

Harmony of Islamic Education with a Halal Ecotourism Insight and Local Cultural Wisdom

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Abstract:

This study will examine the harmony of Islamic education with a halal ecotourism perspective and local wisdom. This study is important to do because in fact halal ecotourism and local cultural wisdom that grow and develop in rural areas are rich in Islamic educational values. If the wealth of these treasures is managed well, it can be part of strengthening Islamic Education through halal ecotourism activities and local cultural wisdom values. This research uses a literature review approach by reviewing various recent scientific journals and is open access. This research concludes that halal ecotourism with a harmonious Islamic education perspective can utilize nature by aligning it with Islamic educational values and culture for conservation, tourism and education purposes and can even be utilized for the welfare of the surrounding community.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Halal Ecotourism, Local Wisdom

Introduction

Islamic education taught within society, particularly in rural communities, has distinctive characteristics that are often overlooked. Islamic education in rural communities can be integrated with local values found in the village, such as tourism and other local cultural values. This study seeks to examine the harmony of Islamic education based on halal ecotourism and local wisdom in Indonesia. The premise of this research is that, when Islamic education is understood as an effort to develop individual potential so that people possess knowledge, noble character, and the ability to apply their knowledge in everyday life, halal ecotourism and local wisdom can become part of the process of applying knowledge and building character. This is highly feasible because halal ecotourism in its various forms, together with the local wisdom values of a community, is in fact rich in educational values.

As one of the countries with the largest Muslim populations in the world, endowed with beautiful natural scenery, distinctive local cultures, regional cuisines, and other natural resources, Indonesia has great potential to develop the halal ecotourism sector into a profitable creative industry. However, in several areas with strong development potential, the halal ecotourism sector has not yet been optimally developed. Many studies indicate that the government has not yet succeeded in packaging halal ecotourism as a creative industry capable of empowering surrounding communities, as shown in the findings of Sofiah¹, Agustina Purnomo², R. Hendrik Nasution³, and several other researchers. The government's lack of success in developing the creative industry within the tourism sector is attributable to

¹ Sofiah Sofiah, "Rekonstruksi Ekowisata Dan Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Masyarakat Melalui Halal Tourism," *Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars* 6, no. 1 (April 15, 2022): 633, <https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v6i1.349>.

² Agustina Multi Purnomo, "PEMBERDAYAAN SOSIAL DALAM PENGEMBANGAN EKOWISATA DI PEKON KILUAN NEGRI, KABUPATEN TANGGAMUS, PROVINSI LAMPUNG," *SINGULARITY: Jurnal Desain Dan Industri Kreatif* 1, no. 1 (November 12, 2020): 10, <https://doi.org/10.31326/jsing.v1i1.741>.

³ R Hendrik Nasution, Ricky Avenzora, and Dan Tutut Sunarminto, "ANALISIS KEBIJAKAN DAN PERATURAN PERUNDANG-UNDANGAN EKOWISATA DI INDONESIA" 23, no. 1 (n.d.): 10.

policies that are still formulated and implemented in a partial manner. In fact, in many cases in Indonesia, local culture, religion, and tourism can be harmonized into something highly positive and valuable.

Furthermore, the harmony between halal ecotourism and local cultural wisdom actually contains Islamic educational values. This aspect has still rarely been discussed by researchers. Yet, when examined seriously and carefully, Islamic education, halal ecotourism, and local cultural wisdom constitute elements that can strongly synergize with one another. This research is important because it demonstrates the significance of harmony between religion and culture in strengthening Islamic education. Moreover, the future development of tourism globally increasingly emphasizes environmental sustainability. In other words, future tourism is environmentally oriented tourism that applies the principles of nature conservation, local community empowerment, and learning and educational values. This concept is more widely known as ecotourism.⁴ In reality, however, the empowerment of surrounding communities through educational values has not yet reached an optimal level.

There are at least four main issues in the context of halal ecotourism that also constitute the central concerns of this study. First, nature conservation is an essential requirement in the development of ecotourism. Second, the strengthening of the creative economy is closely related to the welfare of communities surrounding tourism destinations. Because the sustainability of ecotourism also depends on local communities, these communities need to be empowered. Third, ecotourism can serve as a center for learning and Islamic education for society in general. Through learning and education about ecology, communities are expected to become increasingly aware of the importance of preserving nature. Fourth, religion and local culture are also important issues. This final issue is no less significant than the previous three because religion and local culture also influence and shape the mindset of surrounding communities.

From a global perspective, ecotourism emerged as global society became increasingly aware that the exploitation of nature would be harmful to humanity. Such harm is not limited to the areas where natural resources are exploited, but can have national and even global consequences. Therefore, over the past decade, global communities have increasingly promoted issues such as climate change, the go-green movement, ecotourism, and similar concerns.⁵ These movements share a common objective: people expect the environments in which they live to remain sustainable. The same applies to tourism, as society has increasingly recognized that tourism should not damage the ecosystems of tourism destinations. This is where Islamic educational values can play an important role in creating harmony among these dimensions.

Furthermore, closer examination shows that religion in rural communities tends to maintain a friendly relationship with local culture. Religion not only provides space for tolerance toward local culture but also becomes a means of interaction with it. Therefore, Islamic education should play a significant role in ensuring that Islamic educational values can inspire the strengthening of halal ecotourism while also reinforcing local wisdom values that have long been established.

A deeper examination shows that Islam as it developed in Indonesia has generally maintained a harmonious relationship with local culture. The Wali Songo, prominent figures in the spread of Islam in Indonesia, were able to bring Islamic values into dialogue with local

⁴ Rosaleen Duffy, *A Trip Too Far: Ecotourism, Politics, and Exploitation* (London ; Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2002), ix–x.

⁵ Jawade Hafidz, “EKOLOGI KONSTITUSIONAL (GREEN CONSTITUTIONAL) DAN KEDAULATAN WILAYAH DI INDONESIA,” *Jurnal Hukum* 26, no. 2 (November 28, 2019): 533–34, <http://lppm-unissula.com/jurnal.unissula.ac.id/index.php/jurnalhukum/article/view/208>.

culture through a process known as acculturation. This acculturation subsequently became part of the identity of Indonesian Islam, particularly in many rural areas. Consequently, many elements of local culture have blended with Islamic values without eliminating either the identity of Islam as a religion or the identity of local culture itself. In addition, rural communities generally uphold customary norms inherited from previous generations.

From a broader perspective, the dimensions of Islamic education (religion) and local culture can in fact become an attraction for international tourists, particularly visitors from Muslim-majority countries as well as from other countries. Global statistics indicate that the Muslim population continues to grow. Therefore, the opportunity to develop harmony among Islamic education, ecotourism, religion, and culture presents both challenges and opportunities. The challenge is that the branding of ecotourism based on religious and cultural harmony has not yet gained strong recognition in global tourism. The opportunity, however, lies in Indonesia's beautiful natural landscapes and its moderate Muslim communities that appreciate local values. Accordingly, Islamic education and ecotourism based on religious and cultural harmony are likely to receive support from both cultural and religious leaders because these two entities can complement one another.

Research Method

This study employs library research by relying on the analysis of literature relevant to the subject under investigation. The research is qualitative and emphasizes the process of drawing conclusions and analyzing observed phenomena through an understanding of various written references, particularly research journal articles.⁶ Open-access research journals make it possible to obtain a broad range of information. Easy access to journals greatly facilitates this literature-based research. Moreover, various tools are currently available to assist researchers in managing references and producing citations.

Results and Discussion

The idea of harmonizing Islamic education with halal ecotourism and local culture is grounded in the fact that rural communities possess not only natural resources but also distinctive religious and cultural traditions. Islam, as the majority religion, has grown and developed alongside local culture. The religious commitment of rural communities and their acculturated cultural traditions constitute an important internal strength for developing halal ecotourism. Therefore, if stakeholders involve local communities in designing halal ecotourism based on religious and cultural harmony, the process should not be particularly difficult. In the researcher's view, religious communities in rural areas are generally moderate and highly appreciative of local culture, including the natural environment. A socio-cultural approach to rural communities can therefore serve as an alternative strategy for developing halal ecotourism in harmony with Islamic education and other forms of local wisdom.

From a legal perspective, the idea of halal ecotourism is also implicitly reflected in Indonesian legislation, particularly Article 5(a) of Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, which states:

“Upholding religious norms and cultural values as the embodiment of the concept of living in balance between humans and God Almighty, between human beings, and between humans and the environment.”⁷

⁶ Zuchri Abdussamad, “Buku Metode Penelitian Kualitatif” (OSF Preprints, January 11, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/juwxn>.

⁷ kemenpar.go.id

This article provides an opportunity for and affirms the implementation of halal ecotourism while simultaneously introducing Islamic education and local wisdom values. The article also refers to “humans,” “God,” and the “environment,” which are also objects of study within Islamic education. In other words, Islamic education fundamentally concerns “humans,” “God,” and “nature.” Education derives primarily from God through revelation and aims to enable humans to manage nature properly, a role described in the Qur'an as *khalifah fi al-ard* (vicegerent on earth). Education would be incomplete, and could hardly be called education, if human beings neglected nature and the environment. This is where the central role of education is sometimes overlooked.

Meanwhile, halal ecotourism developed through harmony between religion and culture can complement other forms of ecotourism in Indonesia. As noted by the researcher in previous studies, ecotourism in Indonesia shows four tendencies. First, ecotourism that uses natural scenery and plant life as its main development basis. Second, ecotourism that uses animals as its main basis. Third, ecotourism that combines natural scenery, plants, and animals as the main basis of development. Fourth, ecotourism that uses religion and local culture as objects of development.⁸ These four tendencies still leave a research gap concerning halal tourism that harmonizes Islamic education (religion) and local culture as a means of strengthening the creative economy.

The concept of the creative economy itself, referring to its early formulation as described by John Howkins, centers on ideas and the creativity generated from those ideas. Through creativity alone, individuals can generate substantially higher income.⁹ Thus, the key concepts in the creative economy are “ideas” and “creativity.” In other words, the creative economy is essentially about building a bridge between “ideas” and “creativity,” which can then lead to what is referred to as “demonetization.”¹⁰ Because the creative economy is primarily based on ideas, its development can become increasingly powerful, as ideas are not limited by space and time. This can be seen in the growing number of content creators today. They do not merely exist but are able to survive economically like workers in other sectors. Indeed, the income earned by some content creators can be remarkably high.

The concept of the creative economy is also consistent with Indonesia's vision of becoming one of the world's major economic powers by 2030.¹¹ This initiative was introduced under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and subsequently continued under

⁸ Pembagian menjadi empat kecenderungan riset tentang ekowisata berdasarkan analisis peneliti seteah mengkaji beberapa penelitian. Seperti riset: Retno Utari, “Arahan Pengembangan Objek Ekowisata di Desa Panusupan Kecamatan Rembang Kabupaten Purbalingga” 6, no. 1 (2017): 7, Muhammad Fajar Marsaoly, Marjan Bato, and Nurhani Widiastuti, “Manfaat Ekonomi Ekowisata Hiu Paus (*Rhincodon typus*) di Kampung Akudiomi Distrik Yaur Kabupaten Nabire,” *JURNAL SUMBERDAYA AKUATIK INDONESIA*, May 15, 2017, 105–18, <https://doi.org/10.30862/jsai-fpik-unipa.2017.Vol.1.No.1.25>, Erni Yuniarti et al., “ANALISIS POTENSI EKOWISATA HEART OF BORNEO DI TAMAN NASIONAL BETUNG KERIHUN DAN DANAU SENTARUM KABUPATEN KAPUAS HULU,” *Jurnal Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Alam Dan Lingkungan (Journal of Natural Resources and Environmental Management)* 8, no. 1 (February 26, 2018): 44–54, <https://doi.org/10.29244/jpsl.8.1.44-54>, dan ⁸ “Potensi Pengembangan Tradisi Etnobotani Sebagai Ekowisata Berkelanjutan: Studi Kasus Suku Mentawai Di Pulau Siberut, Kepulauan Mentawai | Pro-Life,” accessed December 9, 2019, <http://ejournal.uki.ac.id/index.php/prolife/article/view/393>. Lebih lengkap lihat dalam kajian terdahulu,

⁹ John Howkins, *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*, Reprinted with updated material (London: Penguin Books, 2007).

¹⁰ Putra Perdana and Anisa Fitria Utami, “STUDI KOMPARATIF EKONOMI KREATIF DI DUNIA,” *Ar Rehla: Journal of Islamic Tourism, Halal Food, Islamic Traveling, and Creative Economy* 2, no. 1 (April 26, 2022): 72, <https://doi.org/10.21274/ar-rehla.v2i1.5510>.

¹¹ Lili Marlinah, “Meningkatkan Ketahanan Ekonomi Nasional Melalui Pengembangan Ekonomi Kreatif,” *Cakrawala: Jurnal Humaniora Bina Sarana Informatika* 17, no. 2 (November 27, 2017): 260, <https://doi.org/10.31294/jc.v17i2.2488>.

President Joko Widodo through the establishment of the Creative Economy Agency (Bekraf). To support the government's goal of strengthening Indonesia as a global economic power, Bekraf formulated six major missions, one of which is to promote innovation in the creative economy so that it generates added value and becomes internationally competitive.¹² Halal ecotourism based on harmony between religion and culture has considerable potential to become internationally competitive when managed properly because each location possesses distinctive characteristics that may not be found in other regions or countries.

From a sociological perspective, structural functionalism views society as a structure whose components are interconnected. These components include norms, customs, and institutions. Furthermore, within the structural-functionalist paradigm, society and its constituent elements form an integrated whole known as a system.¹³ Because society constitutes a system, its individual components cannot stand independently and always require other components. This corresponds to the central principle of structural functionalism, which views society as relatively stable or balanced, with each social element contributing to the maintenance of that stability.¹⁴

In the context of this study on halal tourism based on the harmony of Islamic education and culture as a means of strengthening the creative economy, structural functionalism can be used as one analytical perspective. Rural communities fundamentally form an interconnected whole bound particularly by customs, culture, and religion. These three elements can serve as forms of social capital in relation to halal ecotourism and the strengthening of the creative economy. Future research can therefore seek to develop a model of harmony between Islamic education and local culture that contributes to strengthening the creative economy.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, halal ecotourism characterized by harmony between Islamic education and local culture can be understood as tourism activities that utilize nature while aligning it with Islamic educational and cultural values for conservation, tourism, and educational purposes, and that can also contribute to efforts to improve the welfare of surrounding communities.

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¹² Dr et al., *EKONOMI KREATIF BERBASIS DIGITAL DAN KEMANDIRIAN MASYARAKAT ERA SOCIETY 5.0*, 2022, 30.

¹³ Tri Haryanti and Sujatmiko, *Kamus Sosiolog* (Surakarta: Aksarra Sinergi Media, 2022), 71.

¹⁴ Ari Cahyo Nugroho, "TEORI UTAMA SOSIOLOGI KOMUNIKASI (FUNGSIONALISME STRUKTURAL, TEORI KONFLIK, INTERAKSI SIMBOLIK)," *Majalah Semi Ilmiah Populer Komunikasi Massa* 2, no. 2 (December 3, 2021): 186, <https://jurnal.kominfo.go.id/index.php/mkm/article/view/4525>.

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