chance to gain first-hand insight into the processes of planting and harvesting rice in collaboration with the residents of Gampong Nusa. This initiative not only enhances the tourism experience but also fosters a stronger bond between visitors and the local community.

The tradition of Kenduri Blang has been passed down for generations in Gampong Nusa, reflecting the implementation of Hadih Maja within the local community. The phrase "Keunong

siblah tabu djareung, Keunong sikureung rata-rata, Keunong tudjoh djeut cit mantong, Keunong limong caterpillar seuba" describes the various techniques employed in rice cultivation and fishing. It underscores the necessity of adhering to the customs and methodologies inherited from our forebears to ensure the attainment of bountiful outcomes. The people of Gampong Nusa maintain this tradition by organising Kenduri Blang, which serves a dual purpose: it is both a form of thanksgiving and a guideline in their agricultural practices. This ensures that cultural values and local wisdom remain alive and well in the face of changing times.

Challenges for Tourism Development

Despite the numerous tourism-related opportunities present in Gampong Nusa, a small number of residents remain unconvinced of the potential benefits that tourism can offer to the local economy. This lack of awareness has resulted in a lack of organisation and ineffective participation among the community, with some individuals even expressing scepticism about the concept of a tourist village, considering it a less promising opportunity for their economic future. Furthermore, the financial challenges faced by Gampong Nusa managers have also hindered the development of tourism programmes and facilities.

One of the challenges inherent in the development of the attractions component of Gampong Nusa is the fact that certain attractions are only accessible at specific times, such as weekends, during festivals, or when there are group visits. These issues include the lack of routine in the implementation of cultural activities and festivals, the absence of an interpretation programme for tourist destinations, and the location of the village in a tsunami-prone area. These factors present significant challenges to the sustainable management and development of tourist attractions, underscoring the need for more effective attention and strategies to overcome these constraints.

In terms of accessibility, although Gampong Nusa is relatively easily reached, the challenge lies in the limited signal within the village, which makes it difficult for tourists to ascertain the location of tourist destinations and to obtain information on activities available at each point. Furthermore, the lack of public or specialised transportation options to access various attractions in remote areas of Gampong Nusa represents a significant challenge. With regard to amenities, the environment of this tourism village lacks a distinctive identity, and the existing tourism facilities are inadequate to meet the needs of tourists. Additionally, lighting at night is insufficient, and visitor comfort is disrupted by the presence of wild monkeys that frequently descend into residential areas.

D. CONCLUSION

The numerous potentialities of Gampong Nusa indicate that this village has a significant opportunity to serve as a model for the advancement of halal tourism villages founded upon local wisdom in Aceh. The entire community of Gampong Nusa adheres to Islam and has integrated Islamic values into their daily lives. Furthermore, the culture and local wisdom that exist in Gampong Nusa also reflect Islamic values that continue to be maintained to this day. Therefore, efforts to designate Gampong Nusa as a halal tourism village are strongly recommended as a strategic step to encourage the growth of the tourism sector in Aceh and to develop quality tourism villages.

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