

# Implementation of Muslim Friendly Tourism in Lake Toba Tourism Area As A Super Priority Tourist Destination to Increase Economic Potential

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**Abstract.** The potential of MFT which is currently trending with Lake Toba as a Super Priority Tourist Destination (DPSP) is certainly very positive if it is applied to increase tourist visits, both local and foreign. This study aims to determine how the application of MTF in Lake Toba in increasing the growth of economic potential. Data Analysis Techniques, using a descriptive data analysis model as a problem-solving procedure. The results of this study state that the application of MFT is able to increase the economic potential of the community in tourist locations and increase the country's foreign exchange. This implementation requires policies from the government so that Muslim-friendly tourist destinations can actually be realized, including the need for good cooperation and coordination with each stakeholder. As well as the availability of infrastructure and competent human resources that can attract Muslim tourists to return to Lake Toba.

**Keywords:** Muslim Friendly Tourism; Halal Touris; Super Priority Tourism; Economic Potential.

## 1. Introduction

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy/Tourism and Creative Economy Agency (Kemenparekraf/Baparekraf) has designated 5 Super Priority Destinations in Indonesia. These destinations include Borobudur, Likupang, Mandalika, Lake Toba, and Labuan Bajo. The Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy (Menparekraf), Sandiaga Uno, stated that this was one of President Joko Widodo's explicit directives to enhance tourism in Indonesia [1]. Lake Toba exemplifies a region in Indonesia that heavily depends on the tourism industry as the primary source of regional revenue. The Toba region exemplifies an area that heavily depends on the tourism sector as the primary source of regional revenue. This is demonstrated by the substantial influx of tourists who visit the Lake Toba region and Samosir Island. The scenic Lake Toba greatly enhances the appeal of the surrounding region, making it a top destination for objects and tourist attractions (ODTW) in North Sumatra. The Lake Toba area has been officially declared as a National Tourism Destination (DPN) and Superior Tourism Destination (DPU), and it is also recognized as a National Strategic Area (KSN) for tourism in the province of North Sumatra [2].

Halal tourism, often known as Muslim-friendly tourism, has emerged as a prominent trend in the global tourism industry. Muslim Friendly Tourism, often known as halal tourism, is a type of cultural tourism that places a strong emphasis on adhering to Islamic sharia values and standards as its fundamental principles. This concept is novel in the tourism sector, necessitating

additional refinement and a deeper comprehension of the integration of Islamic principles in tourism. Sharia tourism incorporates the fundamental principles of Islam in its offerings, encompassing accommodation, dining establishments, and tourist activities that consistently adhere to sharia standards [3].

Indonesia has global recognition as the main muslim friendly tourism or halal tourism in the world for its victory in the event "The World Halal Travel Summit & Exhibition 2015". Based on this, of course, Muslim friendly tourism or halal tourism has good economic prospects as an effort to develop the national tourism industry [4] [5] [6] [7]. It can be said that actually some regions have begun to prepare themselves or even began to implement the concept of Muslim friendly tourism or halal tourism in their area, one of which is Lake Toba. Lake Toba was designed as one of the halal tourist destinations by the Governor of North Sumatra, Edy Rahmayadi. However, this plan caused resistance from the community around Lake Toba, causing a sharp polemic. For the people around Lake Toba, the launching of halal tourist destinations in Lake Toba can disturb local wisdom in the area. One of the traditions in question is to consume pork which is commonly done in various traditional ceremonies, weddings, mourning, and giving sticks (*mambere tukkot*) to people who are already old [8].

The plan to implement halal tourism or Muslim friendly tourism actually has a positive impact on attracting foreign tourists. The increase in foreign tourist visits into the country can provide many benefits for the destination area, especially in improving the economy for the surrounding community. However, the launching of halal tourism in Lake Toba could not run well due to community resistance which was not limited to technical obstacles or strategies to attract tourist visits. This leaves an incomplete communication/political issue. The need for political communication that is able to unite all parts of the political system so that all aspirations and interests of various parties can be converted into a policy into a challenge in implementing and developing halal tourism in Lake Toba.

This study aims to formulate model of the application of Muslim friendly tourism or halal tourism in the Lake Toba Area, Toba Regency to increase the economic potential in the Lake Toba Area, so as to be able to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting Lake Toba to improve the welfare of the surrounding community and is expected to have an impact on other improvements. This tourism sector scheme is in accordance with the government's focus as one of President Jokowi's instructions to focus on developing the tourism sector which has been slumped due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so that the government through the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy is trying to develop as much as possible a series of tourism with a focus on Quality and Sustainable Tourism. With the optimism that Indonesia will soon experience a revival in terms of economy and tourism in 2022 and the coming years in accordance with the strategic plan of higher education research.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Muslim Friendly Tourism**

According to COSMEC, Muslim Friendly Tourism, also known as halal tourism, is a form of tourism that specifically caters to the needs of Muslim travelers who seek to uphold their religious beliefs and values. It prioritizes the provision of halal-certified amenities and facilities that align with Islamic teachings, ensuring that Muslim tourists can engage in tourism without compromising their fundamental requirements. Halal tourism can also be defined as the

provision of tourism products and services that meet the needs of Muslim tourists in accordance with Islamic teachings. There are several principles in halal tourism, including: no alcohol to be served, no nightclubs, no drugs, only halal food served, ease of access to worship, no place to do bad things, such as adultery, pornography, and pornography, no place to gamble, the availability of the Quran and worship equipment in the hotel room, the presence of Qibla directions in the hotel room, and prayer rooms segregated by gender.

## **2.2 Model and Implementation**

A model is a systematic and abstract picture, describing certain potentials related to various aspects of a process. There are also those who describe that a model is a way of denoting an object in which is explained the complexity of a process, thinking and the relationship between the elements that support it. In the context of the Indonesian terminology, application or implementation refers to the ability to utilize acquired knowledge in practical or tangible scenarios. This comprehension demonstrates that the term "application" or "implementation" essentially refers to the operation, presence, and functioning of the activities or procedures within a system.

## **2.3 Lake Toba Super priority Tourist Destinations**

Lake Toba in North Sumatra has been selected as one of the five Super Priority Tourism Destinations for expedited development. The other destinations include Borobudur in Central Java, Mandalika in West Nusa Tenggara, Labuan Bajo in East Nusa Tenggara, and Likupang in North Sulawesi. Lake Toba spans an approximate size of 1,145 square kilometers and reaches a depth of 450 meters. Lake Toba is the most expansive lake in Southeast Asia and is among the most profound lakes globally. Visitors and tourists at Lake Toba can partake in kayaking or sampan rides, with the option to choose from three different paths for exploring the lake: Lake Tongging-Silalahi, Tongging-Samosir, or the Northern Circle. The decision to designate the Lake Toba Area as a super priority tourism destination is justified due to the exceptional natural beauty of Lake Toba, which possesses immense potential as a globally renowned tourist attraction.

## **2.4 Economic Potential**

Local economic potential can be interpreted as "the economic ability of the local area that can and should be developed and continues to develop and is a source of search for the surrounding community and can even affect the improvement of the entire regional economy to be more developed". This is one of the ways for the government to develop the potential of the regions by writing in the regional development planning. As the largest lake in the Southeast Asian region, Lake Toba holds a variety of economic potentials. Starting from water transportation businesses, agriculture, animal husbandry, aquaculture, industry, to tourism. Lake Toba is not only an object of natural beauty, but also brings prosperity to the surrounding community. One of the economic activities that develop in Lake Toba is tilapia or tilapia farming with the KJA system, the economic turnover of aquaculture, especially tilapia, can reach up to Rp 5 trillion per year.

### **3 Research Methods**

The study was carried out in Lake Toba, located in North Sumatra, utilizing a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is employed to elucidate and scrutinize occurrences, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts of individuals and collectives. The informant selection technique employed in this study is purposive sampling, wherein informants are chosen based on their expertise and knowledge pertaining to the specific information sought by the researcher for this study's data. This technique enables the researcher to identify the qualities of the study informant with greater precision, ensuring that the information received is pertinent and suitable for the researcher's needs. The defined qualifications pertain to individuals who possess a comprehensive understanding of halal tourism:

1. Governments originating from Pmprovsu and Districts
2. Tourist business people in the Lake Toba Area
3. Representative of MUI/DSN
4. BPOM representatives in the Provincial Government
5. Academics
6. Community leaders from the Lake Toba Area
7. Media Representative

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data derived from field observations, interviews, and questionnaires. Meanwhile, secondary data comes from surrounding agencies and literature sources, both printed and electronic. The data collection techniques carried out are interviews, documentation, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and combinations or triangulations. The data analysis technique used is a descriptive analysis technique.

### **4 Discussion**

#### **4.1 Muslim Friendly Tourism**

The emergence of the term Muslim Friendly Tourism or halal tourism originated from activities carried out by tourists with the desire to cultivate the religious niali that exists in themselves by visiting places that contain religious values [17]. The number of halal tourism enthusiasts is very high, based on the Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel (GMTI) 2022 report, as many as 160 million international Muslim tourists who have traveled before the Covid-19 pandemic hit. After the Covid-19 pandemic gradually improves GMTI projects 140 million international Muslim tourists to travel in 2023 both in countries within the scope of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and non-OIC countries [18]. Considering Indonesia as one of the countries with the largest Muslim population in the world, this trend should be a breath of fresh air in boosting the Indonesian economy through halal tourism. However, the government is still hampered in developing halal tourism because many people do not understand the concept of halal tourism. There are many rejections related to halal tourism that occur in several areas, one of which is Lake Toba, the community considers that the application of halal tourism is a form of Islamization that will destroy the local wisdom of their area and turn the area into a religious area [19].

Halal tourism does not involve the process of Islamization that undermines indigenous wisdom or diminishes diversity. Halal tourism, as defined by the Vice President of Indonesia, K.H. Ma'ruf Amin, and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, refers to a type of tourism that offers specific amenities catering to the needs of Muslim travelers. These amenities include halal food, designated places of worship, and other services that are in line with Islamic principles, ultimately creating a Muslim-friendly environment.

Indonesia possesses significant potential for expanding its halal tourism industry, mostly due to its status as the country with the world's biggest Muslim population. According to the Global Religious Future 2020 data, Indonesia has a Muslim population of 229.6 million people, which accounts for approximately 87.2% of the country's overall population and 13% of the global Muslim population [23]. Indonesia benefits from this circumstance as the Muslim community is the majority.

In terms of geography and astronomy, Indonesia has a very strategic position so that it provides diverse natural patterns so that Indonesia was named the top 10 countries with the best destinations according to Lo Planet in 2019. Another opportunity that supports the increase in halal tourism in Indonesia is the fact that the tourism sector is the largest source of foreign exchange for the country accompanied by an increase in the flow of Muslim tourists which is predicted to continue to increase.

To make good use of this opportunity, the Government needs to carry out a strategy by continuing to increase public awareness of halal certification. One of the government's challenges is facilities and accommodation including hotels, restaurants and even transportation that have halal certification, even though this halal certification is the key for Muslim tourists not to worry when traveling [24].

In addition to halal certification, the promotion of halal tourism business by providing halal tourism guidebook [25] [26] and providing a strong business legal umbrella related to halal tourism also needs to be done. Until now, Indonesia's halal tourism does not have a strong legal umbrella from the central government. The rules that guide halal tourism business actors are only MUI Facilities number 108 / DSN-MUI / 10/2016 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Tourism Based on Sharia which regulates the procurement of travel agencies, steam baths, spas and massages as well as halal tourist attractions.

## **4.2 Economic Potential in the Lake Toba Area**

Lake Toba with an area of 1,145 square kilometers, makes it the largest volcanic lake in the world. Tourists are treated to natural scenery in the form of green hills, grasslands, and lakes that are so vast and calm. The vastness of Lake Toba makes this lake similar to an ocean surrounded by mountains with an island in the middle. The natural beauty of Lake Toba lies in seven districts, namely Simalungun, Toba, Samosir, North Tapanuli, Humbang Hasundutan, Dairi, Karo, and Samosir.

Not only the vastness of the lake that makes tourists interested in visiting Lake Toba, but also because this lake offers extraordinary charm for tourists. In this lake there are several hills that offer views of the lake from a height. Among them are Gajah Bobok Hill, Siadtaratas Hill, Simarjarunjung Indah Hill, Pusuk Hill, and Holbung Hill. Tourists will be spoiled with a gentle fresh breeze, and can set up tents to enjoy the beauty for longer. Lake Toba also offers exoticism that does not exist anywhere else with a spot on the island and a lake above the lake. Samosir Island, which is in the middle of the lake, is above the island of Sumatra. While Lake Sidihoni in Panguruan, Samosir, and Lake Aek Natonang in Simanindo District, Samosir are two lakes above the lake.

In addition to the lake, this area has several waterfalls that add to its charm. The most popular waterfalls in Lake Toba for tourists to visit are Sipiso-Piso Waterfall and other waterfalls, namely Efrata Waterfall, Situmurun Waterfall, Janji Waterfall, and Binangalon Waterfall. Tourism Sector

The Lake Toba area has high tourism potential and has many tourist attractions. The most awaited tourist attractions and events in Lake Toba are the Lake Toba Festival which is held annually around August-September. The festival starts with a sigale-gale carnival, tor-tor sawan dance to mangalahat horbo. In addition, there are also paragliding activities, swimming around Lake Toba and Solu Bolon, namely canoe rowing activities in groups. In addition to the Lake Toba Festival, another tourist attraction located in the Lake Toba Area is the shore of lumban bulbul lake in Lumban Bulbul Village, Balige, Tobasa. There are also natural attractions of Tarabunga Hill on the outskirts of Lake Toba to culinary delights at Lumban Silintong on the shores of Lake Toba with food that is teral Naniura.

The Lake Toba area has a variety of other economic potentials in addition to tourism potentials that can be used to improve the economy and community welfare ranging from the Agricultural Sector, Fisheries Sector, and Water Transportation Sector.

1. Agricultural Sector

The agricultural sector contributes greatly to the economy in the Lake Toba Area. As of 2019, of the total area of the regency covering an area of 202,180 ha, around 27 percent is paddy fields (irrigated and non-irrigated), moor/ garden, and fields / huma. Agricultural serktor consists of food crops such as rice and palawija in the quality of dry milled grain (rice), dried pipilan (corn), dry beans (soybeans and peanuts), and wet tubers (cassava and sweet potatoes) with superior commodities namely rice commodities [27]. In the horticultural crop sector for vegetable commodities, there are shallots, large chilies, potatoes, cabbage, and others with the largest production commodities, namely chili. For fruit commodities, there are mangoes, durians, oranges, bananas, papayas and pineapples. In the plantation sector, which is generally managed by non-governmental organizations, there are several commodities such as rubber, frankincense, coffee, coconut, pecan, palm, chocolate, palm, andaliman, betel nut, and patchouli [28].

2. Fisheries Sector

Fish farming in Lake Toba is very famous in North Sumatra. With a type of fish consisting of goldfish, mukair, tilapia, and patchouli. Fish that are often caught by fishermen are tilapia, mujair, nilem, carp and sepat. Lake Toba has a special fish named batak fish which is a fish native to the lake but has begun to be rare. In terms of water quality, Lake Toba is included in the oligotropic type of waters with minimal nutrients, which are still sufficient to support the life and development of fish and their feed organisms [29].

3. Water Transport Sector

Lake Toba as one of the water tourism attractions gives birth to a fairly good economic potential in the water transportation sector through the services of passenger ships, motor boats, water bicycles and other sea transportation. In addition, now the Minister of Transportation has developed 12 ports in the Lake Toba area, namely Balide, Muara, Ambarita, Ajibata, Simanindo, Tigaras, Sippinggan, Onanrunggu, Onanbaru, Neinggolan, Pakkara and Maarbuntoruan Ports [30].

### **4.3 Muslim Friendly Tourism in Lake Toba to increase economic potential**

Although it has become one of Indonesia's global tourist icons, the Lake Toba area continues to be developed. The government is currently focusing on developing infrastructure

such as airports, ports, roads, to world-class telecommunications networks to support Lake Toba as a super priority tourist area. It is proven that currently the accessibility of Lake Toba is easily accessible through Silangit Airport, North Tapanuli. For a road trip to the Lake Toba area, it can be reached by traveling for 4 hours from the city of Medan.

Ensuring the safety and comfort of tourists is crucial for attracting them to the tourist area and fostering the growth and progress of tourism in the Lake Toba region. The Lake Toba area offers not only opportunities for the development of beauty and culture, but also for religious tourism. This is due to the area's rich religious history, which can be utilized to attract religious tourists. Examples of religious tourism sites in the Lake Toba area include Pusuk Buhit (Samosir) tourism, Huta Bolon Museum (Samosir), TB Silalahi Museum (Toba Samosir), Eden Park (North Tapanuli), and various others.

Therefore, when planning tourism development in the Lake Toba area from an Islamic perspective, it is crucial to acknowledge and comprehend that tourism serves as a means to promote consciousness, faith, and dedication, while also striving to attain virtuous and elevated moral principles. There exists a correlation between religion and tourism, which is considered a crucial aspect for Indonesia. This is due to Indonesia's national philosophy, Pancasila, which places emphasis on the belief in a single supreme deity.

The formulation of tourism development plans in the Lake Toba region is closely intertwined with the significant religious principles that serve as crucial drivers and foundations for the desired values in tourism development. This includes aligning tourism symbols such as hotels and culinary offerings with Islamic values and culture. The local authority in the Lake Toba region is presently formulating a tourism policy grounded in Islamic principles to establish clear guidelines for permissible and prohibited activities. This is due to the fact that a significant portion of the local population and foreign tourists originate from Muslim populations.

When planning tourism development, it is crucial to consider the supply of necessary infrastructure and amenities to foster and advertise tourism in the Lake Toba region. In addition to this, it is imperative to prioritize effective management in order to foster dynamic growth of tourism in the Lake Toba region and stimulate economic development within the surrounding community.

The success of tourism development hinges on its ability to generate favorable outcomes, as outlined in the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPDA). This plan serves as a comprehensive framework for guiding tourism development, managing the potential of tourism areas, developing tourist attractions, enhancing tourism facilities and infrastructure, nurturing tourism human resources (HR), and facilitating investment in the tourism sector. It also serves as a foundation for monitoring and controlling the progress of tourism development and the management of tourist attractions. The primary emphasis being pursued by each local authority in the Lake Toba region is the development of RIPPDA. This arrangement aims to consolidate the vision and objective for the development of tourism in the Lake Toba area, fostering synergy and collaboration across different districts.

Comprehensive tourism development planning is necessary for the Lake Toba area, encompassing interrelated industries, regions, and tourism-related potentials. The primary objective is to build a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable tourist plan for the Lake Toba Area.

## **5 Conclusion**

Muslim-friendly tourism, also known as halal tourism, is not a means of Islamization. Rather, it refers to a type of tourism that caters to the specific needs of Muslim travelers, such as providing halal cuisine, places of prayer, and other necessary amenities. In essence, halal tourism aims to provide a welcoming and accommodating environment for Muslim tourists. Halal tourism in Indonesia holds significant promise for bolstering the country's economy through tourism. This is due to several factors, including Indonesia's status as the nation with the largest Muslim population globally, its ranking as one of the top 10 tourist destinations according to Lo Planet, its strategic geographical location, and the potential for increased foreign exchange earnings through tourism.

To develop halal tourism, the government needs to take definite steps by increasing awareness of halal tourism literacy, increasing awareness of business people related to halal certification, promoting, and most importantly making strong policies from the central government regarding halal tourism.

Lake Toba is one of the super priority tourist destinations that has potential in various fields such as agriculture, fisheries to tourism that can be used to improve welfare. The high trend of halal tourism in the world and supported by the potential of Lake Toba can be a great opportunity for many parties. By implementing halal tourism in Lake Toba which without belief is able to increase the number of tourists and ultimately improve the welfare of the community.

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