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EXPLORATION OF HALAL TOURISM: IMPACT OF HALALPRENEUR BUSINESS INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History:</p> <p>Received : 16.04.2025 Revised : 14.05.2025 Accepted : 06.06.2025</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Halal Tourism, Innovation, Halalpreneur, SDGs.</i></p>	<p><i>The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of halal tourism on halalpreneur innovation and its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Semarang City. Using a qualitative method, the researcher collected primary data through non-participant observation and interviews with tourism managers, tourists, and MSME players. Secondary data was collected in the form of documentation. The research object is Kota Lama Semarang and the MAJT area. The data obtained were then analyzed using descriptive qualitative. The results showed significantly that halal tourism encourages business innovation among halalpreneurs due to the competitive environment. The innovation lies in increasing product variety, expanding services, and digitalizing the business. Furthermore, halal tourism can have a positive impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDGs 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 17. The implication of this study is to emphasize the importance of the government's role and stakeholder cooperation in increasing halal tourism, thereby encouraging sustainable development in Semarang City.</i></p>



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A. INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism has become a world trend in recent years (Noviarita et al., 2021). The concept of halal tourism has been floating in various countries, both Islamic countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Middle East region) and non-Islamic countries (Thailand, Japan, and Korea) (Shi Yan et al., 2017; Wibowo, 2020). This phenomenon reflects the strong demand for halal tourism and has become an industry competition among countries in the world, such as Indonesia, in the middle of ASEAN countries (Putri et al., 2019).

Halal tourism is an integration of several types of tourism, including religious, cultural, and recreational, with a focus on Islamic values and moral dimensions in its activities (Hasan, 2022). Initially, halal tourism is often defined as religious tourism, such as grave pilgrimage, Hajj, and Umrah. As it developed, this concept expanded to include: medical, educational, cultural, historical, or sports (Surwandono et al., 2020). Thus, halal tourism must include several elements, ranging from facilities and infrastructure in accordance with sharia provisions, sharia-based tour and travel, halal-certified hotels, restaurants, and spas (Hasan, 2022).

Indonesia is expected to be a global role model for halal tourism. Evidently, in 2023, based on the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) report, Indonesia is ranked the 1st most popular halal tourism destination in the world. After previously ranking 2nd (CNN Indonesia, 2022; Indonesiabaik.id, 2022). This means that Indonesia has a specialty and great potential in developing halal tourism. The development of this potential began in 2015, by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism looked at opportunities for the increasing halal lifestyle of the community and the Muslim population (Destiana & Astuti, 2019; Fathan, 2022). To support this, the government provides technical guidance programs and organizes workshops, and strengthens destinations (Rahmadian et al., 2021). To be in line with GMTI measurements, the tourism ministry also developed the Indonesia Muslim Travel Index/IMTI in 2018 and 2019 (Noviantoro & Zurohman, 2020). Another is to collaborate with the National Shariat Council (DSN), the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), and the Business Certification Institute (LSU) (Tanjung & Panggabean, 2022). The results can be seen in the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) report regarding the number of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia in May 2024, which increased by 20.11%, compared to before (BPS, 2024b).

Semarang is one of the cities that ranked 4th as the best tourism city in Indonesia in the 2018 Yokatta Wonderful Indonesia Tourism Award event (Kompas, 2018). Semarang is also known for its culture, tourism, education, cuisine, and more. This potential brought Semarang City as the 1st champion in the City cluster tourism sector in 2020 (jatengprov.go.id, 2020). Not only that, in the Green City Metric event in 2022, organized by the University of Indonesia (UI) Semarang City won 1st place as the best sustainable city in Indonesia, beating Kediri City, East Java, and Padang City, West Sumatra (Purbaya, 2022).

The 10 most visited tourist sites in 2022 were Kota Lama Semarang, Marina Beach, Lawang Sewu, Semarang Zoo, Grand Maerakaca, Central Java Great Mosque, Kreo Cave, Sam Poo Kong, Kampung Jawi, and Taman Lele (Abidin, 2023). The latest 2023 data shows a 21.5% increase in the number of tourist visits, both domestic and

foreign. However, to sharpen the research, the researchers focus only on three tourist destinations: Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT.

Halal tourism is one of the elements that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Ridho Subarkah et al., 2019). This means that the implementation of sustainable tourism takes into account social, economic, and environmental impacts and considers the needs of tourists now and in the future. Unfortunately, according to (Fauzi et al., 2020) So far, halal tourism has prioritized improving performance in physical forms such as facilities and infrastructure. The important thing that is forgotten is transaction services for tourists that are safe and efficient, such as sharia fintech (Rahmadian et al., 2021) added that literacy on halal tourism and business certification is fairly low and difficult. In addition, most of the promotions carried out have not taken advantage of digital technology.

Studies on halal tourism, *halalpreneur*, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been conducted by many researchers. For example, (Azizuddin & 'Ainulyaqin, 2022) emphasizes halal tourism towards creating a sharia business environment, while (Wibowo, 2020) shows the importance of government intervention in halal tourism service standards. (Noviantoro & Zurohman, 2020) identified the increasing prospects of halal tourism in Indonesia, thanks to the large Muslim population and favorable geographical conditions. (Kusumaningtyas et al., 2022) offers a strategy for developing halal tourism by utilizing digital technology and the millennial Muslim market. (Surwandono et al., 2020) Discuss the challenges and potential of halal tourism in the context of maqasid sharia and sustainable development. However, these studies have not integrated halal tourism, *halalpreneurs*, business innovation, and the SDGs; for this reason, this research was conducted and contributes to the field's originality.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Tourism

Historically, the general public understood the term "Islamic tourism/halal tourism" at the 2000 OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) meeting. Halal tourism is one of the alternatives in meeting Muslim demand for tourism that is in line with the lifestyle of a Muslim. As it developed, the term halal tourism began to be used alongside other terms similar to it, such as halal-friendly tourism, halal travel, sharia tourism, Islamic tourism, and Muslim-friendly travel destinations. Several experts participated in discussing halal tourism, such as (Carboni et al., 2017) that Islamic tourism is provided to meet the tourism needs of Muslims. Then (Battour & Ismail, 2016) Adding the implementation of Islamic values as a guideline for Muslim tourists when visiting. (Jafari & Scott, 2014) describes travel or tourism activities that are in line with Sharia law. Next, (Boğan & Sarıışık, 2019) makes a distinction in terminology between "halal tourism" and "Islamic tourism." Islamic tourism refers to travel undertaken by individuals seeking God's blessings. Halal tourism, on the other hand, centers on how travel products and services adhere to Islamic principles and requirements.

Halal tourism is regulated in Fatwa Number 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Tourism based on Sharia Principles, regulating several aspects, including the management of accommodation such as lodging or hotels, tourism destinations, spa facilities, saunas, and massage services,

sharia-principled travel agents, as well as guidelines for tour guides with sharia principles (Wibowo, 2020). It is also based on one of them in Surah Al-Mulk, verse 15, where Allah SWT states: "It is He who has made the earth easy for you, so walk in all its paths and eat of His sustenance. And to Him alone do you (return after) being raised up." Then, Surah Noah, verses 19-20: "And Allah has made the earth for you as a plain, that you may walk the broad paths of the earth".

Furthermore, Din in (Boğan & Saruşıık, 2019), there are ten instruments in halal tourism, including: Awareness, Attractive, Accessible, Available, Affordable, A range of accommodation, Acceptance, Agency, Attentiveness or a friendly attitude that is realized in an attractive form, Accountability (Kadir, 2023). (El-Gohary, 2015) added the principles of halal tourism, including: prohibition of alcohol and nightclubs, availability of halal food and avoid products containing pork substances, availability of Muslim staff and separation of services such as male staff only for male guests and vice versa, provision of entertainment in accordance with sharia, there is a place of worship for Muslims along with its equipment, such as prayer mats, Koran and separation between male and female worshipers and there are Qibla direction markers for prayer, separating facilities for women and men, such as swimming pools, gyms, seating, etc., not presenting art content resembling human forms, having beds and toilets that do not face the Qibla, and there is Islamic funding. Meanwhile, the DSN MUI Fatwa No. 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016 emphasizes "the general principle of organizing shariah tourism is to avoid polytheism, sin, mischief, tabdzir/israf and evil, and create benefits and benefits both materially and non-materially." (DSN-MUI, 2016).

Halal tourism indicators according to (Ramadhany & Ridlwan, 2018) includes four main aspects: location, transportation, consumption, and hotels. First, location. Location refers to places permitted in Islam and believed to enhance the religious value of visitors. These destinations are expected to increase individual faith and deepen admiration for the almighty God's creation. Second, transportation. Implementing this system is like providing separate seating for men and women who are not mahrams to ensure visitors' comfort. Third, consumption. This aspect emphasizes the availability of halal food and drinks, as in Q.S Al-Maidah verse 3. And the fourth is the hotel. Hotel arrangements must comply with Sharia principles, including separate toilet facilities for men and women.

Halalpreneur

Halalpreneur is a combination of two words, namely halal and entrepreneur, which means halal entrepreneurship/business actors. The scope of halalpreneur is covered within the framework of Sharia, including belief (*aqidah*), Islamic law (*fiqh*), and ethical behavior (*akhlak*), to ensure that business activities align with Islamic principles. In the Islamic context, *halalpreneur* is considered part of humanity's role as caliphs in the world. The mission of a khalifah is to worship Allah SWT and contribute to the development and improvement of welfare in the world. This role encourages the implementation of entrepreneurial actions that provide positive benefits to society, the world, and all humanity.

Halalpreneurs must prioritize goods and services that meet the needs of Muslims. The needs in question are basic needs. Once it is sufficient, *halalpreneurs* can fulfill secondary and tertiary needs, as well as other requests (*tahsiniyat*).

(Azizuddin & Ainulyaqin, 2022): *Halalpreneurs who can take advantage of these conditions have a great opportunity to innovate across industries, such as tourism.*

Halalpreneurship began in the halal food industry, and halal businesspeople expanded its scope to other products and services, including banking, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. According to the Global Islamic Economy Report, the halal industry sector includes seven main sectors, namely halal food, Islamic finance, Muslim-friendly travel, modest fashion, halal pharmaceuticals, halal cosmetics, Islamic-themed media, and recreation (Harmoko, 2022).

As time goes by, an entrepreneur must become more responsive and creative in developing his products, so that his business can continue to grow amid increasingly fierce competition. This can be achieved by adhering to Islamic economic principles. Innovation is a strategy for creating something unique, distinct from what has existed before. In service management or business production, innovation is a key factor to meet changing consumer tastes. Innovation is a process of discovering or applying new ideas in different situations. This concept of novelty differs from the view of ordinary people because, relatively, what is considered new by one person or in one context can be considered old by another in a different context.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which ended in 2015. SDGs are sustainable development efforts that have become a reference in the development framework and negotiations of countries around the world. The SDGs were launched on October 21, 2015, and replaced the previous program, the MDGs, as a global development framework until 2030, and have been approved by many countries through United Nations (UN) resolutions.

The formulation of the SDGs involved an inclusive, transparent, and participatory process involving a wide range of stakeholders and communities over three years. The SDGs reflect an unprecedented agreement among 193 member states on priorities for sustainable development. The SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets, unlike the MDGs, which at the time included only 7 goals and 21 targets. The goals cover various aspects such as eradicating poverty and hunger, improving well-being and health, providing access to quality education, promoting gender equality, providing access to clean water and proper sanitation, developing clean and affordable energy, creating decent jobs, fostering economic growth, boosting industry, innovation, and infrastructure, reducing inequality, shaping sustainable cities and settlements, regulating responsible consumption and production, addressing climate change, safeguarding marine and terrestrial ecosystems, promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, and building partnerships to achieve these goals.

Warren's perspective (1997) in (Setiadi et al., 2008) mentions indicators of Sustainable Development (SDGs), including:

- a. Reflects the prevailing economic, socio-environmental foundations over the long term for the benefit of future generations.
- b. Easy to understand and clear, with a simple nature so that it can be understood and accepted by the community.
- c. Allows for quantitative measurement.
- d. Responsive to changes in location or different community groups.

- e. Predictive and able to anticipate changes.
- f. Have threshold values that are relatively easy to collect and use as guidelines.
- g. In relation to the quality aspect, the methods used to develop indicators must have clear definitions, be scientifically accurate, and be accepted by the community.
- h. Be time-active, so that if applied annually, the indicator can reflect trends that represent the actual situation.

C. METHODOLOGY

This research falls under the qualitative case study research type. Primary data sources were obtained through non-participant observation and interviews with tourism managers, tourists, and MSMEs. Managers and MSME players were selected based on purposive sampling criteria, while tourists were interviewed to obtain diverse perspectives. Secondary data was obtained from relevant documentation to support the analysis. The data collection process was conducted systematically, using an interview guide to ensure the validity and reliability of the collected information. The objects of study in this research are three tourist destinations, namely Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, with coding techniques to identify key themes. This research also considered ethical aspects, including participant consent, to ensure the protection of personal data.

D. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Impact of Halal Tourism on Muslim Entrepreneurial Innovation in Semarang City

This study selected two tours as case studies: Kota Lama Semarang and the Great Mosque of Central Java (MAJT). Previously, this study discussed in more detail the characteristics of halal tourism in the research sample, based on Ramadhani and Ridlwan's (2018) indicators, namely: location, transportation, consumption, and hotel/lodging.

1) Location

Location in Sharia tourism is important. Because this location can indicate whether the tour is included in the halal category. Based on the results of the author's observations, the following things:

- a) It is a tour that presents the beauty of God's creation.
- b) The tourist location does not present vandalism, pornography, or violent content.
- c) There are places of worship to increase faith, such as a mosque and a mushalla. In Kota Lama Semarang, tourism is not the main facility provided by the organizer; it is provided by the local community or the public, such as Musholla al-Hikmah, Kauman mosque, and Al-Istiqomah mosque.
- d) Sharia financial services, such as BSI CIMB Niaga Syariah. Although the majority are conventional financial services such as Mandiri, BRI, Bank Mega, BNI, etc.
- e) There are public facilities that distinguish between men and women, such as ablutions and prayer spaces at MAJT, but rest areas in both Kota Lama and MAJT are still common.
- f) Information, complaint, and security posts are available. The goal is to make it easier for tourists to obtain the information they need. On the

other hand, tourist safety is also maintained. However, there are still criminal acts, such as theft, that occur in both locations, including luggage theft in MAJT and helmet theft in Kota Lama Semarang.

- g) The development of tourist attractions is to preserve, not the other way around, such as greening. This is evidenced by the amount of greenery around the tourist attraction, both in Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT.
- h) Information boards are available about the uniqueness of tourism.
- i) Events organized are an introduction to local wisdom, such as a grand recitation by inviting well-known religious figures at MAJT and cultural festivals in the Kota Lama Semarang area.
- j) There is a distinction between halal and non-halal culinary in the Kota Lama Semarang area.
- k) Around the tourist sites in the Kota Lama Semarang area, there are karaoke places. However, its implementation does not violate the established rules and does not disturb tourists.

The description above shows that Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT can be categorized as sharia tourism based on their locations. In Kota Lama, Semarang, there are still aspects to consider to further strengthen halal tourism development.

2) Transportation

Transportation is a crucial aspect of sharia tourism, as the ease of access to destinations greatly affects the volume of tourist visits, both domestic and foreign. Accessibility to the Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT is very good. Both locations can be reached by various modes of transportation, including public transport, online motorcycle taxis, rickshaws, private vehicles, and tour buses. The relatively affordable cost of transportation is an added value in attracting tourists from various economic backgrounds. In addition, the availability of digital maps such as Google Maps and on-site directions further facilitates navigation and enhances visitor convenience. Similar to other urban tourism areas in Central Java, such as Solo City with Vastenburg Fort and Klewer Market, and Yogyakarta City with South Square and Yogyakarta Palace, which are also known for their easy and practical transportation accessibility. Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT demonstrate a commitment to providing tourists with convenience and a friendly, accessible destination. With complete and easily accessible transportation facilities, these two locations are increasingly becoming sharia tourism destinations that are convenient, practical, and inclusive.

3) Consumption

Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT are two different attractions. Historically, Kota Lama Semarang is a mixed meeting place. That is, various elements such as residents, tourists, facilities, and religions meet in this place. Even the architectural building that is the mainstay of tourists is another religious building, the Blenduk Church. Therefore, it is not surprising that this tour also serves non-halal food and drinks. Tourists can identify both by looking at the banner or label in each shop or stall. Different from MAJT, which is a mosque

and certainly supports the consumption of halal food and drinks. In addition to food and drinks, tourists also consume other items, such as souvenirs and clothing. Thus, although both tourist destinations offer a variety of consumer goods, MAJT explicitly provides only halal food, which aligns with the concept of sharia tourism, while Kota Lama Semarang offers a more diverse selection and still ensures clear labeling for non-halal food and beverages.

4) Hotel

The presence of hotels and inns enhances the appeal to local and foreign tourists. This relates to the length of time tourists stay. For this reason, the arrangement of hotels, especially Sharia hotels in Sharia tourism areas, is an urgent matter. Indonesia is seeking to increase the number of Islamic hotels to develop halal tourism. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has issued official guidelines to regulate hotel operations that follow sharia principles.

Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT offer a variety of accommodation options to ensure the comfort of both domestic and international tourists. Popular lodging options in Kota Lama Semarang include Kotta Hotel, Bobobox, Hotel Manon, Hotel Pelangi Indah, The Kirana Purnama Semarang, Metro Park Hotel, and many others. However, these hotels do not fully embody the concept of Sharia. A sharia hotel in Kota Lama Semarang that can serve as a reference is Hotel Grasia Semarang, which offers separate areas for men and women, as well as halal food and beverage services. The hotel also provides prayer facilities such as musholla, making it easier for guests to worship. In addition to Grasia, Omah Pelem Syariah and Ibrahim Syariah offer Islamic accommodation options, including separate rooms and halal food. Palm Capsule Syariah, located about 3-4 kilometers from MAJT, offers a modern capsule hotel concept that adheres to sharia principles.

Based on the four main indicators of halal tourism, namely location, transportation, consumption, and accommodation aspects, Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT can generally be categorized as halal tourism destinations. Both locations have demonstrated they meet key elements that support the comfort and needs of Muslim tourists, including accessibility, availability of worship facilities, clarity around halal consumption, and accommodation options that adhere to sharia principles.

Halal tourism is a form of tourism that has grown rapidly in recent years, as Muslim travelers' needs for Sharia services have increased. Halal attributes, such as halal-certified food, worship facilities, and an environment that supports Islamic values, are a special attraction for domestic and foreign tourists. (Ramadhan & Mashilal, 2023) stated that there is a positive and significant effect of generic attributes and Islamic attributes on tourist satisfaction. That way, it is certain that Muslim tourists need Sharia attributes in halal tourism. In fact, it is not uncommon for non-Muslim tourists to also be interested in Islamic tourism. One of them is halal food as an instrument in organizing halal tourism. Factors that influence non-Muslims to consume halal food, according to Cupian et al. (2024), include the presence of a halal logo, level of religiosity, food ingredients, and manufacturing

process. Not much different from non-Muslims in Indonesia, non-Muslims in Malaysia are also interested in consuming halal food, as a study by Aziz and Chok (2013) found that halal awareness, halal certification, marketing promotions, and brands are positively related to halal food purchase intentions among non-Muslims. Furthermore, Haque et al. (2015) explain that non-Muslim consumers' perceptions of halal food products are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, especially in Malaysia.

The increasing number of tourists, both Muslim and non-Muslim, has a significant impact on the dynamics of the halal tourism sector in Semarang. On the one hand, this phenomenon opens up opportunities for Muslim businesses or halalpreneurs to develop businesses based on Islamic values. On the other hand, the high competition among business actors, especially due to the similarity of products (homogeneity of products) and services, requires innovation and adaptation, as is the case with the Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT, where halalpreneurs in both tours carry out three aspects of innovation, namely product variations, service improvements, and adaptation of digital technology in marketing strategies.

Product variety is an important aspect of business model innovation, especially in homogenous businesses. A business's ability to differentiate through product variety determines its capacity to create added value and maintain a competitive advantage. In Kota Lama Semarang, for example, culinary businesses differentiate through a varied menu, ranging from traditional to international cuisine. Similarly, fashion businesses offer a wide range of products, including headscarves, clothes, and bags. This diversity demonstrates innovation that integrates consumer preferences with the local characteristics of heritage tourism areas. In contrast, MAJT already has a food corner, which helps tourists choose culinary options. However, there are also traders outside the mosque who offer similar culinary delights. As a survival strategy, several informants, including Muslim Collection sellers, souvenir centers, and snack vendors around MAJT, aim to increase product variety to overcome increasingly fierce competition. Not only that, but the sellers also try to ensure that product packaging is convenient for buyers to carry. This strategy has proven effective, increasing sales turnover by up to 10%.

In addition to product variations, improving service quality is an important element in attracting and retaining consumers, especially Muslim tourists, who are the main segment of the halal tourism ecosystem. The 5S service, namely smile, greeting, politeness, and courtesy, is a basic thing that must be given to customers. In Kota Lama Semarang, a number of restaurants and hotels have taken the initiative to provide sharia services, ranging from the availability of halal food to adequate worship facilities, such as musholla, qibla direction, and clean ablution places. Moreover, most cafes, restaurants, and other establishments offer digital payment services, namely QRIS. In addition, for making it easier for businesspeople to find returns, this is part of the digital adaptation that is growing day by day. Meanwhile, in the MAJT area, improvements in sharia-based services are evident in the management of mosque facilities that are very friendly to tourists. A large parking area, clean toilets and ablutions, and an organized arrangement of buying and selling zones reflect the manager's efforts to provide

spiritual and physical comfort for visitors. Some inns and homestays around MAJT have also started offering additional services, such as halal breakfast. Although MAJT is an area with strong Islamic influences, the neighborhood remains open to non-Muslim visitors, allowing access to the mosque minaret and museum within the complex, provided they follow the rules and maintain order. Providing services according to Sharia principles without closing access to non-Muslim tourists can strengthen the area's image as a tolerant and culturally open religious tourism destination.

Furthermore, the adoption of digital technology in marketing strategies is becoming an increasingly dominant form of innovation in the dynamics of contemporary halal tourism. In both the Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT areas, businesses, especially in the culinary sector, actively use digital platforms such as Instagram, Google Maps, and location-based booking apps to expand their market reach and build brand awareness. Marketing strategies include interactive promotions, publishing customer testimonials, and special offers tailored to religious observances, such as Ramadan or Islamic holidays. This practice not only increases consumer engagement but also creates a destination image that is responsive to the religious values and digital needs of millennial Muslim travelers. This digital adoption also occurs at MAJT, which uses social media for product promotion.

In addition to internal support for business sustainability, there is external support from the Semarang city government. The Semarang city government is developing tourism through the concept of Smart Tourism, including the use of three information media in the form of applications, websites, and social media that can help tourists access information related to their destination. Semarang City Government also issued regulations on halal food products, including Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2021 on Halal Food Products (PMH). The aim is to maintain halal food consumption for the community and tourism visitors. Not only that, more specifically, the Semarang city government issued Semarang City Mayor Regulation (Perwali) Number 39 of 2024 concerning the Implementation of Quality Tourism, which highlights the characteristics of the destination (bpk.go.id, 2024). The city of Yogyakarta implements tourism development efforts that are based on increasing promotion and developing the attractiveness of tourist attractions, so that there is always something new in a certain period, so that tourists remain interested in coming (Rahman et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, although innovation has been running massively, there are still challenges for some halalpreneurs. One of the main challenges in developing halal tourism is the low understanding of halalpreneurs towards halal certification. Some halalpreneurs, especially small and medium-scale, have difficulty understanding the certification procedures and the costs involved. In addition, a saturated market forms, where large-scale business actors offer similar products. Some halalpreneurs, new business actors, tend to imitate products from well-known old business actors. Moreover, some halalpreneurs are not fully reliable in adopting the latest technology. According to snack traders, most young halalpreneurs create content to promote their selling places. For this reason, assistance is needed to help halalpreneurs optimize existing

opportunities and facilities. Thus, halal tourism has a positive impact not only on business actors in the region but also on the growth of national income.

Halal Tourism Potential for Sustainable Economic Growth (SDGs) in Semarang City

Halal tourism in Semarang City's tourism sector has great potential to support sustainable economic growth. Based on growth data for Semarang City's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP), the tourism sector shows a positive trend, though during the COVID-19 pandemic, it contracted by 3.76 percent. Although Semarang City's economy has not fully recovered, the tourism sector rebounded, growing 5.05 percent the following year and 8.11 percent in 2022. In 2023, the sector continued to record positive growth of 7.70 percent. Meanwhile, the tourism sector's contribution to Semarang City's economy fluctuated. From 7.95 percent in 2019, the contribution declined to 7.81 percent in 2020 and then to 7.69 percent in 2021, due to activity restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19. However, with the improvement of economic conditions, the contribution of the tourism sector began to recover, increasing to 7.77 percent in 2022 and rising again to 7.84 percent in 2023 (BPS kota Semarang, 2024).

Before the pandemic, the tourism sector was one of the leading sectors that made a major contribution to the domestic economy, as well as a sustainable industry with a wide impact on lower-income communities. Tourism is also an important source of foreign exchange and creates significant employment. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, has put severe pressure on the tourism sector and its related sectors, such as hospitality, culinary, cleaning services, local tour guides, and transportation. However, this situation is also a catalyst for transformation in the tourism sector in Indonesia.

On the other hand, halal tourism has seen significant growth in Semarang City, particularly in popular destinations such as Kota Lama Semarang and the Great Mosque of Central Java (MAJT). Visitation data from 2021 and 2023 show an increase of up to 30 percent, which has a direct impact on local revenue growth (PAD). In addition, there has been an increase in the number of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in the halal sector, including souvenir products, culinary, and services. Based on interviews with business owners, around 65 percent of respondents reported a turnover increase of up to 25 percent after obtaining halal certification for their products. This shows that halal tourism attracts not only Muslim but also non-Muslim tourists, thereby expanding the market's diversity. In detail, other potentials are as follows:

1. Has easy access. Both Kota Lama Semarang Area and MAJT have good accessibility, which supports halal tourism. Each can be reached by public transportation, such as Trans Semarang buses, or by private transportation. The good access to these three locations makes it easy for tourists to enjoy a halal tourism experience in Semarang.
2. Tourism Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities. The infrastructure includes roads, public facilities, and transportation. Semarang City's infrastructure has developed rapidly, including well-maintained highways, public facilities, and an adequate transportation system. Wide and well-maintained main roads facilitate the mobility of residents and tourists, while public facilities such as

parks, seating, parking lots, places of worship, food stalls, and community service centers are available to meet public needs. Public transportation, including Trans Semarang buses and city buses, serves various areas, making it easy to reach tourist and commercial destinations. With this infrastructure, Semarang City can support tourism growth and enhance visitors' comfort. Each tourist destination is also typically equipped with basic facilities, such as public toilets, which enhance visitors' comfort. In addition, accommodation facilities in Semarang City are also quite adequate in supporting the tourism sector. From 2019 to 2022, the number of accommodations increased steadily, even during the pandemic. However, after the pandemic ended in 2023, the number of hotels decreased slightly. It was recorded that in that year, there were 275 hotels in Semarang City, comprising 187 starred hotels and 88 non-starred hotels (BPS Kota Semarang, 2024).

3. Potential of the Muslim Community. In 2023, based on the report (BPS, 2023) The Muslim population in Semarang City is 87.6%. With this number, it greatly supports the city's halal atmosphere. The high proportion of the Muslim population creates a friendly environment for Muslim tourists, with the need for services and facilities that comply with Sharia principles. This is reflected in the provision of halal food, easily accessible places of worship, and activities that are in accordance with Islamic values. The presence of a strong Muslim community also contributes to the development of halal tourism, enriching the tourist experience with authentic cultural and traditional activities.
4. Beautiful and memorable tourist attractions for visitors. The natural beauty and historical sites in Semarang City offer a memorable experience for visitors, making it a major attraction for halal tourism. For example, the Kota Lama Semarang and MAJT provide a rich cultural experience. The beauty of colonial architecture and the Old City's historical atmosphere, combined with the charming natural backdrop, make the area a strong draw for tourists.
5. Provisions for organizing events in accordance with sharia. Such as the Halal Center Festival at MAJT and cultural performances in Kota Lama, Semarang.
6. Support from the government, especially the management, Regional Regulation Number 1 of 2021 concerning Halal Food Products, further strengthens this ecosystem by guaranteeing the quality and safety of the products consumed. Then, the halal culinary center that prioritizes the principle of halal from upstream to downstream is a real example of how halal tourism can strengthen the local economy (JDIH BPK, 2021).
7. Availability of a surveillance system that provides convenience and security for visitors. Based on the author's observations, there is a surveillance team at every tourist destination, including security personnel and CCTV. The goal is to reduce unwanted risks.
8. Opportunities for women's empowerment and reducing gender gaps. Many business actors are women active in the culinary and craft sectors, demonstrating that halal tourism can serve as a platform to support gender equality. This can be seen from the large number of halalpreneurs around tourist destinations who are, in fact, products of women or housewives.

In general, the potential for halal tourism in Semarang City aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

1. SDG 1: No Poverty

Table 1. Number of Poor in Semarang City

	Number of Poor in Semarang City (Thousand People)				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Semarang City	79,58	84,45	78,87	80,53	77,79

Source: BPS of Semarang City

Table 1.1 shows that the number of poor people in Semarang City fluctuates. However, the increase in 2021 was also partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, efforts were still underway to restore the economy. And as a result, in 2022, the number of poor people in Semarang City decreased to 78.87%. Unfortunately, in 2023, the number of poor people in Semarang increased to 80.53% and decreased again in 2024 to 77.79 (BPS, 2024a).

2. SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

According to data from the BPS of Semarang City, the open unemployment rate in 2022 was 7.60%. This figure is better when compared to 2021 and 2020, which were 9.54 and 9.57 (BPS, 2022). However, the government needs to pay special attention to reducing the unemployment rate. The reason is that overcoming open unemployment will enable Semarang City to obtain quality human resources, enabling it to quickly achieve its goals.

3. SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

The development of industry in Semarang City, according to (semarangkota.go.id, 2023) can be seen from the increase in the number of MSMEs, from 29,611 in 2022 and 2023 to 30,024 in 2022 and 2023, and in industries, from 1,197 in 2022 and 2023 to 1,197 in 2022 and 2023. Thus, innovation and infrastructure have also increased rapidly.

4. SDG 10: Reduce Inequality

In September 2022, the level of inequality among the Central Java population, as measured by the Gini Coefficient, was 0.366. This figure decreased by 0.008 points when compared to the March 2022 Gini Ratio of 0.374. Likewise, when compared to the September 2021 Gini Ratio of 0.368, it decreased by 0.002 points. Meanwhile, the Gini Ratio in urban areas in September 2022 was recorded at 0.392. Down when compared to the March 2022 Gini Ratio of 0.404 and slightly down when compared to the September 2021 Gini Ratio of 0.393. Meanwhile, the Gini Ratio in rural areas in September 2022 was recorded at 0.326, up when compared to the September 2021 Gini Ratio of 0.324 (Semarangkota.go.id, 2022). This means the city of Semarang is approaching 0 in terms of welfare equality.

5. **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

Based on data from (sidesa.jatengprov.go.id, 2023), Central Java province has no underdeveloped villages. The details are 19 independent villages, 77 advanced villages, and 112 developing villages.

6. **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Products**

The compliance rate of business and/or activity managers with environmental permits, PPLH permits, and PUU LH issued by the Semarang City Government was 88.23% in 2023. Meanwhile, the Implementation of Waste Management in the Semarang City Area is 72.1% (semarangkota.go.id, 2023b). This figure is quite good in terms of business accountability compliance. However, of course, the problem of waste is also important. Considering that waste production in the City of Semarang is also increasing every day.

7. **SDG 17: Partnership for Purpose**

To realize an increasingly advanced Semarang City, Semarang City establishes partnerships to achieve its goals. Such as partnerships with companies to increase CSR in education. In a report released by the Semarang City Government, it was revealed that the realization of CSR funds donated by various companies had reached 41.95 percent or equivalent to 20.7 billion of the total budget allocated for the Education sector (BBPMP Prov. Jawa Tengah, 2023). This means that the stronger the partnership forged by Semarang City, the greater its impact on sustainable development in the city.

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that halal tourism in Semarang City can help improve sustainable development (SDGs). This is proven by the best award for Sustainable Development and Smart Economy for Semarang City in 2022 ([Semarangkota.go.id](https://semarangkota.go.id), 2022). The award was presented at the I-SIM for Cities Award event during Indonesia's SDGs Annual Conference in 2022. The I-SIM for Cities Award program is the result of collaboration between PT. Surveyor Indonesia, Bappenas, and APEKSI, which is part of the support for the Sustainable Development Goals (TPB) in accordance with the provisions of Presidential Regulation No. 59 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of Achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

E. CONCLUSION

The impact of halal tourism on Muslim entrepreneurial innovation in Semarang City shows that the growth of this sector has encouraged business actors to be more creative and responsive to market needs. The increase in the number of tourists, both local and foreign, has created opportunities for Muslim entrepreneurs to develop products and services that not only meet halal standards but also appeal to non-Muslim consumers. Innovation in product quality, service, and promotion is key to winning in the increasingly competitive tourism industry.

In addition, the potential for halal tourism in Semarang City has a significant contribution to sustainable economic growth, in line with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The development of this sector contributes to the creation of more jobs, increased community income, and more responsible production practices. By supporting sustainability and inclusivity, halal tourism not

only strengthens the local economy but also creates synergies between economic growth and social welfare. Not only that, but Semarang City's sustainable development (SDGs) also shows significant growth. This is evidenced by Semarang City receiving the Best Award for Sustainable Development and Smart Economy in 2022.

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