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Indonesia's Maritime Vision: A Look into the Potential of Halal-Based Maritime Tourism¹

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Abstract

This paper explores the evolution and potential of halal-based maritime tourism in Indonesia within the context of the country's maritime vision and regional dynamics in Southeast Asia. Despite facing challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for regional stability, Indonesia has pursued a strategic approach to develop halal tourism, aiming to attract Muslim travelers while preserving its cultural identity and natural heritage. Through infrastructure development, promotion, training, and cultural preservation efforts, the Indonesian government has sought to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for tourists, particularly in Muslim-majority region like Lombok. By aligning its maritime vision with regional frameworks such as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and initiatives like the sea highway project, Indonesia aims to leverage its maritime assets to drive economic growth and empowerment, both locally and nationally. This paper highlights the importance of collaboration between governments, local communities, and stakeholders in realizing the full potential of halal maritime tourism and fostering sustainable development across Indonesia's diverse archipelago.

Key Words: Halal-based Maritime Tourism, Indonesia's Maritime Vision, Regional Stability, Southeast Asia, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

World tourism is experiencing a positive increase annually. Since 1950, there have been 25 million tourists with a tourism value of 2 billion dollars, and the increase in 2019 reached 1.4 billion tourists. The tourism industry continues to grow, until now it is able to contribute more than 1.5 billion dollars, growing 4% from the previous year (UNWTO, 2019) globally creating more than 50 million jobs (BBC, 2020) which can provide welfare for millions of families around the world and contribute around 10.4% to the world economy (Statista, 2022).

Indonesia is one of the countries that has a lot of tourism potential. In the 2015-2019 Tourism Development Plan, the Indonesian government divides tourism development targets into two forms, namely growth targets and inclusive development targets. In the growth target, there are three main aspects, among others: contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP); foreign tourist visits; and domestic tourist visits. Based on data (Katadata, 2023), the economic value of the tourism sector to Indonesia's GDP has consistently increased from 2016 by 4.65% to reach 4.97% in 2019. The number

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of foreign tourist visits from 2016 was calculated to reach 11.5 million and increased to 16.1 million in 2019 (Katadata, 2020). However, this performance did not last long. As a country with an ever-increasing performance in the tourism sector, Indonesia received the bitter taste of COVID-19 in this sector. The economic value of tourism plummeted to only contributing 2.24% to GDP (Katadata, 2023).

For this reason, the Indonesian government in the Ministry of Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2020-2024 divides tourism strategic goals into a vision of tourism that is advanced, competitive, sustainable, and prioritizes local wisdom (Kemenparekraf, 2022). Foreign tourists in Indonesia, which had fallen during the COVID-19 period from 1.29 million in January 2020 to around 150,000 from April 2020 to March 2022, began to show a recovery performance, which since June 2023 has again touched the million mark (Katadata, 2024). Until the end of 2022, the tourism sector has recorded a recovery with an increase in the economic contribution of 3.6% of GDP which is expected to reach 4.1% in 2023 (AntaraNews, 2023).

Tourism can be seen as a contemporary phenomenon that is experiencing growth in the world as a result of globalization. Internationally, world tourism is experiencing various development trends, one of which is halal tourism. This type of tourism is a tourism sector that provides basic needs facilities needed by Muslim tourists under the rules of Islamic law. However, halal tourism facilities can also be enjoyed by non-Muslim tourists, because the overall core of the intended facilities only refers to food and beverage facilities with halal labels, halal restaurants, and sharia hotels. In Indonesia, halal certificates can be obtained from the National Sharia Council-Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Abrori, 2021). On the other hand, the halal tourism industry is a contributor to increasing foreign exchange and the economy of a country. This is due to the contribution of this industry in providing employment that can generate large income, for individuals, businesses, companies, and countries (Wahyono & Razak, 2020). Therefore, the potential for increasing halal tourism is being intensively developed by several countries, especially Indonesia.

Indonesia itself is also a country that actively promotes the tourism economy at a global level. Several efforts have been made by the Indonesian government to increase foreign arrivals, such as the Wonderful Indonesia and Pesona Indonesia programs (Chotijah et al, 2020). Indonesia, with its abundant natural resources and distinctive local wisdom, has great potential to become a rapidly growing center for halal-based marine tourism in the Indo-Pacific region. In this context, Indonesia's Maritime Vision through the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) Framework could play an important role in exploring and expanding the potential of the halal-based marine tourism sector. The author through this paper will try to investigate how the Indonesian Maritime Vision can optimize

the potential of halal-based marine tourism, strengthen Indonesia's position as a leading tourism destination, and make a significant contribution to economic growth and empowerment of local communities in Indonesia.

A Need for Regional Stability to Support Economic Growth in Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia's maritime context, stability is critical to nurturing the tourism sector, which is a significant contributor to economic growth in the region. Southeast Asia's vast archipelagos, unspoiled beaches, and lively cultural heritage attract millions of tourists each year, generating substantial revenue and employment opportunities. However, the full potential of the tourism industry can only be realized in a peaceful and stable environment (Zhou, 2022). Tourism thrives in regions characterized by safety, security, and political stability. Any instability, whether arising from geopolitical tensions, civil unrest, or security threats, can deter travelers and disrupt the tourism supply chain, thereby impacting businesses, employment, and revenue streams (Harrington, 2021). Ensuring regional stability is therefore critical to sustaining the growth of the tourism sector in Southeast Asia which is a maritime region.

The maritime dimension adds a unique appeal to tourism offerings in Southeast Asia. From island-hopping adventures to coastal cruises and water sports activities, the region's abundant marine resources offer a wide array of experiences for tourists. However, investments to capitalize on the potential of marine tourism depend on a stable and secure maritime environment. Geopolitical tensions or maritime disputes can disrupt maritime transportation routes, impede the movement of tourists, and limit access to popular destinations (Neacșu et al, 2018). Concerns such as piracy, maritime disputes, and environmental degradation can undermine the safety and attractiveness of marine tourism destinations, deterring potential visitors and hampering the growth of the sector.

Maritime connectivity also plays an important role in facilitating tourism flows in Southeast Asia and beyond (Page, 2001). Efficient maritime transportation infrastructure, including ports, ferry services, and cruise terminals, is critical to connecting tourism destinations and enabling a seamless travel experience for tourists (Chantavanich, 2021). In addition to security concerns, environmental sustainability is a pressing issue for marine tourism in Southeast Asia. The region's rich marine biodiversity and coastal ecosystems are valuable assets for tourism, attracting nature lovers, ecotourists, and adventure seekers. However, unsustainable tourism practices, pollution, and over-exploitation of marine resources can degrade the attractions that draw tourists to the region. Therefore, promoting sustainable tourism practices and marine conservation efforts is essential to preserve the natural beauty and ecological integrity of marine tourism destinations.

A maritime vision for tourism in Southeast Asia would provide a strategic roadmap for leveraging the region's maritime assets and promoting inclusive and sustainable growth in the tourism sector. By prioritizing security, sustainability, connectivity, and collaboration, countries in the region can unlock the immense potential of maritime tourism as a driver of economic development and prosperity. Indonesia could be playing a role in this. Indonesia may act in some way in the future through the usage of Global Maritime Fulcrum as a strategy to increase its prestige, role, and influence in the regional and international order. Indonesia can play as key opinion leader in influencing ASEAN decision-making. Apart from that, Indonesia has not let GMF act against BRI and FOIP. A show that Indonesia would like to develop its relationship and cooperation with both as broad as possible (Simatupang, 2023).

Indonesia's Maritime Tourism Vision

Indonesia in the early period of President Joko Widodo's leadership has been very aggressive in developing the concept of the Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF). The GMF is a global vision of the Joko Widodo administration that is targeted to be achieved by 2030. To realize the 2030 Vision, the Indonesian Maritime Policy has been prepared with reference to the Indonesian Development Vision contained in Law No.17 of 2007 concerning the National Long-Term Development Plan 2005-2025 and Law No.32 of 2014 concerning Maritime Affairs. In 2030, Indonesia is expected to become a role model for the international community in the marine sector, including how to organize the development of maritime governance (Simarmata et al, 2023)

One of the basic principles in marine policy is the blue economy. Article 14 of Law No.32 of 2014 concerning Maritime Affairs stipulates that the central government and local governments in accordance with their authority carry out maritime management for the prosperity of the people through the utilization and exploitation of resources with the principle of blue economy. It can be said that the GMF is an opportunity for Indonesia to internationalize its sub-national areas, both cities and provinces. The vision of Indonesia as the Global Maritime Fulcrum will be achieved if the sub-national regions, including provinces, districts/cities, sub-districts, and villages, have a vision that supports the central government's vision of becoming the global center. The vision can be applied in the regions by making adjustments to the potential and conditions of the region concerned so that each region has different characteristics and concentrations (Wira et al, 2023).

Indonesia realized that the maritime vision must be built with regional awareness so at first it independently formed the Indo-Pacific Cooperation / IPC (Setkab, 2018). The IPC conception then underwent another transformation, this time through the ASEAN mechanism resulting in the

formation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific in 2019. Within the framework of the Global Maritime Fulcrum initiated by Indonesia, connectivity is one of the main pillars in supporting development. This connectivity is in line with the AOIP cooperation points to support equitable development in the region. The sea highway project (proyek tol laut) echoed by President Joko Widodo to build ports in the eastern part of Indonesia has great benefits for the Indonesia-centric development model. The synchronization of GMF and AOIP encourages the benefits of maritime economic motives. In terms of the maritime tourism economy, the Masterplan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 as an extension of the AOIP can be used as a benchmark for a sustainable framework (Fathun & Gideon, 2023).

Government Efforts in the Development of Halal Maritime Tourism

One key area of focus for government is infrastructure development. By investing in halal-friendly resorts, restaurants, and recreational facilities, Indonesian authorities are creating the necessary infrastructure to cater to the needs of Muslim travelers. Ensuring that these facilities adhere to halal standards in terms of food preparation, prayer facilities, and accommodations is essential to attract and retain Muslim tourists. Moreover, the government is actively engaged in promoting and marketing halal maritime tourism destinations. Collaborating with tourism boards and agencies, they participate in tourism fairs, launch marketing campaigns targeting Muslim travelers, and partner with halal-certified travel agencies and tour operators. By showcasing the unique attractions and experiences of these destinations, the governments aim to capture the attention of Muslim tourists both domestically and internationally (Sinulingga et al, 2018).

In addition to infrastructure and promotion, the Indonesian government is also prioritizing training and certification programs for businesses in the maritime tourism sector (Kemenparekraf, 2020). By providing training in halal food preparation, hospitality services, and cultural sensitivities, they ensure that businesses understand and comply with halal standards. This not only enhances the quality of services offered but also fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment for Muslim travelers. Cultural preservation is another crucial area. By supporting initiatives to conserve historical sites, traditional arts, and cultural festivals that showcase Islamic heritage, the government aims to enrich the overall tourism experience for Muslim travelers. This emphasis on preserving and promoting Islamic culture contributes to the authenticity and appeal of halal maritime tourism destinations.

To implement halal maritime tourism, it is crucial to pay attention to the role of local governments as the main actors in planning and implementing domestic economic development policies that are greatly influenced by trends in regional and global political economy developments. In Indonesia

itself, local governments have been given policy freedom through the Regional Autonomy Law, which has evolved since the fall of Suharto's centralized regime. Local governments have been allowed to give formal engagement in development promotion, and investment efforts, including the development of human resources since the decentralization strategy was put into place. Furthermore, local governments recognize the importance of community engagement in the development of halal maritime tourism. By involving local communities in decision-making processes and ensuring their participation and benefit from tourism activities, they foster a sense of ownership and responsibility towards tourism development. This collaborative approach helps to build sustainable tourism practices that respect the cultural values and way of life of local communities.

The development of halal-based maritime tourism in some Muslim-majority region such as Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), is a progressive step that has been taken by the local government. In this effort, the local government has made various diplomatic efforts to raise the profile and attractiveness of halal tourism in the region. Lombok has attempted to visualize tourism by using the slogan "Friendly Lombok" to show the hospitality of Lombok for all groups, in this case, especially Muslim tourists. The Lombok local government has also made efforts by cooperating with local youth communities as social media activists to carry out promotions, as well as international cooperation with foreign embassies and journalists through the Familiarization Trip program. Lombok's success in implementing this maritime halal tourism vision is evidenced by consecutive awards as the best halal tourist destination in the world (Subarkah, 2018). This success can also be seen from the number of foreign tourist visits which grew rapidly from 752 thousand visits in 2014 when the halal tourism program was first implemented to 1.5 million visits in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (West Nusa Tenggara Tourism Office, 2023).

Conclusions

The Indonesian government's strategic efforts in developing halal maritime tourism have been notable, focusing on infrastructure development, promotion, training, and cultural preservation. By investing in halal-friendly facilities and promoting destinations that cater to the needs of Muslim travelers, Indonesia aims to attract a broader range of tourists while preserving its cultural identity. Moreover, the involvement of local governments and communities in the planning and implementation of tourism initiatives underscores a collaborative approach to sustainable development. Case studies such as Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara demonstrate the success of such efforts, where diplomatic engagement, local partnerships, and promotional activities have led to significant growth in halal tourism. Looking ahead, the alignment of Indonesia's maritime vision with regional frameworks such as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and initiatives like the sea

highway project emphasizes the importance of connectivity and cooperation in realizing the full potential of maritime tourism. By continuing to invest in infrastructure, promote sustainable practices, and engage local communities, Indonesia can further strengthen its position as a leading destination for halal maritime tourism and contribute to economic growth and empowerment across the archipelago.

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