

Halal Tourism Development Through Creative Economy Of Local Communities In Summersuko District

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Abstract

Keywords :

Halal tourism; MSMEs; Creative Economy; Community Empowerment

This study aims to analyze the role of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the creative economy in supporting the development of halal tourism in Summersuko District, Lumajang Regency. The research focuses on identifying the potential of MSMEs, the contribution of the creative economy to empowering local communities, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors in the development of halal tourism. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques including observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review. The research informants consist of MSME actors, tourism managers, and surrounding communities at two tourist destinations, namely Selokambang Natural Bath and Tumpak Selo Mini Tubing. The findings indicate that MSMEs play a strategic role in providing Muslim-friendly products and services, such as halal-certified culinary offerings and business services tailored to the needs of Muslim tourists. Community-based creative economic activities, including souvenir production and local product innovation, also enhance the attractiveness of halal tourism. However, several challenges remain, including increases in entrance ticket prices that affect visitor numbers, the lack of supporting halal tourism facilities, and fluctuations in tourist visits during certain periods. This study concludes that the development of halal tourism in Summersuko District requires synergy among MSMEs, creative economy actors, tourism managers, and local government. Such collaboration is essential to enhance halal product innovation, improve tourism facilities, and strengthen digital promotion in order to create a competitive, sustainable halal tourism destination that can improve the welfare of local communities.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute a vital sector in the Indonesian economy, as they significantly contribute to economic growth, employment generation, and national economic resilience (Hafni R, n.d.). Empirical evidence indicates that during the 2008 global financial crisis, the majority of MSMEs were able to survive without experiencing substantial adverse impacts and have continued to increase in number over time. In the era of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which commenced in 2015, MSMEs are expected to enhance their

competitiveness, strengthen the national economic structure, and contribute to poverty alleviation through improvements in the quality of life (Faizal et al., 2021). As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia possesses significant potential for the development of the Islamic economy, including the halal tourism sector (Ferdiansyah, 2020). Halal tourism has emerged as one of the sectors demonstrating consistent positive growth within the global economy. Based on international travel data, the number of tourists increased from 25 million in 1950 to 278 million in 1980, 528 million in 1995, and reached 1.1 billion in 2014. This growth trend underscores that tourism is a resilient sector and serves as a key driver of the global economy (Nisa, 2022).

Sumbersuko District in Lumajang Regency possesses considerable natural and cultural tourism potential that can be developed into a halal tourism destination. Two prominent tourist attractions in this area are Selokambang Natural Bathing Site and Mini Tubing Tumpak Selo. However, this potential has not yet been optimally utilized. MSMEs, as key actors in the creative economy, continue to face several constraints, including limited innovation in halal products, low competitiveness, and insufficient supporting facilities aligned with the halal tourism concept. In fact, strengthening MSME-based creative economy initiatives is believed to enhance tourist attractiveness while simultaneously improving the welfare of local communities (Sulistyowati et al., 2024). Previous studies indicate that halal tourism can generate positive impacts on the local economy, particularly in the sectors of food, handicrafts, and Muslim-friendly services. Nevertheless, research examining the integration of MSMEs, the creative economy, and halal tourism at the sub-district level—especially in Summersuko—remains limited. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into the extent to which MSMEs contribute to strengthening the halal tourism ecosystem in the region (Maulida & Yunani, 2017). In addition to its potential, several challenges have been identified in the two tourism sites. At Selokambang Natural Bathing Site, MSME actors have expressed concerns regarding the relatively high entrance fees and the limited availability of supporting facilities, such as children's playground areas. External factors, including limited employment opportunities, also pose constraints on the development of community-based businesses. Meanwhile, at Mini Tubing Tumpak Selo, MSME activities remain relatively stable; however, tourist visits tend to decline during certain months, thereby affecting the income of business operators. Based on this background, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

- What is the potential of MSMEs and the creative economy in supporting the development of halal tourism in Summersuko District?
- How do MSMEs contribute to the empowerment of local communities through halal tourism?
- What are the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the development of MSMEs and the creative economy within the halal tourism sector in the region?

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to analyze the potential of MSMEs in the development of halal tourism, to explain the role of MSMEs in empowering local communities, and to identify the supporting and constraining factors influencing the development of creative economy-based MSMEs in Summersuko District. It is expected that the findings of this research will serve as a reference for local governments, tourism managers, and MSME actors in developing competitive and sustainable halal tourism destinations (Hasanah et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, an approach aimed at understanding phenomena in depth within their natural context, with the researcher serving as the primary research instrument (Darmalaksana, 2020). Qualitative research emphasizes meaning, understanding, and interpretation of participants' behaviors and experiences rather than generalization. Within this approach, data are collected directly from the field and analyzed inductively based on empirical findings (Bogdan, 2020). The research was conducted in Summersuko District, Lumajang Regency, which was purposively selected due to the presence of two tourism sites currently being developed as halal tourism destinations, namely Selokambang Natural Bathing Site and Mini Tubing Tumpak Selo. The informants in this study consisted of MSME actors, tourism managers, and local community members involved in creative economic activities. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review. Observation was conducted to directly examine MSME activities and the conditions of the related tourism sites. In-depth interviews were employed to obtain more comprehensive information regarding the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by MSME actors. Documentation was collected from archives, photographs, field notes, and relevant official documents. A literature review was utilized to strengthen the theoretical framework and to compare the research findings with previous studies (Mujia, 2011).

Data analysis was carried out through three stages: data reduction, data display, and inductive conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying the data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. The data were then presented in a narrative form to clearly illustrate patterns and relationships among themes. Conclusions were drawn inductively based on the empirical findings from the field. To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from MSME actors, tourism managers, and local community members. Technique triangulation was performed by cross-checking data derived from observation, interviews, and documentation to obtain valid and reliable findings.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The findings obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation indicate that MSMEs play a significant role in supporting the development of halal tourism in Summersuko District. The results are presented in three main sub-themes in accordance with the research focus.

1. The Role of MSMEs in Supporting Halal Tourism

Based on interviews conducted with MSME actors around Selokambang Natural Bathing Site and Mini Tubing Tumpak Selo, the majority of informants stated that the existence of halal tourism has positively impacted their income growth. One MSME actor stated:

“Indeed, one of the supporting factors of this tourism site is the presence of vendors and food and beverage stalls; therefore, in my opinion, it strongly supports this tourism destination.”

(Suryo, MSME Actor at Mini Tubing Tumpak Selo, August 11, 2025).

Another informant expressed:

“If you ask whether it supports the tourism site, of course it does, because every tourist destination certainly needs food stalls or vendors. I have been selling here for more than

ten years, so it is very supportive.”

(Ali, MSME Actor at Selokambang Natural Bathing Site, August 14, 2025).

The researcher's observations also revealed that the majority of MSME products have adopted halal labeling, particularly in the culinary and beverage sectors. In addition, business actors have adjusted their products to meet the needs of Muslim tourists, such as providing food free from preservatives, pork-free ingredients, and offering more flexible payment facilities.

2. Strengthening the Creative Economy Based on Local Community Participation

Field findings indicate that the local community of Summersuko actively develops creative economic activities that support halal tourism. Several of these activities include the production of souvenirs, such as clothing and bags, at the Mini Tubing Tumpak Selo tourism site, which serve as memorabilia or keepsakes for visitors.

3. Challenges and Constraints in the Development of MSMEs within Halal Tourism

Despite the positive developments, this study also identified several challenges faced by MSME actors. At the Selokambang Natural Bathing Site, the primary concern raised by MSME operators relates to the increase in entrance ticket prices, which is perceived as burdensome for visitors. This condition is considered to have contributed to a decline in the number of tourists during certain periods. One MSME actor stated:

“The main obstacle is the entrance ticket. It used to be ten thousand rupiahs, but since it increased to fifteen thousand, it feels expensive. Many visitors complain, especially since they also have to pay for parking. When it is less crowded, our sales decrease as well.” (Badriah, MSME Actor at Selokambang Natural Bathing Site, August 14, 2025).

In addition, the lack of supporting facilities, such as children's playground areas, constitutes another constraint in the development of halal tourism at Selokambang Natural Bathing Site. Meanwhile, at Mini Tubing Tumpak Selo, visitor numbers fluctuate during certain periods, particularly in August when numerous community events take place. Nevertheless, MSME actors reported that their income remains relatively stable, as visitors continue to come during holidays and weekends.

4. Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that:

- MSMEs make a substantial contribution to supporting halal tourism, particularly through the provision of Muslim-friendly products.
- The creative economy represents a key strength of the Summersuko community in enhancing tourism attractiveness.
- Several challenges still require improvement, particularly those related to tourism facilities, fluctuations in visitor numbers, and entrance ticket pricing policies.

These findings underscore the necessity of synergy among local government authorities, tourism managers, and MSME actors in strengthening a sustainable halal tourism ecosystem in Summersuko District.

DISCUSSIONS

This discussion elaborates on an in-depth interpretation of the research findings regarding the role of MSMEs and the creative economy in promoting the development of halal tourism in Summersuko District. Overall, the results indicate a strong interconnection between local

community-based creative economic activities, the enhancement of tourism attractiveness, and the strengthening of halal tourism values.

1. The Role of MSMEs within the Halal Tourism Ecosystem

The findings confirm that MSMEs make a tangible contribution to strengthening halal tourism through the provision of products and services aligned with sharia principles. The availability of halal culinary products, beverages free from prohibited substances, and halal labeling has proven to increase the confidence of Muslim tourists. This finding is consistent with Pelu et al. (2020), who argue that halal tourism is not solely concerned with destinations but also with the availability of services that comply with sharia standards. The increase in MSME income following the implementation of the halal tourism concept indicates that the MSME sector serves as a key actor within the tourism economic value chain. This finding reinforces the study by Nisa (2022), which emphasizes that the halal tourism industry can stimulate local economic growth through increased consumption by Muslim tourists. Practically, MSMEs in Summersuko District have demonstrated positive adaptation strategies, including the provision of halal menus, product innovation, and the delivery of Muslim-friendly services, such as the use of hygienic packaging and transparent labeling of ingredients.

2. The Role of the Creative Economy in Enhancing Tourism Attractiveness

The creative economy driven by the local community—such as handicraft production, souvenir manufacturing, Islamic-themed art performances, and the utilization of social media—has demonstrated a significant impact on the promotion and image of halal tourism in Summersuko. These findings support the concept proposed by Sulistyowati et al. (2024), which states that the creative economy serves as a primary driver of regional tourism by generating added value through community-based innovation and creativity. Community creative activities also contribute to strengthening local cultural identity, thereby enriching the overall tourist experience. The use of digital media platforms by younger generations, such as Instagram and TikTok, has become an effective and low-cost promotional strategy. This finding aligns with the study conducted by (Hermastuti et al., 2024). regarding the contribution of smart tourism in strengthening halal tourism destinations through the utilization of information technology.

3. Challenges in the Development of Halal Tourism at the Local Level

Despite the positive progress, this study also identified several challenges in the implementation of halal tourism. The issue of entrance ticket prices, perceived as relatively high by visitors at Selokambang Natural Bathing Site, has become a factor contributing to the decline in tourist visits. This condition directly affects the turnover of MSMEs whose income largely depends on the number of visitors. Supporting facilities for halal tourism, such as children's playground areas and proper culinary zoning arrangements, have not yet been optimally provided. This finding is consistent with Maulida and Yunani (2017), who emphasize that MSMEs require adequate facilities and regulatory support to contribute maximally within the tourism ecosystem (Maulida & Yunani, 2017). At Mini Tubing Tumpak Selo, fluctuations in tourist visits during certain periods—particularly in months marked by intensive community activities—lead to instability in MSME income. Nevertheless, the relatively stable number of visitors during weekends indicates that this tourism site holds considerable potential for further development through religious events, halal festivals, or sharia-based educational tourism packages.

4. The Integration of MSMEs and the Creative Economy as a Driving Force for Halal Tourism Development

Based on the findings and theoretical analysis, it can be concluded that the development of halal tourism in Summersuko District largely depends on the collaboration among MSMEs, creative economy actors, and tourism managers. Such integration creates a tourism ecosystem that not only complies with sharia principles but also provides cultural and economic experiences for visitors. This finding reinforces tourism development theories that emphasize the importance of community-based tourism (CBT), in which local communities serve as the primary drivers in the planning, management, and development of tourism. The higher the level of community involvement, the stronger the halal tourism identity that can be established. Therefore, local governments and tourism managers need to provide training programs, halal certification assistance, and digital marketing support to ensure the sustainable growth of MSMEs and creative economy actors.

This discussion demonstrates that MSMEs play a fundamental role in providing the halal products and services required by tourists, thereby serving as a primary foundation for supporting the sustainability of halal tourism in Summersuko District. Furthermore, creative economic activities developed by the local community have proven to strengthen tourism attractiveness and enhance destination promotion through product innovation and the utilization of digital media. Nevertheless, the development of halal tourism in this area continues to face several challenges, particularly those related to the limited availability of supporting facilities and suboptimal tourism management policies. Therefore, the integration and collaboration among MSMEs, creative economy actors, and local government authorities constitute key factors in establishing a more advanced, competitive, and sustainable halal tourism ecosystem in Summersuko District.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the development of halal tourism in Summersuko District is strongly influenced by the active role of MSMEs and the creative economy driven by the local community. MSMEs function as the primary providers of halal products and services that meet the needs of Muslim tourists, thereby enhancing visitor trust and interest. Creative economic activities initiated by the community, such as the production of souvenirs as memorabilia and the utilization of social media for promotional purposes, further strengthen the destination's identity and increase the attractiveness of halal tourism in the region. However, this study also identifies several challenges that require attention, including the limited availability of supporting facilities for halal tourism, fluctuations in tourist arrivals, and tourism management policies that have not yet fully supported the optimal development of MSMEs.

These constraints affect the income stability of MSME actors and the overall quality of tourism services. Overall, the successful development of halal tourism in Summersuko District largely depends on strong collaboration among MSME actors, creative economy communities, tourism managers, and local government authorities. Such synergy is essential to enhance halal product innovation, improve tourism facilities, expand digital promotion, and formulate supportive policies aimed at establishing a competitive and sustainable halal tourism destination that generates economic benefits for the local community.

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