

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF MUSLIM-FRIENDLY TOURISM IN THE MANDEH ISLAND TOURISM AREA

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Abstract

The emergence of Muslim-friendly tourism as a significant trend in the global tourism industry has gained significant traction due to the rising number of Muslim travelers seeking destinations that align with their religious and cultural values. Mandeh Island in West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, renowned for its stunning natural beauty, has begun to focus on developing Muslim-friendly tourism. This study examines the opportunities and challenges associated with creating this type of tourism in the Mandeh Island tourism area, utilizing the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) indicators as a framework. The research findings highlight the considerable potential of Mandeh Island to attract Muslim travelers owing to its captivating landscapes and relatively preserved environment. Access, Communication, Environment, Facilities, and services adhering to Islamic principles have begun to be established, including alcohol-free accommodation, prayer areas, and halal dining options. However, challenges such as the need for enhanced infrastructure, limited accessibility, and local awareness of the needs of Muslim travelers still impact their overall experience. Effective marketing communication is also essential to reaching the global market of Muslim tourists. Consequently, this study concludes that while Mandeh Island holds substantial potential for Muslim-friendly tourism, collaborative efforts involving the government, private sector, and local communities are essential to address the existing challenges and maximize the available opportunities. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on niche tourism segments and provides practical recommendations for stakeholders in Pulau Mandeh to enhance their offerings and tap into the Muslim-friendly tourism market.

Keywords: *Muslim-Friendly Tourism; Mandeh Island; Opportunities; Challenges; Muslim Travelers; Global Muslim Travel Index*

Introduction

Indonesia has many natural tourist attractions without the slightest touch of the human hands. This makes Indonesia a destination for foreign tourists on vacation. In the era of regional autonomy, Indonesia encourages each region to optimize its resource potential to increase regional income. This is a trigger for regional enthusiasm in optimizing the potential of its resources, one of which is the tourism sector (Putri Meliza Sari, 2018).

The large role of the tourism sector in influencing economic growth, so the government pays great attention to its development (Hasan, 2022). (Ali, M. N.; Almagtome, A. H.; Hameedi, 2019) said that the growth of the tourism sector will also affect economic



growth in finance, transportation, environment, trade and telecommunications, and various other business sectors.

Along with the growing development of the Islamic economy and the increasing public awareness of the realization of Islamic Sharia in everyday life, it is affecting the demand for services in the Islamic tourism sector (Hasan, 2022). The Islamic economy is an important part of the Indonesian economy, which is growing rapidly and has become one of the main gaits in Indonesian finance. Globally, seven Islamic economies in several sectors have experienced a significant increase, including food, Islamic financial insurance, industry, fashion, cosmetics, pharmaceutical entertainment, and tourism. Among Muslims, the economic sector that has experienced the development and attention of many people in lifestyle products is halal tourism. As well as halal tourism continues to experience increased growth compared to conventional tourism that exists (Muhammad et al., 2021).

Jaelani (Eka et al., 2018) explains that Indonesia collaborates with many parties in developing halal tourism. In realizing this, the Ministry of Tourism synergizes with DSN (National et al.), MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia et al.), and LSU (Business Certification Institute). The form of synergy is the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy pouring on its regulations related to developing tourism and prioritizing culture and trust values.

In the World Halal Tourism Awards 2016 competition in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia won 12 awards from 16 categories. Arief Yahya, the Minister of Tourism of Indonesia at that time, said that this achievement was the first form to build a new halal tourism ecosystem in Indonesia, which will contribute greatly to increasing the number of tourists coming to Indonesia. Of the 12 contested categories, one was the world's best halal destination (Muhammad et al., 2021).

The Ministry of Tourism has reported that 13 provinces in Indonesia will be developed to become halal tourist destinations. One of these provinces is West Sumatra (Eka et al., 2018). This province is rich in potential tourist attractions that should be developed, especially for halal tourism destinations. In addition, this potential can be seen from its natural beauty, cuisine, and culture and customs of the people who are very close to religion. The majority of West Sumatra's population is Muslim. It upholds their culture, namely the Minangkabau culture, which makes Muslim-friendly tourism not a common thing because something with sharia elements is by the principles or rules of the Minangkabau tribe (Mandalia et al., 2022). This is represented by the motto of West Sumatra's people, namely "Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah". The results of the 2018 Report of Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI) regarding various halal tourist destinations in West Sumatra included in the top 10 provinces in Indonesia (Rozalinda, 2019).

Increased awareness of Muslim-Friendly Tourism has created significant opportunities for tourism destinations worldwide. In recent years, the demand for Muslim-friendly facilities and services has grown rapidly, with the number of Muslim travelers increasing. Along with that, many countries and tourist destinations are competing to meet the needs of these Muslim travelers.

West Sumatra has coastal areas that have potential and prospects for development. The marine wealth owned by West Sumatra has just begun to be worked on again by West Sumatra, which turned out to be able to produce and attract tourist visits quickly to produce and attract tourists to visit West Sumatra (Putri et al., 2018). The following is a list of domestic tourist visits by district/city in West Sumatra as follows:



Table 1 List of National Tourist Visits by Regency/City in West Sumatra

Regency/City	2021	2020	2019
Kepulauan Mentawai Regency	318	122793	994655
Pesisir Selatan Regency	354297	177017	971989
Solok Regency	703300	703649	601244
Sijunjung Regency	60533	149889	12434
Tanah Datar Regency	340363	527635	627057
Padang Pariaman Regency	100144	261615	307316
Agam Regency	509428	664318	756750
Lima Puluh Kota Regency	624155	654334	639840
Pasaman Regency	11812	747	101141
Solok Selatan Regency	61199	41809	68084
Dharmasraya Regency	54908	11676	9745
Pasaman Barat Regency	23503	2486	28603
Padang City	376534	2621929	843296
Solok City	181154	134450	120411
Sawahlunto City	91027	101649	237490
Padang Panjang City	215073	107642	166364
Bukittinggi City	748074	1471542	933609
Payakumbuh City	77747	46930	298479
Pariaman City	252317	239758	450640

Source: West Sumatra Central Bureau of Statistics 2019-2021

The data of archipelago tourist visits shows that Pesisir Selatan Regency is one of the districts many tourists visit. Pesisir Selatan Regency is rich in interesting island attractions and has various potentials that need to be developed. Mandeh Island, located in the South Coastal District of West Sumatra, Indonesia, has long been a tourist destination that attracts the attention of tourists from within and outside the country. Its stunning natural charm, white sandy beaches, and rich marine ecosystems make Mandeh Island one of the potential tourist areas in Indonesia. In addition, Indonesia has a large Muslim population, and Muslim-friendly tourism is increasingly gaining attention in the global tourism industry, especially in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area, a port location if tourists want to visit various surrounding islands. Mandeh Island Tourism Area offers many options for tourists who want to come and is not limited to only marine tourism (Ogi Kurniansyah, 2018).

As a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia has great potential to develop Muslim-friendly tourism. However, certain challenges may also arise in implementing this concept, especially in tourist areas with unique characteristics, such as Mandeh Island. Therefore, this research aims to identify the opportunities and challenges in developing Muslim-friendly tourism on Mandeh Island and provide relevant recommendations for further development. From the various explanations of the phenomena and problems above, the researcher is interested in more deeply studying the opportunities and challenges in developing Muslim-friendly tourism in the Mandeh Island area. Muslim-Friendly Tourism is a tourism concept that considers the needs and preferences of Muslim

tourists, including halal food, prayer facilities, and an environment that is by Islamic religious values. This is expected to increase the attractiveness of Mandeh Island as a tourist destination for Muslim tourists worldwide.

Method

This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. This research will explain and describe various things using words with a special context and understanding that is natural using various specific methods (Moeleong, 2006: 6). As for what will be explained, described, and described in the results of this study is about the opportunities and challenges of Muslim-friendly tourism in the Mandeh Island tourism area. The researchers used in this research are primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources used in this study are the Mandeh Island Tourism Area Management and the Pesisir Selatan Regency Tourism Office and various types of data that support this research, such as journals, articles, reports, books, and so on, also called secondary data.

Result and Discussion

Opportunities of Muslim-Friendly Tourism in Mandeh Island Tourism Area

Muslim tourism opportunities are becoming a trend in society, both local and foreign Muslim tourism, so it becomes an opportunity for Muslim-friendly tourism in Indonesia, especially West Sumatra. Some of the needs of Muslim tourists in tourism activities based on the **Indonesia Muslim Travel Index** include the following:

Access

Access is a very important factor in tourism; road infrastructure is one of the access components. Road infrastructure is the main thing in tourism activities; with the infrastructure, tourism will develop. Based on the results of interviews conducted with Suhendri Zainal as Head of the Tourism, Youth and Sports Office of Pesisir Selatan Regency in 2023, it can be concluded that access in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area is quite good, making it easier for tourists to visit and there are no damaged roads. The following is the number of travel agencies in Pesisir Selatan Regency

Table 2 Number of Travel Agencies

No	Travel Agencies	Address	Number of Fleets
1	BMP Tour & Travel	IV Jurai	1
2	PT. Penjuru Wisata Negeri	IV Jurai	1
3	MIA Travel 1	IV Jurai	23
4	PT.HPS	IV Jurai	11
5	MIA Travel 2	Bayang	8
6	CV. Alfar Travel	Lengayang	4
7	Bumnagma Tarusan Jaya	Koto XI Tarusan	1
8	Bumnag Kambang	Lengayang	1
9	Bumnag Lunang	Lunang	1
10	Bumnag IV Jurai	IV Jurai	1
11	Bumnag Silaut	Silaut	1
12	Bumnag Ranah Pesisir	Ranah Pesisir	1
Jumlah			54

Source: Department of Tourism, Youth and Sports, 2023



Communication

Internal and external communication of tourist destinations includes destination exposure, communication skills for tour guides, and stakeholder involvement. In the Mandeh Island Tourism Area, stakeholder involvement greatly influences tourism development. Based on interviews that have been conducted with Suhendri Zainal and Hadi Susilo as Head of the Tourism, Youth and Sports Office in 2023 and 2021, it can be concluded that stakeholder involvement greatly affects tourism development in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area. The stakeholders involved are local communities, there are no external stakeholders, in order to develop the potential of human resources in South Pesisir Regency and improve the economy of the surrounding community.

Environment

The environment is more about the security of tourist destinations; this is a very important factor because security is a facility that affects traveling activities. Based on the results of interviews conducted with Suhendri Zainal as Head of the Tourism, Youth and Sports Office 2023 and Vando as the Operations Manager of one of the lodgings in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area, namely Pandan View Lodging, it can be concluded that they certainly maintain the safety of tourists while in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area and also greatly maintain the safety of tourists during their stay by providing 3 security guards who are also on duty at night to ensure environmental security and ensure visitors' vehicles are safe. Several other opportunities that can be seen from the environmental aspects of the Mandeh Island Tourism Area including:

- a. A clean and comfortable environment for tourists in Mandeh Island Tourism Area.
- b. Sufficient and adequate worship facilities are available in tourist attractions and public places in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area.
- c. Already running SAPTA PESONA well, which contains Islamic values.
- d. Stability and security in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area.
- e. There is already a draft strategy for implementing Muslim-friendly tourism in Pesisir Selatan Regency.
- f. Many marine tourism destinations have the potential to be developed.
- g. There is already a regional regulation related to Muslim-Friendly Tourism.

Services

A tourist destination provides these services; this factor is very much needed in Muslim-Friendly tourism. Here are some that need to be in tourist destinations that Muslim tourists need. However, not only Muslim tourists are also needed by foreign tourists:

- a) Halal Hotels or Accommodations

Hotels or lodgings located in a destination are by Islamic law; there is already halal certification from the local MUI. If seen in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area for lodging, it already has worship facilities that are quite Muslim-friendly, the rooms provided already have prayer equipment and Qibla directions, and the toilet does not point to the Qibla. Room facilities in lodging have met the standards of Muslim-Friendly Tourism and workers in restaurants and lodgings already wear clothes that meet Islamic law. Overall, room and facilities in lodging have met the standards of Muslim-Friendly Tourism. Based on the results of interviews with Vando as the Operations Manager of Pandan View Lodging, it can be concluded that their lodging is not yet halal certified by MUI, but when a couple visitors will check in they will first check whether the visitors is married or not.



Figure 1. Hotels or lodgings located in a destination

Hotels or accommodations support tourism activities; the following data is on the number of hotels, homestays, and lodgings in Pesisir Selatan Regency.

Table 3 Number of Hotels, Homestays, and Lodgings in Pesisir Selatan Regency

No	Districts	Number of Hotels, Homestays, and Lodgings			Number of Rooms
		Hotels	Homestays	Lodgings	
1	Koto XI tarusan	2	5	6	164
2	Bayang	1	1	0	28
3	IV Jurai	11	8	14	420
4	Lengayang	0	0	1	26
5	Linggo SB	0	0	1	10
6	Pancuang Soal	0	2	0	21
7	BAB Tapan	2	0	4	72
8	Lunang	0	0	5	82
9	Silaut	0	0	2	7
	Jumlah	18	16	33	850

Source: Department of Tourism, Youth and Sports, 2023

b) Halal Foods or Halal Restaurants

Foods and drinks are an inseparable part of the needs of tourists in tourist destinations. The style and taste of food is one of the tourist magnets, usually packaged to become a special attraction for tourists, such as halal food. When viewed in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area, the food provided and the restaurants in the tourist area serve typical food from West Sumatra. Based on the results of interviews conducted with Suhendri Zainal as the Head of the Tourism, Youth and Sports Office 2023, it can be concluded that food entrepreneurs or restaurants are not yet Halal certified from MUI, but they are certified in Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environment Sustainability (CHSE).



c) Attractions

Tourism attractions in Pesisir Selatan Regency, ranging from natural, historical, or cultural to marine tourism owned by Pesisir Selatan Regency, have become an attraction for domestic and foreign tourists. All of that has been supported by good management. This needs to be a concern for the government regarding halal and Muslim service standards to provide comfort to Muslim tourists. When viewed in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area, natural tourism is beautiful. It has formed itself by Allah SWT as a list of main and buffer tourist destinations in the South Pesisir Regency.

Table 4 Main and Buffer Tourism Destinations in Pesisir Selatan Regency

No	Tourism Destinations	Type of Destination			Location
		Nature	Marine	Historical	
1	Kawasan Mandeh		✓		Koto XI Tarusan
2	Air Terjun Si Guntur	✓			Koto XI Tarusan
3	Kapal MV.Boeloengan			✓	Koto XI Tarusan
4	Jembatan Akar	✓			IV Nagari Bayu
5	Air Terjun Bayang Sani	✓			Bayang
6	Pantai Carocok		✓		IV Jurai
7	Bukit Langkisau	✓			IV Jurai
8	Limau Gadang Lumpo	✓			IV Jurai
9	Timbulun Painan	✓			IV Jurai
10	Benteng Portugis			✓	IV Jurai
11	Pantai Tansridano		✓		Batang Kapas
12	Labuhan Baruah		✓		Batang Kapas
13	Pantai Soeta		✓		Batang Kapas
14	Pemandian Lubuak Kualii	✓			Batang Kapas
15	Pemandian Jalamu	✓			Batang Kapas
16	Penangkaran Penyu		✓		Sutera
17	Pantai Buayo Putih		✓		Sutera
18	Pasar Putih Kambang		✓		Lengayang
19	Masjid Al-Imam Koto Baru			✓	Lengayang
20	Rumah Oeang Lengayang			✓	Lengayang
21	Air Terjun Sungai Liku	✓			Ranah Pesisir
22	Air Terjun Palangai Gadang	✓			Ranah Pesisir
23	Pantai Sumedang		✓		Ranah Pesisir
24	Pantai Muaro Kandis		✓		Linggo SB
25	Rumah Gadang Mande Rubiah			✓	Lunang
26	Kesultanan Indrapura			✓	Pancung Soal
27	Sako Gambir Tapan	✓	✓		Rahul Tapan
28	Pantai Sumbungo				Silaut
Jumlah		11	11	6	

Source: Department of Tourism, Youth and Sports, 2023

Challenges of Muslim-Friendly Tourism in Mandeh Island Tourism Area

Behind the opportunities that Mandeh Island Tourism Area has for the development of Muslim-friendly tourism, there are also several challenges that exist in Mandeh Island

Tourism Area. The following are some of the challenges found in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area against some of the needs of Muslim tourists in tourism activities based on the ACES Indonesia Muslim Travel Index model:

Access

Overall road access and infrastructure in Mandeh Island Tourism Area is quite good, but the road infrastructure in Mandeh Island Tourism Area is very steep, making it prone to accidents. In addition, the absence of street lights along the way to Mandeh Island Tourism Area.

Communication

Challenges that can be seen from the communication aspect of Mandeh Island Tourism Area include the unavailability of internet networks in all networks, only a few providers are available. In addition, there is no wifi service available considering the limited internet network available around the Mandeh Island Tourism Area.

Environment

Several challenges that exist in the environmental aspect namely:

- a. There are halal-certified homestays and lodgings close to the Mandeh Island Tourism Area. This will certainly be a challenge for some inns that have not been halal certified by MUI because of course tourists will be more interested in staying at lodgings that are already halal certified.
- b. The RDTR (Detailed Spatial Design) lodging establishment permit has yet to be issued.
- c. The potential for natural disasters, such as earthquakes and *tsunamis*.

Service

Several challenges that exist in the service aspect namely:

- a. Food in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area restaurants is not halal certified.
- b. There are no separate recreational facilities and swimming pools for men and women.
- c. Human resources still need to be made aware of the potential of existing destinations.
- d. Lack of hospitality and training for human resources.

In halal tourism, some indicators prioritize security and a comfortable and conducive atmosphere for Muslim tourists. This can be realized by everything that supports the existence of halal tourism. Thus, those concerning Sharia standard accommodation and other supporters are inseparable from efforts to develop Islamic tourism (Muttalib, 2019). A Muslim traveler now understands their needs when traveling. Muslim travelers are already good at choosing which destinations are safe for them. Several countries, such as Malaysia, Dubai, and Turkey, have benefited from halal tourism. Indonesia is also among the countries starting to pay attention to what Muslim tourists need (Karina Mayza, 2017).

The research results related to opportunities and challenges of Muslim-friendly tourism in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area show that the South Coastal Regency owns many opportunities regarding Muslim-friendly tourism. Muslim-friendly tourism is a tourist spot that provides facilities, accommodations, and a safe atmosphere for Muslim tourists, which will not influence non-Muslim tourists. The Mandeh Island Tourism Area, which has beautiful marine tourism, has the potential to develop tourism and support the economic activities of the local community. Mandeh Island Tourism Area has Muslim-friendly tourism opportunities because it already has a halal tourism strategic plan, and lodging around the Mandeh Tourism Area has led to Muslim-friendly tourism standards.



Muslim-Friendly Tourism does not Islamize tourist destinations but provides services and considers the needs of Muslim tourists. The challenges in the Mandeh Island Tourism Area for Muslim-Friendly Tourism are because many of the understanding destination managers, restaurant managers, stakeholders, and others think that Muslim-friendly tourism will decrease economic income turnover. If implemented properly, this Muslim-Friendly Tourism will not affect non-Muslim tourists.

Conclusion

After going through the discussions from beginning to end discussing the opportunities and challenges of Muslim-friendly tourism in the Mandeh Tourism Area, from the findings supported by relevant data and theories, it can be concluded that at the SWOT analysis stage carried out external and internal factors can be identified by looking at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The manner tourist area has the opportunity for Muslim-friendly tourism because it already has a strategic plan for halal tourism, and the lodging around Mandeh Island tourism area has led to Muslim-friendly tourism standards. Muslim-friendly tourism is not an Islamic tourist destination but provides services and considers the needs of Muslim tourists. The challenges in the Mandeh tourist area for Muslim-friendly tourism are obvious because many destination managers, restaurant managers, stakeholders, and others believe that Muslim-friendly tourism will decrease economic income turnover. If implemented properly, this Muslim-friendly tourism will not influence foreign tourists.

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