

Digital Nomads as A Strategy to Accelerate the Religious Tourism Recovery in Post-Pandemic

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the potential of Kudus Regency in implementing digital nomads as a strategy to accelerate Islamic religious tourism recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. This research is important because even though pandemic control has gotten better, there is no guarantee that a virulent virus like COVID-19 will not emerge again and then have an impact on the tourism vacuum. To examine the potential of digital nomads in the Kudus Regency, the research results will be displayed using four aspects of tourism products including attraction, accessibility, amenity, and ancillary, and then discussed with SWOT as an analytical tool. This study uses a qualitative and descriptive approach where data collection is done by observation, interviews with seven informants, and focus group discussions with ten experts. The research results showed that: First, the attraction aspect is very promising because of the many and a varied number of Islamic religious tourism destinations in Kudus. Second, the accessibility aspect still needs improvement because the bus is the only mass public transportation option that directly reaches Kudus. Third, the amenities aspect requires adjustments to prices and health protocol standards. Fourth, the ancillary aspect is quite promising because health facilities, banking, and internet networks are well-available. Thus, attraction and ancillary become elements of strength (S), accessibility becomes weakness (W), and amenities become opportunity (O). However, attraction can also turn into a threat (T) if it is not managed properly because many tourist objects have died after the pandemic.

Keywords: digital nomads; religious tourism; recovery; post-pandemic; Kudus regency

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak has hit every sector of life. One of the sectors that are directly affected by the pandemic is the tourism industry. According to data from the World Travel and Tourism Council – WTTC, this pandemic has caused fifty million people worldwide to lose their jobs in the tourism sector (Škare *et al.*, 2021). Starting from the hotel business, aviation services, land and sea transportation recorded a sharp decline in various parts of the world. This condition also occurs in Indonesia. Whereas tourism is one sector that has a major influence on the pace of the economy and development in Indonesia (Lukman *et al.*, 2022). Various policies limiting human

activity have stopped the tourism industry so it can be ascertained that the number of tourists has decreased dramatically.

Along with the acceleration of vaccination, COVID-19 began to be controlled gradually and life began to return to normal in a new way (Kyriakidis *et al.*, 2021). Now the tourism industry must also undergo new scenarios that may not have been thought of before. In the past, the attraction of tourism was price and service, but now it is health and safety so health protocols are a top priority (Rodríguez-Antón & Alonso-Almeida, 2020). In this improving condition, one thing that must always be a mindset for everyone is to learn from the past. In this case, although tourism has started to return to normal, everyone must remain vigilant. There is no guarantee that conditions like the COVID-19 outbreak will not happen again in the future. Although we hope that this condition will not happen, the tourism community must be ready for all situations in the future.

One of the most important lessons from the COVID-19 outbreak is how tourism should be able to continue when there are various restrictions on human mobility. It should be remembered that these mobility restrictions discourage people from traveling so tourism interest also continues to decline (Gwee *et al.*, 2021). Under these conditions, of course, there are many losses as mentioned above and tourism is one of the driving forces of the country's economy. Learning from this experience, the government and other stakeholders need to take interesting breakthroughs while still prioritizing health factors. This is because the adaptation of new habits does not necessarily make all fields of work able to return to work from the office, so the option to maintain the work-from-home policy is still chosen (Davidescu *et al.*, 2020). Once again, the authors emphasize, we need to learn from this experience to be better prepared for all possibilities in the future.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, religious tourism in Indonesia grew very promising (Hassan *et al.*, 2022; Jaelani, 2017). This potential must be maintained even when conditions are difficult. Admit it or not, the pandemic has a religious effect on society that human age is not eternal, death can come at any time, so humans need to continue to improve themselves. In conditions of social restrictions, there is a human desire to continue to fulfill their jobs, while traveling while also getting closer to God. Under these conditions, the concept of digital nomads has become a new trend for workers. This concept is suspected to be a potential market for tourism business actors. One example is the work from Bali policy initiated by the government through the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment, together with the Ministry of Tourism (Nasution, 2021). In capturing digital nomad opportunities, Bali emerged as one of the destinations, thus making Bali tourism start to thrive, including tourism with Hindu religious nuances.

Then it becomes a big question whether local regions with Islamic religious tourism have the same awareness to develop the potential of digital nomads. Local regions in Indonesia have a variety of unique cultures, even their own culture is used as an icon of an area. Various symbols and cultural expressions, such as language, motion, music, architectural works, and other forms of crafts are used by humans to express religious experiences (Hermansyah, 2014; Forshee, 2006). With the development of the digital nomad trend, religious tourism destinations with Islamic nuances need to seize

the opportunity of this trend. But unfortunately, until the post-pandemic situation becomes more stable, there has been no in-depth study of the religious tourism industry that utilizes the digital nomad trend. Therefore, it is interesting to study more deeply whether local regions with Islamic nuances have tried the potential of this digital nomad. If the region has tried, what form or effort would the initiative take and if not, then what is the underlying reason for ignoring the opportunity.

To examine this phenomenon, the authors will focus this research on Kudus Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. The reason the authors chose Kudus Regency is that this local region is identical to various forms of *Walisongo* heritage which is the propagator of Islam in Java. The northern coast of Java, including Kudus Regency, is known as an area that the *Walisongo* had visited (Kasdi *et al.*, 2021; Erzad & Suciati, 2018). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the existence of these various *Walisongo* heritage sites could always attract many people to travel while on pilgrimage. Therefore, this local region finally got the nickname the city of *santri* which has been embedded in the minds of the people. More than that, the name of a city in Java that comes from Arabic is only Kudus Regency. The name Kudus is taken from the word *Al-Quds* which means holy city. Therefore, the reason for choosing Kudus Regency was very strong.

Based on the explanation above, the problem formulation in this study is: how is the potential of Kudus Regency in implementing digital nomads as a strategy to accelerate Islamic religious tourism recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic? Based on the problem formulation above, the purpose of this study is to analyze the potential of Kudus Regency in implementing digital nomads as a strategy to accelerate Islamic religious tourism recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on previous research, basically, there are many studies related to the recovery strategy of the tourism industry after the pandemic, for example: *First*, the research entitled ‘Tourism in a post-COVID-19 era: Sustainable strategies for industry's recovery.’ The results of this study indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic affects travel habits, especially regarding crowds and cleanliness. This situation makes tourism entrepreneurs such as the transportation, accommodation, and catering sectors have to improve hygiene conditions to restore their business (Orindaru *et al.*, 2021).

Second, the research entitled ‘Post-pandemic recovery: A case of domestic tourism in Akaroa, South Island, New Zealand’ shows that during the pandemic there was a gradual shift from cruising tourism to domestic tourism (Hussein & Fuste-Forne, 2021). The tourism recovery strategy cannot be separated from local potential, including local tourists. Therefore, stakeholders should focus on quality rather than increasing the quantity of local tourism. Nature-based resources and outdoor activities are expected to be important ingredients for the future of sustainable tourism. *Third*, the research entitled ‘Canggu, Bali is a basecamp for digital nomad? Identification of tourism products based 4A (attraction, amenity, accessibility, and ancillary.’ The results of this study indicate that from the aspect of attractions and amenities, Canggu has fulfilled very well. However, from the aspect of accessibility and ancillary, Canggu is still lacking. Therefore, a policy for the development of Canggu Village towards digital-based nomadic tourism is needed (Prabawati, 2020).

If we look closely, the three studies above have provided various strategies for the recovery and development of the tourism industry after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, research that specifically examines the use of digital nomad trend opportunities as a tourism recovery strategy is still very limited, namely in Bali which is very close to Hindu religious tourism. In other words, there has been no research investigating the recovery strategy of the Islamic religious tourism industry based on digital nomad trends as will be done in this research. Based on this fact, the novelty of this research becomes clear.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious Tourism

Traveling is the hobby of many people in this world, so tourism continues to grow. Tourism is a journey from one place to another, temporarily in nature, carried out by individuals or groups, to seek and get happiness from the social, cultural, and natural dimensions (Spillane, 1987). Indonesia is a country that is very rich in tourism potential. Even now, the Indonesian tourism industry has become one of the leading sectors that contribute to the largest national income. Indonesia is also known as a religious nation where the majority of the population embraces Islam. In general, Indonesian people view religion as important and the level of religious practice is also very high (Kusuma & Octastefani, 2020). These facts open opportunities for the development of the religious tourism industry.

Actually, religious tourism is not something new in the Indonesian tourism industry, considering that there have been Walisongo pilgrimage activities since time immemorial. As stated by Widagdo and Rokhlinasari (2017) that interpreting religious tourism is an activity that is more directed toward pilgrimage tourism. However, in the post-modern era, the terminology is broader, not just visiting graves and visiting mosques. However, in some countries the terminology of religious tourism or sharia tourism uses terms such as Islamic tourism, halal tourism, halal travel, or as a Muslim friendly destination. What needs to be underlined, basically religious tourism should have a deep meaning that can be used as a lesson, remembering the Oneness of God, and aims to invite people to goodness.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the religious tourism industry could have had a significant socioeconomic impact on business actors and the surrounding community (Nasir *et al.*, 2022). The existence of religious tourism helps to create jobs and strengthen community businesses so that they can improve their welfare. Religious tourism also increases the number of MSMEs, reduces unemployment, and opens new job opportunities around tourist areas. From this explanation, it can be imagined how religious tourism destinations are so crowded by tourists. However, the situation changed drastically when the pandemic hit. People tend to avoid crowded places and of course, have a negative impact on decreasing visitors and people's income. Therefore, tourism actors need to find a breakthrough so that tourism does not really die, one of which is the application of digital nomads.

Digital Nomads

Whether we realize it or not, the pandemic has actually made people more familiar with digital technology. Therefore, the development of information technology today has a great influence on the world tourism industry, including Indonesia. Technological advances are not only used by the tourism industry to improve services to tourists, but tourists can also use technology to increase the effectiveness and productivity of their work by enjoying tourist destinations (Wiranatha *et al.*, 2020). The massive pace of the digital world has made the digital nomad trend more and more developed lately. The progressive digital world through the internet provides many job opportunities that can be done anywhere and anytime, including working from tourist destinations. If managed properly, this trend can become an ecosystem for the digital industry and tourism (Mulyana *et al.*, 2020).

Digital Nomads are people who use technology to work, earn a living, and live a nomadic or nomadic life. A digital nomad can live on the move while working online only with an internet connection and electronic devices. A digital nomad is a condition where a person can work without being bound by time and place. Not only changing places of work, but digital nomads also give us the opportunity to work while on vacation. According to Pieter Levels, a digital nomad in determining a destination will consider several aspects, such as: how the effect of moving time, taxes, daily living costs, internet connection, security, weather, and tourist attractions (Chandra & Hadiwono, 2021).

Digital nomads are also a symbol of a new lifestyle where everyone is freed from the limitations of time and place in the hustle and bustle of work supported by advances in technology and the internet (Makimoto, 2013). Basically, digital nomads have something in common with other tourists, namely coming to enjoy tourist attractions. The difference lies in how they do and complete their work at the tourist site. So relevant stakeholders must prepare co-working spaces, adequate internet services, and other supporting infrastructure. In the new normal period, digital nomads are one of the solutions that can be taken to generate tourism. In this study, the potential application of digital nomads in Kudus as a strategy to accelerate Islamic religious tourism recovery in the post-pandemic will be analyzed using SWOT. SWOT analysis is one of the most popular models for analyzing business strategic management (Namugenyi *et al.*, 2019).

Strategic Management

Strategic means the art and science of planning and directing (Prawirosentono & Primasari, 2014). In this case, strategy is understood not only as a way to achieve goals but also includes the determination of various goals themselves. Strategy is also understood as a pattern of both planned strategies – intended strategy and deliberate strategy – as well as strategies that were not originally intended by institutions – emerging strategy – but become strategies that are considered and even chosen by institutions to be implemented. Strategic management becomes a series of decision processes with managerial actions resulting from the process of formulating and implementing plans with the aim of achieving competitive advantage (Sampurno, 2013). From some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that a strategic action is

prepared by taking into account various aspects with the aim of the action being well implemented in the organization.

In analyzing the strategy, this study uses the strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) model to assess the needs and suitability of the strategy. According to Pearce and Robinson, SWOT analysis is a well-known historical technique where managers create a quick general picture of the company's strategic situation (Gürel, 2017). This analysis is based on the fact that an effective strategy is derived from a good alignment between the company's internal resources (strengths and weaknesses) with external or external situations (opportunities and threats). This SWOT can be used as a model in analyzing a profit-oriented and non-profit organization with the main objective of knowing the state of the organization more comprehensively (Serpa *et al.*, 2020). SWOT analysis makes it easier for strategic managers to determine the right strategic policies for their companies. Therefore, the authors take the position that SWOT is the right analytical tool to assess the potential of digital nomads as a strategy to accelerate the recovery of Islamic religious tourism in Kudus Regency.

METHOD

This research on the potential of digital nomads in the Kudus Regency uses a qualitative type and a descriptive approach. Kudus Regency was chosen as the research location because of the large number of Islamic religious tourism objects. The number of religious tourism objects and their supporting facilities indicates the potential of digital nomads in the Kudus Regency. The duration of this research was conducted from April to August 2022 or five months. To obtain holistic research results, this study presents data collected through observation, interviews, and focus group discussions. Regarding post-pandemic situations, the consequences of observation and interview studies need to be addressed in terms of the possible harm to the subject as well as the expected benefits of participating in the research (Qu & Dumay, 2011; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

Observations were made on pilgrimage activities and other related activities in Kudus Regency during the post-pandemic new normal adaptation. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with tourists and tourism business actors. The focus group discussion was conducted with experts and academics in the field of tourism management. The author also extracts secondary data such as related documents, books, journals, academic research, and articles from various mass media that have relevance to this research. The use of secondary data, data that has been gathered for another purpose but may be suitable for research, is growing in relevance and importance in management research (Ellram & Tate, 2016). All data that has been collected in this research is processed using an interactive model (Miles *et al.*, 2019) starting from data reduction to selecting important information, presenting a series of data systematically, and drawing strong conclusions.

RESULT

Kudus is a unique regency located on the northeast coast of Central Java Province between Semarang City and Surabaya City. Kudus Regency is bordered by Pati Regency

in the east, Grobogan and Demak Regencies in the south, and Jepara Regency in the west. So far, Kudus has been recognized from two perspectives. Kudus Regency is called the city of *kretek* because of the existence of one of the largest cigarette companies in Indonesia. Upon entering the Kudus area in Central Java, visitors will be greeted by a view of the *kretek* bridge which has now become one of the city's icons. In addition, visitors will also be treated to beautiful views of a number of buildings built by the largest national cigarette company. Kudus Regency is also known as the city of *santri* or even Jerusalem van Java. This title is given by the public because Kudus Regency is known as a *pesantren* area and has a very large potential for religious tourism. This is closely related to the history of the development of Islam in Java, which is centered in this region. Miller (2000) suggests that the main attraction of a tourist attraction to visit is a tourist attraction. Tourist attractions are based on natural, cultural, ethnic, or entertainment resources that have certain differences. To see the potential of Kudus as a tourism development area based on digital nomads, this study will display the results of research with four components of a tourism product consisting of attraction, accessibility, amenity, and ancillary (Boniface *et al.*, 2016).

First, let's start with attraction. Attraction is a component of a tourist destination that can attract tourists to come. Some things that can attract tourists to visit are such as natural scenery, cultural diversity, or man-made such as events or recreation areas. In the digital nomad concept, when tourists come to Kudus, they do not only travel but also work. In between working online, tourists will take their time to enjoy the environment around them. Unlike tourists in general who are very time-bound, digital nomad tourists have more free time where they usually will live in a place for a relatively long time for tourists, for example, one month. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are many types of work that can be done online, so the chances of the presence of digital nomad tourists are even greater. This long duration allows them to explore various tourist destinations even with health protocols and various restrictions. In this case, there is no need to doubt the religious tourism attractions of the Kudus Regency. Let's mention the top religious' tourism in Kudus, namely the Tower of the Kudus Mosque, the Tomb of Sunan Kudus, the Tomb of Sunan Muria, the Tomb of Sheikh Syadzali, the Three Taste Water of Sheikh Syadzali, Langgar Bubrah, and the Gusjigang Museum. In addition to the destinations mentioned above, there are many more religious tourism objects available in Kudus. So many that it cannot be mentioned one by one. This is in accordance with what the author stated that the need for digital nomad tourism in the post-COVID-19 pandemic is not just traveling while working, but also as an effort to get closer to God, or a form of gratitude for having been given safety during a pandemic that has swallowed up a lot of fatal victims. From the description above, it can be seen that the list of religious tourism in Kudus has fulfilled the element of attraction.

Second, accessibility. This is closely related to the availability of transportation facilities and infrastructure to get to and leave a tourist destination such as roads, modes of transportation, stations, ports, airports, and others. In the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, this second aspect can be said to be quite complicated because of the many social restrictions. In addition to private vehicles, there are several public transportation options to Kudus, including trains, planes, and buses. The train is one of the public's

main choices of transportation. To get to Kudus, the journey cannot be completely done by train, because Kudus does not have a rail network, so trains do not cross this area. So, tourists must stop and get off at the Semarang Tawang railway station first and then continue with the Damri bus which goes to Kudus with a trip duration of about two hours. Just like using the train, if tourists want to go to Kudus by plane, then there are no direct flights to Kudus. Tourists must land at Ahmad Yani Airport, Semarang. From the airport, tourists can use a taxi to go to Kudus with a journey length of 61 kilometers. With the two modes of transportation above, it can be said that Semarang is the initial gateway to Kudus. The only mass transportation that can take tourists directly to Kudus is the Bus. In Kudus Regency there is a Jati Bus Station which is a destination for various bus routes. But the problem is during the pandemic, buses are mass transportation with low health protocols when compared to planes or trains. As a result, many people are worried about the transmission of the virus through the bus mode of transportation. Therefore, in general, this aspect of accessibility still needs improvement in the future.

Third, amenities. This third aspect relates to the availability of supporting accommodation facilities such as lodging, provision of consumption, souvenirs, travel agents, as well as guides, and tourist information centers. Because this research discusses digital nomads, the accommodation that will be the focus of the discussion is lodging. Lodging service providers can also carry out other functions of accommodation such as providing food, souvenirs, guides, and information centers. As a tourist destination, Kudus Regency has quite a variety of lodging accommodations. According to data from the Central Java Province Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2021, it is stated that the number of lodging service providers in Kudus has fluctuated when compared between before and after the pandemic, some have increased, and some have decreased. Before the pandemic, there were no one- and two-star hotels, but after the pandemic, three one-star hotels and three two-star hotels emerged. Meanwhile, three-star hotels have stagnated because both before and after the pandemic there was only one hotel. Problems occur in four and five-star hotels. Before the pandemic, there were two four-star hotels and four five-star hotels, but after the pandemic, all four and five-star hotels closed operations. Meanwhile, the number of non-star hotel accommodation options decreased because before the pandemic it was 33 and after the pandemic, it was 24. This condition indicates that in the post-pandemic recovery period, tourists want cheap hotels but still prioritize health and hygiene. Therefore, one- and two-star hotels have increased, three-star hotels have been stagnant, and others have decreased.

Fourth, ancillary. This fourth aspect relates to facilities that support activities while in a tourist destination such as health services, banking, communication networks, and so on. The three services mentioned above – health, banking, and communication – are fundamental in running a digital nomad in the post-pandemic tourism recovery period. Health facilities are very important because the COVID-19 virus has not completely disappeared. Travelers can be exposed at any time and require immediate treatment. According to the Kudus Regency BPS, currently, in Kudus there are 19 public health centers (*Puskemas*), 7 general hospitals, 2 special hospitals, and 40 primary clinics. Thus, there are 69 health facilities available for various actions. Financial or banking facilities are no less important, both to pay for services and to support work.

For this banking service, it can be said that in Kudus it is quite complete. Lots of government and private banks open service offices and ATMs in various strategic places. As for the internet network, which is the most basic capital for digital nomads, the Kudus Regency Government has paid great attention to it. The Kudus Regency Government is committed to realizing its city as a smart city based on information and technology or Smart City. In this city, the cellular operator's 4G network is also very reliable. There are two points that became the destination of the network test that we did. First in the area of the Holy Identity Monument. In this area, XL and Telkomsel provide internet access at above-average speed. XL and Telkomsel download speeds are 38.3 Mbps and 31.4 Mbps, respectively. More than enough for any form of internet connection including video playback on YouTube. Likewise at other test points that are no less strategic. Holy Square. This location is a place to show internet speed by Smartfren and Telkomsel. These two operators are the fastest for download access at 25.4 Mbps and 13.7 Mbps. Even now free internet facilities have entered the villages. The power of data speed for all operators in Kudus is a big capital for going digital.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the research above will be analyzed using a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threats (SWOT) analysis. If you look at the data displayed above, then the strength (S) of the potential application of digital nomads as a strategy to accelerate the religious tourism recovery in post-pandemic is in the attraction and ancillary aspects. The attraction aspect is so strong because it is supported by the existence of so many religious tourist destinations scattered in Kudus. As stated in the introduction section, one of the goals of digital nomad tourists is to get closer to God. The existence of religious tourism objects certainly supports these needs. Destinations in the form of mosques, graves of preachers, or religious museums will become favorite places for digital nomad tourists to spend time outside of their flexible working hours. The mosques and places mentioned above will give peace and a feeling of closeness to the creator, especially at a time when the number of human deaths is so high due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ancillary is also very strong in Kudus. With a large number of health facilities, banking, and internet channels, tourists are not worried about their daily lives. Sufficient health facilities will give peace to digital nomad tourists that at any time they feel their health condition is not fit, then they can immediately get help. The existence of banking services complete with ATMs in various places provides financial flexibility to digital nomad tourists both to pay for the services they access and for business purposes. Then with a smooth and stable internet, digital nomad tourists will be calm in carrying out their work online so they can spend more time in Kudus.

The weakness (W) of the potential application of digital nomads in Kudus as a strategy to accelerate the religious tourism recovery in post-pandemic is in the accessibility aspect. From the presentation of the data above, it can be seen that the only mass public transportation to Kudus is the bus. Trains and planes only reach Semarang and then tourists have to change to other modes of transportation. In this condition, the convenience of digital nomad tourists who prioritize health and safety can be reduced because buses tend to be less careful in carrying out health protocols when compared to

trains and planes. Indeed, digital nomad tourists can use taxis because they don't want to use vehicles with a large number of passengers, but this choice will involve high travel costs. Mass transportation facilities can hinder the implementation of digital nomads in Kudus. Therefore, in the future, it must be considered how to provide a cheap but still clean and safe mode of transportation for tourists, especially digital nomad tourists who will spend quite a long time in Kudus.

Then the opportunity (O) of the potential application of digital nomads in Kudus as a strategy to accelerate the religious tourism recovery in post-pandemic is in the amenities aspect. With the presence of digital nomad tourists when the situation is not normal, various accommodations such as lodging, food providers, souvenirs, tour guides, and so on will quickly rise. The presence of digital nomad tourists for a long time will re-run the tourism supply chain so that the community's economy will also run again. This opportunity must be used wisely, for example, service providers are willing to compromise by providing competitive prices to tourists. From the display data above, it can be seen that the hotel accommodations desired by tourists in the post-pandemic period are cheap services but still prioritize health and safety. If service providers set such high prices for the reason that they want to get a lot of income and recover their business faster, then this action will actually reduce tourist interest. So, the opportunity should be used with caution and avoid speculation.

While the threat (T) of the potential application of digital nomads in Kudus as a strategy to accelerate the religious tourism recovery in post-pandemic is in the attraction aspect. In addition to being a strength, attraction can turn into a threat. During the pandemic, many tourist destinations in Indonesia were suspended, died, and then failed to rise again. These tourist destinations are then abandoned and no longer attract tourists. This is a serious threat if not noticed. Indeed, destinations such as mosques or preachers' graves will continue to be crowded because of the high level of public interest in religiosity as stated in the introduction. However, for religious tourism sites in the form of museums or the like, it is possible that they will fail if they are not revitalized properly. Therefore, all religious tourism destinations in Kudus must be treated properly so that they remain a strength and do not turn into a threat so that the potential of digital nomads can be utilized as well as possible.

CONCLUSION

Based on the four aspects of tourism products as discussed above, it can be concluded that: *First*, the attraction aspect is very promising because the number of Islamic religious tourism destinations in Kudus Regency is very large and diverse. The existence of these various destinations fits the needs of digital nomad tourists in the post-pandemic recovery period who want to get closer to God and find peace in life. *Second*, the accessibility aspect still needs improvement because the bus is the only mass public transportation option that directly reaches Kudus. If tourists want to go to Kudus by plane or train, then these modes only reach Semarang and tourists still have to change transportation modes to cover the distance to Kudus along 60 km or two hours away. *Third*, the amenities aspect requires adjustments to prices and health protocol standards. Looking at the fluctuations in the number of hotel accommodation providers in Kudus,

it can be said that the preference of tourists looking for lodging is those that offer low prices but still pay attention to health and safety. Therefore, the hotels that many tourists choose are in the middle range, not those that are too expensive or too cheap. *Fourth*, the ancillary aspect is quite promising because health facilities, banking, and internet networks are well available in Kudus Regency. With these three services, digital nomad tourists can travel and work online smoothly in Kudus. When they feel unwell or want to make financial transactions, many facilities are available around them. Thus, if analyzed using SWOT, the results show that attraction and ancillary are elements of strength (S) because they are well available and spread in various corners of Kudus Regency, accessibility is a weakness (W) due to the lack of transportation modes that directly reach Kudus Regency, and amenities becomes an opportunity (O) because if accommodation service providers in Kudus Regency can offer relatively cheap prices accompanied by good health protocols then tourists will welcome it. However, attraction can also turn into a threat (T) if it is not managed properly because many tourist objects died after the pandemic and were unable to rise again. The authors realize that this research has limitations, including: *First*, the situation of social restrictions forces the authors to rely a lot on local partners who are in the location compared to direct observation. *Second*, social restrictions also make interviews and focus group discussions more likely to be conducted online so the authors feel less than optimal in gathering data. *Third*, this research was conducted in a relatively short period of time, so further in-depth research is needed, especially after entering the new normal period of the COVID-19 pandemic by increasing interviews with digital nomad practitioners. From this study, the authors hope to be able to provide practical input to the Government of Kudus Regency in reviving the tourism sector which has declined dramatically due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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