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Halal Tourism as a Sharia-Based Economic System: Legal, Business, and Sustainability Dynamics at Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to examine halal tourism in Solo Raya as a Sharia-based economic system, focusing on the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque as a strategic hub for religious tourism. It specifically analyzes the legal, business, and sustainability dynamics shaping the development of halal tourism in the region. **Theoretical framework:** This research employs an integrated framework of Sharia economic systems, Islamic legal governance, and sustainable development, emphasizing the role of Islamic principles (maqāṣid al-sharī'ah) in guiding economic activities, ensuring compliance, and promoting socio-economic welfare. **Literature review:** Prior studies highlight halal tourism as a growing sector driven by halal certification, Sharia compliance, and religious destinations. However, gaps remain in the integration of legal frameworks, business practices, and sustainability, particularly in local contexts where regulatory support and public literacy are still limited. **Method:** This study uses a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Informants include business actors, visitors, local authorities, and stakeholders involved in halal tourism activities surrounding the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. **Results:** The findings reveal that the mosque functions as a catalyst for a Sharia-based economic ecosystem, stimulating halal culinary industries, Islamic MSMEs, and faith-based tourism services. Nevertheless, critical challenges persist, including weak halal standardization, limited regulatory frameworks, and low public literacy regarding Sharia compliance and halal tourism practices. **Implications:** The study underscores the importance of strengthening Sharia economic governance through collaboration between government institutions, business actors, and halal certification bodies to ensure legal compliance, economic inclusivity, and sustainable development aligned with the SDGs. **Novelty:** This research contributes by conceptualizing halal tourism as an integrated Sharia-based economic system and highlighting the intersection of legal governance, business practices, and sustainability dynamics, with the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque serving as a central driver in a local Indonesian context.

Keywords: halal tourism, sharia-based economic system, islamic legal governance, sdgs, sheikh zayed mosque.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of halal tourism has positioned it as one of the most dynamic sectors within the global Islamic economy. In Indonesia, this development is particularly evident in emerging religious destinations such as the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Solo Raya, which has quickly become a prominent attraction for both domestic and international visitors. Beyond its architectural and spiritual appeal, the mosque represents a strategic node for economic activities rooted in Islamic values, including halal culinary services, Muslim-friendly tourism facilities, and the expansion of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). This transformation signals a shift from conventional tourism toward a more integrated model that aligns with Sharia principles and sustainable development objectives [1].

Despite the increasing attention to halal tourism, existing studies tend to approach the topic from fragmented perspectives. Much of the literature focuses on tourism marketing, visitor satisfaction, or destination branding, often neglecting the deeper structural dimensions of halal tourism as a Sharia-based economic system. In particular, limited scholarly work examines how Islamic legal frameworks (*fiqh mu'āmalāt*) shape business practices, regulate halal standards, and ensure ethical compliance in tourism ecosystems. Furthermore, the intersection between legal governance, business dynamics, and sustainability remains underexplored, especially in local contexts where regulatory instruments and institutional coordination are still evolving [2].

Another critical gap lies in the insufficient integration of sustainability discourse within halal tourism research. While the concept is frequently associated with economic growth and religious compliance, its alignment with broader sustainable development goals—such as social inclusion, cultural preservation, and community empowerment—has not been adequately theorized or empirically demonstrated. In many cases, halal tourism initiatives operate without a coherent framework that links Sharia principles with long-term environmental and socio-economic sustainability. This gap is particularly evident in regions like Solo Raya, where the rapid rise of religious tourism has not always been matched by standardized regulations, public literacy, or inclusive economic planning [3].

Therefore, this study is important as it seeks to reconceptualize halal tourism not merely as a sectoral activity, but as a comprehensive Sharia-based economic system that integrates legal, business, and sustainability dimensions. By focusing on the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque as a case study, this research highlights how religious landmarks can function as catalysts for ethical economic transformation while also revealing the regulatory and practical challenges that must be addressed. Ultimately, this study contributes to advancing a more holistic understanding of halal tourism that is normatively grounded, economically viable, and socially sustainable [4].

The development of halal tourism can be started by conducting a thorough analysis of the condition and potential of the tourism component in Solo Raya tourist destinations. These components include tourist attractions, accessibility, amenities, and destination management or institutions. By analyzing the extent to which these aspects meet Sharia principles, such as the availability of halal food, adequate worship facilities, and Muslim-friendly services, a more focused and effective development strategy can be designed to make Solo Raya a superior and competitive halal tourism destination [5].

In addition, Tourism is a strategic sector like other economic sectors, which has a significant impact on the social, economic, and physical aspects of a region. The development of this sector not only increases local economic activity but also contributes to job creation, encourages the growth of MSMEs, and accelerates infrastructure

development. This is in line with SDG8, which emphasizes the importance of inclusive economic growth and the creation of decent jobs for all groups [6].

The tourism sector has an important role in the global economy because it contributes significantly to job creation, increased community income, and sustainable economic growth. Thus, Tourism is considered one of the main sources for the contribution of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), especially in developing countries that have cultural and natural wealth as tourism assets. This is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, which emphasize the importance of creating adequate jobs, encouraging entrepreneurship, and achieving inclusive economic growth. The development of a sustainable tourism sector based on local values that not only strengthens the economic structure but also provides wider access for the community to engage in fair and equitable economic development [7].

Sharia tourism, which is generally known as religious tourism, is an activity that is strengthened by various facilities and services according to Sharia regulations. Halal tourism is seen as an innovative approach to developing the tourism sector in Indonesia, while preserving Islamic culture and values. In several countries, there are currently competitions to hold Muslim-friendly and halal tourism. Halal tourism destinations are generally tourist destinations as long as they do not conflict with Sharia values and ethics. Along with the development of the times in the tourism sector as a whole, sharia tourism is increasingly becoming a trend among the public, especially in Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim [8]. The halal industry not only caters to Muslim consumers who consider halal products to be a primary need, but also attracts the attention of non-Muslim consumers thanks to its high quality, cleanliness, and safety standards, making it a widely accepted choice by a wide range of [9].

Local societies tend to imitate novelties that are considered symbols of modernity, thus slowly abandoning their original culture and customs. This triggers a shift in socio-cultural values around tourist destinations. In the context of SDG 8, these changes need to be managed wisely so that economic growth through the tourism sector continues to pay attention to the preservation of local culture and create jobs that support local identity and wisdom [10].

Sharia business in the field of halal tourism is increasingly in demand, especially in Indonesia as a country with a Muslim majority. The increasing demand for tourism services and goods that are by Islam, such as halal accommodation, halal food, and places of worship, creates a huge opportunity. Even in some countries as halal tourist destinations, they need to design strategies to meet the needs of Muslim tourists. This industry is becoming a very promising market. Indonesia has achieved global achievements in halal tourism in recent years, becoming one of the best halal tourism destinations in the world according to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI). This is reflected in the 2019 Mastercard CrescentRating GMTI Report, which predicts there will be 230 million Muslim tourists worldwide by 2026. In line with these predictions, the Global Islamic Economy Report estimates that revenue from the global halal tourism sector will increase from \$177 billion in 2017 to \$274 billion in 2023. In the initial effort to develop sharia tourism in Indonesia, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has designated 12 provinces as sharia tourism destinations, namely: Aceh, West Sumatra, Riau, Lampung, Banten, Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, NTB, and South Sulawesi [11],[12].

The development of halal tourism in the future is considered very potential and promising, along with the increasing need for tourism based on Islamic values. This concept is expected to be an increasingly attractive business opportunity for tourism industry players. This is in line with SDG 8, as halal tourism contributes to the creation of new jobs, encourages entrepreneurship, and supports inclusive and sustainable economic growth [13].

Religious tourism is where people are interested or motivated to visit holy places. This attraction is further strengthened by the physical conditions and spatial layout of the area, thus making the location potentially a sustainable tourist destination. Based on the above,

religious tourism is a type of tourism that is closely related to certain beliefs, activities with high spiritual value, and is visited by tourists both with certain motivations and in filling their free time [14].

One of the focuses of religious tourism in this study is the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque of Solo, a halal tourist destination that is popular among the Muslim community. This mosque has its charm because of its unique and magnificent architectural splendor, often referred to as a replica of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi. Although Middle Eastern in style, the design also incorporates local elements, creating a spiritual and cultural experience that visitors can enjoy. The presence of this mosque is a great opportunity to increase the potential of halal tourism in the city of Surakarta [15]. Apart from being a means of worship, this mosque is also a center for da'wah activities and Islamic education. According to Surakarta.go.id, the Islamic Center will be built around the Sheikh Zayed Mosque complex in Solo, with the hope of becoming a center for Islamic teaching and education. In the upcoming Islamic Center, there will be facilities such as an Al Quran Tafsir place, a park, Al Quran Education (TPA), madrasas, as well as an area for the Islamic economy that sells halal goods with an area of 8,000 square meters. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is the main building that can accommodate up to 10,000 worshippers, equipped with a VIP room, a 20-square-meter library, and a basement provided for ablution places for male and female worshippers [16].

The principle of sustainability in tourism is crucial to achieving sustainable development goals. The concept of sustainable tourism emphasizes a balance between economic, social, and environmental aspects, taking into account the needs of all parties involved, including tourists, the tourism industry, nature, and local communities. And it is important to maintain a balance between the needs of tourists, the interests of tourism industry players, environmental sustainability, and the welfare of local communities, so that the benefits of tourism activities can be felt fairly and sustainably by all parties [17].

Novelty and Implications. This study offers novelty by reconceptualizing halal tourism as an integrated Sharia-based economic system that simultaneously connects Islamic legal governance, business practices, and sustainability dimensions. Unlike prior studies that treat halal tourism as a sectoral or market-driven activity, this research highlights its systemic nature through a local, mosque-centered case, demonstrating how religious institutions can function as catalysts for economic transformation.

The implications emphasize the need for integrated Sharia governance, including stronger halal regulation, MSME capacity building, and cross-sector collaboration. This model supports inclusive economic growth, enhances legal compliance, and aligns halal tourism development with sustainable development goals, particularly in fostering community empowerment and long-term socio-economic resilience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal tourism has been widely discussed as a rapidly growing segment within the global Islamic economy. Early studies emphasize its definition as tourism activities that comply with Islamic principles, including halal food, prayer facilities, and modest services. Scholars argue that halal tourism is not merely a niche market but a comprehensive system that integrates religious values into tourism practices. However, these foundational studies tend to focus more on conceptual definitions rather than examining halal tourism as an integrated economic system grounded in Sharia law [18].

Subsequent research highlights the economic potential of halal tourism in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates. These studies demonstrate that halal tourism significantly contributes to GDP growth, job creation, and the expansion of MSMEs. The development of halal destinations is often associated with increased tourist arrivals and local economic stimulation. Nevertheless,

most of this research primarily adopts a macroeconomic perspective, leaving micro-level dynamics and legal governance aspects underexplored [19].

In the context of Indonesia, several studies have examined halal tourism as part of national economic strategy. Researchers emphasize the government's role in promoting halal destinations through branding, infrastructure development, and policy support. Regions such as Lombok and Aceh are frequently cited as successful examples. However, these studies often focus on policy implementation and destination competitiveness, with limited attention to the integration of Sharia legal frameworks into tourism governance [20].

Other scholars have explored the role of religious destinations, particularly mosques, as key drivers of halal tourism. Mosques are not only places of worship but also serve as cultural and educational centers that attract visitors. Research shows that iconic mosques can stimulate surrounding economic activities, including halal culinary businesses and souvenir industries. Despite this, there is still a lack of in-depth analysis regarding how mosque-based tourism operates within a structured Sharia economic system. From a business perspective, studies on halal tourism highlight the importance of halal certification and standardization. Certification ensures that products and services meet Islamic requirements, thereby increasing consumer trust and market competitiveness. Researchers argue that halal certification plays a crucial role in shaping business practices and maintaining ethical standards. However, challenges such as inconsistent certification processes and limited awareness among business actors remain significant obstacles [21].

In terms of Islamic legal perspectives, a number of studies have begun to address the role of *fiqh mu'āmalāt* in regulating economic activities within halal tourism. These works emphasize principles such as transparency (*shiddiq*), trust (*amanah*), and fairness (*'adl*). Islamic law is seen as a guiding framework that ensures ethical conduct and prevents exploitation. Nevertheless, the application of these principles in real tourism contexts is often not systematically examined, creating a gap between theory and practice [22].

Sustainability has also emerged as an important theme in halal tourism research. Scholars link halal tourism with sustainable development by highlighting its potential to promote environmental responsibility, cultural preservation, and social inclusion. Some studies argue that Islamic values inherently support sustainability through concepts such as stewardship (*khalifah*) and balance (*mizan*). However, empirical evidence demonstrating the integration of sustainability principles into halal tourism practices is still limited [23].

Sustainability has also emerged as an important theme in halal tourism research. Scholars link halal tourism with sustainable development by highlighting its potential to promote environmental responsibility, cultural preservation, and social inclusion. Some studies argue that Islamic values inherently support sustainability through concepts such as stewardship (*khalifah*) and balance (*mizan*). However, empirical evidence demonstrating the integration of sustainability principles into halal tourism practices is still limited [24].

Another stream of research focuses on community empowerment within halal tourism ecosystems. These studies show that local communities can benefit from tourism through employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, and cultural promotion. MSMEs, in particular, play a vital role in providing halal products and services. Despite these positive impacts, challenges such as unequal benefit distribution and lack of capacity building are frequently reported. Recent studies have begun to examine the challenges facing halal tourism development, including regulatory gaps, limited infrastructure, and low public literacy. Researchers highlight the need for stronger institutional frameworks and better coordination among stakeholders. In many cases, the absence of clear legal guidelines and enforcement mechanisms hinders the effective implementation of halal tourism standards [25].

Overall, the existing literature demonstrates that halal tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon involving economic, social, and religious aspects. However, there remains a

significant gap in understanding halal tourism as an integrated Sharia-based economic system that connects legal governance, business practices, and sustainability. This study seeks to address this gap by providing a holistic analysis within the context of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Solo Raya, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive and contextualized understanding of halal tourism development [26].

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical approach to explore halal tourism as a Sharia-based economic system, focusing on the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Solo Raya. A qualitative method is considered appropriate because this research seeks to understand social phenomena, institutional practices, and legal-economic dynamics in their natural context. The study emphasizes how halal tourism operates not only as a tourism activity but also as an integrated system involving Sharia compliance, business practices, and sustainability dimensions. The descriptive approach is used to portray empirical conditions in the field, while the analytical aspect aims to interpret the relationships between legal frameworks, economic activities, and socio-cultural impacts. This approach allows the researcher to capture the complexity of interactions among stakeholders and to identify both opportunities and challenges in developing a Sharia-based tourism ecosystem.

Data collection was conducted through multiple techniques to ensure depth and validity. First, field observations were carried out in the area surrounding the mosque to examine tourism activities, business practices, and supporting facilities related to halal services. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, including mosque administrators, local government representatives, tourism actors, MSME entrepreneurs, and visitors. These interviews explored perceptions, experiences, and evaluations regarding halal tourism practices, legal compliance, and economic opportunities. Third, documentation analysis was undertaken by reviewing relevant regulations, policy documents, promotional materials, and institutional reports related to halal tourism development. In addition, several visitors were selected as respondents to provide insights into their experiences, impressions, frequency of visits, and assessment of facilities and services. The use of these multiple data sources enables triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the findings.



Figure 1. Research Location at Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Solo

The data analysis process follows an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Initially, collected data were organized, categorized, and reduced to focus on key themes such as Sharia legal governance, business dynamics, and sustainability practices. The data were then presented in a narrative form to illustrate patterns, relationships, and emerging issues in halal tourism development. Finally, conclusions were drawn through interpretative analysis by linking empirical findings with relevant theoretical frameworks, including Sharia economic principles and sustainable

development concepts. Throughout the analysis, particular attention was given to identifying gaps between normative expectations and practical implementation. This methodological approach enables the study to provide a comprehensive understanding of halal tourism as a Sharia-based economic system while offering insights into its legal, economic, and social implications in the context of Solo Raya [27], [28].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the author focuses on the development of halal tourism in the city of Solo Raya by making the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque the center of the phenomenon to examine opportunities and challenges in the development of sharia business. This mosque is not only an architectural icon and a destination for worship for Muslims, but also serves as a magnet for local economic growth based on Islamic values. The development of halal tourism in Solo Raya shows a very significant change in building a tourism industry that is by global trends and the needs of Muslim tourists. The most prominent aspect is the presence of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Surakarta, not only as a center of worship, but as a form of cultural cooperation between the two countries, as a strong religious tourism attraction [29]–[31].

This mosque is the center that encourages the development of various other halal tourism initiatives. In addition, the Zona KHAS (Halal, Safe, Healthy Culinary) initiative shows that solo not only prioritizes the symbolic aspect of halal tourism, but also focuses on the substance of services that are in line with Sharia principles and food safety. The development of halal tourism in Solo Raya is not only symbolic, but also reflects the direction of structured and measurable development. The regional government uses the cultural wealth and local religion as a basis to build the image of Solo as a friendly destination for Muslim tourists, both from within the country and abroad.

This study took samples with direct interviews with three categories of respondents: tourists from outside Java, local tourists from Solo Raya, and traders around the mosque area.

Table 1. Tourists from Outside Java

No	Sources	Question	Responses
1.	Great	Have you ever visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque? If so, what experience has been the most memorable for you?	Yes, the most memorable experience was when breaking the fast in the month of Ramadan and performing tarawih prayers there. The atmosphere was very peaceful.
		What do you think about the existence of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in the community?	The mosque is quite iconic and very similar to the original architecture in Dubai. This mosque will be an interesting place to visit for religious tourism in Surakarta.
		How often do you visit Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque?	Quite often, almost 5-6 times, when visiting the city of Solo.
		What are the facilities at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque? Is it adequate for	The facilities in the mosque are sufficient; it's just that the

		the needs of pilgrims and visitors?	parking lot for vehicles still needs to be repaired.
		What is your first impression when you see the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque?	The first impression is very impressive due to the beauty and splendor of the building, as well as the change of lights that every minute adds to the beauty at night.

Based on the response from Agung, a visitor who has come to this mosque several times, the presence of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque brings a deep religious nuance while pampering the eyes with its architectural beauty. The most memorable experience for him was when breaking his fast and performing tarawih prayers in the month of Ramadan, where the atmosphere of peace and togetherness was very felt. He considers this mosque to be very iconic and has a strong appeal, not only as a place of worship, but also as a religious tourist destination that reflects the splendor of the original mosque in Dubai. The first impression when seeing the building is so profound, especially at night when the change of lights adds to the beauty and splendor of the visuals. In terms of facilities, this mosque is very adequate to support the needs of worshippers and visitors, although there are still records on the availability and management of parking lots that need to be improved to provide more comfort. Overall, the Sheikh Zayed Mosque not only reinforces Solo's image as a cultural and religious city, but also provides a heart-touching spiritual experience and stunning aesthetics for anyone who visits [32], [33].

Table 2. Tourists from Outside Java

No	Sources	Question	Responses
2.	Rachmania	Have you ever visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque? If so, what experience has been the most memorable for you?	Yes, the Sheikh Zayed mosque is a grandiose, luxurious, and very artistic building.
		What do you think about the existence of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in the community?	There are pros and cons. The pros can increase income for residents, while the cons make the streets congested due to the large number of visitors.
		How often do you visit Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque?	Not too often because of the crowd
		What are the facilities at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque? Is it adequate for the needs of pilgrims and visitors?	Adequate for visitors
		What is your first impression when you see the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque?	Very large and luxurious

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Surakarta leaves a strong impression on every visitor, including Rachmania, who admires the splendor, luxury, and artistic side of the iconic building. He highlighted that the architecture of this mosque is indeed very extraordinary, with an impressive design at first glance. However, he also raised a more critical view of the social impact of the existence of this mosque. According to him, there is a positive side where this mosque can increase the income of residents through economic

activities that arise from the crowd of visitors, such as culinary businesses, souvenirs, or parking services. On the other hand, Rachmania noted that the dense number of visitors is one of the reasons she rarely visits, because it has the potential to cause congestion around the mosque location. Even so, he admitted that the facilities available in the mosque are quite adequate and able to serve the needs of worshippers and tourists well. This view shows that although the Sheikh Zayed Mosque carries high aesthetic value and spiritual function, there is still a need for better traffic management and the surrounding area so that the benefits of this mosque can be optimally felt by all parties [34], [35].

Table 3. Tourists from the local Solo Raya

No	Sources	Question	Responses
1.	Eva	Have you ever visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque? If so, what experience has been the most memorable for you?	Yes, at that time, I stopped by to pray duzur only because I happened to pass by the Sheikh Zayed mosque.
		What do you think about the existence of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in the community?	The existence of this mosque for the people of Solo is one of the latest religious attractions in the city of Solo, and a destination for foreign tourists to come to Solo. So that it becomes jammed because there are many visitors
		How often do you visit Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque?	Not often because many tourists arrive.
		What are the facilities at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque? Is it adequate for the needs of pilgrims and visitors?	Enough for the visitors, but parking is difficult as visitors are overflowing.
		What is your first impression when you see the Sheik Zayed Grand Mosque?	Majestic and Luxurious as seen from the building

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Surakarta further affirms its position as a new religious tourism destination that attracts public attention, including Eva, a visitor who had stopped by to perform the dzuhur prayer when passing through the area. Although her visit was short, Eva was deeply impressed by the mosque building, which she considered very magnificent and luxurious. He sees that the existence of this mosque has a positive impact as a religious tourism magnet that can attract many tourists from outside the region to come to the city of Solo. However, as some other residents viewed, Eva also highlighted the other side of the crowded visitors, namely the congestion that often occurs around the mosque location, which makes her reluctant to come often. Regarding facilities, he assessed that in general, this mosque is adequate in serving the needs of worshippers and tourists, although the availability of parking space is a separate record because it is not proportional to the surge in the number of visitors. This response reflects that although the Sheikh Zayed Mosque brings beauty, value, and great potential in boosting the religious tourism sector, it

is still necessary to arrange and manage the surrounding environment comprehensively so that its existence can provide comfort for all parties [36], [37].

Table 4. Traders Around the Mosque

No	Sources	Question	Responses
1.	Mrs. Tuti	How does this mosque affect MSME actors?	For this, economic influence is very helpful, because in the past, in this area it was an ordinary village, and suddenly there was a mosque which was very influential for the surrounding community, as a trader.
		How are the facilities at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque for MSMEs in the vicinity?	It is also quite adequate for local traders, even though the parking space is a little lacking, and the mosque always makes it easier for traders because it is managed by the community around the village.
		Where are the customers coming from? And are there any obstacles as long as you sell around the mosque?	Customers come from anywhere. I don't know where they come from, but for customers who are cameramen, mosque employees, and parking attendants. For obstacles, if it rains, visitors and sales do not run out, and business capital decreases.
		Does the existence of the Sheikh Zayed Mosque increase the number of buyers or business turnover?	Income can be said to be enough for this year to survive, very different from 2 years ago. The initial opening of this mosque was very skyrocketing and very fulfilling.
		What are your hopes for the existence of the Zayed mosque in the long term?	We always want to have a lot of visitors who come to the mosque, not only at certain times.

Based on an interview with one of the MSME traders around the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Mrs. Tuti, the author observed that the existence of this mosque has a significant economic impact on the local community, especially for those who previously lived in ordinary village environments. Mrs. Tuti stated that before the mosque was built, this area did not have a strong economic attraction. But since the mosque came along, many residents have started opening small businesses such as food, beverages, and other services that create new economic opportunities that did not exist before. Regarding facilities that support MSME activities, according to Mrs. Tuti, it is adequate, especially the direct involvement of the village association in managing the activities of traders, although the note is about

the lack of parking space, which can affect the comfort of visitors. Mrs. Tuti admitted that they (customers) come from various circles, although the most frequent interactions are with cameramen, mosque employees, and parking attendants. And the weather is one of the important factors that affect the success of sales. When it rains, the number of visitors drops significantly. Business turnover also experienced a high spike when the mosque was opened, enough to meet the needs of life properly. However, in the last 2 years, Mrs. Tuti admitted that indeed turnover has experienced a temporary economic surge, which needs to be balanced with a long-term strategy so that business sustainability is maintained. And finally, Mrs. Tuti hopes that the number of mosque visitors will remain consistent throughout the year, not just crowded at certain times. This hope reflects the dependence of MSME actors on the flow of tourist visits, so that the sustainability of the local economy is closely related to its function as an active and dynamic religious destination [38], [39].

Based on the results of direct interviews with several speakers, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Surakarta has become a new symbol of religious tourism that attracts people and tourists from various regions. The three admitted that this mosque presents a very magnificent, luxurious, and artistic architecture, making it not only a place of worship but also a tourist attraction that strengthens the religious image of the city of Solo. Personal experiences such as tarawih prayers during Ramadan, stopping by for Dzuhur prayers, or simply admiring the beauty of the building show that this mosque gives a deep spiritual and aesthetic impression to visitors.

However, behind its splendor, the speakers also raised the challenges that arise from the explosion in the number of visitors, such as traffic congestion and limited parking spaces. Although the facilities inside the mosque are generally considered quite adequate and comfortable for worshippers, technical problems outside the mosque area are an important note for better management. Interestingly, they also see a positive economic side, where the crowd of visitors helps to revive the local business sector, such as culinary, souvenirs, and parking services [40], [41].

Overall, these interviews show that the existence of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque has a dual impact as a proud spiritual icon and modern architecture, as well as a driver of religious tourism and the local economy. However, for this function to run optimally and sustainably, it is necessary to rearrange traffic, public facilities, and manage the environment around the mosque in an integrated manner. With this step, the Sheikh Zayed Mosque will not only continue to be the pride of the people of Solo, but also a religious, orderly, and meaningful destination for all visitors.

The existence of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Surakarta opens up strategic opportunities for the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the halal economic sector. The mosque attracts Muslim tourists and creates a huge market potential for sharia-based products, such as halal culinary, Islamic souvenirs, and religious tour guide services. Opinion as the Takmir of the Sheikh Zayed Solo Grand Mosque stated that the visitor capacity can be 10,000 worshippers, and Weekday mosque visitors of 8,000-10,000 visitors every month, especially the increase on weekends and religious holidays, provides an important momentum for local MSME actors to expand the market, improve product quality, and develop innovations by Islamic values. This proves that the economic potential of halal tourism is not only spiritual, but also has a real impact on the growth of MSMEs. For this development to become a trend, there needs to be support through regulations, mentoring, and continuous education, by emphasizing Islamic values, consumer literacy, and strengthening Sharia business actors. Solo, as a cultural city with an Islamic heritage, such as the Mataram Palace, has a tourist attraction that has long attracted Muslim tourists. This is a great opportunity that must continue to be maintained and improved [42].

The main challenges in the development of sharia businesses around the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque are the low conceptual understanding and lack of systemic support for

sharia-based economic practices. Many local MSMEs do not have sufficient access to Sharia entrepreneurship training, so they tend to manage their businesses with a pragmatic and short-term approach, without a long-term strategy based on comprehensive Islamic principles. In addition, the supporting infrastructure for halal businesses is still limited; there is no special zone for halal-certified MSMEs, minimal promotion of sharia products, and a lack of regulations that support the formation of a halal tourism ecosystem around mosques. Some observers also noted a discrepancy between the increasing number of tourists and the readiness of local communities to provide professional, standardized, and sustainable halal services. This situation is exacerbated by low halal literacy among tourists, which has an impact on fluctuations in demand for Sharia-based products and services [43], [44].

Without a strategic approach that involves collaboration between mosque managers, local governments, certification bodies, and local business actors, the development of sharia businesses in the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque area risks not developing optimally. If managed properly, this region has great potential to support the achievement of SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth. Strengthening the halal tourism ecosystem around mosques can create decent jobs, empower local MSMEs, and increase economic productivity based on Islamic values. Therefore, planned and collaborative interventions are essential to realize inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the sharia tourism sector.

The main problem in the development of sharia-based religious tourism around the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque lies in the government's strategic role, which is not optimal. Although there is a great opportunity to encourage the sharia economy through policies, incentives, and MSME coaching in line with SDG 8, which emphasizes decent job creation and inclusive economic growth, its implementation is still weak. The lack of synergy between sectors and the absence of a holistic policy cause this potential to be exploited to the fullest. The government also faces the challenge of maintaining a balance between the function of mosques as places of worship and centers of economic activity. Therefore, the policies taken need to be able to encourage economic growth without neglecting religious values and the sacredness of the worship space [45]–[47].

According to the researcher's point of view, the use of religious tourism destinations has had a positive impact on the surrounding community, but it can also hurt tourists if there is an act of commercialization by the community. The reciprocal impact of this religious tourism icon has a great influence on tourists and local communities, one of which is the decrease in the number of visitors. Therefore, policies are needed that can open up the potential for the use of religious tourism, such as promoting tourism icons through various media. With this policy, it is hoped that it will increase the interest of tourists to visit this mosque.

As is known, the front door of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is in front of a non-Muslim place of worship, namely the church (GPIA), and some areas around the church are used as resting and parking places for mosque visitors. This condition reflects the high tolerance between religious communities in the city of Surakarta, which is known as one of the most tolerant cities in Indonesia. Initially, the existence of these two adjacent places of worship caused a debate, especially regarding congestion and limited parking spaces. However, through dialogue between the mosque and church administrators, a joint solution was reached in the form of cooperation in parking arrangements: sterile land during church worship on Saturday and Sunday, and land sharing on weekdays. This collaboration is a tangible proof of harmony, mutual respect, and support between well-established religious communities.

In line with the values of Islamic teachings, the development of tourism, especially sharia tourism, should not only focus on economic and entertainment aspects but should also serve as a means to promote morality, ethics, and spiritual values. In the concept of Islamic

tourism, manners and morals are the basis for every tourism activity, including social interaction, economic transactions, and respect for the local environment and culture. Therefore, tourist destinations that apply sharia principles must be able to become an educational and inspirational space that strengthens religious awareness, as well as maintains the sanctity of Islamic values in modernity and commercialization. The importance of building a tourism ecosystem that is not only economically productive, but also socially and ethically responsible. The development of ethical sharia-based tourism can create more decent and dignified job opportunities, especially for local communities involved in the provision of halal services, Islamic education, and cultural activities by sharia [48], [49].

The halal travel industry, or halal tourism, contributes directly to the achievement of SDG 8, which is related to decent work and sustainable economic growth. By integrating Islamic values in practice, the sector is showing significant global economic growth. Every opening of halal tourist destinations also encourages economic activities involving various parties, ranging from trade in goods and services to job creation, so that it functions as an inclusive and ethical driver of the local economy [50].

Halal tourism has the strategic potential to create new jobs that are decent and sustainable, especially in supporting sectors such as sharia hospitality, halal culinary, si transportation, tour guide services, and MSME products based on Islamic values. In addition to opening up business opportunities, halal tourism also contributes to increasing the income of local communities through strengthening the community-based economy. This is in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which emphasizes the importance of inclusive economic growth, increased labor productivity, and job creation that supports social well-being in a sustainable manner [51].

There are several reasons why halal tourism is so profitable in Indonesia, including a proportionally rapid increase in the number of Muslim populations, a significant increase in middle-class income among Muslims, as well as the large number of young Muslims who like to travel. In addition, easy access to tourism information, friendly facilities, and satisfactory services also contribute. There are also many exciting travel options during the month of Ramadan, and the rapid growth of the travel business to meet the needs of tourists [52].

The tourism sector has shown significant growth in recent decades, even exceeding the pace of expansion of the manufacturing sector in many countries. This development includes diversifying tourism types such as ecotourism, cultural tourism, and halal tourism that can reach various levels of society and regions, including rural and remote areas [53]. This condition shows that tourism plays a strategic role in encouraging more equitable and equitable economic growth. In line with SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, the tourism sector contributes to the creation of decent jobs, increased productivity of local communities, and the empowerment of micro and medium enterprises. In addition, sustainably managed tourism can foster creative economy innovation and growth that is not only profit-focused, but also rooted in cultural values and local wisdom [54], [55].

Analysis

The findings of this study demonstrate that halal tourism in Solo Raya is experiencing a gradual yet notable shift from a predominantly conventional tourism framework toward a more structured Sharia-based economic system. Despite this progress, the transformation remains partial and lacks full institutional maturity. A key driver of this development is the presence of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, which functions not only as a religious landmark but also as a socio-economic catalyst. The mosque attracts a growing number of visitors, thereby stimulating local economic activities and creating opportunities for surrounding communities. This dual role illustrates how religious infrastructure can effectively integrate spiritual engagement with economic development, particularly by

encouraging the expansion of halal-oriented micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and related service sectors.

Nevertheless, the study identifies a clear disconnect between the theoretical foundations of Sharia principles and their actual implementation in practice. While core Islamic values such as fairness, transparency, and adherence to halal standards are generally acknowledged by stakeholders, they are not yet fully embedded within formal business operations. A significant number of MSMEs continue to operate informally, often without standardized halal certification or regulatory oversight. This reflects both limited enforcement of legal frameworks and insufficient access to institutional support systems. Consequently, the growth of halal tourism in Solo Raya appears to be driven more by consumer demand and market trends than by a cohesive and well-regulated Sharia governance structure.

From a sustainability standpoint, the current trajectory of development raises additional concerns. The focus tends to lean toward immediate economic benefits rather than long-term strategic planning. Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, increasing traffic congestion, and the unequal distribution of economic gains indicate a lack of comprehensive policy coordination among relevant stakeholders. These issues highlight the need for a more integrated and forward-looking approach to development.

In this context, halal tourism in Solo Raya should be viewed as an evolving system that is still in the process of consolidation. To fully realize its potential as an inclusive and resilient Sharia-based economic model, stronger alignment is required between legal regulations, institutional capacity, business practices, and sustainability strategies. Only through such integration can halal tourism achieve balanced growth that is both economically viable and consistent with Sharia principles.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that halal tourism in Solo Raya reflects an emerging transformation toward a Sharia-based economic system, in which legal governance, business practices, and sustainability dimensions are interconnected but not yet fully integrated. The presence of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque has functioned as a strategic catalyst for this transformation by attracting significant flows of religious tourists and stimulating economic activities rooted in Islamic values. This dynamic is evident in the growth of Sharia-oriented MSMEs, the diversification of halal products and services, and the increasing participation of local communities in tourism-related businesses. These developments indicate that halal tourism in this context is no longer limited to religious travel, but is evolving into a broader economic ecosystem with the potential to support inclusive growth. However, the findings also reveal that the development of this Sharia-based economic system remains constrained by several structural challenges. From a legal perspective, the lack of comprehensive regulatory frameworks and weak enforcement of halal certification standards hinder the establishment of a fully compliant system. Many business actors still operate without formal halal certification, reflecting gaps in legal awareness and institutional support. From a business standpoint, although opportunities are expanding, the capacity of MSMEs to maintain consistent quality, standardization, and competitiveness remains limited. In terms of sustainability, the integration of Islamic economic principles with long-term social and economic development goals has not yet been systematically realized. These issues indicate a disconnect between the normative ideals of Sharia economics and their practical implementation in the field. Furthermore, the absence of strong coordination among key stakeholders—including government institutions, religious authorities, and business actors—contributes to fragmented policy implementation. Sectoral approaches to tourism, economic development, and religious affairs often operate independently, resulting in inefficiencies and limiting the potential for building a cohesive halal tourism ecosystem. Without a unified governance framework, halal tourism risks being reduced to symbolic or market-driven practices rather than functioning as a comprehensive Sharia-based system. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need to strengthen Sharia economic governance

through integrated policies, improved halal literacy, and institutional collaboration. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque should be positioned not only as a religious landmark but also as a central hub for developing a sustainable and inclusive Sharia-based economic ecosystem. By aligning legal structures, business practices, and sustainability objectives, halal tourism in Solo Raya can move beyond a temporary trend and become a resilient model of Islamic economic development that contributes meaningfully to community welfare and long-term sustainability.

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Author Contribution

Muhammad Davi Arham contributed to the conceptualisation of the study, research design, literature review, data analysis, and manuscript drafting. Aya Said provided theoretical guidance, supervised the research framework, and critically reviewed the manuscript to ensure academic rigour and Sharia compliance. Eman Tarek contributed to the legal analysis, interpretation of findings, and refinement of the discussion from an Islamic economic law perspective. Qudra Bezibweki supported the comparative analysis, assisted in synthesising results, and contributed to the final review and editing of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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