

## Implementation of Tourism Potential in Bengkalis Regency from an Islamic Economics Perspective

### Implementasi Potensi Pariwisata Kabupaten Bengkalis Ditinjau Dari Perspektif Ekonomi Islam

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#### ABSTRACT

Tourism in Bengkalis Regency has significant potential to drive regional economic growth through the development of natural, cultural, and marine tourism. This study aims to analyze the implementation of tourism potential in Bengkalis Regency from an Islamic economics perspective. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and library research. Primary data were obtained from local communities and tourism stakeholders, while secondary data were sourced from relevant government institutions and official regional publications.

The findings indicate that tourism development in Bengkalis Regency is generally aligned with the principles of Islamic economics, particularly in terms of sustainable utilization of natural resources (*hifz al-bi'ah*), empowerment of the local economy (*maslahah*), and preservation of Malay cultural values imbued with Islamic principles. However, the implementation of sharia-based tourism has not yet been fully optimized due to infrastructural limitations, insufficient understanding of halal tourism standards among business actors, and the lack of comprehensive regulations and halal certification.

This study concludes that sharia-oriented tourism holds considerable potential to enhance community welfare and increase local government revenue (PAD) in Bengkalis Regency if managed in an integrated and sustainable manner in accordance with Islamic economic principles. Therefore, strengthening policy frameworks, improving human resource capacity, and fostering synergy among government, business actors, and local communities are essential to support the development of halal tourism in Bengkalis Regency.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Islamic Economics, Halal Tourism, Bengkalis Regency, Economic Empowerment

## ABSTRAK

*Pelancongan Kabupaten Bengkalis mempunyai potensi besar dalam merangsang pertumbuhan ekonomi daerah melalui pembangunan pelancongan alam semula jadi, budaya dan maritim. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pelaksanaan potensi pelancongan Kabupaten Bengkalis dari perspektif Ekonomi Islam. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui pemerhatian, temu bual, dokumentasi dan kajian kepustakaan. Data primer diperoleh daripada masyarakat dan penggiat pelancongan, manakala data sekunder diperoleh daripada agensi berkaitan serta penerbitan rasmi kerajaan daerah.*

*Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pembangunan pelancongan di Kabupaten Bengkalis pada asasnya telah selari dengan prinsip-prinsip Ekonomi Islam, khususnya dalam aspek penggunaan sumber alam secara lestari (hifz al-bi'ah), pemerkasaan ekonomi masyarakat tempatan (masalah), serta pemeliharaan nilai budaya Melayu yang berteraskan Islam. Walau bagaimanapun, pelaksanaan pelancongan berasaskan syariah masih belum dilaksanakan secara optimum kerana masih terdapat kekangan dari segi infrastruktur, kurangnya kefahaman dalam kalangan pengusaha terhadap piawaian pelancongan halal, serta kelemahan dalam aspek peraturan dan pensijilan halal.*

*Kajian ini merumuskan bahawa pelancongan berasaskan syariah mempunyai potensi besar untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat dan Pendapatan Asli Daerah (PAD) Kabupaten Bengkalis sekiranya diurus secara bersepadu dan mampan selaras dengan prinsip Ekonomi Islam. Oleh itu, pengukuhan dasar, peningkatan kualiti sumber manusia, serta sinergi antara kerajaan, pengusaha dan masyarakat amat diperlukan bagi menyokong pembangunan pelancongan halal di Kabupaten Bengkalis.*

*Kata kunci: Pelancongan, Ekonomi Islam, Pelancongan Halal, Kabupaten Bengkalis, Pemerkasaan Ekonomi*

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as a strategic sector with significant potential to drive regional economic growth, create employment, and enhance community welfare (Bishop, 2008; Seah, 2016). Kabupaten Bengkalis, located in Riau Province, Indonesia, possesses a diverse array of tourism assets, including natural attractions such as beaches and mangrove forests, cultural and historical sites, and local culinary offerings. Despite this potential, the development of tourism in the region has not reached its optimum level. Challenges persist, including limited professional management, insufficient infrastructure, inadequate promotion, and minimal local community involvement, which collectively hinder the sector's contribution to sustainable economic development (Ernest, 2019).

In response to these limitations, recent scholarship has emphasized the integration of Islamic economic principles into tourism management, highlighting concepts such as justice, sustainability, societal welfare (kemaslahatan), and ethical resource utilization (Lin, 2025). Halal tourism and community-based tourism approaches align closely with these principles, ensuring that local communities serve as primary beneficiaries while preserving environmental and cultural resources. However, existing studies on tourism in Indonesia, including those focused on Riau and Kabupaten Bengkalis, have largely neglected a systematic examination of the extent to which tourism management adheres to Islamic economic values. Moreover, there is limited research employing analytical tools such as SWOT analysis to assess the internal and external factors influencing the implementation of halal and community-oriented tourism in this context.

This study addresses this research gap by exploring the implementation of tourism potential in Kabupaten Bengkalis from the perspective of Islamic economics. Specifically, it examines how halal principles are applied across various tourism components—including culinary offerings, accommodations, travel services, and destination management—and evaluates the supporting infrastructure, promotion strategies, and governance mechanisms. By incorporating SWOT analysis, the research aims to provide a structured assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses as well as

external opportunities and threats, thereby informing evidence-based strategies for sustainable and ethical tourism development. Ultimately, this study seeks to generate actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners, fostering tourism that contributes equitably to local economic growth while remaining consistent with the values of Islamic economics (Bishop, 2008; Seah, 2016; Ernest, 2019; Lin, 2025).

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

### 1. Principles of Islamic Economics in Tourism Implementation

Participants consistently highlighted that the foundation of tourism development in Kabupaten Bengkalis is grounded in Islamic economic principles, emphasizing halal compliance, social justice, and communal well-being. One local government official noted, "*Semua aktivitas wisata harus sesuai syariah, mulai dari makanan hingga fasilitas ibadah, agar wisatawan merasa aman dan nyaman.*" This perspective was echoed by community respondents, who emphasized equitable benefit-sharing: "*UMKM lokal sangat terbantu karena mereka bisa menjual produk halal kepada wisatawan, sehingga ekonomi kami ikut terdorong.*" These findings underscore that the moral and spiritual dimensions of tourism are inseparable from its economic objectives, aligning with the concept of kemaslahatan (public good).

### 2. Implementation Strategies in Halal Tourism

The development of halal tourism in Bengkalis manifests across attractions, amenities, and accessibility. Cultural and religious events, such as Festival Lampu Colok and Festival Mandi Safar, were described as integrating Islamic values with tourism appeal. A participant explained, "*Festival Lampu Colok bukan sekadar hiburan, tapi juga cara menyiarkan nilai Islam sambil melestarikan tradisi lokal.*" Amenity provision, including halal-certified accommodations and restaurants, was identified as crucial. Respondents noted the importance of prayer facilities and hygienic services: "*Kami pastikan musholla tersedia di hotel dan homestay, serta makanan yang dijual sudah bersertifikat halal.*" In terms of accessibility, tour packages were designed to respect prayer times, and guides were trained to apply Islamic etiquette, ensuring an experience aligned with ethical and religious norms.

### 3. SWOT Analysis and Strategic Implications

Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats revealed both structural and operational factors influencing halal tourism. Strengths included a predominantly Muslim population and rich cultural heritage, while weaknesses centered on limited halal infrastructure and insufficiently trained personnel. Participants highlighted opportunities such as growing global halal tourism markets and the involvement of religious institutions in certification. However, threats included environmental risks and competition from other destinations. One stakeholder observed, "*Jika SDM tidak terlatih dan fasilitas belum memadai, wisatawan bisa memilih tempat lain yang lebih nyaman secara syariah.*" These insights informed strategic priorities: leveraging local culture, empowering UMKM, and strengthening regulatory frameworks to ensure equitable and sustainable tourism development.

### 4. Programs and Policy Implementation

The study found that the government has operationalized halal tourism through targeted programs. Cultural-religious events, infrastructure improvements in Pulau Rupat, financial support for local businesses, heritage site preservation, and halal certification initiatives were all highlighted. As one respondent involved in policy implementation explained, "*Dana desa digunakan untuk meningkatkan*

*kualitas produk lokal agar halal dan higienis, sehingga wisatawan puas dan ekonomi lokal terdorong.*” While the label “halal tourism” is not always explicit, its principles permeate policy and program design, reflecting the integration of Malay-Islamic cultural identity with economic development.

## 5. Emerging Policy Recommendations

Participants identified areas for policy enhancement to further institutionalize halal tourism, including legal standardization of accommodations, family-friendly zoning, syariah-compliant financing for local entrepreneurs, training and certification of Islamic tour guides, and digital planning tools. One community leader emphasized, *“Dengan aplikasi yang menandai lokasi masjid dan restoran halal, wisatawan akan lebih mudah merencanakan perjalanan sesuai syariah.”* These recommendations align with the principles of Islamic economics by promoting transparency, fairness, and facilitation (taysir) for all stakeholders, particularly local communities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The development and management of tourism have long been a subject of academic inquiry, particularly in the context of optimizing local economic benefits while preserving cultural and environmental sustainability. Central to this discourse is the concept of **implementation**, which refers to the deliberate application of well-planned strategies to achieve predetermined objectives (Dalam Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia). Implementation is not merely action but involves careful alignment with prior planning to ensure outcomes meet expectations. In the tourism context, effective implementation determines whether potential resources are fully utilized to enhance local development and community welfare.

The notion of **potential** is closely linked to implementation. Potential represents latent capabilities or resources that, while significant, remain underutilized (Deddy Prasetya Maha Rani, 2014). In tourism, potential encompasses natural attractions, cultural heritage, and human capital that, if developed effectively, can generate economic, social, and environmental benefits. Several studies have highlighted the importance of identifying and mobilizing these resources as part of a comprehensive tourism strategy (Handayani, 2012; Nawangsih, 2017).

Tourism itself is a multidimensional phenomenon, involving temporary travel away from one’s usual environment for leisure, education, or cultural purposes (Undang-Undang No. 10 Tahun 2009). In Indonesia, tourism development is guided by principles of sustainability, local empowerment, and cultural preservation. The law emphasizes not only economic growth but also the enhancement of social welfare, environmental conservation, and national identity (Pasal 4 & 5, UU No. 10/2009). The literature indicates that tourism development is most effective when integrated with local communities and when both infrastructure and services are adequately provided (Prasetya Maha Rani, 2014).

**Debates in the literature** often center on the effectiveness of tourism implementation. Nawangsih (2017) observed that although local government revenue from tourism (PAD) is measurable, the contribution remains relatively low, highlighting a gap between potential and actualized economic benefit. Similarly, Handayani (2012) identified a discrepancy between increasing tourism income and its reflection in local development outcomes, partly due to governance and asset ownership issues. These findings suggest that despite recognition of tourism’s potential, **implementation strategies frequently fail to translate resources into sustained local development.**

Another key debate involves the role of **cultural and religious values in tourism development.** Literature suggests that incorporating Islamic ethical and spiritual values can enhance the social legitimacy and sustainability of tourism in Indonesia (Prasetya Maha Rani, 2014). This perspective

underscores tourism as not merely economic activity but also a vehicle for promoting ethical, cultural, and environmental stewardship. Likewise, environmental preservation is highlighted as both a moral obligation and a strategic necessity, aligning with broader Islamic principles of stewardship (QS Al-A'raf: 56-58).

**Limitations of past studies** include an overemphasis on quantitative measures such as revenue generation and PAD contributions, often neglecting qualitative aspects such as community engagement, cultural authenticity, and environmental ethics. Additionally, prior research frequently examines tourism potential at a macro level, without sufficient attention to local governance mechanisms, stakeholder interactions, and the lived experiences of communities surrounding tourism sites (Handayani, 2012; Nawangsih, 2017).

Given these gaps, the **current study aims to explore the qualitative dimensions of tourism implementation in regional contexts**, focusing on the mechanisms through which latent potential can be activated in alignment with social, cultural, and environmental objectives. By examining stakeholder perspectives—including government agencies, private sector actors, and local communities—this study addresses both the **"how" and "why" of effective tourism implementation**, providing insights that extend beyond conventional economic metrics.

This review highlights that tourism development in Indonesia is a complex interplay between planning, resource potential, governance, community involvement, and ethical-cultural considerations. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies that not only maximize economic outcomes but also enhance social cohesion, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability.

### **Tourism Development and Regional Economic Growth**

Tourism is widely recognized as a strategic sector for regional economic development due to its capacity to generate employment, stimulate local businesses, and increase local government revenue. Scholars argue that tourism development contributes to regional income through direct spending, investment attraction, and the multiplier effect on supporting sectors such as transportation, accommodation, and creative industries. In the context of regional autonomy, tourism plays an important role in strengthening local fiscal capacity and enhancing economic resilience. However, previous studies also highlight that the economic benefits of tourism are highly dependent on effective planning, infrastructure readiness, and community participation.

In developing regions, the failure to integrate tourism planning with local economic systems often results in unequal benefit distribution and environmental degradation. This indicates the need for development approaches that emphasize sustainability and social justice, which aligns with the principles of Islamic economics.

### **Islamic Economics and Tourism Development**

Islamic economics provides a normative framework for economic activities based on ethical values, social welfare, and balanced development. Core principles such as *maslahah* (public interest), *'adl* (justice), *amanah* (trust), and sustainability (*hifz al-bi'ah*) guide economic behavior toward collective well-being rather than profit maximization alone. Within this framework, tourism is not merely an economic activity but also a social and moral endeavor that must adhere to Islamic values.

Tourism development from an Islamic economics perspective emphasizes halal products and services, ethical business practices, environmental preservation, and respect for local culture. Several studies suggest that tourism aligned with Islamic principles can enhance destination competitiveness, particularly in Muslim-majority regions, while maintaining moral integrity and social harmony. This

approach also encourages inclusive growth by prioritizing local community empowerment and equitable income distribution.

### **Halal Tourism as a Conceptual Framework**

Halal tourism, often referred to as sharia-compliant tourism, is a form of tourism that accommodates the religious needs of Muslim travelers without excluding non-Muslims. Key components of halal tourism include halal-certified food and beverages, prayer facilities, modest recreational activities, and service ethics consistent with Islamic teachings. Previous research indicates that halal tourism has grown rapidly in response to increasing global demand from Muslim travelers.

Despite its potential, scholars note that halal tourism implementation often faces challenges related to regulatory ambiguity, limited human resource capacity, and inconsistent certification systems. These issues underscore the importance of institutional support and policy coherence in translating halal tourism concepts into practice.

### **Community-Based Tourism and Local Empowerment**

Community-based tourism is closely linked to Islamic economic principles, particularly in promoting *maslahah* and economic justice. This approach positions local communities as active participants and beneficiaries of tourism development. Studies show that when communities are involved in planning and management, tourism is more likely to produce sustainable economic and social outcomes.

In Islamic economics, empowering local communities through tourism supports poverty reduction, income diversification, and social cohesion. The integration of halal value chains within local enterprises, such as UMKM, further strengthens economic inclusion and ensures that tourism benefits are distributed fairly.

### **Empirical Studies on Tourism and Local Revenue**

Previous empirical research on tourism development in Indonesia demonstrates a positive relationship between tourism growth and local government revenue (PAD). However, these studies also reveal that tourism's contribution to PAD varies across regions depending on governance quality, infrastructure availability, and investment climate. From an Islamic economics perspective, maximizing PAD should not compromise ethical considerations or environmental sustainability.

The literature suggests that tourism development guided by Islamic economic principles can enhance fiscal outcomes while maintaining moral and social accountability. This provides a relevant analytical lens for examining tourism implementation in Bengkalis Regency.

### **Research Gap**

Although extensive studies have examined tourism development and its economic impacts, limited research explicitly analyzes tourism implementation through the lens of Islamic economics at the regional level. In particular, empirical studies focusing on Bengkalis Regency remain scarce. This study addresses this gap by examining how tourism potential in Bengkalis is implemented and aligned with Islamic economic principles, offering insights into ethical and sustainable tourism governance in a Muslim-majority context.

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the implementation of tourism potential in Bengkalis Regency from an Islamic economic perspective. This design was chosen to capture rich and contextual insights on how tourism management aligns with ethical, halal, and community-oriented principles, while contributing to local economic development. By focusing on the real experiences of participants as well as institutional practices, this study prioritizes depth and nuance over quantification, allowing for a thorough understanding of opportunities and challenges in the local tourism sector. The credibility of the research is maintained through methodological triangulation by integrating various sources of evidence, including interviews, observations, documentation, and secondary data.

### Participants

Participants in this study are individuals and groups who have direct or indirect involvement in tourism activities in Bengkalis Regency. Participant selection was carried out purposively by considering the relevance of experience, knowledge, and their role in the management and development of the tourism sector. This aims to obtain in-depth, contextual data that aligns with the focus of the research, particularly in examining the implementation of tourism potential from an Islamic economic perspective. Through the involvement of various stakeholders, such as local government, local communities, and tourists, this research seeks to explore diverse perspectives related to tourism practices that are in line with Sharia principles, including aspects of halal, ethics, and benefits for the community. Thus, participants not only act as data sources but also as representations of social reality that form the basis for understanding the dynamics of tourism development in Bengkalis Regency comprehensively.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis followed an iterative process combining deductive, inductive, and descriptive approaches. Deductive analysis involved examining data against established principles of Islamic economics, while inductive analysis allowed patterns, themes, and relationships to emerge organically from participant narratives. Descriptive analysis synthesized quantitative and qualitative information to create a holistic depiction of tourism implementation and its economic impact. Throughout the analysis, rigor was maintained through constant comparison, member checks, and cross-referencing of multiple data sources, supporting transparency, credibility, and transferability of findings to similar contexts.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Islamic Economic Principles in Tourism Implementation

Although the Participants affirmed that the development of tourism in Bengkalis Regency has been based on the principles of Islamic economics, such as halal compliance, social justice, and public welfare, but there are a number of conceptual and implementation issues that need to be further critiqued. Normatively, these principles have indeed been recognized and used as references in tourism policies and practices. However, in practical terms, there is a gap between the ideal values (*das sollen*) and empirical reality (*das sein*). First, the aspect of halal compliance tends to still be understood narrowly, limited to food products and places of worship, while broader dimensions such as the Islamic financial system, business ethics, and governance free from practices of *gharar* (uncertainty) and *riba* have not been fully integrated. This indicates that the implementation of Islamic economic principles is still partial, not yet touching the entire tourism value chain. Second, in the context of social justice and benefit distribution, although local MSMEs are said to gain positive impacts, it needs to be further examined whether the distribution is truly equitable or still dominated

by certain groups. Without strong oversight and regulatory mechanisms, there is a risk of economic access disparities, where small business actors only become complements in the tourism ecosystem, rather than as actors main. Third, the concept of kemaslahatan (public good) which underpins Islamic economics also needs to be examined more critically, especially in relation to environmental and social sustainability. Increasing tourism activities have the potential to exert pressure on coastal environments and local cultures, so if not managed wisely, they could actually conflict with the principles of maqashid sharia, particularly in preserving the environment (hifz al-bi'ah) and community sustainability. Fourth, there are indications that the use of the label "sharia tourism" or "halal" is more symbolic and for branding purposes, rather than reflecting substantial transformation in the economic system. This could potentially lead to what is called pseudo-halal tourism, where Islamic values are merely used as a tool for legitimacy without comprehensive implementation. Thus, the formulation of the problem in this research does not stop at merely identifying the application of Islamic economic principles, but It is also necessary to critically examine the extent to which these principles are implemented comprehensively, consistently, and sustainably, as well as how to address the gaps between normative concepts and practices on the ground. This critical approach is important so that tourism development is not only oriented toward economic growth but also truly reflects the values of justice, sustainability, and welfare from an Islamic economic perspective.

### **Implementation Strategy in Halal Tourism**

The implementation strategy of halal tourism in Bengkalis Regency, which includes aspects of attractions, amenities, and accessibility, essentially shows a fairly systematic effort to integrate Islamic values into the tourism sector. However, there are several critical issues that indicate the implementation still faces structural and conceptual challenges.

First, in terms of tourist attractions, the integration of Islamic values in cultural festivals such as the Colok Lamp Festival and Mandi Safar does strengthen the local identity based on Malay-Islam. However, there is a potential for commodification of religious values, where religious traditions are packaged more as tourist products rather than as authentic spiritual practices. This raises the question of whether Islamic values are truly internalized or merely used as instruments to enhance tourist appeal.

Second, in terms of amenities, the provision of halal facilities such as certified food and prayer rooms showing significant progress. However, this implementation still tends to be physical and administrative in nature, and has not fully touched upon the aspect of service quality based on Islamic values, such as service ethics (akhlaq), price transparency, and honesty in transactions. In addition, the limited availability of halal certification also indicates obstacles in standardization and supervision. Third, in terms of accessibility, adapting tourism schedules to prayer times and training tour guides are positive steps. However, there are challenges in ensuring consistent implementation on the ground, especially when dealing with the diverse needs of tourists. This creates a dilemma between maintaining Sharia principles and meeting the demands for flexibility in a competitive tourism industry. Fourth, the existing strategies still seem to focus on a supply-side approach (service provision), while a demand-side approach (understanding the the needs of global halal tourists) have not been optimally addressed. For example, there has not been visible maximal utilization of digital technology, such as integrated halal information platforms or promotions based on international Muslim tourists' preferences. Fifth, overall, this implementation strategy still faces challenges in terms of cross-sector integration. Halal tourism is not only related to the tourism sector alone but also involves the Islamic finance sector, education, certification, and environmental governance. The lack of coordination between sectors has the potential to cause inconsistent and partial implementation. Therefore, although the implementation strategy for halal tourism in Bengkalis Regency has shown a

positive direction, strengthening is needed in terms of the substance of values, implementation consistency, system integration, as well as technology- and market-based innovation. A more holistic and critical approach is very much needed so that halal tourism not only being a normative concept, but also a competitive and sustainable practice.

### **SWOT Analysis and Strategic Implications**

The use of SWOT analysis in examining the development of halal tourism in Bengkalis Regency provides an initial overview of internal and external conditions. However, critically, this approach still has limitations in capturing the complexity of the dynamics of halal tourism based on Islamic economic values.

First, in terms of strengths, the dominance of the Muslim population and the richness of local culture are often considered the main advantages. However, this assumption needs to be critiqued because Islamic identity does not automatically guarantee the quality of halal tourism implementation. Without enhancing human resource (HR) capacity and a deep understanding of global halal standards, this strength has the potential to become a pseudo-advantage. This concept is rooted in the theory of competitive advantage by Michael E. Porter in his book *Competitive Advantage* (1985). As for the facts that occurred in Bengkalis Regency, based on the results Interview with the Head of the Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports Office, Edi Sakura, S.Pd, M.Pd, he stated that “Although the majority of the population in Bengkalis Regency is Muslim, this does not automatically make the area a leading halal tourism destination. The presence of halal facilities, professional services, and adequate tourism promotion still remain determining factors for tourists.” Here are some examples of factual conditions regarding halal facilities relevant to the context of tourism in Bengkalis Regency that have not been well implemented: Accommodation 1. Hotels or homestays have not provided halal-certified food. 2. Prayer rooms or musholla on every floor or in each lodging area are absent. 3. Rooms free from alcohol or items prohibited by Sharia are not fully available. Restaurants and Cafes 1. Not all restaurants have official halal certification from MUI or trusted institutions. 2. It is not clear which food menus do not contain ingredients haram, and separating cooking utensils for halal food. Transportation and Tourism Services 1. Transportation is still inadequate to accommodate tourists who wish to perform religious practices, for example, providing time for prayer stops in tour packages. 2. Tour guides do not yet understand Islamic ethics, including maintaining propriety and dressing modestly according to Sharia. Second, regarding weaknesses, the limited halal infrastructure and untrained human resources indicate structural problems. However, these weaknesses are not only technical but also reflect a lack of institutional commitment and integrated governance. If not addressed systematically, these weaknesses will continue to recur despite short-term program interventions, Jay Barney (1991).

The limitations of halal infrastructure and untrained human resources in Bengkalis Regency indicate significant structural problems in the development of halal tourism. These problems are not only technical—such as the lack of halal facilities or limited human resource capabilities—but it also reflects a lack of institutional commitment and integrated governance. This indicates that short-term program interventions, for example temporary facility construction or training, are not sufficient to produce sustainable impact. Based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective by Jay Barney (1991), the competitive advantage of an organization or region depends on the ability to utilize resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. In the context of Bengkalis: 1. Halal infrastructure and trained human resources are important strategic resources for developing sustainable halal tourism. 2. Limited facilities and human resources mean that the region does not yet have strategic resources that meet the RBV criteria, so its competitive advantage potential is still weak and easily imitated by other regions. 3. Without strengthening systemic and cross-sector policy

integration, this weakness is structural and repetitive, so short-term program interventions only result in partial improvements. In addition, RBV emphasizes that valuable resources must be supported by institutional capacity in order to be optimized. The absence of coordination, halal operational standards, and continuous monitoring indicates weak governance, so regions cannot maximize the potential of existing resources. Third, in terms of opportunities, the growing global halal tourism market is indeed a promising external factor. However, there is a risk that this opportunity is understood too optimistically without adequate internal preparedness. This unpreparedness can result in regions only being spectators in the global market, while the economic benefits are enjoyed by other regions that are better prepared in terms of infrastructure and promotion. DiMaggio & Powell (1983). The growing halal tourism market Global halal is clearly a promising external factor for Bengkalis Regency.

Theoretically, this trend opens opportunities to attract Muslim tourists from both domestic and international destinations, strengthen the local economy, and promote Malay-Islamic culture.

However, critical analysis shows that this opportunity does not automatically become a benefit for the region if internal readiness is inadequate. Based on the Institutional Theory by DiMaggio & Powell (1983), organizations or institutions tend to imitate popular practices and trends (isomorphism) to gain social or market legitimacy. In the context of halal tourism: 1. The risk of optimistic 'isomorphism': The region may be tempted to merely adopt the 'halal tourism' label or announce tourism potential without strengthening adequate infrastructure, human resources, and governance. 2. Internal unpreparedness: If facilities, halal certification, and digital promotion are not prepared, Bengkalis Regency risks becoming a spectator in the global market, while economic benefits are gained by other regions that are more prepared. 3. Legitimacy versus actual performance: Following the halal tourism trend for international legitimacy without substantial readiness only creates a pseudo-advantage. This aligns with Institutional theory, which states that external pressure can drive symbolic practices without improving actual performance. In other words, although the global halal market is a strategic opportunity, successfully capitalizing on this opportunity requires mature internal readiness: infrastructure, trained human resources, halal service standards, and effective promotion.

Without such readiness, the economic potential of Islam contained in halal tourism will not be optimally realized, and regions will only become trend followers rather than active players (leaders) in the global market. Fourth, regarding threats, competition among destinations and environmental risks are often identified as major external factors. However, a more fundamental threat actually lies on the potential inconsistency between Sharia principles and industry practices. If halal tourism is only used as a label without strict supervision, tourists' trust can decline, which ultimately damages the destination's reputation. The author's research results show that competition between destinations and environmental risks are significant external threats to tourism development in Bengkalis Regency. Other destinations with more developed infrastructure, more aggressive promotion, or more complete halal facilities can attract tourists who should be Bengkalis' target. These threats are real and can have a direct impact on visitation levels and local revenue. However, critical analysis shows that the more fundamental threat is not just competition or environmental risks, but the inconsistency between Sharia principles and tourism industry practices. Some critical points include: 1. Halal label without supervision: If halal tourism is only used as branding or symbolic labels without strict supervision and certification, the destination is at risk of becoming pseudo-halal, which only provides a perception of value without real implementation. 2. Long-term reputational damage: The mismatch between halal claims and actual practices—for example, uncertified food, inadequate worship facilities, or unethical services—can reduce Muslim tourists' trust. A damaged reputation is difficult to restore and can lower the destination's competitiveness in the global halal market. 3. Balancing Sharia principles and the

economy: Islamic economics emphasizes justice, transparency, and welfare (maslahah). Threats arise when industry practices only pursue profit without considering Sharia values, thereby disrupting social-economic and spiritual sustainability. In other words, the halal tourism threats in Bengkalis Regency are twofold: external factors such as competition and the environment, and internal factors in the form of inconsistency in the implementation of sharia. To maintain competitiveness and tourists' trust, development strategies must emphasize strengthening regulations, monitoring, certification, and human resources capacity so that sharia principles are applied consistently in all aspects of the tourism industry. Fifth, from the perspective of strategic implications, SWOT results tend to produce general recommendations, such as strengthening local culture, empowering SMEs, and enhancing regulations. Critically, this strategy still requires more concrete and measurable operationalization, including success indicators based on maqashid sharia (such as equitable distribution, environmental sustainability, and community welfare). Without clear indicators, the strategy risks becoming a normative discourse without real impact. SWOT analysis results in Bengkalis Regency tourism indeed tend to produce strategic recommendations that are general in nature, such as strengthening local culture, empowering SMEs, and enhancing regulations.

Normatively, these suggestions appear relevant because they refer to existing strengths and opportunities, as well as attempt to address weaknesses and threats. However, critically, this strategy still faces several significant shortcomings: 1. Lack of concrete operationalization: Recommendations such as “strengthening local culture” or “empowering MSMEs” are often abstract. Without a clear action plan—for example, HR training programs, halal service standards, or Sharia-compliant financing schemes for MSMEs—these strategies are difficult to translate into tangible steps. 2. Absence of success indicators based on maqashid sharia: Islamic economics emphasizes the goals of welfare (maslahah), justice (adl), and sustainability (istiqlamah). Common strategies without indicators such as: fair distribution of economic benefits among local communities, environmental impact of tourism activities, social and spiritual welfare of the community run the risk of becoming normative discourse that does not produce real impact. for communities and destinations. 3. The risk of a “pseudo-strategy”: Without clear benchmarks, this strategy can become a pseudo-advantage, where recommendations sound attractive in theory but do not enhance competitive advantage or real value for tourists. This aligns with criticism of the “halal label” practice that is not followed by substantial implementation. Jay Barney (1991) 4. The need for cross-sector integration: Effective strategic implications must combine policy, infrastructure, human resources, promotion, and regulation systematically.

SWOT alone is not sufficient to ensure this coordination; measurable, structured, and data-based implementation mechanisms are needed. In other words, strategies emerging from SWOT may be conceptually relevant, but real impact depends on concrete operationalization and clear success indicators. Integrating maqashid sharia as a measure of success can ensure that strategies are not only normative, but creating sustainable economic, social, and spiritual value for Bengkalis Regency. In addition, the SWOT analysis has not fully considered a dynamic and adaptive approach, even though the tourism sector is highly influenced by changes in global trends, digital technology, and tourist preferences. Therefore, integration with other, more progressive analyses is needed, such as an ecosystem-based approach or the halal tourism value chain. The SWOT analysis used in the study on the Implementation of Tourism Potential in Bengkalis Regency from the Perspective of Islamic Economics is indeed capable of identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats comprehensively at a static level. However, critically, this approach has not fully taken into account the dynamics of the tourism sector, which is greatly influenced by: 1. Changes in global trends: Tourist preferences continue to change, including the increasing demand for authentic, eco-friendly, and culturally-based halal travel experiences culture. 2. Advances in digital technology: Travel

applications, online booking platforms, and social media influence how tourists choose destinations. Static tourism strategies risk falling behind trends. 3. Adaptive consumer preferences: Tourists increasingly demand services that are flexible, convenient, and compliant with Sharia values, so general strategies are not sufficient. As a result, SWOT recommendations tend to be normative and static, for example, strengthening local culture, empowering SMEs, or enhancing regulations, without anticipating how external and internal factors change over time. More Progressive Alternative Approach 1. Halal Tourism Ecosystem: a) This approach sees the interaction between the government, communities, business actors, tourists, and halal certification institutions as an interconnected system. b) Ecosystem-based strategies allow dynamic adaptation, for example, adjusting digital promotions, SME collaborations, and halal facilities with global trends. 2. Halal Tourism Value Chain: a) Focus on every stage of the tourist experience, from information, transportation, accommodation, culinary, to cultural activities. b) Helps identify bottlenecks and innovation opportunities that are not visible if only using static SWOT analysis. It can be concluded that SWOT is still useful as an initial mapping, but not sufficient to design an adaptive and sustainable halal tourism strategy. c) Integration with an ecosystem-based and value chain approach can provide a more progressive strategic vision, ensuring that competitive advantages are not only normative but responsive to changes in global trends, technology, and tourist preferences. d) This approach aligns with the principles of maqashid sharia, as it emphasizes social, economic, and cultural sustainability in the development of halal tourism. Thus, although SWOT analysis provides a useful initial framework, a more critical, comprehensive, and based on Islamic economic values so that the strategic implications produced are not only descriptive but also capable of driving real transformation towards sustainable, fair, and competitive halal tourism.

### **Programs and Policy Implementation**

The study found that the government has operationalized halal tourism through targeted programs. Cultural-religious events, infrastructure improvements in Pulau Rupat, financial support for local businesses, heritage site preservation, and halal certification initiatives were all highlighted. As one respondent involved in policy implementation explained, *“Dana desa digunakan untuk meningkatkan kualitas produk lokal agar halal dan higienis, sehingga wisatawan puas dan ekonomi lokal terdorong.”* While the label “halal tourism” is not always explicit, its principles permeate policy and program design, reflecting the integration of Malay-Islamic cultural identity with economic development. . Critical Review of Programs and Policy Implementation

The programs and implementation of halal tourism policies in Bengkalis Regency show the government's commitment to integrating Islamic values into the development of the tourism sector. Various initiatives such as infrastructure development, organization of cultural-religious events, support for MSMEs, and halal certification reflect a progressive policy direction. However, when examined critically, there are several fundamental challenges that need to be considered.

First, the aspect of coordination among stakeholders is still not optimal. The implementation of halal tourism policies requires synergy between local government, business actors, certification institutions, and the local community. In practice, cross-sector coordination is often partial, resulting in programs that are not fully integrated and potentially causing policy overlaps. Second, the limited capacity of human resources. (HR) has become a significant constraint. Many tourism business actors, especially MSMEs, do not fully understand halal certification standards and procedures as well as the concept of halal tourism services comprehensively. This affects the quality of services, which are not yet consistent with the principles of halal tourism. Third, challenges in halal standardization and certification are still quite complex. The certification process, which tends to take time and cost, becomes an obstacle for small business actors. In addition, the uneven access to information regarding certification procedures also slows down the adoption of policies at the grassroots level. Fourth, the

promotion and branding of halal tourism in Bengkalis Regency is still not optimal. Although it has strong cultural and religious potential, the marketing strategies carried out have not fully been able to reach the Muslim tourist market widely, both nationally and internationally. This indicates the need for a more innovative and digitally-based promotional approach. Fifth, performance measurement and policy evaluation have not been conducted systematically and continuously. Without clear performance indicators and a structured evaluation mechanism, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of programs and make policy improvements accurately. Sixth, there are also challenges in maintaining a balance between religious values and tourism appeal. If not managed well, an overly normative approach has the potential to limit creativity in tourism product development, thereby reducing the competitiveness of destinations amid the increasingly dynamic tourism industry. Thus, although halal tourism policies in Bengkalis Regency have shown a positive direction, efforts are needed to strengthen aspects of coordination, human resource capacity enhancement, certification simplification, promotion strategies, and policy evaluation systems so that their implementation can be more effective, inclusive, and sustainable.

### **Emerging Policy Recommendations**

Participants identified areas for policy enhancement to further institutionalize halal tourism, including legal standardization of accommodations, family-friendly zoning, syariah-compliant financing for local entrepreneurs, training and certification of Islamic tour guides, and digital planning tools. One community leader emphasized, *“Dengan aplikasi yang menandai lokasi masjid dan restoran halal, wisatawan akan lebih mudah merencanakan perjalanan sesuai syariah.”* These recommendations align with the principles of Islamic economics by promoting transparency, fairness, and facilitation (taysir) for all stakeholders, particularly local communities. Emerging Policy Recommendations.

Based on the research findings, participants identified several areas that need to be strengthened to further institutionalize halal tourism in Bengkalis Regency. Some recommendations include legal standardization related to accommodation, implementation of family-friendly zoning, provision of Sharia-compliant financing schemes for local business actors, as well as training and certification of Islamic tour guides. In addition, the development of digital planning tools is also considered important to make it easier for tourists to plan their trips according to Sharia principles.

One community figure (Mr. Permadi), a respected person in Pantai Selat Baru tourism, emphasized the importance of this digital innovation by stating, *“With an application that marks the locations of mosques and halal restaurants, tourists will find it easier to plan trips according to Sharia.”*

Conceptually, these recommendations align with the principles of Islamic economics, as they emphasize transparency, fairness, and ease (taysir) for all stakeholders, especially the local community. This approach not only improves the quality of tourism services but also ensures that the resulting economic growth is inclusive and sustainable.

First, from the policy design perspective, the programs implemented still tend to be fragmented and sectoral, not yet fully integrated into a comprehensive halal tourism policy framework. This is evident from the absence of specific regulations that explicitly govern halal tourism standards and indicators based on Islamic economic principles. As a result, field implementation may be inconsistent and dependent on the interpretation of each executor.

Second, in terms of program implementation, there is a tendency for policies to focus more on physical outputs, such as the construction of facilities and the organization of events, rather than on substantive outcomes, such as behavioral changes in an economy that aligns with Sharia values. For

example, the existence of halal certification does not necessarily come with strict supervision of daily business practices, which could potentially create a gap between formal standards and actual practices.

Third, regarding the empowerment of MSMEs, although financial support and training have been provided, their effectiveness still needs to be evaluated critically. There is a possibility that these programs have not fully reached small business actors at the grassroots level, or are still dominated by certain groups who have greater access to information and resources. This could potentially create disparities in the distribution of economic benefits.

Fourth, in the context of preserving local culture and identity, the integration between Malay-Islamic values and tourism is indeed a major strength. However, there is a risk of cultural meaning being reduced, where local traditions are packaged commercially for tourism purposes, thus the glimmer losing its authentic value. If not managed carefully, this can contradict the principles of Islamic economics, which emphasize sustainability and the authenticity of value.

Fifth, from a governance perspective, policy implementation still faces challenges in terms of cross-sector coordination, transparency, and accountability. Without a monitoring and evaluation system based on Sharia indicators (such as fairness in distribution, blessings, and public benefit), it is difficult to assess the extent to which the policy is truly successful. Sixth, there is an indication that the use of the concept of “halal tourism” in policy is still implicit and normative, not yet fully developed into a measurable operational framework. This has the potential to make the policy merely a symbol or narrative of development, without real structural transformation in the tourism economy system. Therefore, although programs and the implementation of halal tourism policies in Bengkalis Regency have been showing significant progress, it is necessary to strengthen aspects of policy integration, consistency in implementation, fairness in the distribution of benefits, as well as an evaluation system based on Islamic economic values. A more critical and systematic approach is greatly needed so that policies do not merely stop at the administrative level, but are truly able to realize sustainable, inclusive halal tourism that is oriented towards public welfare.

### **Tourism Potential and Current Development in Bengkalis Regency**

Findings show that Bengkalis Regency has considerable tourism potential encompassing natural, cultural, and marine attractions. Coastal areas, island tourism, and Malay cultural heritage are major assets that can support sustainable tourism development. Participants emphasized that tourism activities have contributed to local economic circulation, especially through small-scale businesses, transportation services, and accommodation providers. However, this potential has not been fully optimized due to inadequate infrastructure, limited accessibility, and fragmented destination management. These findings align with regional tourism development studies that highlight infrastructure and coordination as key determining factors in destination competitiveness.

From the perspective of Islamic economics, the underutilization of tourism resources indicates inefficiency in *uti* maximizing public benefits (*maslahah*). Findings that indicate the significant tourism potential in Bengkalis Regency—including natural attractions, Malay culture, as well as coastal and island areas—reflect the existence of strong basic capital in developing destinations based on local uniqueness. From the perspective of tourism development theory, this condition can be explained through the concept of tourism-led development that positions tourism as a strategic sector in driving regional economic growth. However, critically, it can be said that this potential is still at the level of latent potential that has not yet been fully converted into tangible competitive advantages.

First, the gap between potential and development realization indicates structural issues in tourism governance. This can be analyzed through the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) theory proposed by Richard Butler, in which a destination develops through certain stages but requires integrated management in order to achieve optimal maturity, Richard W. Butler (1980). Fragmentation of destination management indicates weak institutional approaches, especially within the framework of destination management organization (DMO).

Secondly, infrastructure and accessibility issues can be explained through regional development theory, which places connectivity as a key factor of growth. Limitations in transportation and facilities impact the low mobility of tourists as well as the length of stay. In this context, John Maynard Keynes' multiplier effect concept shows that the tourism sector will only have a significant economic impact if supported by an integrated economic system. John Maynard Keynes (1985).

Third, economic contributions that are still informal indicate weak integration in the tourism value chain. From the perspective of value chain theory, this condition results in low added value in accepted by local business actors. Douglass C. (1990). This also indicates that regional economic development is not yet fully inclusive and sustainable.

Fourth, the weak institutional capacity and minimal cross-sector collaboration can be explained through institutional theory, which emphasizes the importance of the role of institutions in regulating economic and social interactions. Without strong governance, tourism development will proceed sporadically and lack long-term strategic direction. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (1993).

Fifth, from the perspective of Islamic Economics, this condition reflects inefficiency in resource management, which affects the suboptimal achievement of *maslahah*. This concept aligns with the thought of Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, who emphasized that the primary goal of development is the attainment of welfare (*falah*) through fair and responsible resource management. Madrid: UNWTO, (2013).

Sixth, sustainability challenges can be analyzed through Through the theory of sustainable tourism development which emphasizes a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects. Unplanned coastal tourism development risks causing environmental degradation, which is contrary to the principle of *hifz al-bi'ah* in *maqashid sharia*.<sup>6</sup> Thus, based on these various theoretical approaches, it can be concluded that the main problem in tourism development in Bengkalis Regency does not lie in the absence of potential, but in the weak ability to transform potential into a system that is managed effectively, integrated, and sustainably.

### **Alignment of Tourism Development with Islamic Economic Principles**

Research reveals that tourism development in Bengkalis Regency generally aligns with the values of Islamic economics, particularly regarding environmental sustainability (*hifz al-bi'ah*) and community-based economic empowerment. Respondents reported that tourism-related activities tend to avoid practices explicitly prohibited in Islam, and cultural tourism strongly reflects Malay-Islamic values. The preservation of religious traditions and historical Islamic sites increasingly reinforces the spiritual dimension of tourism development.

However, the findings also indicate that Islamic ethical principles—such as justice (*'adl*), transparency, and honesty in business transactions—have not yet been systematically institutionalized. The absence of formal halal tourism standards and consistent monitoring has resulted in uneven implementation across various destinations. This situation reflects the existence of a gap between the ideals of normative Islamic economics and their practical application in the tourism sector. Research reveals that tourism development in Bengkalis Regency has essentially shown alignment with the

values of Islamic Economics, particularly in the aspects of environmental sustainability (hifz al-bi'ah) and community-based economic empowerment. From the perspective of maqashid sharia, this condition reflects an effort to maintain public welfare through the utilization of resources that do not damage the environment and promote social well-being. Empirically, the developing tourism practices tend to avoid activities that conflict with sharia principles and strengthen the local cultural identity with Malay-Islamic characteristics. This is in line with the thoughts of Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, who emphasized that development must aim at achieving *falah* through the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (1993).

Preservation of traditions of Religious aspects as well as historical Islamic sites also strengthen the spiritual dimension in tourism development, so it is not solely oriented toward economic gain. However, if examined critically, there is a fairly significant gap between normative values and practical implementation. First, Islamic business ethics principles such as *'adl* (justice), transparency, and honesty have not been systematically institutionalized in tourism governance. Within the framework of modern Islamic economic theory, as put forward by Muhammad Umer Chapra, an Islamic economic system not only emphasizes formal compliance with halal-haram rules but also focuses on distributive justice and ethical governance. M. Umer Chapra (1992).

The absence of a strong supervisory mechanism has the potential to lead to economic practices that do not fully reflect sharia values. Second, the lack of formal standards and integrated halal certification systems in the tourism sector indicates weakness institutional aspects. This results in the uneven application of halal principles across destinations. From the perspective of institutional theory, this condition reflects the lack of established regulatory structures and norms capable of consistently guiding business actors' behavior. Douglass C. (1990).

Third, there is a tendency that the application of Islamic values is still symbolic and cultural, not yet fully substantive and systemic. This means that these values are more reflected in cultural and traditional aspects but have not been internalized in business practices, destination management, and public policy. This indicates the existence of an implementation gap between the ideal concept of Islamic economics and the reality on the ground. Fourth, from the perspective of maqashid sharia, this condition shows that the achievement of *maslahah* is still partial. Although environmental and cultural aspects have been accommodated, economic justice and good governance aspects have not yet fully realized. In fact, within the framework of Islamic development, all these dimensions must operate simultaneously and in balance. Thus, it can be concluded that tourism development in Bengkalis Regency has been on a path relatively in accordance with the principles of Islamic economics, but still requires strengthening in the aspects of value institutionalization, halal standardization, as well as the comprehensive implementation of Islamic business ethics. Without such efforts, the existing harmony risks remaining at a normative level without providing a tangible transformational impact on the welfare of the community.

### **Economic Contributions and Community Empowerment**

Tourism in Bengkalis Regency has generated positive economic impacts, particularly in creating employment opportunities and supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (UMKM). Local culinary businesses, handicrafts, and homestays have benefited from tourist visits, indicating the sector's role in income diversification. These outcomes align with the Islamic economic objective of promoting social welfare and reducing economic disparities.

However, the study finds that many tourism actors lack adequate knowledge of halal tourism standards and Islamic business ethics. As a result, economic benefits are not evenly distributed, and some local communities remain marginal participants rather than primary beneficiaries. Strengthening

human resource capacity and promoting halal value chains are therefore essential to ensure that tourism development truly reflects the principles of *maslahah* and inclusive growth. Economic Contribution and Community Empowerment Tourism in Bengkalis Regency has generated positive economic impacts, particularly in creating employment opportunities and supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Local culinary businesses, handicrafts, and homestays have benefited from tourist visits, demonstrating the sector's role in income diversification. These results align with the objectives of Islamic economics to improve social welfare and reduce economic disparities.

However, this study found that many tourism actors lack adequate knowledge about halal tourism standards and Islamic business ethics. As a result, economic benefits are not evenly distributed, and some local communities remain marginal participants rather than primary beneficiaries. Therefore, strengthening human resource capacity and promoting the halal value chain are crucial to ensure that tourism development truly reflects The principle of *maslahah* and inclusive growth. Tourism in Bengkalis Regency has shown a positive economic contribution, particularly in creating jobs and encouraging the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Sectors such as local culinary, handicrafts, and homestays directly benefit from tourism activities, reflecting the role of tourism as an instrument of regional economic diversification.

From the perspective of Islamic Economics, this condition aligns with development goals oriented toward improving social welfare (*falah*) and reducing economic disparities. Theoretically, this contribution can be explained through the concept of the multiplier effect proposed by John Maynard Keynes, where increased economic activity in the tourism sector can create a ripple effect on other sectors. John Maynard Keynes, (1936). Furthermore, within the framework of community-based tourism (CBT), the involvement of local communities in tourism activities Tourism is an important indicator in creating inclusive and sustainable development. However, if analyzed critically, the economic contribution still faces a number of structural limitations. First, the low capacity of human resources (HR) is a major obstacle in optimizing economic benefits. Many tourism business actors do not yet have adequate understanding regarding halal tourism standards and Islamic business ethics. From the perspective of Muhammad Umer Chapra's thought, Islamic economic development not only demands growth but also the improvement of human quality as the main actors in the economy. M. Umer Chapra, (1992) Secondly, the uneven distribution of economic benefits indicates an imbalance in the local economic structure.

Although tourism generates income, some communities are still in marginal positions and have not become key actors in the tourism value chain. This can be analyzed through value chain theory, which shows that groups with limited access to capital, information, and networks tend to only obtain a small portion of the economic value generated. Michael E. Porter (1985) Third, there is an indication that community empowerment is still pseudo-participatory, where community involvement is more of a formality without significant increases in capacity and economic independence. Within the framework of participatory development theory, this condition indicates that the empowerment process has not reached the stage of empowerment, but is still at the level of involvement. Fourth, from the perspective of *maqashid sharia*, this condition reflects that the achievement of *maslahah* is still not optimal. Although there is an increase in economic activity, the principles of distributive justice (*'adl*) and equitable welfare have not yet been fully realized. This is contrary to the view of Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, who emphasized the importance of fair distribution of benefits in achieving social welfare. Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, (1993). Fifth, the weak integration within the halal value chain also becomes a significant challenge. Without a system that connects production, distribution, to consumption within a standardized halal framework, the economic potential of halal tourism cannot be maximized optimally. Thus, although tourism in Bengkalis Regency has provided tangible economic contributions and opened opportunities for community empowerment, the benefits produced are still

limited and not fully inclusive. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen human resource capacity, develop the halal value chain, and implement policies that encourage a more equitable distribution of benefits so that tourism can truly become a development instrument focused on *maslahah* and the broader welfare of society.

### **Institutional and Regulatory Challenges**

The findings highlight several institutional challenges, including weak regulatory frameworks, limited halal certification, and insufficient inter-agency coordination. Although tourism policies exist, they have not fully incorporated Islamic economic principles into operational guidelines. This situation reduces legal certainty for investors and tourists seeking sharia-compliant services.

From an Islamic economics standpoint, regulatory clarity is essential to uphold trust (*amanah*) and consumer protection. The absence of binding regulations on halal tourism standards undermines the credibility and long-term sustainability of Bengkalis Regency as a halal tourism destination.

### **Strategic Implications for Syariah-Oriented Tourism Development**

The discussion suggests that Bengkalis Regency has strong potential to develop sharia-oriented tourism by leveraging its Islamic cultural identity, Muslim-majority population, and natural resources. Strategic priorities include improving infrastructure, formalizing halal tourism regulations, enhancing digital promotion, and strengthening collaboration among government, business actors, and local communities.

Integrating Islamic economic principles into tourism governance can transform tourism into a tool for sustainable development that balances economic growth with ethical values. Such an approach not only increases regional competitiveness but also ensures that tourism contributes to social justice, environmental preservation, and spiritual well-being. Islamic Economic Principles in Tourism Implementation

The findings indicate that tourism development in Bengkalis Regency is normatively grounded in Islamic economic principles, particularly halal compliance, social justice, and collective welfare. Participants consistently emphasized that tourism activities must adhere to Islamic norms, ranging from halal food provision to the availability of worship facilities. A local government official stated that all tourism-related services are expected to align with sharia principles to ensure comfort and security for Muslim visitors. This reflects the Islamic economic view that economic activities are inseparable from moral and spiritual responsibilities.

Beyond compliance, respondents highlighted the importance of equitable benefit distribution, especially for local communities and UMKM actors. Community members noted that halal-oriented tourism enables local entrepreneurs to participate more actively in the tourism value chain, thereby strengthening household incomes. These findings affirm the concept of *maslahah*, where tourism functions not merely as a revenue-generating sector but as a mechanism for enhancing social welfare and communal well-being. Thus, tourism in Bengkalis is understood not only as an economic activity but also as an ethical practice embedded in Islamic values.

### **Implementation Strategies in Halal Tourism Development**

The implementation of halal tourism in Bengkalis Regency is evident across three main dimensions: attractions, amenities, and accessibility. Cultural and religious events such as the Festival Lampu Colok and Festival Mandi Safar were frequently cited as key attractions that integrate Islamic values with tourism promotion. Participants described these events as instruments of cultural preservation and

religious expression rather than mere entertainment. Such integration demonstrates how Islamic cultural capital can be transformed into sustainable tourism assets.

In terms of amenities, respondents emphasized the importance of halal-certified accommodations, prayer facilities, and hygienic services. The provision of musholla in hotels and homestays, along with halal-certified food outlets, was considered essential in shaping tourists' trust and satisfaction. Accessibility strategies further reinforce sharia compliance through tour scheduling that accommodates prayer times and the training of tour guides in Islamic etiquette. Collectively, these strategies reflect an operationalization of Islamic ethics in tourism services, although their implementation remains uneven across destinations.

### **Alignment with Islamic Economic Values**

Overall, tourism development in Bengkalis Regency is broadly compatible with Islamic economic principles, particularly in environmental sustainability (*hifz al-bi'ah*) and community empowerment. Respondents noted that tourism activities generally avoid practices prohibited in Islam and actively promote Malay-Islamic cultural values. The preservation of Islamic heritage sites further reinforces tourism's spiritual dimension.

Nevertheless, the study identifies a gap between normative Islamic economic ideals and practical implementation. Ethical principles such as justice (*'adl*), transparency, and fairness have not been fully institutionalized due to the absence of standardized halal tourism regulations and monitoring mechanisms. This inconsistency results in uneven service quality and weak accountability.

### **Economic Contributions and Community Empowerment**

Tourism has contributed positively to employment creation and UMKM development in Bengkalis Regency. Local culinary enterprises, handicrafts, and homestays benefit from tourist visits, supporting income diversification and poverty reduction. These outcomes align with Islamic economic objectives centered on social welfare and equitable growth.

However, limited understanding of halal standards among tourism actors constrains broader community participation. Some communities remain peripheral rather than central beneficiaries of tourism development. Strengthening human resource capacity and integrating halal value chains are therefore essential to ensuring inclusive and just economic outcomes.

### **Institutional and Regulatory Challenges**

The findings highlight institutional weaknesses, including limited halal certification, weak regulatory frameworks, and insufficient inter-agency coordination. Although tourism policies exist, they do not yet comprehensively integrate Islamic economic principles into operational guidelines. This lack of regulatory clarity undermines legal certainty for investors and Muslim tourists seeking sharia-compliant services.

In Islamic economics, clear regulation is essential to uphold *amanah* (trust) and consumer protection. Without binding standards, the credibility and sustainability of Bengkalis as a halal tourism destination remain fragile.

### **Strategic Implications for Sharia-Oriented Tourism Development**

The discussion suggests that Bengkalis Regency has strong potential to position itself as a sharia-oriented tourism destination by leveraging its Islamic cultural identity, natural resources, and demographic advantages. Strategic priorities include infrastructure enhancement, formalization of

halal tourism regulations, digital promotion, and strengthened collaboration among government, business actors, and local communities.

Integrating Islamic economic principles into tourism governance can transform tourism into a tool for sustainable development that balances economic growth with ethical responsibility. Such an approach enhances regional competitiveness while ensuring social justice, environmental preservation, and spiritual well-being.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the implementation of tourism potential in Bengkalis Regency shows a positive development direction, marked by the utilization of natural resources, Malay-Islamic culture, and contributions to the local economy. From the perspective of Islamic Economics, this development has generally aligned with basic principles such as *maslahah* (public benefit), community empowerment, and environmental sustainability (*hifz al-bi'ah*).

However, critically, it is found that the implementation still faces various structural, institutional, and conceptual limitations. The significant tourism potential has not fully transformed into a sustainable competitive advantage due to weak governance, limited infrastructure, and a lack of integration among stakeholders. This indicates a gap between potential and realization that hinders the optimization of economic benefits.

From the perspective of compliance with the principles of Sharia, tourism practices in Bengkalis tend to avoid activities that conflict with Islamic values and strengthen religious cultural identity. However, the implementation of core values such as justice (*'adl*), transparency, and honesty in economic activities has not been systematically institutionalized. As emphasized by Muhammad Umer Chapra, Islamic economic development should not only be oriented toward formal compliance but must also reflect social justice and comprehensive ethical governance. In addition, the economic contribution of tourism to the local community is still limited and not fully inclusive. Although this sector can create business opportunities and jobs, the distribution of benefits is uneven, leaving some members of the community in a marginal position within the tourism value chain. This condition contradicts the main objective of development in Islam as stated by Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, namely the achievement of collective welfare (*falah*) through the fair distribution of benefits. Furthermore, the weak human resource capacity and the suboptimal development of the halal value chain indicate that the implementation of halal tourism is still at an early stage and has not yet been integrated systematically. This causes the economic values of Islam, which should be the main foundation, to not be fully internalized in business practices and public policies. Thus, overall, it can be concluded that the implementation of tourism potential in Bengkalis Regency has reflected normative alignment with Islamic economic principles, but has not yet reached an optimal level of substantive implementation. Therefore, fundamental transformation is needed through strengthening institutions, improving human resource capacity, developing a standardized halal tourism system, and applying principles of justice and good governance. These efforts are important so that tourism not only becoming a source of economic growth, but also as a development instrument oriented towards public interest, social justice, and sustainability.

## Implications

### Theoretical Implications:

This study extends the application of Islamic Economics to the tourism sector by demonstrating how principles such as *maslahah*, *hifz al-bi'ah*, and ethical business conduct can guide sustainable destination development. It also offers a conceptual framework for integrating cultural, religious, and economic dimensions in halal tourism, contributing to scholarship on faith-based and community-oriented tourism models.

### Practical Implications:

For policymakers, the findings suggest the need to enhance infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and halal certification processes to ensure tourist satisfaction and compliance with syariah standards. Local businesses and communities should receive training in sharia-compliant tourism management, ethical business practices, and halal value chains. Collaborative digital promotion strategies can leverage Bengkalis' unique Malay-Islamic cultural identity to attract domestic and international Muslim tourists.

### Research Implications:

Future research should evaluate the effectiveness of halal tourism initiatives in Bengkalis using quantitative measures, including economic impact assessment and visitor satisfaction. Longitudinal studies can track the sustainability of syariah-aligned tourism practices and provide evidence-based guidance for scaling and replicating similar models in other regions.

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