



MUSLIM COMMUNITY PERCEPTION TOWARDS
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SABANG, ACEH,
INDONESIA

BY

MYNA AGUSTINA YUSUF

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree Master of Urban and Regional Planning

Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design
International Islamic University Malaysia

OCTOBER 2015

ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions of the Muslim community regarding tourism development in Sabang, Aceh, Indonesia. Sabang is a tourist destination and is predominantly inhabited by Muslims, hence it applies the *Syariah* law from the higher level (Aceh Province). Since there has been a gradual increase in the number of tourists from 2009, it brings into question the Muslim community's perceptions and desires of tourism, where there is a clear divide in Muslims, some considering it an unlawful and useless activity, while others encouraging it. This study adopted both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess the perception of the Sabang community in the tourism industry. The probability method of simple random sampling techniques was used to decide the respondents of questionnaire survey. 157 respondents were picked and four stakeholders were interviewed, and the outcomes were analysed accordingly. Based on frequency analysis and transcript, the results revealed that both community and stakeholders perceive tourism development in Sabang are not being in line with the community expectations and Aceh identity/law, however they did agree with the established tourism policies. The community considered tourism as an entertainment that must be in compliance with Islam. In particular, the community agreed with the covering of *aurah* and prohibition of co-habitation of unmarried Muslim tourists. Further analysis of correlation showed that there were no significant relationships between education, religiosity and some perception variables, such as tourism for seeking fun, tourists' attire, and so forth. This might be due to data distribution and acquisition. This study recommended that Sabang authority to establish regulation pertaining to dress code, accommodation for unmarried couples, *halal* food, and appropriate signage, in addition to conduct regular awareness campaigns among tourism business operators and community regarding tourism activities in Sabang.

ملخص البحث

تتناول هذه الدراسة تصورات المجتمع الإسلامي فيما يتعلق بتطوير السياحة في سابانج، بمقاطعة آتشيه في إندونيسيا. وتُعدُّ سابانج مقصداً سياحياً تقطنه أغلبية مسلمة، وبالتالي فهو يطبق قوانين الشريعة الإسلامية بمستوى عالٍ (مقاطعة آتشيه). وقد حدثت زيادة تدريجية في عدد السياح منذ عام 2009م، وصاحب ذلك تساؤل عن تصور المجتمع حول السياحة ومتطلباتها، حيث يوجد اختلاف واضح بين المسلمين إزاءها؛ حيث يعتبره البعض عملاً غير شرعي أو أنشطة عديمة الفائدة، بينما يشجع البعض الآخر مثل هذه الأنشطة السياحية. وقد اعتمدت هذه الدراسة كل من المنهجين الكمي والنوعي لتقييم وجهة نظر المجتمع المسلم في سابانج حول صناعة السياحة. وقد تم استخدام تقنيات منهج العينة العشوائية البسيطة لتحديد المشاركين للإجابة على أسئلة الاستبيان. وقد تم استطلاع آراء 157 فرداً، بالإضافة إلى عقد مقابلات مع أربعة من أصحاب المصلحة في هذا المجال، ثم تم تحليل النتائج وفقاً لذلك. وقد كشفت النتائج بناء على التحليل التكراري والنصي أن كلاً من المجتمع وأصحاب المصلحة ينظرون إلى التنمية السياحية في سابانج على أنها لا تتماشى مع تطلعات المجتمع في آتشيه ولا تتواءم مع هويته وقوانينه، إلا أنها تتفق مع سياسات السياحة المعمول بها. وينظر المجتمع إلى السياحة على أنها مجرد وسائل ترفيهية ينبغي أن تكون متوائمة مع الإسلام. وخاصة فيما يتعلق بالتزام المجتمع بتغطية عورة المرأة وحظر إقامة أية علاقة جنسية مع السياح المسلمين غير المتزوجين. وقد أظهر التحليل أنه لم تكن هناك علاقات كبيرة بين التعليم، والتدين في تغيير هذا التصور. مثل السياحة بهدف البحث عن المتعة، وملابس السياح، وهكذا دواليك. وقد يكون هذا راجعاً إلى توزيع البيانات وطريقة اكتسابها. وأوصت هذه الدراسة سلطة سابانج أن تضع معايير تأسيسية لتنظيم الأمور المتعلقة بالملابس المناسبة، ووضع ضوابط لمنع إقامة غير المتزوجين من الجنسين في مكان واحد بصورة غير شرعية، وتوفير الأكل الحلال، واللافات الملائمة. بالإضافة إلى تنظيم حملات توعية منتظمة بين المشتغلين بالأعمال السياحية والمجتمع فيما يتعلق بأنشطة السياحة في سابانج.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

.....
Mansor Ibrahim
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

.....
Lukman Hakim Mahamood
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

.....
Norzailawati Mohd Noor
Head, Department of Urban and
Regional Planning

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

.....
Alias Bin Abdullah
Dean, Kulliyah of Architecture
and Environmental Design

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Myna Agustina Yusuf

Signature.....

Date.....

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**MUSLIM COMMUNITY PERCEPTION TOWARDS TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT IN SABANG, ACEH, INDONESIA**

I declare that the copyright holder of this dissertation is
Myna Agustina Yusuf

Copyright © 2015 by Myna Agustina Yusuf. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below.

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Myna Agustina Yusuf

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Dedication to:

My beloved parents, sisters, brothers, and friends.

Who always encourage me through ups and downs,

Thank you for your prayers, and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, along with *Salawat* and Salam to our role model, the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Alhamdulillah, all praise to Allah for his blessings and guidance of His grace, and also for giving me strength, idea, health, ability and patience, so I could complete this dissertation.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Mansor Ibrahim for guidance, advice, supervision, understanding and idea throughout the study. I have been extremely lucky to have a supervisor who are very kind and cared so much about my work.

I would like to thank Dr. Lukman Hakim Mahamood for his feedback and suggestions. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all lectures in Master of Urban and Regional Planning Programme, who have taught and encouraged me for what I achieved today.

Huge thanks to my beloved parents, my dearest sisters and brothers. Thank you for always supporting me and believing in me for every condition.

Finally, I would like to thank my lovely friends who have given me helps, support, and smiles during the completion of this dissertation. This work would have been more difficult without yours.

Alhamdulillah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page	iv
Declaration	v
Copyright Page	vi
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xiii
List of Abbreviations	xiv
List of Symbols	xv
CHAPTER 1:INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of Study	2
1.3 Problem Statements	5
1.4 Research Questions.....	8
1.5 Objectives	8
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	9
1.7 Scope and Limitation.....	10
1.8 Structure of Thesis/Project Paper	11
1.9 Chapter Summary	12
CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Tourism and Islam	13
2.2.1 The Islamic View of Tourism.....	17
2.2.2 Tourism in Islamic Law.....	21
2.2.3 Tourism in Muslim Countries.....	23
2.2.4 Tourism Policy in Aceh.....	28
2.3 Community Perception	33
2.4 Religiosity.....	35
2.5 Chapter Summary	36
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	38
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Methods of Previous Studies	38
3.3 Methods of Data Ghatering and Analyses	40
3.3.1 Data Collection	40
3.3.1.1 Population and Sample	40
3.3.1.2 Primary Data.....	42
3.3.1.3 Secondary Data.....	45
3.3.2 Data Analysis.....	45
3.3.2.1 Observation/Literature/Book/Report Data Analysis	46
3.3.2.2 Questionnaire Data Analysis	46

3.3.2.3 Interview Data Analysis	48
3.4 Research Structure	48
3.5 Study Area	51
3.5.1 Geographic Condition.....	51
3.5.2 Land Use.....	53
3.5.3 Population of Sabang.....	55
3.5.4 Tourism in Sabang.....	56
3.6 Chapter Summary	60
Chapter 4:DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	62
4.1.Introduction	62
4.2.Respondents' Background.....	63
4.3.Cronbach's Alpha of Perception Items/Questions.....	64
4.4.Community Perception and Religiosity.....	65
4.4.1. Community Perception of General Understanding of Tourism.....	66
4.4.2. Community Perception on Tourism Policies in Aceh	73
4.4.3. Community Perception on Tourism Aspects.....	75
4.4.4. Respondents' Religiosity	79
4.5.Correlation Analysis	81
4.6.Institution Perception on Tourism Development.....	84
4.7.Comparative Perception of Community and Stakeholder/Institution.....	87
4.8 Main Findings	88
4.9.Conclusion	89
CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	89
5.1 Introduction	89
5.2 Summary of Findings	89
5.3 Recommendation	91
5.3.1 Physical Aspect.....	91
5.3.1.1 Signage in Tourism Sites.....	91
5.3.1.2 Non-Exclusivity Tourism Development Area.....	92
5.3.2 Non-Physical Aspect	93
5.3.2.1 Clear Regulation of Tourism Activity in City Regulation	93
5.3.2.2 Community Awareness About Tourism.....	94
5.3.2.3 Role of Forum Tata Kelola Pariwisata Sabang	95
5.3.2.4 Awareness Campaign Among Tourism Business Operators.	95
5.4 Suggestions For Future Research	96
5.5 Conclusion.....	97
REFERENCES.....	98
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	104
APPENDIX B: QANUN NO.8 YEAR 2013	110
APPENDIX C: RELIGIOSITY VALUE OF RESPONDENTS.....	143
APPENDIX D: STATISTICAL RESULT OF CORRELATION ANALYSIS ..	145
APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF STATISTICAL FINDINGS.....	150
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT	153

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Islamic Tourism Definition	15
Table 3.1	Dependent Variables and Independent Variables	44
Table 3.2	Likert Scale	44
Table 3.3	Secondary Data	45
Table 3.3	Land Use Types in Sabang Year 2007	53
Table 3.4	Tourism Sites in Sabang	58
Table 3.5	The Number of Tourists in Sabang Year 2009-2013	60
Table 4.1	Analysis Frequency of Respondents' Background	63
Table 4.2	Cronbach's Alpha Internal Consistency	65
Table 4.3	Reliability Statistic	65
Table 4.4	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on Tourism Development Concept	70
Table 4.5	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on Negative Impacts of Tourism	70
Table 4.6	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on Positive Impacts of tourism	71
Table 4.7	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on tourism Development consideration	71
Table 4.8	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on Tourism Definition	72
Table 4.9	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on Tourism Policies in Aceh	74
Table 4.10	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on Social Tourism Aspects	77
Table 4.11	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on Physical Tourism Aspects	77
Table 4.12	Frequency Analysis and RII of Respondents' Perception on Economic	

Tourism Aspects	78
Table 4.13 Respondents Level of Religiosity	80
Table 4.14 Guilford's Rule of Thumb	82
Table 4.15 The Correlation between Perception Variables and Education Level as well as Religiosity	82
Table 4.16 Summary of Findings	88

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1	Research Structure	50
Figure 3.2	Sabang Administration Map	52
Figure 3.3	Sabang Land Use Map	54
Figure 3.4	Total Population According to Gender and Sub District Year 2007-2012	55
Figure 3.5	Tourism Sites in Sabang	57
Figure 3.6	Sabang Tourism Map	59
Figure 3.7	Line Graph of the Number of Tourists in Sabang Year 2009-2013	60
Figure 5.1	Example of Dress Code Signage	91

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ITC	Islamic Tourism Centre
NGO	Non Government Organization
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
RII	Relative Importance Index
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
UAE	United Arab Emirate
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization

LIST OF SYMBOLS

A	Response category based on Likert scale
n	Total numbers of respondents
p	Significance coefficient
r	Correlation coefficient
X_a	Frequency of the respondents of the total response for each statement
y	Highest weight
Y_a	Constant expressing the weight of the respondents

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Some countries are encountering loss of cultural and social values today which is caused by various factors including globalization and tourism. Globalization has adverse impacts on cultural diversity and affects multinational corporations' promotions of a customer culture through technology of commercial media and products that can fade local cultural influences, which are also encouraged by Western ideals of individualism (Gibson, 2007). Subsequently, tourism comprises of movement of individuals in different geographical locations and social interactions between people who would otherwise not meet, clashes may occur by some social differences in cultures, ethnic and religious groups, values, lifestyles, languages and levels of prosperity (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], n.d). However, besides those adverse impacts, tourism shows that its development could bring economic growth of a country as tourism plays a prominent role in the financial world for an over period of times (Brida, Disegna, & Osti, 2011; Sheldon & Var, 1984).

Inevitably, tourism brings both advantages and disadvantages impacts in a nation even in a particular small community within tourism destination (Breugel, 2013). Social and cultural values of the community are influenced by tourism development. In addition, the community itself influences how tourism development will be. Since tourism planners are now being asked to be more responsive to wider set of economic and social needs, then the local governments should realize their

responsibility towards the local citizens whose lives and communities may be affected by tourism (Haywood, 1988). Hence, what society perceives of tourism could reveal how they accept tourism development and how it should be.

This research focuses on community attitudes that relate to tourism development in Sabang, Aceh, Indonesia. In this chapter, the study background, the research problems, research questions, objectives and scope of the study are discussed. In the end, significance of study and limitation are clarified.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Tourism has become one of the primary sectors of developing countries that can vibrate economic growth. The economic factor is one of the positive impacts of tourism, yet there are also negative effects of tourism. Some of these may appear in either environmental or physical or socioeconomic areas.

Indonesia, as a developing country, has many tourism destinations that could attract either local or international tourists. For instance, Aceh, the western part of Indonesia, has diverse tourism destination. Aceh provides not only the beauty of nature, but also different insights into the culture and the Muslim community. Aceh is a province in the west part of Indonesia, with 99% of Muslim population and religiosity of Aceh's residents is likely their inherence. Therefore, Aceh is the only province in Indonesia, which applies *Syariah* Law in its *Qanun* (Aceh Law). Every development in Aceh is likely to be connected with Islam and its law. This, however, leads to slow development in Aceh, because investors as one of driving wheels in the economy face such barriers in the social and religion of community (Hirwan, 2012).

To develop a tourism sector is not an easy effort. Some factors (environment, policy, community, economy) could determine and be barriers in tourism

development. Also, these aspects occur in the development of tourism in Sabang as the islands tourism along with a small town in Indonesia which has diverse coastal biodiversity and culture. Tourism development in Sabang has had a positive impact in the economic sector. Data show that tourism contributes the most to Local Own-Source Revenue (Ferdinand Nazirun, 2011). Inevitably, it has also brought some negative impacts, for instance, land exploitation, environmental degradation, un-controlling development, over-crowded in tourism sites, and uncertainty of tourism marketing (Fadlina, 2014). These adverse impacts could be of serious concern when developing a tourism sector in Sabang.

The arrival of tourists could influence the attitude of the host community towards tourism development, which may grow through the process of euphoria, apathy, irritation and potentially antagonism when anti-tourist attitudes are expanding among the local people (Shaw & Williams, as cited in Keovilay, 2012). Moreover, according to Krannich and Petrzalka (as cited in Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012), cultural attractions are supported by tourism and even created for tourists, yet tourism can depreciate the small-town charm and sense of place interesting both residents and tourists.

For the purpose of developing tourism in Aceh, some barriers may be faced, such as community understanding about tourism. This is because most people in Aceh still object the development of tourism in the region and regard tourism activities as being against the Islamic law (Hirwan, 2012) and although this might seem reasonable because Muslims are trying to keep the integrity of Islamic law, it should not be a barrier since Islam is a universal religion.

Furthermore, tourism development is a complicated concept covering wide aspects such as society behaviour, economics, politics and culture hence it seems to be

more complex since it meets with the Islamic law in a region. The Islamic laws mean that any problem of interpretation, application and authenticity may raise the disputatious issue for most Muslims (Tajzadeh-Namin, 2012). As tourism relates with social and cultural aspects, Eshliki & Kaboudi (2012) mentioned that understanding community perception is a precious input for the stakeholder, along with being a pivotal one, for a sustainable and successful development.

Tourism is perceived as a threat to “tradition” and religion, even while a large segment of the population is dependent on its economic benefits, while in the Islamic context, Muslim social leaders and citizens are concerned that tourism will lead to drug and alcohol consumption, spread unacceptable behaviour and immodest dressing, open displays of males and females and lead to sexual prostitution and gambling that are forbidden by Islamic law (Henderson, as cited in Scott, 2010). Also, tourism is viewed by some Muslims as a means of leisure and entertainment that does not have any real or long-lasting value (Sanad, Kassem, & Scott, 2010) even if it benefits national economy and has a potential to build relationships between people (local and tourists) and cultures (Sanad, as cited in Sanad et al., 2010).

Therefore, it is important to know how the community in Sabang perceives tourism, since Sabang is a beautiful coastal tourism destination with coastal biodiversity, one that can attract international tourists and non-Muslim tourists alike. Moreover, community perception could be the basic measure in developing the tourism sector could be generally appreciated.

Therefore, tourism is an important sector to trigger economic growth in most countries. This industry is growing in a body of literature in this relevant research concentration. Thus, economic aspect for the community is likely to grow in many pieces of research (Michael Muganda, 2013). Also, since it involves the traditional

interaction between community and tourism development and its impact, tourism context is becoming a popular research topic (Long, 2008).

To conclude, community perception is most widely studied because it is known as crucial for sustainable tourism development, particularly in the Muslim society. Understanding of community perception of tourism how these attitudes are formed regarding tourism development would be a valuable knowledge for decision makers.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENTS

In 2005, Aceh (as a province) and Indonesia (as a country) made an agreement that the former has a right to be an exclusive province. This means that since 2005, Aceh has been granted the right to make its own law. Indonesia recognizes the exclusivity of Aceh, which is declared in Indonesian Act Number 11 Year 2006: Aceh Sovereignty (*Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2006: Pemerintahan Aceh*). Implementation of *Syariah* Law is one of the Aceh's various rights recognized by Indonesia. Implementation *Syariah* Law in Aceh comprises three rules, including *aqidah*, *syariah*, and *akhlaq*. Tourism is one of the aspects regulated and stated in Aceh Act (*Qanun Aceh*).

Such policies regarding tourism must be based on the Islamic law. The system is described in Aceh Act Number 8 Year 2013 (*Qanun Aceh Nomor 8 Tahun 2013*). This *Qanun* (Act) regulates tourism related to principle, purpose, function, government authority, financing, community participation and any activities allowed and prohibited for either local or international tourists. Sabang, a tourism destination in Aceh must follow this *Qanun* in developing tourism. Tourism activity in Sabang has involved the local community. It has been proven that some of the local people involve in providing various services such as diving operators, tourist guides,

accommodation business (bungalow and chalet), cafe, and souvenir seller (Ferdinand Nazirun, 2011). Sabang has a tremendous potential as a world tourism and maritime destination where about 531 decorative fish and magnificent coral reefs are living in its beautiful garden underwater ("*Sebongkah Tanah Turun Dari Surga*", 2015).

The number of tourists has risen in Sabang in the past three years. The number of international tourists was 3,932 in 2010, then increased to 4,622 in 2012. The number of local visitors is 121,646 in 2010, then increased to 212,165 in 2012. According to Sabang Statistic 2012, Sabang has 25 Hotels, 19 bungalows, and 3 cottages. These increasing numbers of tourists and facilities, however, are very positives in terms of tourism development in Sabang. The promotion of Sabang as a tourism destination area raised worries of tourists especially non-Muslim tourists (Maria, 2013). Questions arising from foreign visitors are: "Is it permitted to wear such swimsuits and drink alcoholic beverages?" (Padden, as cited in Maria, 2013). Additionally, this gives rise to the community's anxieties about how tourism development is going to be. Besides that, there are many people were doubt that tourism in Sabang will be a world tourism destination since many protests and comments were arising when a photo of tourist wearing swimming suits in one spot of the tourism sites was posted in the media (Maria, 2013).

According to Mari Elka P, Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, the first challenge to develop tourism is communities' understanding of tourism in the tourist destinations, and Sabang is one of the targets for Destination Management Organization to get a community understanding of what tourism is ("*Apa Sih Masalah Pengembangan Wisata di Indonesia?*", 2014). Since Sabang is more known and realized to have a huge potential for a tourism industry, the strategies for this purpose should meet the policy of Islamic law in Aceh.

Several researchers have explained about the community's perception that indicates a diverse community understanding of impact of tourism amongst study areas. However, there is a lack of research that reveals how the community thinks and perceives tourism, which is engaging with Islam and the policy, since many studies relate more to the impacts. According to previous studies (Ap, 1992; Brougham & Butler, 1981), communities are not homogeneous groups of consentaneous people, but instead a group of persons with uncertain or mixed feelings in relation to the perceived impacts they have on tourism. Thus, the result of previous research regarding the community perception cannot be generalized.

Since the beginning of the advocacy planning in 1970's, tourism development with emphasis on residents' attitudes or citizen participation has been acknowledged for a need in planning. Since tourism comprises of substantial social, economic and environmental impacts both positive and negative, planners can no longer maketravel as tangential to other planning functions (Harrill & D.Potts, 2003). In fact, it is not disputed now that any sustainable tourism development must be participative in character, and must count on the opinion of the local people, who have the right to express their preferences for the type of tourism model development (Vargas-Sanchez, Porras Bueno, & Plaza-Mejia, 2011). As it is applied in Aceh, especially Sabang as the study site, the community preference type of tourism should be transformed in strategic development. This is because Sabang not only as tourism destination but also as part of Aceh, is applying *Syariah* law, that according to Yusri & Chin (2015) Islamic tourism is a promising market nowadays in growing tourism activity. Hence, there is no doubt that tourism planning need strategies which are accepted by the community in the tourism destination.

Based on those issues (policy made and development in Sabang), problem statements for this research could be listed in three points, which are:

1. Islamic principle can be a serious barrier to tourism development in Aceh.
2. The hostile community perception on tourism is the most challenging in developing tourism in Aceh.
3. The community agreement is crucial and essential to produce a strategic tourism development in Sabang.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the problems discussed, the following research questions were identified in the study of community perception of tourism development in Sabang, Aceh, Indonesia:

1. What is the concept of tourism in the Islamic view and Aceh law?
2. What is the perception of the local community towards tourism activities in Sabang?
3. What type of tourism development is suitable for Sabang?

1.5 OBJECTIVES

Based on the research questions identified, the following points are objectives translated from the research questions:

1. To analyze the concept of tourism in Islam and Aceh law.
2. To analyze the perception of local community towards tourism activities related to tourism policy implemented by Aceh Government.
3. To recommend tourism development strategies that suit Sabang and its local community.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significant of this study could be achieved in three different sectors which are academic, government, and investor.

1. Academic

This study contributes to the advancement of understanding how the community perceives the tourism industry. It adds to existing knowledge by explaining how the variety of community perception towards tourism relates to the religious life also the Islamic law implemented in Aceh. The study is unique since it studies the region which has never been done before. Thus, it may bring a different perspective regarding community perception towards tourism.

2. Government

This study will produce advice for the government for developing tourism in Sabang. This input may form tourism in Sabang that can be appreciated by the community. The government may use the result of this study as a basic of preparing the policies, regulations and strategies towards tourism development.

3. Investor

This study will be a contribution for investors in term of considering investment in the study area. Thus, the investors could make the investment in either tourism or other sectors in the study area without triggering conflict with the surrounding community.