

Digitizing Halal Tourism and Designing Muslim-Friendly Tourism Categorization as an Effort to Minimize Uncertainty in Halal Tourism in *Blitar*

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Abstract. Halal tourism in practice is still full of uncertainties. This uncertainty is due to the inconsistency of Muslims, especially in the Greater *Blitar*. Therefore, this article will discuss three important issues, the first is about why halal tourism is still full of uncertainties, the second is designing a categorization of Muslim-friendly tourism that supports the implementation of halal tourism and the third is discussing the ideal digitization of halal tourism to improve the quality of tourism. The method used is qualitative research with a mix approach, namely the phenomenological approach and the sharia maqashid approach. The results of this study are that first, halal tourism has a high level of uncertainty and causes inconsistencies in its implementation. Second, uncertainty in halal tourism can be minimized by categorizing proper Muslim tourism starting from the red, yellow, green categories. Third, this categorization needs to be supported by digitalization to encourage the availability of information certainty related to Muslim-friendly tourism in *Blitar Raya*.

Keywords: Muslim friendly tourism, categorization and digitalization of tourism

1 Introduction

Halal tourism is a tourism concept based on Islamic religious principles. Halal tourism includes various aspects that are in accordance with Islamic values, such as halal food, Muslim-friendly accommodation, prayer facilities, and travel experiences that are in accordance with religious guidance. The arguments that strengthen the concept of halal tourism can be found in the Al-Quran and Hadith. For example, Al-Quran Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:5) which mentions halal food for consumption by Muslims. Hadith also mentions the importance of maintaining cleanliness and avoiding things that are unlawful in everyday life. The principles of halal tourism are based on the understanding and practice of the Islamic religion, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining purity, health and blessings in all aspects of life, including tourism activities. Thus, halal tourism provides facilities for Muslims to carry out their prayers, respect Islamic culture

and history, and enjoy a tourist experience that is in accordance with Islamic sharia principles.

The halal tourism industry has become one of the fastest growing segments in recent years. Halal tourism is one of the aspects that can drive economic growth in Indonesia (Yenita). With a growing Muslim population and awareness of their needs and preferences, the demand for Islamic Sharia-compliant tourism experiences is also growing. The increasing development of halal tourism can be seen in the following table.

| Tahun 2015 | Tahun 2015: 108 juta wisatawan Muslim |
|------------|--|
| Tahun 2016 | Tahun 2016: 117 juta wisatawan Muslim |
| Tahun 2017 | Tahun 2017: 121 juta wisatawan Muslim |
| Tahun 2018 | Tahun 2018: 131 juta wisatawan Muslim |
| Tahun 2019 | Tahun 2019: 140 juta wisatawan Muslim |
| Tahun 2020 | Tahun 2020: 63 juta wisatawan Muslim (terpengaruh oleh |
| | pandemi COVID-19) |
| Tahun 2021 | Tahun 2021: 95 juta wisatawan Muslim (perkiraan |

Table 1. Development of Muslim tourism 2015 - 2021

Source: GMTI 2022

Based on the data above, it illustrates that since 2015 the world community has placed great importance on tourism labeled halal. Muslim tourists need places to visit that are friendly to their beliefs. So indeed in the implementation of halal tourism must meet several Muslim Friendly aspects and indicators in tourism which are usually used as a reference to see whether tourism is friendly for Muslims. The Muslim Friendly indicator is a set of criteria and standards used to evaluate the extent to which the services and facilities provided by tourist destinations meet the needs and expectations of Muslim tourists.

The urgency of the halal tourism industry, which is subjectively desired by many Muslim communities, is in fact still being debated about its urgency. Some think that tourism does not need to be labeled halal and on the other hand there are those who want tourism to be labeled halal. This debate is related to the legal status of halal tourism which according to fiqh is very likely to be interpreted differently depending on the maqashid sharia when making ijtihad determines fiqh law on halal tourism. Apart from that, this debate is related to the implementation of halal tourism which seems as if it does not need to be given legal status where the legal status should be for the tourist and not for the place. In addition, this debate occurs when it is associated with the economic interests that accompany the implementation of halal tourism. The implementation of the halal label in tourism can be an effective marketing strategy. By accommodating the needs of Muslim tourists, they can attract significant market share and increase revenue from the tourism sector.

However, with the existence of economic interests, other people who disagree will easily say that halal labeling is only for marketing and not for the sake of worship. What is even more extreme is that there is an assumption that this labeling is only to sell religion for industrial profit. So that this debate is getting wider and affecting the scope of its application which is becoming more limited. Some argue that assigning a halal label to tourism can be difficult in practice. There are technical and logistical challenges involved certifying food, accommodation and other facilities in all tourist destinations.

The implementation of halal labeling for tourism will lead to inclusiveness for some people but on the other hand it will lead to tolerance. The argument that tourism must be inclusive and open to everyone, regardless of religion or belief. Emphasizing the halal label can create divisions and encourage discrimination within the tourism sector. However, for people who agree with the halal labeling, this is a form of tolerance, where when there are Muslims traveling to Bali who are synonymous with Hinduism, it is still possible. Likewise, with non-Muslims who may visit tourist attractions that are synonymous with Muslims, for example Waliyullah's grave. So this debate is often subjective because it is part of personal responsibility.

Arguments in the context of personal responsibility assume that Muslim tourists have a responsibility to ensure halal food, worship facilities and other practices according to their beliefs. Relying completely on the halal label can reduce personal responsibility in carrying out Islamic religious teachings. However, on the other hand, the existence of halal labeling is considered as consumer protection. This is considered capable of providing assurance and trust for both local and foreign Muslim tourists. The halal label can help consumers choose wisely and minimize the risk of misuse or noncompliance with halal principles. It is important to remember that this debate involves viewpoints related to economic interests, religious values, and social considerations. The existence of a balanced perspective can be a reference for halal labeling standards that are clear, transparent, and mutually respectful understanding between all parties involved in halal tourism.

An attempt to find common ground for some of the previous debates is by looking at the benefits of halal labeling for tourism by looking for halal standards for halal tourism and alternatives. This is intended so that Muslim perceptions about halal tourism can be accepted, one of which can be done by providing a categorization of Muslim-friendly halal tourism. To maximize this effort, of course, it can be supported by application development as a form of digitizing halal tourism. This step will encourage halal tourism to develop more and all application users can be involved in providing an assessment of the intended tourist attractions. However, this effort is still limited to a small implementation of efforts to emphasize the benefits and importance of halal tourism which must be recognized as being inconsistent and full of uncertainties.

In connection with the importance of halal tourism for Muslims, of course there needs to be a deeper study considering that halal tourism is still biased in its application, or in the sense that halal tourism is actually still uncertain. Many things make this phenomenon happen and many people mutually claim the importance of halal tourism for Muslims. Therefore, this article will discuss three important things related to the importance of halal tourism which is full of uncertainty. The first problem discussed is why halal tourism is still full of uncertainties, the second is designing a categorization of Muslim-friendly tourism that supports the implementation of halal tourism and the last is the digitalization of ideal halal tourism and alternative applications as a solution to improve tourism quality. This problem will be studied specifically in one area in East Java, namely in *Blitar Raya*.

Blitar Raya was chosen as the location for the study of the problems previously described because Blitar Raya has relatively complete tourist attractions. For example, there are natural tourism, one-way tourism, religious tourism and modern tourism. However, what is most important is the nationalist image of Blitar Raya, the impact of

the image of Indonesia's first president who happened to be buried in Blitar City. So that culturally *Blitar Raya* is not identified as a religious area like Jombang Regency and Kediri Regency with a large number of Islamic boarding schools as an indicator. However, that does not mean that *Blitar Raya* is not religious, it's just that it has a nationalist impression that seems to bury *Blitar Raya*'s concern as an area that provides halal tourism. In connection with that reason, the study of this problem will be more objective because it is carried out in areas that are not identical with their level of religiosity but rather a more visible nationalist image.

2 Methodology

The research design in this article is qualitative research with a mixed approach, namely phenomenology and the maqashid sharia approach. These two approaches will be used in a study of uncertain halal tourism in *Blitar Raya* and use the maqashid sharia approach to design categorization that will be used as an alternative for determining Muslim-friendly tourism labeling, especially in *Blitar Raya*. Location The research was conducted in *Blitar Raya* which consists of two regions, namely Blitar district and Blitar City. Data were collected using commonly used techniques, namely interviews, observation and corroborated by literature studies that were considered relevant. The data obtained will be processed through three stages, namely the stages of data reduction, data analysis, validation and drawing conclusions which are then used as theoretical implications of research findings. These implications are related to halal tourism, destination development, and policies related to tourism and simulations of implementing travel track applications in *Blitar Raya*.

Why is Halal Tourism [Still] Full of Uncertainty?

Indonesia, whose population is predominantly Muslim, is certainly strange when the availability of halal tourism is not widely available. This indicates that halal tourism is still full of uncertainties. Halal tourism which is full of uncertainty is divided into two, namely economic uncertainty and uncertainty in the implementation of jurisprudence, giving rise to inconsistencies in its application. Uncertainty in halal tourism seen from the side of the theory of uncertainty makes us aware that indeed uncertainty is a natural thing in the economy. That is, the existence of uncertainty in halal tourism is the certainty that halal tourism must adapt.

The uncertainty theory coined by Charles R. Berger and Richard J. Calabrese stated that uncertainty is a situation in which humans do not have sufficient or clear information about situations or other people in social interactions. This uncertainty includes uncertainty about an individual's behavior, intentions, preferences, or other traits. If it is related to the uncertainty of halal tourism, especially in *Blitar Raya*, it is certainly very relevant to what was conveyed by Charles Berger. *Blitar Raya* tourists are often drugged with information about the heroic story of the proclaimer so that they worship too long and linger at the proclaimer's tomb which, if they reflect on it, is an

exaggeration, where excess is prohibited in Islam. So that the tourists' actions become uncertain whether they are still in the corridor of Islamic values or not.

The theory from Charels Berger seems to provide confirmation to ensure that halal tourism is very far from possible. This is because the certainty desired by some people to provide halal certainty will collide with unknown human behavior, preferences and intentions so that it becomes uncertain. Likewise, on one of the beaches in *Blitar Raya* it is difficult to distinguish whether the female and male visitors who come are legal partners, or even partners are having an affair or they have come to steal and other criminal acts. If there is an opinion like what has been echoed in the Banten region that wants to separate female and male visitors, it is almost impossible for *Blitar Raya* to materialize because of the region's nationalist culture and the possibility of leading to claims of intolerance and harming human rights. This is reinforced by the theory of Firz Heider that humans will tend to justify actions and respond to the actions of others, or what is called attribution.

Such attributions give rise to a self-serving bias when individuals tend to make positive internal attributions for their own personal successes, while making external attributions for their failures. For example, when a person agrees with halal tourism, he will feel that he is a good Muslim, while someone who disagrees is not a good Muslim. So that this self-serving bias makes the perception of the existence of halal tourism even further away because the attitude of Muslim tourists who feel the need for halal tourism services acts not halal because they are self-serving bias and actually the person's perception shows that halal tourism cannot be fully ensured that it is halal.

This situation shows the inconsistency of the implementation of halal tourism, resulting in uncertainty in halal tourism. Inconsistency in halal tourism can occur due to several factors. The following are some forms of inconsistency that often occur in the context of halal tourism. The first inconsistency is the Unverified "Halal" label. Some tourism destinations often claim to be "halal" without having the appropriate certification or verification. This can lead to uncertainty for Muslim tourists who crave halal tourism to determine the halalness of tourism. In this context, what has been implemented in *Blitar Raya* is only the provision of halal-certified food and beverages by the halal product process assistant (PPH). However, apart from that there are no clear standards which result in uncertainty about the existence of halal tourism in *Blitar Raya*.

Inconsistency in the form of unilateral claims from tourism managers is certainly a common thing, because most tourism managers in *Blitar Raya* perceive halal status as being perceived as self-declaring on halal certification for food. This is of course different because the standardization of food and beverage certification is clear. As for tourism.? Of course, it must be admitted that there are still no clear standards from the authorities so that many versions appear, such as the version from GMTI or other institutions. So that again there is uncertainty related to halal tourism that must be faced. Not to mention there is no monitoring or evaluation related to halal claims by tourism managers in *Blitar Raya*. However, this claim cannot be blamed but only needs to be verified. It could be that this claim is true because based on the results of observations made from March to May, the practice of organizing tourism in *Blitar Raya*, especially at the Bung Karno Cemetery, Tambak Beach and *Penataran* Temple, even though they cannot be assessed as highly halal, at least they are safe from illegal status or tourism that is not suitable for Muslims

Further uncertainty relates to cultural expectations of halal tourism. This is a form of inconsistency in halal tourism because it includes cultural aspects in halal tourism. It's funny if there are people who still question the relevance of culture to religion because basically culture has never been at odds with religion. Uncertainty in this context in *Blitar Raya* is when there are Muslim tourists visiting the upgrading temple, which in fact is very synonymous with Hinduism. However, one of the tourist centers in *Blitar Raya* is the *Penataran* Temple and based on research conducted, it shows that the largest number of visitors from 2021 to 2022 will be Muslims. This is certainly strange considering that Muslims who are supposed to visit Islamic places instead come to places used for worship by other religions. Then the question is whether it is forbidden for Muslims to visit the place and whether it is possible for the *Penataran* Temple to be given a halal label. This of course raises uncertainty again from the status of these tourist attractions.

Therefore, cultural expectations must certainly be interpreted as respect for the results of human thought that are able to form customs and ethics which are ultimately agreed upon. If this is related to maqashid sharia, it can be said to be the al-Urf method. As long as we respect culture, there is nothing to doubt about traveling to the *Penataran* Temple, which is synonymous with Hinduism, as long as you don't participate in worshiping what is worshiped at these tourist spots. So that the existence of al-Urf makes it possible to give a halal label to the *Penataran* Temple. This halalness is of course debatable and inevitably raises more uncertainty. However, it needs to be emphasized in this case, halal is evidence showing that the tourist attractions visited are friendly and proper tours for Muslims in *Blitar Raya*.

It is important to remember that inconsistency in halal tourism does not mean that all tourism destinations or services in *Blitar Raya* cannot be visited. Many tourist attractions in Bliar Raya are truly trying to meet the needs of Muslim tourists and ensure that they get an experience that is in accordance with Islamic religious values. However, as a tourist, you need to act wisely because the uncertainty of being given a halal label for tourism is a certainty that must be faced and responded to adaptively. So it is necessary for Muslims to seek detailed information before choosing a destination or halal tourism service with clear categorization and supported by digitalization so that it can be more effective and can minimize uncertainty in halal tourism.

4 Design of a Muslim-Friendly Tourism Categorization that Supports Halal Tourism Implementation

The implementation of halal tourism must be supported by the categorization of Muslim-friendly or proper tourism. This needs to be done so that halal tourism is not co-opted only in two legal statuses, namely halal and haram. Halal tourism needs to be designed so that it can be more flexible and can attract non-Muslim tourists as an affirmation of Islam Rahmatan lil Alamin. This flexibility certainly does not mean belittling religion, but formulating a legal status that is easier to understand and does not seem rigid, only halal and haram. Whereas in tourism there will definitely be two sides of the legal status.

Efforts to design this categorization certainly require a structured and measurable approach to facilitate the management and development of destinations that suit the needs of Muslim tourists. The design of halal tourism categorization is important in determining the standards and services needed to create an authentic tourist experience and meet the expectations of Muslim tourists. Designing the categorization of halal tourism is done by analyzing important aspects that must be considered in developing Muslim-friendly destinations. This categorization design focuses on worship infrastructure which legally allows it to be accepted by the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, especially in the *Blitar Raya* region.

This categorization is closely related to the tourism ecosystem in *Blitar Raya* such as halal food, halal accommodation, worship facilities, activities and entertainment that comply with sharia, as well as cultural suitability and a comfortable environment. Based on the design results of the halal tourism categorization, it will be presented as follows



Fig. 1. Decent Muslim Tourism Categorization Design

Figure I above show the design results of the categorization of halal tourism as an alternative to be used in assessing whether a tourist destination is Muslim-friendly or not. Categorization with yellow-green labels is of course arranged based on several indicators and the weight of the score. To see in detail, the categorization that has been shown in Figure I can be seen in the following table.

| No | Indicator | Score |
|----|--|-------|
| 1 | More than three mosques or prayer facilities are available | 5 |
| | There are less than three mosques or prayer facilities | 3 |
| | There is no place to pray | 1 |
| 2 | The food and drinks sold are Halal certified | 5 |
| | Food and beverages sold are Halal but not Halal certified | 3 |
| | Food and drink that is sold is haram | 1 |
| 3 | There are rules for visitors who are not muhrim | 5 |
| | There are rules for visitors who are not muhrim | 3 |
| 4 | There are rules regarding Islamic clothing | 5 |
| | There are no rules regarding Islamic dress | 1 |
| 5 | There is a tourist guide book for Muslims | 5 |
| | There is a tourist guide book for Muslims | 3 |

Table 2. Indicators for assessing the halal tourism categorization.

| 6 | Availability of sharia hotels | 5 |
|----|---|---|
| | Unavailability of sharia hotels | 3 |
| 7 | Availability of sharia-based payments | 5 |
| | No sharia-based payment available | 3 |
| 8 | There is a tourist spot supervisor | 5 |
| | There is no supervisor of tourist attractions | 3 |
| 9 | There is an Islamic tour guide | 5 |
| | There is no Islamic tour guide | 3 |
| 10 | There is a ban on bringing dogs | 5 |
| | There are no restrictions on bringing dogs | 3 |
| | There are stray dogs | 1 |
| 11 | There is a holy place | 5 |
| | There is no sanctuary | 3 |
| 12 | Entertainment highlights modesty and Islam | 5 |
| | There is entertainment that highlights the sexiness of both | 1 |
| | women and men | |
| 13 | No liquor sellers | 5 |
| | There are hard drink sellers | 1 |
| 14 | Clean and holy place | 5 |
| | Clean place but questionable sanctity | 3 |
| | The place is not clean and clean | 1 |
| 15 | The tour manager is friendly | 5 |
| | The tour manager is normal | 3 |
| | The tour manager is evil | 1 |
| 16 | There is a special place for breastfeeding | 5 |
| | There is no special place for breastfeeding | 3 |
| 17 | There is a price list of items sold | 5 |
| | There is no list price of goods sold | 3 |
| 18 | There are public toilets | 5 |
| | There are no public toilets available | 1 |
| 19 | Infaq and alms boxes are available | 5 |
| | Infaq and alms boxes are not available | 3 |
| 20 | Non-Muslims are allowed to enter tourist attractions | 5 |
| | Non-Muslims are not allowed to enter tourist attractions | 1 |

Source: Personal Documents

Based on the table above, the total weight of the assessment is 100 points and the assessment is adjusted to several tourist attractions in *Blitar Raya*. The assessment will be divided into three categories, namely green with 86-100 pounds, yellow 70-85 and red 0-69. With the categorization and assessment indicators that have been designed, it can be used as an alternative to accelerate tourism labelling as proper or friendly for Muslims. The indicators above will certainly be easier to label as tourist attractions in Biltar Raya because they are based on a certain score based on the assessment of each tourist spot in Biltar Raya. It is hoped that with this categorization, the *Blitar Raya* region will be able to minimize uncertainty about halal tourism, which so far has only claimed to be labelling a proper or Muslim-friendly wizard based on assessments and

observations at each tourist location with easier indicators besides granting illegal or halal legal status. Stiffer.

5 Tourism Digitalization as a Solution to Increasing the Quality of Halal Tourism in *Blitar Raya*

Halal tourism has become a sector that is increasingly important and attracts the attention of the wider community. So that when halal tourism is designed in *Blitar Raya* it will have an impact on increasing people's preferences because the majority of visitors to tourist attractions in Blitar are Muslims. In an era of digital technology that continues to grow, digitizing halal tourism through an Android application can be an effective solution to improve the quality and experience of halal tourism in *Blitar Raya*.

One of the main advantages of digitizing halal tourism through digitization is the ease of access to information. This convenience can be seen by the ease with which both local and foreign tourists can see the eligibility status of the tours that will be visited by Muslims through the Android application available on smartphones. This is corroborated by data obtained in *Blitar Raya* in the period from April to May that 84% of respondents wanted an application that would make it easier for tourists to track the status of tourist eligibility for Muslims through the application, and 76% thought this was still not important. In addition, this application allows tourists to help provide an assessment with the indicators previously described so as to encourage the acceleration of information to tourists about the feasibility of tourism for Muslims in *Blitar Raya*.

The digitization of halal tourism is designed so that Muslim tourists can easily access information regarding halal tourist destinations, halal food, halal accommodation and worship facilities in *Blitar Raya*. This is supported by the results of research in *Blitar Raya* from April to May that 76% of respondents wanted information about the existence of religious facilities at tourist attractions. So that this digitization will encourage the availability of complete and detailed information about Muslim-friendly destinations, so tourists can make better decisions when planning their trips. In addition, this digitization will make it easier to also search for halal tourist destinations in *Blitar Raya*. Muslim tourists can search for destinations that suit their preferences, such as beautiful natural attractions, historical attractions, or shopping centers that offer halal products. This feature will help Muslim travelers find destinations that suit their needs and preferences easily and efficiently.

In addition, digitizing halal tourism through applications provides features that are very considerate of worship facilities. This application can provide information about mosques, prayer rooms, or prayer rooms that are easily accessible to tourist attractions in *Blitar Raya*. A prayer time reminder feature can also but added in the application to help Muslim tourists carry out their prayers better. Not only that, this digitization function can provide user reviews and recommendations. This feature allows Muslim tourists to share their experiences in visiting tourist destinations in *Blitar Raya*. So that application users as a product of digitizing halal tourism will continue to grow and can be evaluated regularly. These reviews and recommendations will help other travelers make better decisions and choose a destination that suits their preferences which of course conforms to Islamic values.

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Overall, digitizing halal tourism through an Android application is an ideal alternative solution to improve the quality of halal tourism in *Blitar Raya*. Ease of access to information, search for halal destinations, information on halal food, worship facilities, and reviews from users all contribute to providing a better halal tourism experience and strengthen *Blitar Raya*'s position as a quality halal tourism destination. By continuing to encourage the digitalization of halal tourism in *Blitar Raya*, this is the same as encouraging the progress of Muslim-friendly tourism in *Blitar Raya* and it will be increasingly in demand by Muslim tourists from various regions.

This digitization also aims to minimize gaps in tourist information about the availability of Muslim-friendly tourism in *Blitar Raya*. Facts in *Blitar Raya* often receive unclear or inadequate information so that doubts arise about the concept of halal tourism in *Blitar Raya*. This can make it difficult for Muslim tourists to understand with certainty whether the destination or service they are visiting actually meets Halal tourism standards. In addition, the limited information is exacerbated by the inconsistent quality of halal services. All tourism actors and the economic ecosystem in it will definitely claim that everything that is done or sold is halal. However, this is not in accordance with the data related to credible halal labeling assessment or certification. For example, in the tourist spot Sentul Park which offers the beauty of the park but the public toilets available are in fact not maintained and their sanctity is very doubtful so that they are not worthy of being called proper Muslim tourism. Therefore, disputes about these claims can be minimized by digitization which is able to measure with definite scores and clear indicators. So that both tourists and all those in the tourism economy will now how feasible the tourist attractions in *Blitar Raya* are to visit.

6 Conclusion

Based on the previous explanation regarding the categorization of proper Muslim tourism, uncertainty in halal tourism and the digitization of halal tourism can draw several conclusions. The first is Halal tourism which has a high level of uncertainty, which can be divided into two aspects, namely economic uncertainty and uncertainty in the implementation of fiqh. This causes inconsistencies in the implementation. Uncertainty in halal tourism, when viewed from the point of view of uncertainty theory, makes us realize that uncertainty is indeed a normal phenomenon in the economic field and the certainty of halal tourism is the uncertainty of halal tourism itself. The second conclusion, uncertainty in halal tourism can be minimized by categorizing Muslim-friendly tourism starting from the red category which means it is not feasible, yellow which means it is still feasible but needs to be careful and green means the tourism visited is very suitable for Muslims. The third conclusion, with this categorization, it needs to be supported by digitalization to encourage the availability of information certainty related to whether or not tourism for Muslims in *Blitar Raya* is feasible.

Authors' Contributions. This article was reviewed and written by a team consisting of five authors. Each author has a major contribution based on their respective proportions. The first author contributed to the research concept and design. The second and third authors contributed to designing a Muslim-friendly tourism categorization. The third author focuses on gathering data and the fifth author focuses on implementing the digitization of halal tourism in *Blitar Raya*.

Acknowledgments. A big thank you to halal tourism activists in *Blitar Raya* and the respondents who provided information related to the research conducted.

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