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Optimizing Surakarta (Solo) as a Tourism City Brand to Enhance Community Economic Welfare: An Islamic Economic Perspective

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to analyze the potential of optimizing Surakarta (Solo) as a tourism city icon to enhance community economic welfare from an Islamic economic perspective. Solo is widely recognized for its rich cultural heritage, historical attractions, and Islamic religious destinations, making it a strategic city for the development of sustainable and Sharia-compliant tourism. **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in Islamic economics, particularly the concept of mu'amalah, which emphasizes economic activities that promote social welfare, ethical values, and compliance with Islamic principles. Tourism is viewed not only as an economic sector but also as a means of achieving maslahah (public benefit) for society. **Literature review:** The literature review highlights previous studies on tourism development, regional economic growth, religious tourism, and Sharia tourism, indicating that tourism significantly contributes to employment creation, local income generation, and community empowerment. However, limited studies have specifically examined the optimization of Solo's tourism potential through the lens of Islamic economics. **Method:** This research employs a literature review method by analyzing relevant academic publications, government reports, and tourism-related documents. **Results:** The findings reveal that tourism indicators, including the number of tourist arrivals, average length of stay, hotel occupancy rates, and accommodation availability, play a significant role in supporting regional economic development. Furthermore, Islamic tourism in Solo, such as the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the tombs of Kyai Ageng Henis and Ki Gede Sala, and Langgar Merdeka, possesses substantial potential to attract domestic and international visitors. From a Sharia perspective, tourism activities should adhere to Islamic values, ensuring ethical business practices and social benefits. **Implications:** The study implies that policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and local communities should strengthen the promotion, infrastructure, and management of Sharia-based tourism destinations to maximize their economic impact. **Novelty:** The novelty of this study lies in integrating tourism optimization strategies with Islamic economic principles to enhance community welfare and strengthen Solo's identity as a leading Islamic tourism destination.

Keywords: surakarta (solo), islamic tourism, sharia tourism, economic welfare, islamic economics.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the growing body of literature on tourism development, regional economic growth, and Sharia tourism, several research gaps remain. First, previous studies have predominantly focused on the economic contribution of tourism in general, emphasizing

tourist arrivals, tourism revenue, and employment generation without specifically examining how tourism development can be integrated with Islamic economic principles. Second, studies on Sharia tourism in Indonesia have largely concentrated on major halal tourism destinations such as Aceh, West Nusa Tenggara, and West Sumatra, while limited attention has been given to Surakarta (Solo), despite its strong cultural heritage and emerging Islamic tourism attractions. Third, existing research tends to analyze tourism destinations individually rather than exploring how multiple religious and cultural tourism assets can be optimized collectively to strengthen a city's identity and improve community welfare. Consequently, there remains insufficient understanding of how Solo's tourism resources can be strategically developed as a comprehensive tourism city icon within an Islamic economic framework [1], [2].

The importance of this topic is closely related to the increasing demand for ethical, sustainable, and faith-based tourism among Muslim travelers worldwide. As one of Indonesia's prominent cultural cities, Solo possesses a unique combination of historical, cultural, and Islamic attractions that can support the development of Sharia-compliant tourism. Optimizing these tourism assets is not only expected to increase tourist arrivals but also to generate broader economic benefits through employment creation, business opportunities, tax revenues, and community empowerment. Furthermore, Islamic economics emphasizes the achievement of *maslahah* (public welfare), equitable distribution of benefits, and ethical economic activities. Therefore, examining tourism development from an Islamic economic perspective is important to ensure that economic growth is accompanied by social justice, cultural preservation, and spiritual values. This study seeks to address these gaps by analyzing the potential of optimizing Solo as a tourism city icon through the integration of tourism development strategies and Islamic economic principles. By focusing on the economic and socio-religious dimensions of tourism, this research contributes to the literature on Islamic tourism and provides practical recommendations for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and local communities in promoting sustainable and welfare-oriented tourism development [3], [4].

Indonesia is a country that has various types of diversity, such as biodiversity, culture, race, ethnicity, religion, and language. This diversity is the pride as well as wealth owned by Indonesia. This is because this diversity has the potential and has great attraction for tourists, to encourage and support the development of the tourism creative industry in Indonesia. Tourism is one of the important things and even a need that needs to be met as a result of the development of commerce, industry, and transportation. The ease of doing tourism encourages many people to travel, even in 2022, the interest of the Indonesian population in tourism has increased by 17 percent compared to 2019. Most people, especially the younger generation, do tourism as a form of refreshment in the midst of busy activities. They do this to balance physical and psychological needs [5], [6].

In addition to being just a place for refreshment, tourism has an impact that cannot be underestimated in supporting the local economy, even the country's economy. Tourism contributes to the country's foreign exchange receipts, the added value of gross domestic income (GDP), and labor absorption. In 2019, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stated that 5.0 percent of Indonesia's gross domestic income (GDP) was contributed by the tourism sector. However, it decreased to 2.2 percent due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, Indonesia's tourism is starting to improve and is increasing. This is shown by the increase in the number of foreign tourist visits (foreign tourists) to 508.87% compared to the same period in 2022. To support the development of Indonesia's tourism sector as a whole, each region needs to pay more attention to the development of their respective regional tourism sectors [7], [8], [9].

Foreign tourists generally only know Bali and Jakarta in Indonesia, while other regions in Indonesia are still not widely known. Therefore, Indonesia needs to introduce and promote other regions in Indonesia as foreign tourist destinations. One of the regions in Indonesia that

has the opportunity to become a potential tourism sector is the city of Solo. Solo has an old and unique tradition or culture, so it is very suitable to be used as one of the tourist destinations. This is in accordance with its vision and mission, which is to make tourism one of the efforts in realizing Solo as a cultural city. In addition, Solo City tourism has also been equipped with transportation, health, and residential facilities that support the convenience and comfort of tourists visiting Solo [\[10\]](#), [\[11\]](#).

In addition to the beauty or culture in Solo, religion is also one of the factors that is the reason for tourists to visit Solo, especially Islam. Solo has several Islamic tourist destinations that attract the attention of the public, both local and foreign people. One of the Islamic tours that can be done in Solo City is pilgrimage or visiting several tombs of Islamic figures in Solo City. To support Islamic tourism, the city of Solo also provides hotels or lodgings with sharia or halal concepts. This is done to make it easier and more comfortable for Muslim tourists to carry out tourist activities comfortably and in accordance with Islamic law. Even so, Islamic tourism in Solo is still not managed and runs optimally. Therefore, it is important to optimize the city of Solo as a tourist city so that it can attract more Islamic tourists who can support the community's economy, especially from a sharia perspective [\[12\]](#), [\[13\]](#).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist City Concept

A tourist city is a city that has tourism potential and attractions so that it functions as a tourist attraction that is able to support and drive the city's economy. In addition to attractions, tourist cities must also have other supporting factors that support tourism in the region, such as accessibility, facilities, management and regulations, and the enthusiasm of the local community. Evadiani said that tourism is based on three important and mutually sustainable pillars, namely the government, the private sector, and the community. In tourism development, the community is a pillar that is quite difficult to control. This is because not all people have good tourism awareness, while fostering this awareness in the community is not an easy thing to do [\[14\]](#).

The city of Solo is one of the regions in Indonesia with a majority Muslim population and has several Islamic tourist destinations. The concept of Islamic tourism or sharia tourism is one of the tourism concepts that can be developed in the city of Solo. The concept of sharia tourism will provide a guarantee of safety, comfort, and trust for Muslim tourists in the products produced at the tourist attractions visited. To support this, every component of society needs to contribute and take part in making it happen. Mardiah stated that the development of sharia-based tourism has several principles, namely (a) the development of sharia-based tourism facilities is carried out on a small or large scale and needs to be accompanied by services inside and outside tourist sites, (b) the development of sharia-based facilities and services is owned and developed jointly by the local community, and (c) sharia-based tourism is developed based on the nature or culture of religion that inherent in the environment of the tourist attraction [\[15\]](#), [\[16\]](#).

Economic improvement through tourism in a sharia perspective

Indonesian tourism is one of the most influential sectors in supporting the country's economy. Indonesia has experienced significant GDP growth from the tourism sector and made the sector the second largest contributor to national GDP after oil and gas. Tourism will affect the economic growth of regions that are aware of their tourism potential. To realize this, tourism development needs to get support and cooperation from the surrounding community so that everyone has the same opportunity to participate in tourism that will advance the Joint Economy [\[17\]](#), [\[18\]](#), [\[19\]](#).

The city of Solo is one of the cities with tourism potential that can support the community's economy. The majority of Solo City residents who are Muslims encourage tourism development that supports a sharia-based or Islamic-based economy. Economic activities from a sharia perspective encourage residents to allocate tourism in accordance with the principles and values that exist in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Faraby said that the tourism sector is one of the seven sharia-based economic sectors that carry the halal concept. Tourism activities are also allowed in Islam as an effort to reflect on the creation of Allah SWT [\[20\]](#), [\[21\]](#), [\[22\]](#).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach to examine the optimization of Surakarta (Solo) as a tourism city icon for enhancing community economic welfare from an Islamic economic perspective. A literature review was selected because it enables a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between tourism development, regional economic growth, and Sharia-based tourism practices through the synthesis of existing academic and institutional sources. The study seeks to identify the economic contributions of tourism in Solo and explore how Islamic economic principles can support the sustainable development of tourism destinations [\[23\]](#), [\[24\]](#), [\[25\]](#).

The data used in this research consist entirely of secondary data collected from a wide range of relevant sources. These sources include scholarly journal articles, books, conference proceedings, government publications, tourism reports, statistical databases, and official documents related to tourism development, regional economic performance, and Islamic tourism. Particular attention was given to publications discussing tourism indicators, such as tourist arrivals, average length of stay, hotel occupancy rates, accommodation capacity, and the contribution of tourism to local economic welfare. In addition, literature concerning Islamic economics, Sharia tourism, and religious tourism was reviewed to establish the conceptual foundation of the study [\[26\]](#).

The data collection process was conducted through a systematic search of academic databases and institutional repositories using keywords such as “Surakarta tourism,” “Solo tourism development,” “Islamic tourism,” “Sharia tourism,” “regional economic welfare,” “religious tourism,” and “Islamic economics.” Relevant publications were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives, credibility, and contribution to understanding the economic and Islamic dimensions of tourism development. Sources that provided empirical evidence, theoretical insights, or policy recommendations related to tourism optimization were prioritized [\[27\]](#).

Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive qualitative method. The collected literature was carefully examined, categorized, and interpreted to identify recurring themes, patterns, and findings related to tourism development and economic welfare. The analysis focused on four main dimensions: (1) the role of tourism in supporting local economic growth; (2) the contribution of tourism indicators, including tourist arrivals, average length of stay, hotel occupancy rates, and accommodation facilities; (3) the development potential of Islamic tourism destinations in Surakarta; and (4) the application of Islamic economic principles in tourism management and promotion [\[28\]](#).

To enhance the validity of the findings, the study employed source triangulation by comparing information from various academic publications, government reports, and tourism statistics. This process helped ensure consistency and reliability in the interpretation of data. The findings were then synthesized and presented descriptively to explain how the optimization of cultural and Islamic tourism attractions—such as the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the tombs of Kyai Ageng Henis and Ki Gede Sala, and Langgar Merdeka—can contribute to community economic welfare while remaining aligned with Islamic values and Sharia principles. Through this methodological approach, the study provides a

comprehensive understanding of tourism optimization strategies that can strengthen Solo's position as a leading tourism city and Islamic tourism destination [29].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourism has a strong connection in supporting the country's economy. The development of tourism in developing countries, especially Indonesia, focuses on increasing the number of tourist visits over time. This situation is certainly very influential and plays an important role in increasing tourism income and gross domestic product (GDP). Improving the economy through tourism needs to be considered and carried out by all regions in Indonesia. This is important so that each region has its own tourism sector in accordance with the characteristics and culture of the region. Thus, each region will have the same opportunity to be able to improve the economy from the the tourism sector. One of the regions in Indonesia that has tourism potential to support the community's economy is the city of Solo [30],[31],[32].

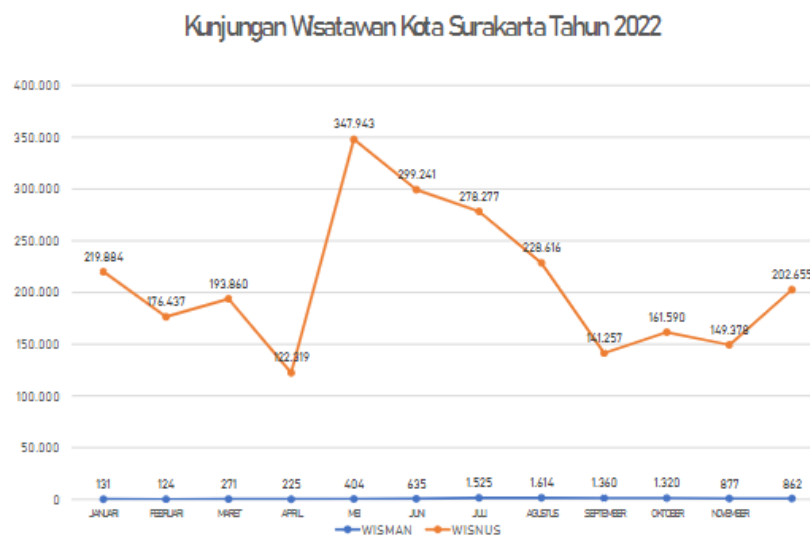


Figure 1. Surakarta City Tourist Visits in 2022

The city of Surakarta or better known as the city of Solo has a tourism sector that is not only visited by Indonesian tourists (wisnus), but also foreign tourists (foreign tourists). In Figure 1 above, it can be seen that the number of Indonesian tourists is much more than foreign tourists. The data above covers all tourist visits in various tourist destinations in the city of Solo. The number of tourists who come has a positive impact on the economy of Solo City. The more tourists who visit, the more money will automatically be spent to meet their needs while in Solo. This will certainly have an impact on increasing tourism industry revenue along with tax and levy revenue [33].

In addition, the average length of stay (RLM), room occupancy rate (TPK), and accommodation provided by the City of Solo also play a role and contribute to the community's economy. The longer tourists stay in hotels, both star and non-star, the greater the profits obtained by the hotel or inn. Thus, the taxes that will be paid to the regions will also be larger. Furthermore, hotels equipped with good accommodations near tourist attractions also affect the economy of the area. The better the accommodation provided by the hotel, the higher the room occupancy rate. This will certainly provide additional regional revenue through taxes, including income tax, hotel tax, and restaurant tax. Data on RLM, TPM, and accommodation in Solo City can be seen in the following Table 1:

Table 1. RLM, TPK, and Accommodation Data for Surakarta City in 2022

Moon	RLM		TPK	Accommodation
	Foreigner	Domestik		
January	1,69	1,25	46,95%	131.222
February	1,88	1,29	46,15%	116.309
March	1,83	1,25	46,45%	126.615
April	1,66	1,18	37,08%	92.564
May	3,05	1,22	61,75%	134.597
June	2,46	1,26	57,56%	122.625
July	2,69	1,33	62,93%	133.518
August	4,98	1,63	54,82%	116.407
September	3,11	1,34	49,86%	115.042
October	2,27	1,41	55,30%	133.931
November	2,47	1,60	59,00%	123.406
December	2,01	1,42	62,58%	167.166
Average	2,51	1,35	53,37%	126.116,8

From a sharia perspective, tourism is included in one of the aspects of mu'amalah that concerns social, economic, and socio-cultural life. Meanwhile, tourism in Islam can be interpreted as an effort by Muslims to take I'tibar or lessons from what has been observed during travel or tourism. Arifin said that tourism according to the Qur'an and Sunnah has several goals, namely (a) Getting to know the creator and increasing spiritual values, (b) Opening business opportunities to empower regional potential, (c) Adding insight and knowledge, (d) Providing peace of mind and cleanliness of heart. The relationship between tourism and the economy from a sharia perspective is defined as tourism that is able to support the economy based on Islamic sharia with three main pillars, namely property ownership, the concept of asset management and utilization, and the concept of distribution. In order to support the creation of the city of Solo as a tourist city, it is important to optimize, plan, and sustain the sustainable development of several destinations or tourist attractions, especially religious tourism in the area. This is done to support the economy of the people of Solo City with a sharia perspective. Here are some tourist destinations in the city of Solo with a religious/Islamic concept [34], [35].

Sheikh Zayed Mosque

The Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Solo is a replica of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The name of this mosque is based on the name of a national figure and the founder of the United Arab Emirates, namely Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. This mosque was built with a concept inspired by the Qur'an verse 26, which reads "O humans, I have indeed created you from the types of men and women, tribes, and nations so that you may know each other. This mosque has eight elements of Islamic architecture, namely symmetrical balance, geometric shapes, decorative façades, repetitive compositions, floral ornaments, geometric ornaments, handmade, natural colors, and patterned plaster" [36], [37].



Figure 1. Sheikh Zayed Solo Mosque

The Sheikh Zayed Mosque can be used as one of the tourist destinations in the city of Solo. The development of this mosque as a tourist destination is based on the fact that the mosque has historical value and as an effort to introduce Islamic civilization to the community and tourists. The beauty and splendor of the Sheikh Zayed mosque in Solo City is a great attraction for tourists, especially domestic tourists. This situation has a positive impact on the economic development of the city of Solo, especially supported by the varied culinary tourism around the mosque. Even so, community settlements around the mosque have the potential to be evicted for the widening of the mosque area. Therefore, to optimize mosque tourism, it is necessary to carry out more careful and structured planning so that the community does not feel disadvantaged but remains on the goal of developing tourism at the Sheikh Zayed Mosque [38], [39].

Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Kyai Ageng Henis and Ki Gede Sala

Pilgrimage is one of the religious tourism destinations that is often carried out by Muslim tourists. Kyai Ageng Henis is a scholar figure who spread Islam in Solo, so his tomb is included in cultural heritage sites and religious tourism that should be preserved. Research conducted by Ramadhanie stated that the promotion of Kyai Ageng Henis Tomb tourism was carried out in several ways, namely word-of-mouth promotions, tour packages, social media, and events. The development of Kyai Ageng Henis tomb tourism is supported by the enthusiasm of the government and the community in promoting the tourism according to their respective capacities. In addition, the strategic location of the tomb makes it easy for tourists to visit it. In addition, development efforts also experience several obstacles, such as (a) Road access can only be passed by two-wheeled vehicles, (b) Inadequate parking lots, (c) Tourism that is not known to tourists. To be able to optimize the role and tourism of Kyai Ageng Henis' tomb, it is important to carry out planned and structured promotions so that they can reach more tourists. In addition, road facilities and parking lots also need to be improved to support the development of tourism [40], [41].



Figure 2. Tomb of Kyai Ageng Henis

In addition to Kyai Ageng Henis' tomb in Laweyan, which can be used as a place of pilgrimage, there is Ki Gede Sala's tomb in the Surakarta Kasunanan Palace Complex. Ki Gede Sala was the owner of the land which was later used as a place to establish the Surakarta Palace. In addition, Kyai Sala is an elder in Sala Village, which is a village located on the coast of Bengawan Solo. Ki Gede Sala's tomb is located near the interior of Mlayakusuman. In the cemetery complex, there are three tombs, namely the tombs of Ki Gede Sala, Kyai Carang, and Nyai Sumedang, where the three of them were classmates. Visiting and making a pilgrimage to the tomb of Ki Gede Sala will give tourists insight into the history of the place. To be able to maximize the role of tourism in introducing history, it is important to be equipped with supporting facilities that can support tourists to learn about history [42], [43].



Figure 3. Makam Ki Gede Sala

Violating Freedom

Merdeka Langgar is the oldest langgar in the city of Solo (Haryono et al., 2019). This Langgar was originally a shop owned by residents of Chinese descent who were used as a place to buy and sell marijuana. The building was then bought by Muslims who converted it into a mosque. This building is also equipped with decorations in the form of Arabic ornaments decorating the langgar building. It is said that the name Merdeka is also a trust from President Soekarno. Furthermore, the Merdeka violation is designated as a cultural heritage building that prohibits everyone from altering or damaging the building. To be able to heed the prohibition, it is important to make rules in print form that are easily accessible to tourists to make it easier for them to comply with the existing rules [44]. In addition, promotion by the government and the community is important to continue to develop tourism in the future.



Figure 4. Langgar Merdeka

The findings indicate that tourism plays a crucial role in supporting regional economic development and improving community welfare. In developing countries such as Indonesia, tourism has become one of the strategic sectors for stimulating economic growth through increased tourist arrivals, higher consumption expenditures, and expanded employment opportunities. Consequently, many regions have prioritized tourism development as a means

of enhancing local revenue and strengthening their economic competitiveness. Surakarta (Solo) is one of the cities that possesses significant tourism potential due to its rich cultural heritage, historical attractions, and Islamic religious destinations. Tourism statistics demonstrate the importance of the sector for Solo's economy. Tourist arrivals consist of both domestic and international visitors, although domestic tourists represent the largest proportion of visitors. The increasing number of tourist arrivals contributes directly to local economic activities because tourists spend money on accommodation, transportation, food and beverages, souvenirs, and other tourism-related services. This circulation of expenditure creates multiplier effects that benefit local businesses, small and medium enterprises, and government revenue through taxes and tourism levies. Therefore, increasing tourist arrivals remains an important strategy for enhancing regional economic performance [45].

In addition to tourist arrivals, tourism performance can also be assessed through indicators such as the Average Length of Stay (ALS), Room Occupancy Rate (ROR), and accommodation capacity. The data show that the average length of stay for foreign tourists was higher than that of domestic tourists, indicating a greater economic contribution from international visitors. Likewise, room occupancy rates remained relatively stable throughout the year, with an annual average exceeding 50 percent. Higher occupancy rates generate higher income for hotels and related businesses, which subsequently contribute to regional tax revenues, including hotel taxes, restaurant taxes, and income taxes. Accommodation availability also reflects the city's readiness to support tourism activities. Adequate accommodation facilities encourage tourists to extend their stay and increase their spending, thereby generating broader economic benefits for the local community. From the perspective of Islamic economics, tourism is categorized as part of *mu'amalah*, encompassing social, cultural, and economic interactions that should be conducted according to Islamic principles. Tourism in Islam is not solely intended for recreation but also serves educational, spiritual, and socio-economic purposes. Islamic teachings encourage travel as a means of appreciating Allah's creation, gaining knowledge, strengthening faith, and reflecting upon historical and cultural heritage. Consequently, tourism development should promote both economic prosperity and moral values while ensuring social justice and public welfare (*maslahah*) [46].

Several religious tourism destinations in Solo have strong potential to support Sharia-based tourism development. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque serves as one of the city's most prominent Islamic landmarks. Its architectural beauty, historical significance, and spiritual atmosphere attract large numbers of visitors and create economic opportunities for surrounding businesses, particularly in the culinary and service sectors. However, future development should carefully consider community interests to ensure that tourism expansion does not negatively affect residents [47], [48].

Religious tourism can also be strengthened through pilgrimage destinations such as the tombs of Kyai Ageng Henis and Ki Gede Sala. These sites provide visitors with opportunities to learn about the history of Islamic propagation in Solo while fostering spiritual reflection. Nevertheless, limited accessibility, inadequate parking facilities, and insufficient promotion remain challenges that need to be addressed. Similarly, Langgar Merdeka possesses significant historical and cultural value as one of the oldest Islamic heritage sites in Solo. Enhanced promotion, preservation efforts, and visitor education programs are necessary to maximize its tourism potential. Overall, optimizing these Islamic tourism destinations through improved infrastructure, strategic promotion, and sustainable management can strengthen Solo's position as a leading Islamic tourism city while simultaneously enhancing community economic welfare in accordance with Islamic economic principles [49], [50].

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that tourism has become one of the most important sectors supporting regional economic development in Surakarta (Solo). The steady growth of domestic and international tourist arrivals contributes directly to local income through expenditures on accommodation, transportation, culinary services, handicrafts, and other tourism-related activities. This finding supports the broader understanding that tourism generates a multiplier effect by stimulating small and medium enterprises, increasing employment opportunities, and strengthening regional tax revenues. Consequently, tourism should not be viewed merely as a recreational industry but also as a strategic instrument for sustainable economic development and community welfare.

The tourism indicators analyzed in this study, including tourist arrivals, Average Length of Stay (ALS), Room Occupancy Rate (ROR), and accommodation capacity, collectively demonstrate the economic performance of Solo's tourism sector. The relatively high hotel occupancy rate and increasing accommodation capacity indicate that the city possesses adequate tourism infrastructure to support visitor growth. Furthermore, the longer average stay of international tourists suggests greater economic value because extended visits generally increase tourist expenditures on local products and services. Therefore, tourism development policies should not only focus on attracting larger numbers of visitors but also encourage longer stays through integrated tourism packages, cultural festivals, and religious tourism experiences. From the perspective of Islamic economics, tourism represents an important component of *mu'amalah*, where economic activities should generate prosperity while maintaining ethical values, justice, and public benefit (*maslahah*). Islamic tourism is not limited to religious worship but also includes educational, historical, and cultural experiences that strengthen spiritual awareness. Therefore, optimizing Solo's tourism should integrate economic objectives with Islamic values, ensuring that tourism development preserves cultural heritage, respects local communities, and promotes socially responsible business practices. Such an approach aligns with the objectives of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, particularly the protection of religion, wealth, intellect, and social welfare.

The study also identifies significant opportunities for strengthening Islamic tourism through destinations such as the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the tombs of Kyai Ageng Henis and Ki Gede Sala, and Langgar Merdeka. These sites possess historical, architectural, and spiritual significance capable of attracting both domestic and international Muslim travelers. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including limited accessibility, insufficient promotion, inadequate supporting facilities, and the need for professional destination management. Addressing these issues through coordinated government policies, private sector investment, community participation, and digital tourism promotion would significantly enhance Solo's competitiveness as a leading Islamic tourism destination. Overall, the discussion confirms that optimizing Surakarta as a tourism city brand requires an integrated strategy combining infrastructure improvement, destination preservation, cultural promotion, and Sharia-compliant tourism management. Such a strategy not only increases tourism competitiveness but also creates inclusive economic opportunities, strengthens local identity, preserves Islamic cultural heritage, and contributes to sustainable community economic welfare in accordance with Islamic economic principles.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Surakarta (Solo) possesses significant tourism potential that can be further optimized to improve community economic welfare, particularly through the development of Sharia-based tourism. The city's rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and Islamic religious attractions create a distinctive tourism identity that differentiates Solo from many other destinations in Indonesia. From an Islamic perspective, tourism is not merely a recreational activity but also a form of *mu'amalah* that encourages people to appreciate the beauty of creation, strengthen spiritual values, and express gratitude to Allah

SWT. Therefore, the development of tourism in Solo can be aligned with both economic objectives and Islamic ethical principles. The findings demonstrate that tourism contributes substantially to regional economic development. Indicators such as tourist arrivals, average length of stay, hotel occupancy rates, and the availability of accommodation have a direct influence on local economic activity. The tourism sector generates employment opportunities, stimulates the growth of small and medium enterprises, and increases government revenue through income taxes, hotel taxes, restaurant taxes, and other tourism-related levies. As a result, tourism serves as an important economic driver that supports the welfare of local communities. In the context of Islamic economics, the development of Sharia tourism in Solo offers additional opportunities for sustainable and ethical economic growth. Destinations such as the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the tombs of Kyai Ageng Henis and Ki Gede Sala, and Langgar Merdeka have the potential to attract both domestic and international Muslim travelers seeking religious and cultural experiences. However, these destinations require continuous optimization through improved infrastructure, better accessibility, effective promotion, and professional management in order to increase their competitiveness and attractiveness. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that tourism development should not focus solely on increasing visitor numbers but also on ensuring social benefits, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and adherence to Islamic values. Collaboration among local government, tourism stakeholders, religious institutions, and the community is essential to create an integrated tourism ecosystem that supports long-term welfare. Overall, the optimization of Solo as a tourism city icon from an Islamic economic perspective has strong potential to enhance community welfare while preserving the city's cultural and religious identity. By combining tourism development with Sharia principles, Solo can strengthen its position as a leading Islamic tourism destination in Indonesia and contribute to inclusive, sustainable, and ethically grounded economic development for the benefit of present and future generations.

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Author Contribution

Muhammad Pradipta Handika Putra conducted the research, analyzed data, and drafted the manuscript. Muthoifin supervised the study, refined the methodology, reviewed the manuscript, approved the final version, and shared responsibility for publication.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that no financial, institutional, professional, or personal conflicts of interest influenced the research, analysis, interpretation, writing, or publication of this manuscript. Both authors approved the final version.

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