

Analysis of the Potential and Development Strategy of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar as a Religious Tourism Object in the City of Palembang, South Sumatra Province

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Abstract: Indonesian tourism has become a very popular industry, due to its economic impact and benefits. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, tourism was one of the sectors that was severely affected by the economy of most Indonesians. Based on BPS data (2021), there is a significant decrease in the number of tourists in domestic tourists and foreign tourists. The research objective is to determine and analyze the potential and development strategy of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar as a religious tourist attraction in Palembang City, South Sumatra Province using SWOT analysis. The method used in the preparation of this thesis is the Qualitative Descriptive research method. In this study, the authors used descriptive qualitative methodology. Researchers who conduct qualitative descriptive research must be skilled at explaining, describing, and exploring data based on in-depth interviews with respondents to understand what they say, feel, and do. The result of the research is that the external factors of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism are more dominant than the internal factors. The highest value of SWOT owned by Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism is located in strength with a value of 2.35. Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism of Palembang City has various potentials and can be developed further if there is good coordination between agencies, managers, and local community support.

Keywords: Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar, Development Strategy, Potential

A. Introduction

Ranking fourth in terms of foreign exchange earnings behind coal, oil and gas, and palm oil is tourism in Indonesia. Indonesia, an archipelagic nation, is rich in natural resources and has a diverse range of cultures, customs, and faiths. To support the growth of Indonesia's economy, the tourism industry must make the most of this potential. In addition to providing foreign cash, the tourist sector boosts a region's Regional Original Income. In some places, like Bali and NTB, the tourism sector is the primary source of income and can positively affect other industries.

Owing to its advantages and positive effects on the economy, tourism in Indonesia has grown significantly. The majority of Indonesians' economies have been significantly impacted by the tourism sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics from the BPS for 2021 show a sharp decline in the number of both domestic and foreign visitors. In 2020, Indonesia received 4.02 million foreign visitors, a 75.03% decrease from 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused Indonesian tourism to gradually rebound. More than 470 thousand foreign visitors arrived in July 2022, according to data. This is the highest record since the Covid-19 epidemic. Overall, 1.2 million foreign visitors arrived during the first half of 2022. Compared with 2021, when only 1.6 million foreign visitors arrived in one year, this figure is very impressive. Tourist visits to Palembang City have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The following is the number of domestic and foreign tourist visits to the city of Palembang before and during the COVID 109 Pandemic (2015-2022) in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Domestic and Foreign Tourist Visits in Palembang City 2015 - 2022

No	Year Visit	Traveler		Total (orang)
		Domestic	(person)	
1	2015	1.724.275	8.028	1.732.303
2	2016	1.899.887	9.261	1.909.148
3	2017	2.002.567	9.850	2.011.417
4	2018	2.110.898	12.249	2.123.147
5	2019	2.189.407	12.433	2.201.840
6	2020	893.890	2.022	895.912
7	2021	1.206.448	0	1.206.448
8	2022	1.542.485	0	1.542.485

According to the information in Table 1, Palembang City's tourism industry had an increase in annual visits from both domestic and foreign travellers before the COVID-19 Pandemic (2015-2019). Particularly in 2021-2022, there were no international tourist visits, which indicates a major decline in tourism since the COVID-19 epidemic began. There is a lot of room for growth in the tourist sector of religious tourism. Religious tourism is defined as travel that is done to enhance religious practices to accomplish the targeted da'wah strategy (Bahits et al., 2020).

Religious tourism is one type of travel that falls under the special interest travel category. Special interest tourism centres on the extremely specific interests of travellers who go to discover the existence and traits of particular objects to have unique experiences associated with the travel location. This interest may manifest itself as a pastime or a particular pleasure that is enjoyed on a vacation. Religious tourism is often referred to as active tourism since travellers' participation or

engagement in the cultural setting and tourist locations they visit is thought to be a significant part of special interest tourism (Marsono et al., 2018).

Traveling to places that hold particular significance for religious adherents usually in the form of temples, cemeteries, or important historical sites is known as religious tourism (Ismayanti, 2019). Religious tourism is the practice of individuals or groups traveling to sacred sites, the tombs of notable historical people, Islamic monarchs, and revered religious leaders or figures (Pendit, 2017). Religious authorities of the Palembang Grand Mosque were the ones who first introduced the concept of religious tourism, as they regularly welcomed their followers to historical locations that still bore Islamic emblems (Isnawijayani, 2009)

Several well-liked tourist destinations in Indonesia, including West Sumatra, Riau, Lampung, Banten, Jakarta, West Java, East Java, South Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, and South Sumatra, have the potential to be promoted as religious tourism destinations (Pitana & G.Gayatri, 2018). The South Sumatra Province's religious tourism sector has a lot of potential, and with proper expansion and packaging, it can draw more domestic and foreign tourists. The South Sumatra Provincial Tourism Office has developed religious tourism packages for Pagaralam City, Ogan Ilir district, East OKU Regency, and South OKU Regency, as well as three areas in the Greater OKU area. This package has been developed through a series of work. One of these actions is to build religious tourist packages, particularly in the city of Palembang, to revive religious tourism in South Sumatra, which had sharply decreased following the COVID-19 epidemic (Apriani et al., 2022).

With numerous traces of its past as the capital of both the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate and the Sriwijaya Kingdom, Palembang, in particular, has a tremendous chance to be developed as a religious tourism destination. This is because both domestic and foreign tourists find Palembang's historical, cultural, and religious tourism sites to be highly intriguing. The Palembang City Government is now developing religious historical tourism that is appealing for tourists to visit. Some examples of these types of tourism are the tourist destination Kemaro Island, Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar, Ki Gede Ing Suro Mosque, Sabokingking Tomb, Tekurep Crater Tomb, and others (Devi, 2022).

Known as the Giant Al-Qur'an, Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar is one of the well-known religious tourism locations in Palembang City with development potential. Jalan M. Amin Fauzi, Soak Bujang, RT 03, RW 01, Gandus Village, Gandus District, Palembang, South Sumatra is the address of this tourist destination. The site is around 9 kilometers from Palembang city center and can be accessed by car in about 25 minutes. The IGM Al-Ihsaniyah Palembang Modern Islamic Boarding School is just across from the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Building (Devi, 2022).

The first draft of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar was created during the month of Ramadan in 1422 Hijriah. It was first presented on March 15, 2002, or 1 Muharram in 1423 Hijriah. The Al-Qur'an's production was effectively finished in 2008. Two covers of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar exist. Page 1-604, comprising a total of 306 sheets, contains Juz 1-30. 17 sheets, spanning from pages 605 to 630, including the Al-Qur'an ornaments, table of contents, page count, tajwid, preamble, pentashih permission, committee, and list of authors and participation. When the cover is included, the size increases to a total thickness of nine meters. Each sheet measures 2.5 cm thick, 140 cm broad, and 177 cm high. On Thursday, May 14, 2009, in the Palembang Grand Mosque, in the presence of hafizh and hafizhah from all over South Sumatra, H. Najib Hartawi, the Head of the Regional Office of the Department of Religion of South Sumatra Province, successfully launched the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar (Wa'uyun, 2022).

Al-Akbar Qur'an is a popular tourist destination that draws a large number of visitors from within the city as well as from beyond it. The bulk of visitors to Al-Akbar Qur'an are recitation groups, students from Islamic educational institutions, and other interested parties (Admin Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar, 2023). There are several reasons why Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar is a well-liked tourist attraction. One of the things that makes Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar comfortable for its visitors is the encouragement to research the Creator and locate sources of information about him as soon as possible. Visitors who come to Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar for religious tourism might broaden their perspectives and discover new inspiration in approaching the religious aspect of the destination (Wa'uyun, 2022).

Because they cannot function freely, tourism hotspots require cooperation from the local government to provide accessibility, services, and a robust infrastructure. This covers lodging, transportation to and from tourist sites, attractions, and local events related to the destination. Government support may be shown in UU no. 10/2009 addressing tourism, which highlights the value of tourism in promoting equality, business opportunities, obtaining advantages, and overcoming challenges in meeting changes in local, national, and worldwide life.

The expansion of religious tourism needs to be viewed as an element of development with a local community empowerment agenda. Religious tourism can ultimately contribute to more democratic management of local cultural resources and act as a means of acknowledging the wealth that local communities have amassed. Long-term, this will motivate nearby communities to safeguard the area's tourism resources (Sari et al., 2019).

Meriyati & Aravik (2017) research indicates that religious tourism at Bait Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar has significantly boosted the local economy in the Palembang City area surrounding the IGM Al-Ihsaniyah Islamic boarding school. Rendayani (2018) added that 82% of the potential for sharia tourism was contributed by SWOT factors in

internal and external factors, with the remaining 18% being influenced by other factors like promotion, the development of tourism products, raising the caliber of human resources, and national awareness campaigns. The community and tourists agree that the concept of good tourism and sharia tourism such as Puncak Mas Suka has a high opportunity to be developed.

The managers of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism attraction, in particular, must be aware of the attraction's strengths and limitations to prioritize areas that need to be developed and enhanced to draw in more tourists. SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is therefore required. In addition to identifying the potential and development plan for the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar, the SWOT approach may be used to determine the quality of service that has to be prioritized to increase the number of visitors to the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism object. Based on this background, the author is interested in researching "Analysis of the Potential and Development Strategy of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar as a Religious Tourism Object in the City of Palembang, South Sumatra Province".

B. Methods

The study was carried out in Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar, which is situated on Jalan Moh. Amin in Palembang City's Gandus District in the province of South Sumatra. Managers and guests of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism in Palembang City's Gandus District served as the research items. This thesis was prepared using a qualitative descriptive research methodology. Sugiyono (2019) states that descriptive qualitative research is a post-positivist research method that is typically employed to study natural, objective settings.

According to Arifin (2018), the size of the sample depends on the type of research and sampling technique. The basic random sample approach is the one that will be applied in this study. Questionnaires were distributed to tourists, administrators, and managers, as well as guests of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism area in Gandus District, Palembang City, to conduct a sample of respondents. The following are the data collection methods that the author employed to gather information and data 1) Library Research and 2) Field Research by using observation, interview, and questionnaire.

C. Results and Discussion

The author will go into detail about the study's primary focus, which is to use SWOT analysis to analyse the feasibility and plan for turning Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar into a religious tourism destination. The author employed a descriptive qualitative approach in this study. When doing qualitative descriptive research, researchers need to be adept in deciphering, characterizing, and examining data from in-depth

interviews with respondents to comprehend their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Both questionnaire and interview responses will be used to present the analysis's findings. After that, a debate utilizing SWOT analysis will be used to examine these results in greater detail.

1. SWOT Analysis

During the analysis stage of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Palembang tourism development strategy analysis, data collection and maintenance were done. The study's participants were directly interviewed to gather primary data about Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar tourism development initiatives. This interview aims to obtain information on the organization's strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and dangers related to both internal and external components. Furthermore, the researchers separated the data into two groups: those about the Al-Qur'an Akbar Palembang tourism's internal and external environments. To be more precise, the data summary is as follows:

Tabel 2. IFAS (Internal Factors Analysis Summary) Tourism Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar

No.	Internal Strategy Factors	Weight	Ratings	Score
Strength				
1	A tourist destination that has great potential for religious tourism with unique, beautiful, comfortable suburban views and relatively clean air in Gandus District, Palembang City	0,15	5	0,75
2	The distance is not too far from the center of Gandus District, Palembang City	0,05	2	0,1
3	Typical panorama of the outskirts of the city with the Musi River along the road to the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism location	0,1	3	0,3
4	The road to the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism location is easy and safe for visitors	0,1	3	0,3
5	Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism is very suitable as a source of Islamic religious knowledge for tourists in Indonesia and abroad	0,1	4	0,4
6	There are facilities for places of worship, public toilets, parking, places to eat, and places to shop for souvenirs and souvenirs typical of Palembang City	0,1	3	0,3
7	The support of the regional government makes the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar one of the icons of religious tourism in the city of Palembang	0,1	2	0,2
Total Parts				2,35
Weakness				
		Weight	Ratings	mark
1	Lack of availability of trash cans and there is still rubbish strewn around the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism location	0,05	1	0,05
2	The access road is quite narrow to get to the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism location and there is still a lot of road damage here and there with quite large potholes	0,05	1	0,05

3	The spatial arrangement of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar seems chaotic and not neatly arranged	0,05	2	0,1
4	Lack of spacious parking space at the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism location	0,05	1	0,05
5	The location of MSMEs in Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism has not yet been arranged	0,05	2	0,1
6	Environmental maintenance and management around the location still receive minimal attention	0,05	1	0,05
Total		1,00		2,75

Based on the examination of IFAS data in Table 2, the combined score for the strength and weakness components is 2.75. A total score exceeding 2.5 indicates a good internal position, particularly in terms of strength.

Tabel 3. EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) - Tourism Al-Qur'an Al Akbar

No.	External Strategy Factors	Value	Rating	Weight
<i>Opportunity</i>				
1	Building infrastructure and facilities that do not yet exist at the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism location	0,1	2	0,2
2	Increasing public interest in Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism every year	0,15	4	0,6
3	Opportunity as a source of information about the Koran in Palembang City	0,1	5	0,5
4	As a venue for holding national and international events, it adds to the attraction of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism	0,1	4	0,4
5	Can create jobs for local communities	0,05	3	0,15
6	Has the opportunity to be developed as a national and international religious tourist attraction	0,1	4	0,4
Total Parts				2,25
<i>Threat</i>				
		Value	Rating	Weight
1	Visitor interest is decreasing because there are many religious tourist attractions in Palembang City	0,05	1	0,05
2	Tourism competition between other religious tourist attractions in Palembang City	0,05	1	0,05
3	It is quite a distance from the center of Palembang City to the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism	0,05	1	0,05
4	The occurrence of a natural disaster/disturbance	0,05	2	0,1
5	Lack of concern from visitors and local communities regarding the presence of rubbish at the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism	0,1	3	0,3
6	Increasing tourist interest in traveling to other religious tourism locations	0,05	1	0,05
7	Lack of investor interest in opening a business in Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Religious Tourism	0,05	1	0,05
Total		1,00		2,9

From the results of the analysis in Table 3 regarding EFAS, the opportunity and threat factors have a total score of 2.9, because the total score is quite high, meaning

this shows that Al-Qur'an Akbar tourism responds to existing opportunities and tries to avoid existing threats.

Based on Table 2 IFAS and Table 3 EFAS, the EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) value is 2.9 while the IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) value is 2.75. It can be concluded that the external factors of the Great Al-Qur'an Tourism are more dominant than the internal factors. So, it can be ensured that Al-Qur'an Akbar Tourism can develop its business by taking advantage of external factors, namely opportunities such as target visitors covering all groups, visits by tourists from outside, increasingly rapid technological developments, and national and international events that can increase tourists' interest in visiting. The process of formulating corporate or commercial strategy and policy decisions is described by (Rangkuti, 2016) This indicates that in the current environment, strategic planning, or strategy planners, must assess the company's or business's strategic elements (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). We refer to this as situation analysis. SWOT analysis is the most widely used paradigm for scenario analysis.

2. SWOT Analysis Calculation Stage

Positioning was done at the calculation stage of Halal Al-Qur'an Akbar Tourism's SWOT analysis using the findings of the calculations for internal factors, or IFAS, and external factors, or EFAS.

Tabel 4. SWOT Analysis of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar

IFAS	2.75	EFAS	2.9
Total Strength Score (S)	2.35	Total Chance Score (O)	2.25
Total Weakness Score (W)	0,4	Total Threat Score (T)	0.65
X = S-W	1.95	Y = O-T	1.6

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism has good strengths. Based on IFAS calculations, Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism has a strength value of 2.35.

The idea behind Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar tourism development is that external influences outweigh internal ones. This indicates that the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism Development Strategy's external components have the potential to outperform its internal ones. So that if a serious problem occurs due to internal factors, external factors can overcome it. Quadrant I position is a very profitable position for the company. This business has opportunities and strengths so it can take advantage of existing opportunities.

The combination of the two IFAS and EFAS factors is shown in the SWOT analysis and makes the strategy for developing Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism in Palembang City as follows:

a. SO Strategy (Strength - Opportunity)

This strategy was developed based on all of the strengths to seize and take advantage of the opportunities that are currently available. It is a combination of internal (strength) and external (opportunity) aspects. Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism's SO strategy is as follows: Since Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar is the largest Al-Qur'an in the world, social media marketing is necessary to increase its visibility to tourists, both domestic and foreign. This SO strategy is suitable for around 100-200 visitors who come every day, except for holidays which can reach 500 people.

The historical power of Islam, which is already well-known in Palembang, along with Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar's tremendous potential should be further used by the national or municipal governments. so that visitors from all around Indonesia can come to Palembang and learn about Islamic culture, as well as so that this tourist destination can be promoted internationally. Unfortunately, the local community has not yet felt the effects of the government's help. There are still many people in Palembang who don't even know that Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar exists because of the lack of information. Researchers are optimistic about the future of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar religious tourism if the potential that already exists is enhanced by the inclusion of virtual world information.

b. ST Strategy (Strength - Threat)

This strategy leverages the company's strengths to defeat all external threats. It combines internal (Strength) and external (Threat) aspects. Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism has adopted the following ST strategy: educating the public about the value of visiting places with an understanding of Islamic heritage, enhancing the expertise of tour guides, and advertising the destination online and through social media.

The following conclusions were drawn from the interviews conducted on the advantages and disadvantages of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar religious tourism: The largest risks stem from a variety of sources, including advancements in technology and culture. Islamic culture is tied to historical events and places of worship, if the government ignores this. Even though the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar has great power in terms of history, if it is not promoted through the era of digitalization and the use of existing technology, it will slowly lose its appeal. Therefore, the right strategy is to promote this tourism on various sites and social media. In addition, the government and management need to work together to assign staff members who have received historical education and are qualified to translate the Koran's text. Through these

calligraphy carvings, the intention is to pique tourists' curiosity about discovering more about the Islamic faith.

c. WO Strategy (Weakness - Opportunity)

This approach is centered on taking advantage of current opportunities by lessening the company's deficiencies. It combines internal (weakness) and external (opportunity) components. Al Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism's WO strategy is as follows: Al Qur'an Akbar works with the government to fix broken roads because of its less strategic location. Apart from that, the management renovates the tourist attractions to make them appear more appealing while expanding the tourist spots and finishing any incomplete or existing facilities.

The facilities of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar are rather comprehensive, based on the assumptions of the researchers, but there are still a lot of things that need to be addressed, such as the parking lot, the gift shop, the buildings that appear to be in poor condition, and the steps that go to the calligraphy of the Al-Qur'an. The researcher-taken images below illustrate the shortcomings of the Al-Quran Al-Akbar tourist attraction:



Figure 1. First Floor of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tour



Figure 2. Calligraphy of Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar on the Top Floor



Figure 3. Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourist Parking Location



Figure 4. Front view of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tour

You can see that the first floor of the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar tour is devoted to a variety of gifts that visitors can purchase. Researchers suggest that rather than within the building, the souvenir shop should be outside or on the road home. Calligraphy should be on the bottom floor other than that. This is just to ensure that visitors' interest and attention are directed toward the main attractions rather than mementos. Travelers frequently lose interest in calligraphy and instead concentrate solely on shopping.

The second-story stairs are located on the other side. Researchers recommend that escalators be installed in place of the stairs right away. The administration is frequently contacted by several adult and elderly visitors who lament the excessive number of stairs required to access the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar calligraphy. The fact that there isn't enough parking because it hasn't been fixed is another disadvantage. Additionally, visitors expressed dissatisfaction with the building's exterior, saying it was extremely old and poorly maintained. Other than that, the researcher's

description of the road access matches the findings from the interviews in the following ways:

There are numerous issues with Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar tourism concerning structures, amenities, etc. This can be addressed, nevertheless, by taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the unique history and teachings of the enormous Al-Quran. Thus, local tourists continue to frequent the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar tourist site despite its many flaws. Restoring tourist destinations through cooperation between tourism managers and the local government, such as by expanding the location, mending buildings, enhancing road access, etc., is a tactic that is in line with the aforementioned opportunities and shortcomings.

d. WT Strategy (Weakness - Treats)

This tactic combines both external and internal influences. This defensive strategy seeks to minimize the company's vulnerabilities by averting potential external threats. By installing CCTV cameras and bolstering security, a less strategic position can effectively counter threats.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of the description and discussion that have been presented, the researcher concluded the potential and strategy for developing the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar as a religious tourist attraction in Palembang City, South Sumatra Province as follows:

1. The SO (Strength and Opportunity) strategy implemented by Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar tourism is a promotional strategy through social media so that it is better known by tourists, both local and foreign tourists.
2. The ST (Strength and Threat) strategy implemented by the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar tour is to introduce the wider community to the importance of learning Islamic history when visiting, increasing the knowledge of tour guides, and promoting it on the internet or social media.
3. The WO (Weakness and Opportunity) strategy by Al Qur'an Al-Akbar tourism is to work together with the government to repair damaged roads and expand tourist locations and complete facilities that do not exist or are inadequate while renovating tourism to make them more attractive
4. The WT (Weakness and Treat) strategy that can be implemented by Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar Tourism is adding security and installing CCTV cameras.

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