

## ***Collaborative Governance in the Development of Religious Tourism in Blitar City***

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### ***Abstract***

*The tourism sector is one of the economic potentials that must be continuously developed, including in Blitar City, which has religious tourism sites such as Bung Karno's Tomb and the Ar-Rahman Mosque. However, several infrastructure and facility problems have arisen, such as parking tourism buses on the side of the road, which causes congestion around the Ar-Rahman Mosque and damaged visitor seats at the Bung Karno Tomb. Based on Blitar City Regional Regulation Number 12 of 2011 concerning the 2011-2030 Regional Spatial Plan of Blitar City, Article 57, paragraph 1 states that cultural tourism areas must be appropriately managed. This study aims to discover the collaboration process in developing religious tourism in Blitar City by using the Ansell and Gash (2008) model approach as the analysis knife. Qualitative methods were used in this study, such as observations, interviews, and documentation with stakeholders at the Blitar City Culture and Tourism Office, Bung Karno's Tomb, and the Ar-Rahman Mosque. The results showed that collaboration in developing religious tourism involving the government, private sector, and local communities is essential. However, the collaboration process has not been entirely based on the principles of collaborative governance, especially in building trust and mutual understanding with the management of the Ar-Rahman Mosque. Other collaboration processes, such as face-to-face dialogue and commitment, have started to run by producing socialization activities to increase tourism and halal certification program campaigns.*

**Keywords:** *collaborative governance, tourism development, religious tourism*

### **1. Introduction**

Tourism is a trip to enjoy natural and cultural beauty and a strategic investment that requires careful planning and collaboration of various parties. The success of this sector is highly dependent on the active involvement of the government in the provision of infrastructure, expansion of facilities, and cooperation with private companies and local communities. In addition, effective tourism management and promotion at the national and international levels can be a significant source of local revenue. By Law Number 10 Year 2009 Article 1, paragraph 3, tourism includes various activities supported by facilities and services provided by the community, entrepreneurs, government, and local governments. Well-planned tourism development not only ensures the achievement of economic goals but also improves the quality of life of local communities and strengthens regional cultural identity.

In public administration, collaboration is the key to achieving common goals by involving various related parties. This concept of governance is the basis for public



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management, public sector coordination, public-private partnerships, corporate governance, and good governance (Sudirman et al., 2022). Collaborative governance allows public and non-governmental institutions to collaborate in formal, agreement-oriented decision-making. Collaborative governance involves institutions' (stakeholders) active participation in setting goals, evaluating results, and implementing changes, creating synergies to manage programs effectively and efficiently (Kedasi Silayar, Ika Sartika, 2021). Research by (Mindarti et al., 2024) in Kraton Village, Yosowilangun Sub-district, Lumajang District, shows that collaboration is essential to overcome resource limitations, improve efficiency, build trust, involve the community, support infrastructure development and training, and ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of e-government-based public information disclosure.

With its complexity, tourism requires close collaboration between the private sector, government, and local communities to thrive and benefit society. As an essential pillar in economic development, tourism development must be carried out with a systematic and participatory approach that considers economic, technical, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects (Rahmi, 2016). To ensure the achievement of optimal tourism development goals, careful planning is required. Religious tourism destinations, which include places with special significance, such as mosques as religious centers and tombs as places of sanctity, offer a profound spiritual experience. Religious tourism aims to quench visitors' spiritual thirst, enrich their religious vision and experience, and deepen their spiritual feelings. Therefore, religious tourism destinations should be comprehensive, encompassing a variety of places that can create an appropriate sense of religiosity. To improve the quality, effectiveness, and existence of religious tourism, a holistic and inclusive development strategy is required.

**Table 1. Data on Tourism Visits in Blitar City**

Year	Number of Visitors
2019	316.748
2020	452.552
2021	107.889
2022	143.485
2023	876.331

Source: Blitar City Culture and Tourism Office, 2023

Table 1 data on tourist visits from 2018 to 2023. The data includes various tourist destinations in Blitar City, such as Bung Karno Tomb, Gebang Palace, Bung Karno National Library, Kebon Rojo Park, Blitar Green Park, Sentul Park, Sumber Udel Water Park, Fish Garden, Aryo Blitar Tomb, Argo Belimbing Tourism Karangasari, Telaga Nirmala, Herlingga Jaya Park, and Bathok Tourism Village. From these data, it can be concluded that Blitar City experienced a significant increase in tourist visits in 2023 after the decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This shows that tourism recovery efforts in Blitar City are starting to bear fruit.



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One of the main religious tourism destinations in Blitar City is the Ar-Rahman Mosque and Bung Karno's Tomb. Ar-Rahman Mosque offers architectural beauty similar to the Nabawi Mosque in Medina, with umbrellas surrounding the mosque (Shinta Fatmala & Alhada Fuadilah Habib, 2023). The beauty and uniqueness of the Ar-Rahman Mosque's architecture attract people from within and outside the region to visit this mosque, both to pray and enjoy the beauty of the building. Ar-Rahman Mosque has its charm compared to other mosques in general. In addition to the Ar-Rahman Mosque, Blitar City is also famous for the Bung Karno Tomb, which has a lot of charm, beauty, and historical value. Bung Karno's tomb has great tourism potential, both as a place of pilgrimage and as a medium to increase the sense of nationalism. Visitors often pilgrimage to this tomb to commemorate Bung Karno's services. Another attraction is the National Library, which stores objects and books related to Sukarno, which can be enjoyed by visitors, especially students, to learn about nationalism. (Arti et al., 2023).

Based on Blitar City Regional Regulation Number 12 of 2011 concerning the 2011-2030 Regional Spatial Plan of Blitar City Article 57 paragraph 1, cultural tourism areas include the Tomb of Indonesian Proclamator Bung Karno in Sentul Village and Bendogrit Village, Ndalem Gebang in Sananwetan Village, Kartawibawa House in Sananwetan Village, Aryo Blitar Tomb in Blitar Village, Pangeranan Tomb in Sananwetan Village, and the Development of PETA Struggle Tourism Area in Bendogrit Village. Based on the decision of this regional regulation, the government must pay more attention to existing tourism problems. Many studies have examined collaborative governance in tourism management, such as research conducted by Tongkotow et al., (2021) mentioned that tourism development decision-making at Lakban Beach in Ratatotok District was carried out without involving the local community, so the community's aspirations needed to be accommodated. Collaboration is more top-down and does not provide significant benefits for the welfare of the local community. Research conducted Hariyoko (2023) found that the Keputih Surabaya Bamboo Forest tour development was already quite good, with good communication between the government, other agencies, and the community. Human and financial resources are well managed to build supporting facilities. Research Arrasyid (2021) found that the development of Toluk Jangkang tourism integrates nature and local culture but is still constrained by the lack of budget and lack of community participation.

The uniqueness of this research is that it focuses on collaboration in the development of religious tourism, a specific area of research that differs from the focus of other natural and cultural tourism research. The research also highlights specific problems in the religious tourism sector relating to infrastructure and stakeholder trust. It provides insights into how government and communities can work together more effectively to overcome empirical problems. The problems include infrastructure issues, such as the parking of tour buses on the side of the road, which has caused severe congestion around the Ar-Rahman Mosque. Residents often complain about this congestion as passing vehicles must patiently pass through the parking on the right and left sides of the road, worsening traffic conditions. In addition, most of



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the chairs in the Bung Karno Tomb area used by visitors to relax appear damaged and need repair. Based on these empirical gaps, important questions arise that become the focus of this research: How is the collaborative governance process in the development of religious tourism in Blitar City?

## 2. Methods

The research used is qualitative. According to Creswell (2015), the research strategy or method must be based on the objectives. The real purpose of research is to answer research questions. Researchers choose qualitative methods to describe the situation in the field in more detail, clearly, and in-depth. This research aims to describe the situation or event so that the data collected can be described to identify the internal and external environment. The focus of this research is determined based on the formulation of the problem of the collaborative governance process in the development of religious tourism in Blitar City, which is analyzed using the theory of collaborative governance. Ansell, C., and Gash (2008) include several essential elements: face-to-face dialog, building trust, commitment to the collaboration process, shared understanding, and collaboration results. Researchers interviewed the Ar-Rahman Mosque tourism manager, the Bung Karno Tomb tourism manager, the Blitar City Culture and Tourism Office, the Head of the Pedicab Community, the Head of PHRI, Merchants around the tour, and Visitors. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model from Miles et al., which included three main steps: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation involves the selection, simplification, and abstraction of data collected. Data presentation allows information to be neatly organized, making it easier to interpret. Initial conclusions drawn are provisional and may be adjusted based on new evidence that emerges during the subsequent data-collection process.

## 3. Results and Discussion

*Collaboration* is a term that describes the way two or more parties work together to achieve a common goal. In this context, collaboration involves internal work processes and cooperation between parties to achieve a desired outcome. This cooperation can drive progress in complex organizational environments. In the development of religious tourism, the government, private sector, and local communities play a direct role. Local communities provide tourist-related services as part of tourism management and business. The success of this collaboration requires direct communication between all parties to find opportunities for mutual benefit. In this study, the collaboration process is measured using the indicators of the Ansell, C. and G. G. model. Ansell, C., and Gash (2008) model indicators, which include face-to-face dialog, building trust, commitment to the collaboration process, shared understanding, and collaboration outcomes.

### 1) Face-to-Face Dialogue

Face-to-face dialogues are essential for stakeholders, including government, private



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sector, and communities, to meet and discuss in person. While insufficient for the entire process, these dialogs are essential in building collaboration. In-person meetings often lead to disagreements reinforcing each party's arguments, but they are crucial to reaching a mutual agreement on tourism development. Officials from the Blitar City Culture and Tourism Office stated that developing the tourism sector in Blitar City involves collaboration with various business actors, including hotels, restaurants, and the creative economy sector. The Tourism Office regularly conducts monthly surveys to record the number of visits. Ar-Rahman Mosque is now one of the tourist destinations managed by the private sector, while the government manages Bung Karno's Tomb. Face-to-face dialogue is conducted monthly to facilitate stakeholder communication and collaboration in organizing events. In addition, community development forums are held monthly to facilitate better communication in expressing opinions and information.

The manager of Ar-Rahman Mosque expressed full support for the mosque as a tourist destination and explained that non-formal coordination is done every time there is a significant activity or event. Members of the pedicab community mentioned that face-to-face dialog is held once every three months, both in formal and non-formal forms. The head of the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) of Blitar City added that the government often holds coordination meetings or events every month, and they are always invited to participate. The Blitar City government has taken proactive steps by holding forum meetings at the Culture and Tourism Office, both formally and non-formally. One form of this face-to-face dialog is a Forum Group Discussion (FGD) involving all tourism stakeholders. The agenda of this FGD is to unite the synergy of *parekraf* actors to retain tourists longer in Blitar City. The observation results show that communication between stakeholders in tourism development is going well. The government, community, and other related parties have successfully collaborated through coaching and socialization to improve the quality of tourism in Blitar City.

## 2) Building Trust

According to Ansell, C. and Gash (2008), building trust and commitment are crucial factors that significantly influence the success rate of collaboration. In collaborative partnerships, trust and commitment between actors are the main foundations that enable productive interactions. Actors involved in this collaboration must understand that they can only stand-alone with the support of other actors. Therefore, strong commitment can only be achieved by accommodating the interests of all parties and based on long-term relationships that are continuously nurtured. Building trust is a crucial aspect of tourism development, as expressed by several officials and business actors in Blitar City.

The head of the Tourism Division of the Blitar City Culture and Tourism Office emphasized the importance of establishing harmonious relationships through regular coordination. According to him, any obstacles must be addressed immediately, and trust must continue to be built, although additional coordination is still needed, especially for the Ar-Rahman Mosque. Kasi Bidang Kawasan also underlined the importance of coordination



between private stakeholders and local communities in building trust. This suggests frequent coordination strengthens relationships between the various parties involved in tourism development. Support from local communities, such as the Pedicab transportation community, is also critical. They explained that regular meetings and respect for different views are vital in building stakeholder trust. The head of the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) of Blitar City added that good communication and participation in various events helped strengthen harmonious relationships with the government and other stakeholders.

The manager of Ar-Rahman Mosque pointed out that despite substantial financial support from the private sector, collaboration with the government is still not maximized. This suggests the need for increased support from the government side to ensure better trust in collaboration. Visitors also play a role in building trust, such as maintaining cleanliness and security at Ar-Rahman Mosque, which is a form of support for tourism development. Souvenir vendors, too, feel economically advantaged and help maintain cleanliness around Bung Karno's Tomb. The interview results show a good relationship and positive contribution between the government, community, and visitors in tourism development. The established trust gives confidence that tourism development will run smoothly. The Blitar City, Culture and Tourism Office held a Creative Economy Workshop in November 2023 to build trust. This activity is expected to increase literacy and share experiences in the industrial world. Based on the results of the researcher's observations and observations, it can be seen that when the government and other stakeholders work together to build trust and solve problems, perfect trust is formed between the government, the private sector, the community (pedicab transportation community, and traders).

### **3) Commitment to the Collaboration Process**

Commitment to collaboration will increase as stakeholders become more Interdependent. In this context, collaboration is a short-term agreement and a beneficial and sustainable cooperation process. Commitment to a collaborative process means that each party works together to reach a consensus on the best way to realize the desired policy. This requires all stakeholders to continuously interact, support each other, and align their visions and missions to achieve optimal results. When all parties commit to this process, they are focusing on the end goal and developing long-term relationships that can bring sustainable benefits to the entire community. The Head of the Tourism Division of the Blitar City Culture and Tourism Office said that commitment to the tourism sector is carried out through regular coordination, consultation with stakeholders, and maintaining good communication. One of the concrete actions taken is the halal certification program campaign for MSMEs in the surrounding community.

Trust and commitment are the main assets in collaboration so that rejection from the community can be minimized (Islamy, 2018). The measure of a program's success is whether it can positively affect community welfare. Commitment can be strengthened by clarifying the value of the benefits obtained and presenting clearly to all collaboration actors how goals can



accommodate all interests. Providing halal certificates for traders around religious tourism in Blitar City is part of a government program in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which aims to ensure that the products and services offered by traders meet halal standards. This step aims to increase tourist trust and comfort and support local economic development by attracting more visitors who prioritize halal products.

Commitment to the collaborative process of developing religious tourism in Blitar City requires strong support from the government. Their role in providing a legal basis and clear direction, especially through the establishment of concrete regulations, is crucial. The presence of a mayoral regulation is very important to ensure that the management of religious tourism can run in a structured manner, optimize local potential, and preserve cultural and religious values. Clear and specific regulations are needed to support the synergy between the government, the community, and the private sector in the sustainable development of religious tourism in Blitar City.

As of now, there are no regulations governing the management of religious tourism specifically, highlighting the need for their presence. As a comparative study, research by Kurniawan et al., (2023) shows that in the face of flooding in Sungai Penuh City, the local government has issued Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2019 concerning Regional Disaster Management, which serves as a legal basis for disaster management actions. This regulation regulates disaster prevention, mitigation and handling measures, which also includes socialization and simulation for the community. Another study conducted by Annisa & Sampurna (2024) mentioned that the presence of regulations such as Government Regulation No. 32/2011 on Traffic Engineering Management is crucial in traffic management, especially in the context of policy implementation such as Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) in Jakarta. This regulation provides a clear legal framework for implementing innovative and complex traffic management policies. In addition, this regulation allows the government to collaborate with various stakeholders, such as the private sector and law enforcement agencies, in data synchronization and evaluation of the ERP system.

#### **4) Shared Understanding**

Shared understanding involves the same mission, common goals, common purpose, shared vision, shared ideology, clear goals, clear and strategic direction, implementation of core values, and resolution of problem definition (Islamy, 2018). In this context, a shared understanding of the program's target is needed to realize tourism development. This shows that the stronger the collaboration and interdependence between the actors involved in the tourism sector, the more capable of managing tourism affairs. There is a need to unite various stakeholders to interact and achieve a shared vision for sustainable tourism development and improve community welfare. In the development of religious tourism in Blitar City, various actors have essential roles that complement each other to achieve common goals, including the Blitar City Culture and Tourism Office (government), Ar-Rahman Mosque Manager (private sector), local traders and becak communities (local communities), each of which has a vital role



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in this collaboration process.

**Table 2. Shared Understanding on Religious Tourism Development in Blitar City**

<b>Parties Involved</b>	<b>Role in Tourism Development</b>
Government (Blitar City Culture and Tourism Office)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct coaching and socialization with stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Promoting religious tourism objects.</li> <li>3. Assist with a campaign program for tourism development.</li> </ol>
Private Sector (Ar-Rahman Mosque Manager)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage and maintain the Ar-Rahman Mosque.</li> <li>2. Ensure the comfort and hospitality of tourists while visiting the Ar-Rahman Mosque. They maintain the standard of services and facilities available and make efforts to improve the quality of the tourist experience.</li> </ol>
Pedicab Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The pedicab community actively participates in keeping the tourist area clean and safe.</li> <li>2. They are involved in various meetings and discussion forums organized by the government to provide input and discuss tourism development.</li> </ol>
Local Merchants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The pedicab community is dedicated to ensuring that their trading areas remain clean and safe, enhancing the convenience of visiting tourists.</li> <li>2. Local merchants play a significant role in contributing to local revenue through the payment of taxes and levies, serving as an important source of income for local governments in developing and maintaining tourist facilities.</li> </ol>

Source: Research results, 2024

The development of religious tourism in Blitar City provides various benefits for each actor involved. The government benefits from increased local revenue and a positive image that can attract more tourists and investors. Businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and traders, experience an increase in the number of visitors, which directly increases their income. Local communities gain new jobs and more significant business opportunities, improving their living standards. As the manager of Ar-Rahman Mosque, I see that the private sector also benefits from increased visitation, allowing them to improve and expand their existing facilities. This collaboration also facilitates the creation of an environment conducive to the growth of the creative economy, allowing the local community to continue to thrive and innovate in offering products and services that appeal to tourists.

To address the traffic congestion caused by irregular bus parking around the Ar Rahman Mosque, which has become a significant complaint for residents and road users. A common



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understanding between various stakeholders, including the city government, the police, the mosque management, and the community, is needed. The police and city government have made various coordinated efforts to address this issue. One concrete step is to revitalize the Ornamental Fish Market, located near the Ar Rahman Mosque, as a particular parking lot for tourists of the Ar-Rahman Mosque, which will be realized in 2024. This plan shows the government's efforts to find a long-term solution to reduce congestion and increase convenience for tourists.

This shared understanding is not only created through administrative decisions, but also through frequent coordination meetings with various other stakeholders, including you. In these meetings, all parties have the opportunity to express their views and solutions that they consider most effective. Your active participation in these meetings is crucial as it helps ensure that the solutions implemented are acceptable to all parties and effective in the long run. In addition, the Ar Rahman Mosque management also needs to be actively involved in managing parking around the mosque. With good coordination between the mosque management and the city government, the use of parking lots can be regulated more effectively.

### **5) Intermediate Outcomes**

An intermediate outcome results from business activities that can be identified and measured in the near term and indicates long-term results. They are necessary when long-term outcomes are diffuse, delayed, or challenging to measure. While intermediate outcomes can represent tangible goals due to the process, they are essential in building momentum that can lead to successful collaboration. *Small wins* can feed hope into the collaborative process, encouraging a virtuous cycle of building trust and commitment (Rogers et al., 1993; Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

In the development of religious tourism in Blitar City, small wins are referred to as small victories and short-term goals. The collaboration that occurs between the government, the community, and other institutions provides quite positive temporary results, especially in the tourism sector. These small wins have had a significant impact on the local economy. The Head of the Tourism Division stated that the temporary results showed an increase in the economy from the tourism sector, especially with the increase in hotel visits when there were events or activities. In addition, creative economy actors such as food and beverage businesses have also experienced an increase in sales. The Head of the Area Division revealed that the economy of traders around Bung Karno's Tomb has increased thanks to the tourism sector. The pedicab community and surrounding hotels also feel a positive impact, especially when there are events. However, for the maintenance of facilities and infrastructure, it still relies on the budget from the APBD and central government assistance. The Ar-Rahman Mosque Manager said that the Ar-Rahman Mosque has become one of the religious tourism destinations in Blitar City, indicated by the increase in tourist visits, but cooperation with the government has not been running optimally, especially in terms of parking which still relies on the surrounding community.



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**Table 3. Intermediate Outcomes for Each Actor**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Benefits Received</b>
Government	1) Attract both domestic and international tourists, which in turn enhances the positive image of the area as an attractive and diverse tourist destination. 2) Increase local revenue from the tourism sector, especially from parking fees.
Private sector	1) Hoteliers and restaurants have the opportunity to increase their business. 2) The benefits received by the Ar-Rahman Mosque management are that the increasing number of visitors can have an impact on increasing donations and funds received by the mosque for maintenance and further development.
Local community	1) Local merchants around the tourist area are expected to get an increase in income through the sale of products and services to tourists. 2) Pedicab drivers are expected to get more passengers as the number of tourists visiting religious tourism sites increases. 3) Opening new business opportunities for local communities to sell visitors souvenirs, food, and other necessities. In addition, parking management is also an additional business opportunity for residents, creating jobs and supporting the local economy in a sustainable manner.

Source: Research results, 2024

Intermediate outcomes provide a solid basis for continuing and strengthening the collaboration process for sustainable tourism development in Blitar City.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, face-to-face dialogue serves as an essential platform for the government, private sector, and community to discuss directly. Although this meeting does not solve the whole problem, reaching a mutual agreement on tourism development is crucial. The Blitar City Government has held regular dialog forums, such as FGDs, involving all stakeholders to unite synergies and improve the quality of tourism in Blitar City. Trust and commitment are the main foundations of collaboration. Building trust through regular coordination and open communication helps strengthen relationships between parties. Although there are still challenges in collaboration with some parties, such as the Ar-Rahman Mosque manager, support from local communities and the private sector shows positive progress in building harmonious and productive relationships.

A strong commitment from all stakeholders is crucial for ensuring sustainable collaboration. The Blitar City Government's commitment is evident through its regular coordination, halal certification program campaigns, and stakeholder consultations. This commitment is not just about achieving the end goal, but also about fostering long-term



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relationships that benefit the entire community. A shared understanding of mission, goals, and vision is key in collaboration. The development of religious tourism in Blitar City brings benefits to the government, businesses, and local communities. The government's efforts to address the issue of traffic congestion around the Ar-Rahman Mosque by revitalizing the parking lot demonstrate their commitment to finding long-term solutions that are acceptable to all parties. Good coordination and active participation from all stakeholders ensure an effective and sustainable solution. The intermediate results achieved show an economic boost from the tourism sector. Increased hotel visits and sales of food and beverage businesses are some of the small victories that drive positive momentum in collaboration. However, improvements are still needed in the maintenance of facilities and infrastructure of the Bung Karno Tomb tourist attraction as well as better coordination with the Ar-Rahman Mosque manager to achieve maximum results.

The Blitar City Government should continue to strengthen the dialog forum and focus on improving tourism infrastructure, especially facilities such as parking and accessibility for the convenience of visitors. They should also work on making regulations governing the management of religious tourism. The private sector's active participation and investment in tourism, especially in the promotion and development of business facilities, will significantly strengthen Blitar's position as a religious tourism destination. Local communities should support government programs by maintaining cleanliness, order, and participating in empowerment programs, which will strengthen cooperation and provide direct benefits to the community. Ar-Rahman Mosque managers need to improve visitor management, work more closely with the government, and develop attractive religious tourism programs to increase the attractiveness of the mosque as an important part of religious tourism destinations in Blitar.

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