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The Economic Impact of Halal Tourism in Muslim and Non-Muslim Countries: A Comparative Study of Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Africa

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ABSTRACT

This research examines and compares the economic impact of halal tourism in Muslim and non-Muslim contexts, analyzing Indonesia, Hong Kong, and selected African countries. It aims to identify how demographic, policy, and socio-cultural factors shape halal tourism's contribution to economic development. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing a systematic literature review. Academic journals, international reports, and policy documents published between 2010 and 2023 were analyzed through content and comparative analyses to assess halal tourism's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) growth, employment, and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) development across the three regions. The findings reveal that halal tourism generates significant economic benefits in Indonesia, thanks to strong regulatory support, cultural alignment, and the empowerment of MSMEs. In Hong Kong, halal tourism contributes moderately by attracting high-spending Muslim tourists through adaptive market strategies despite a small domestic Muslim population. In Africa, the economic impact remains limited but shows strong potential, particularly in countries with Islamic heritage, which is constrained mainly by weak infrastructure and inadequate policy support. The study highlights the importance of context-specific strategies in maximizing the economic impact of halal tourism and supports the multiplier effect theory in tourism economics. This research provides a cross-regional comparative framework that integrates economic, cultural, and policy perspectives in halal tourism studies.

Keywords: Halal Tourism; Economic Impact; Comparative Study; Muslim and Non-Muslim Countries; Tourism Development

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of halal tourism in the last decade has become a serious concern in academic studies and practices of the global tourism industry. The growth of the world's Muslim population, projected to exceed 2 billion by 2030, has made the halal tourism sector one of the most promising market segments [1]. This phenomenon is not only relevant in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, or Saudi Arabia, but also in non-Muslim countries such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and even Hong Kong, which have begun to adapt Muslim-friendly services to attract Muslim tourists from the Middle East and Southeast Asia [2]. The presence of halal tourism marks a paradigm shift in the global tourism industry, one that no longer relies solely on natural and cultural attractions but also takes into account the spiritual, ethical, and religious dimensions of tourists' identities [3].

Halal tourism in Indonesia is growing rapidly in line with government policy support, halal certification regulations, and international promotion [4]. Lombok, Aceh, and Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) have been recognized as leading halal destinations that enhance Indonesia's global image. Hong Kong, which is not a Muslim country, has also shown strategic initiatives in accommodating the needs of Muslim tourists by providing halal-certified restaurants, prayer rooms in shopping malls, and Muslim-friendly tourist guides [5]. In Africa, several countries, including Morocco, Tunisia, and South Africa, are pioneering halal tourism by promoting religious tourism and Islamic history. However, most countries in the region still face limited infrastructure, a lack of halal promotion, and weak supporting regulations [6]. Halal tourism still presents several challenges, despite its great potential. First, there is a gap in understanding between tourism service providers and the needs of Muslim tourists. In many destinations, halal facilities are not evenly distributed, ranging from the availability of halal food and prayer rooms to services that adhere to Sharia principles. Second, in terms of regulations, not all countries have a strong and internationally recognized halal certification system, which raises doubts among tourists about the authenticity of halal labels. Third, in practice, integrating halal tourism into national economic development strategies is often suboptimal. Halal tourism is treated more as a marketing trend than a long-term development strategy [7].

Based on a theoretical aspect, there is still a gap in understanding the difference in the economic impact of halal tourism between Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Many previous studies have only emphasized the marketing dimension, consumer behaviour, or branding of halal destinations, but have not provided an in-depth comparative analysis of the real contribution of halal tourism to GDP, labour absorption, and growth of local MSMEs in various countries [8]. There have not been many studies that elaborate on the role of socio-cultural and political factors in determining the success of halal tourism implementation. For example, local community support in Indonesia is relatively substantial because it aligns with the cultural identity of the majority of the population. In contrast, in Hong Kong, public acceptance is more adaptive and pragmatic [9]. In Africa, ethnic and religious diversity poses its own challenges in promoting halal tourism as a collective identity [10].

Some previous studies have provided a partial picture of this phenomenon. The importance of developing halal-based tourism villages in Indonesia as a strategy for local economic empowerment [11]. The awareness of the halal supply chain in Hong Kong remains limited, but it is beginning to develop [12]. The opportunities and challenges of Islamic tourism in Africa, particularly in relation to infrastructure limitations [13]. The loyalty of Muslim tourists to non-Muslim destinations is influenced by the comfort level of halal facilities [14]. According to the study's results above, there is a tendency for halal tourism to have a positive economic impact; however, no systematic research has been conducted to compare its economic effects across Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Studies on halal tourism have grown rapidly in the last two decades as global awareness of the needs of Muslim tourists has increased. Academic literature indicates that halal tourism is not merely a tourism business practice that accommodates halal consumption, but has evolved into a multifaceted concept that encompasses creativity, culture, and political economy, influencing relations between nations [15]. Within the framework of this study, the theoretical discussion focuses on five main aspects: the concept and principles of halal tourism; halal tourism in an economic perspective; halal tourism in Muslim countries; halal tourism in non-Muslim countries; and the theory of tourism economic development based on cross-country comparisons.

The phenomenon of halal tourism was first popularized

academically, with the travel behaviour of Muslim tourists as the basis for the emergence of the Sharia-based tourism industry [16]. Soonsan and Jumani broadened the perspective by examining Muslim tourists' loyalty to non-Muslim destinations, finding that it was strongly influenced by the availability of halal facilities [17]. Thus, theoretically, halal tourism can be understood as a form of tourism services designed in accordance with Sharia principles, including the provision of halal food, alcohol-free accommodations, worship facilities, and service ethics that reflect Islamic values. From an economic perspective, halal tourism contributes significantly to GDP growth, job creation, and the empowerment of MSMEs. Halal-based tourism villages in Indonesia have been shown to increase community income while strengthening the local business ecosystem [18]. Halal regulations are a crucial tool for promoting the competitiveness of halal tourism globally. The multiplier effect theory in the tourism economy explains that the arrival of Muslim tourists benefits not only the accommodation and transportation sectors but also stimulates growth in the food and beverage, handicrafts, and support services sectors [19].

The majority Muslim demographic base supports the theory of halal tourism development in Muslim countries such as Indonesia. This aligns with the theory of cultural congruence, which posits that economic practices that align with the dominant culture are more easily accepted and developed [20]. Non-Muslim countries such as Hong Kong demonstrate the relevance of market adaptation theory, in which tourism service providers tailor products and services to access high-purchasing-power Muslim market segments. The adaptation of halal services in Hong Kong has significantly increased tourist visits from the Middle East [9]. The development of halal tourism in Africa is still in its early stages. A relevant resource-based view theory is employed here, where the natural superiority and historical heritage of Islam in Morocco or Tunisia can serve as a unique resource to attract Muslim tourists [21]. However, without adequate halal infrastructure support, this potential has not been able to have an optimal economic impact. The comparative advantage approach is the basis for analysis in the theory of tourism economic development. Indonesia has an advantage in its large Muslim population and supportive regulatory framework. Hong Kong excels in global accessibility and modern facilities, while Africa excels in the uniqueness of its natural resources and history. However, competitive advantage must be built through halal service innovation, global promotion, and a strong branding strategy. Therefore, this comparative study is important for explaining how differences in the characteristics of Muslim and non-Muslim countries affect the economic outcomes of halal tourism.

Previous research has highlighted the limitations of studying halal tourism theory. First, there is still little research that explicitly links halal tourism to macroeconomic indicators, such as GDP contribution and employment. Second, the literature still tends to be biased towards the Muslim countries, while studies in non-Muslim countries are sporadic and descriptive. Third, there have been few studies that employ comparative theoretical frameworks to explain the variation in practices and economic impacts of halal tourism across countries. Thus, this study closes the theoretical gap by integrating the concept of halal tourism, economic development theory, and cross-regional comparative analysis. This research is here to fill this gap by conducting comparative studies in Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Africa. The researcher argues that this comparative study is significant because it will show how demographic, policy, and cultural factors affect the economic impact of halal tourism. Practically, the results of this study are urgent because they can serve as the basis for halal tourism development policy recommendations in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Theoretically, this research contributes to expanding the halal tourism discourse from a political economy perspective, rather than focusing solely on marketing and branding. The purpose of this study is to analyze and compare the economic impact of halal tourism in Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Africa, as well as to formulate a development strategy model that is tailored to the characteristics of each region. As a reinforcement of the argument, the following is presented a comparative table of halal tourism conditions in Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Africa.

Table 1 indicates that this research has a high level of both academic and practical urgency. Academically, this research fills a gap in the literature on the comparative analysis of the economic impact of halal tourism in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Practically, this research makes a significant contribution to policymakers, industry players, and the community, enabling them to optimize opportunities in the growing halal tourism market. The results of the re-

search are expected to strengthen Indonesia's position as a global leader in the halal tourism industry, provide strategic input for Hong Kong to expand its Muslim tourist market, and serve as an inspiration for African countries in formulating more structured and globally competitive halal tourism development strategies.

Table 1. Comparison of Halal Tourism Conditions in Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Africa.

Aspects	Indonesia (Muslim Country)	Hong Kong (Non-Muslim)	Africa (Mixed Muslim & Non-Muslim)
Demographic Base	The majority of Muslims (87%)	Muslim minority (less than 5%)	Varied, Morocco & Tunisia Muslim majority, South African minority
Halal Infrastructure	Relatively established (Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) halal certification, Sharia hotels, halal culinary, spacious mosques)	Limited but growing (halal restaurants, prayer rooms in malls & airports)	It is still minimal, especially in sub-Saharan Africa; Morocco is relatively more prepared
Government Policy	There are national regulations and international promotions (Wonderful Indonesia Halal)	Partial support through the Tourism Board	Sporadic support, more for the promotion of religious tourism
Economic Impact	Significant: contribution to GDP, MSMEs grow, and the workforce increases	It is starting to be felt, especially in the retail and hospitality sectors	Not optimal, limited to certain areas
Challenge	Infrastructure in the districts is uneven, and Malaysia and Turkey outpace the global average in promotion.	Lack of local understanding of halal, small domestic market	Weak infrastructure, limited promotion, and halal branding are not strong

Source: Ghozani et al. [9]; Bekkin and Shnyrkova [10]; Rahmawati et al. [22].

2. Materials and Methods

The research applies a systematic narrative literature review with a qualitative comparative analysis to analyze the economic impact of halal tourism in Muslim and non-Muslim countries, with a focus on Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Africa. This design enables structured comparison while preserving contextual depth from prior empirical and policy-oriented studies.

The research process is carried out in several stages. First, the researchers formulated research questions focused on how halal tourism contributes to economic growth in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, and on the factors that differentiate these impacts. Second, the researcher identifies relevant literature sources, including articles from reputable international journals, conference proceedings, reports from international institutions such as the Global Muslim Travel Index (MTI), government policy documents, and academic books on halal tourism, the creative economy, and tourism development.

Inclusion criteria covered peer-reviewed journal articles, official reports, and institutional publications published in English or Indonesian, focusing on halal tourism, halal industry development, and measurable economic impacts. Excluded were opinion pieces, non-scholarly sources, duplicated studies, and articles lacking explicit economic indicators or methodological clarity. The data collection technique involved searching scientific databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using the keywords "halal tourism", "economic impact", "Muslim and non-Muslim countries", "Indonesia", "Hong Kong", and "Africa". The literature selection was carried out using the following inclusion criteria: (1) publications from 2010–2023 to maintain relevance, (2) literature that directly discusses halal tourism and its impact on the economy, and (3) literature that includes empirical and conceptual studies. From the search results, the researchers collected more than 80 publications and narrowed them to approximately 40 sources most relevant to the research focus.

Data analysis was carried out using content analysis and comparative analysis methods. In the first stage, the literature is categorized based on the main themes, such as the contribution of halal tourism to GDP, job creation, strengthening MSMEs, international promotion, infrastructure, and the role of policy. In the second stage, the researchers compared the literature from three research, namely Indonesia, Hong

Kong, and Africa, to see differences in strategies, achievements, and challenges. This approach enables researchers to identify both common patterns and the uniqueness of each region. Economic indicators, including GDP contribution, employment generation, and MSME development, were identified through keyword screening and content relevance. Data were extracted by mapping reported figures, trends, and qualitative assessments, then compared across cases using thematic alignment and cross-country comparison to highlight similarities, gaps, and structural differences in economic performance and policy orientation.

The validity of the research is maintained by triangulating literature sources from various databases and policy documents, as well as comparing the results of empirical research with conceptual analyses [23]. In addition, the researcher ensures the transparency of the process by documenting the stages of literature selection, including the inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as thematic maps of the analysis results. This research not only describes the conditions of halal tourism in the three regions, but also offers a comparative analysis that explains the differences in economic impact both theoretically and practically. This qualitative literature review method also provides an opportunity for further research to develop an integrative model that connects social, cultural, and policy dimensions in the development of cross-border halal tourism.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Concepts and Principles of Halal Tourism

Halal tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on providing tourism services, products, and experiences that comply with Islamic Sharia. Muslim tourists can enjoy safe facilities and services that support their religious beliefs in halal tourism. Halal tourism encompasses various aspects that adhere to religious rules, including accommodation, food, transportation, and recreation [24]. The main characteristics of halal tourism include providing halal-certified food, worship facilities such as prayer rooms, and services that avoid things contrary to Islamic values, such as alcohol and gambling [25]. In addition, halal tourism destinations often offer activities that prioritize moral and spiritual aspects, such as religious tourism [26].

The development of halal tourism has become a global phenomenon, not only limited to Muslim countries but also adopted by non-Muslim countries wishing to attract Muslim tourists. Halal tourism plays a crucial role in meeting the needs of this burgeoning market segment, as the global Muslim population is projected to exceed 2 billion by 2030. This recognition of the Muslim market's significance underscores the importance of halal tourism in the global travel industry [27].

The cornerstone of halal tourism is adherence to Sharia, encompassing Islamic rules on hygiene, ethics, and consumption. All products and services in halal tourism, including food, drinks, and lodging facilities, must be halal-certified. This certification ensures that Muslim tourists receive products and services that meet Islamic law standards, instilling confidence and reassurance in the quality of their travel experience [28].

Muslim-friendly infrastructure, such as the availability of places of worship and regular prayer times, is integral to halal tourism [29]. The services provided must also comply with Islamic norms, including friendliness and honesty in customer service. Countries that want to develop halal tourism must adopt policies that enable Muslim tourists to feel comfortable and safe in their worship and daily activities [30].

The history of halal tourism begins with Muslims needing to adhere to religious teachings when travelling [31]. In Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, halal tourism has developed rapidly since the early 2000s, with the promotion of religious tourist attractions and the provision of facilities that comply with Sharia principles. Non-Muslim countries such as Thailand, Japan, and South Korea are starting to realize the economic potential of halal tourism. They are beginning to adapt their products and services to attract Muslim tourists. They implement halal tourism promotion strategies by providing halal food and worship facilities, and avoiding practices that do not align with Islamic values. Although a non-Muslim country, Hong Kong is also developing its halal tourism sector to attract tourists from Muslim countries, particularly those from the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

3.2. Economic Impact of Halal Tourism in Muslim Countries

Indonesia, with the world's largest Muslim population, has significant potential for developing halal tourism. Various tourist destinations across the country, including Bali,

Lombok, and Aceh, have begun offering halal tourism products and services to attract both domestic and international tourists[32]. The economic potential of halal tourism in Indonesia encompasses contributing to the tourism sector, generating new jobs, and expanding business opportunities for local enterprises[33].

The Indonesian government has taken strategic steps to encourage this sector through various policies and initiatives. One is halal certification for restaurants, hotels, and tourism-related products, managed by the Indonesian Ulema Council[34]. The government also promotes halal tourism in international forums, such as the Halal Tourism Summit and the World Halal Travel Awards. Adequate infrastructure, such as the construction of mosques and ablution facilities in major tourist destinations, also supports the development of halal tourism[35].

Halal tourism has a significant impact on local economies across various regions of Indonesia. One example is Lombok, which was officially promoted as a halal tourist destination[36]. The increase in Muslim tourists has driven the growth of the hospitality, restaurant, and related services sectors, generating additional income for local communities. The small and medium enterprise sector also benefits from the growing demand for halal products, including handicrafts, regional culinary delights, and souvenirs.

The increase in tourist flows also benefits the transportation sector and local infrastructure. Airports, highways, and public transportation in tourist areas have improved in quality to meet the needs of tourists. Overall, halal tourism has strengthened the tourism sector's contribution to Indonesia's gross domestic product and improved the welfare of communities focused on halal tourism. Although the potential for halal tourism in Indonesia is enormous, this sector also faces numerous challenges. One issue is a lack of in-depth understanding of Muslim tourists' needs among service providers and tourism business actors. Many destinations lack the necessary infrastructure to provide comprehensive halal services, including halal-certified food and adequate worship facilities[37].

Indonesia also faces challenges in marketing and promoting halal tourism internationally. Although the government has attempted to promote Indonesia as a halal destination, competition from other countries, such as Malaysia and Turkey, remains a significant obstacle. However, opportunities for developing halal tourism in Indonesia remain wide open. The global Muslim tourist market potential continues to grow, and Indonesia can capitalize on its natural, cultural, and diverse tourist destinations to attract more Muslim tourists. With appropriate government policies and improved infrastructure, Indonesia has an excellent opportunity to become a global leader in halal tourism[38].

The results of the literature review indicate that Indonesia is one of the countries with the most significant development of halal tourism globally. Since 2015, Indonesia has been actively promoting halal destinations through the Wonderful Indonesia Halal Tourism Campaign, which is supported by halal certification regulations from the Indonesian Ulema Council. Lombok, Aceh, and NTB have successfully established themselves as pioneers of halal destinations, garnering international recognition[39].

The economic contribution of halal tourism in Indonesia is evident in the growth of the tourism sector's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to a report by the Ministry of Tourism, the halal tourism sector accounted for more than 20% of the total national tourism contribution in 2019. Additionally, halal tourism promotes the growth of local MSMEs, particularly in the culinary, handicraft, and community-based tour guide services sectors. Labour absorption has also increased significantly, especially in leading halal destination areas, which demonstrates the multiplier effect of halal tourism on the local economy[40]. However, challenges remain, including uneven halal infrastructure, low halal literacy among tourism industry players, and fierce competition with Malaysia and Turkey in global halal branding[41]. This indicates that, despite the substantial economic impact, the sustainability of halal tourism in Indonesia still requires strengthening international promotional strategies and regulatory consistency. Halal tourism has a strategic economic impact on Muslim countries, boosting GDP, foreign exchange earnings, and job creation. This sector expands opportunities for MSMEs and triggers infrastructure investment. Muslim tourist spending is projected to reach USD 300 billion with a total of 230 million travelers by 2026[42].

3.3. Economic Impact of Halal Tourism in Non-Muslim Countries

Hong Kong has adopted halal tourism to attract Muslim tourists, although it is not a Muslim-majority country,

especially from the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Halal tourism in Hong Kong begins with steps that cater to Muslim tourists' needs, such as certifying restaurants and offering prayer facilities, as well as creating a welcoming environment for Muslim visitors. Although Hong Kong is not yet an established halal tourism destination like Malaysia or Indonesia, the local government and private sector have collaborated to develop more inclusive tourism infrastructure and services [43].

The Hong Kong government has promoted halal tourism by collaborating with restaurants, hotels, and shopping centers to obtain halal certification through the Hong Kong Tourism Board [44]. Additionally, a Muslim-friendly travel guide offers information on halal dining options, mosque locations, and prayer times. This strategy has helped increase the number of Muslim tourists visiting Hong Kong, directly impacting the city's hospitality, restaurant, and retail sectors [12].

The presence of Muslim tourists in Hong Kong has had a significant economic impact. Muslim tourists, especially those from Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, are a high-spending tourist segment, particularly in luxury accommodations, shopping, and entertainment. This makes Hong Kong increasingly active in promoting Muslim-friendly services and products to attract more tourists from this segment. For example, large shopping centers in Hong Kong now provide places of worship and offer halal food options in various restaurants. As the number of Muslim tourists increases, related sectors such as transportation, tour services, and retail directly benefit. This increases local income and strengthens Hong Kong's position as one of the halal tourist destinations in the East Asia region [45].

Hong Kong is not the only non-Muslim country to adopt a halal tourism strategy. Several other countries, such as Japan, Thailand, and South Korea, have also developed policies that support halal tourism to attract Muslim tourists [46]. In Japan, Muslim-friendly transportation services, including trains with prayer facilities and halal food options, are available at major stations. Thailand also offers accommodation with Muslim-friendly facilities in various tourist destinations [47].

Halal tourism promotion strategies in non-Muslim countries generally focus on providing easily accessible information for Muslim tourists. Halal travel guides, applications that map halal restaurants and mosques, and organizing halal tourism events are some of the steps taken to attract more Muslim tourists. In addition, these countries also actively participate in international tourism exhibitions, especially those focused on the halal sector, to expand their market reach [48].

As a non-Muslim country, Hong Kong occupies a unique position in the development of halal tourism. The studies of O'Connor and Ho emphasized that Hong Kong has succeeded in identifying the potential market for Muslim tourists, especially from Gulf countries known for their high purchasing power. Muslim tourists in Hong Kong spend heavily on luxury accommodation, shopping, and halal cuisine. The government's efforts through the Hong Kong Tourism Board focus on providing Muslim-friendly facilities, such as halal-certified restaurants, prayer halls in airports and shopping malls, and digital halal tourism guides [44]. This has been proven to increase the number of Muslim tourist visits, which in turn has a positive impact on the hospitality, retail, and transportation sectors.

Economically, Muslim tourists' contribution to Hong Kong's tourism revenue continues to increase, though their share remains lower than that of Indonesia. The main challenge lies in the limited domestic market, due to the small number of local Muslims, as well as the low understanding of halal needs among tourism industry players [49]. Nevertheless, Hong Kong's market adaptation demonstrates that non-Muslim countries can leverage halal tourism to diversify their tourism economies.

Halal tourism in Africa is still relatively new and in its early stages of development. Muslim-majority countries such as Morocco and Tunisia are more established in promoting halal tourism based on Islamic history and culture. North African countries such as Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia dominate the top rankings for halal tourism (Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) category) according to the GMTI 2025. In the south, South Africa is a key player in the non-OIC category. In addition, Tanzania (especially Zanzibar) and Mauritius stand out thanks to their Muslim-friendly infrastructure and natural beauty. Religious tourism, visits to historical sites, and halal cuisine are the main attractions that support the local economy [50]. However, in non-Muslim African countries such as South Africa, the adoption of halal

tourism is still limited. The biggest challenges are the limitations of halal infrastructure, weak certification systems, and a lack of global promotion [51]. In fact, Africa's potential is enormous, with its natural wealth, diverse culture, and rich Islamic historical heritage that can be marketed as a halal tourism attraction [17]. The economic contribution generated from halal tourism in Africa remains relatively small compared to Indonesia and Hong Kong; however, it has excellent growth prospects if the government and the private sector collaborate to provide halal facilities and promote the sector internationally. Halal tourism is a major economic engine for non-Muslim destinations like Singapore, Thailand, and the UK. By attracting high-spending travelers through Muslim-friendly infrastructure, these countries significantly boost their GDP, diversify market segments, and create jobs. Globally, Muslim travel expenditure is projected to reach $300 billion by 2026 [52].

3.4. Comparison of the Economic Impact of Halal Tourism in Indonesia, Hong Kong and Africa

Each region—Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Africa—has a distinct approach to developing halal tourism, tailored to its demographic and sociocultural characteristics. Indonesia has more mature policies and infrastructure than other Muslim-majority countries. Halal certification, worship facilities in tourist destinations, and training programs for business actors in providing halal services are all managed by official institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council [53]. The government promotes halal destinations internationally, primarily through the Wonderful Indonesia program.

Policies supporting halal tourism in Hong Kong focus on adapting to the needs of Muslim tourists. Because Hong Kong is not a Muslim country, the adopted strategy is more incentive-based, including providing halal certification for restaurants and hotels, as well as information through tourist applications that facilitate the discovery of halal facilities for Muslim tourists. Worship infrastructure, such as prayer rooms in shopping centers and airports, is also provided as a strategic step to accommodate Muslim tourists [52].

Africa, particularly countries with significant Muslim populations such as South Africa and Morocco, has also begun to develop halal tourism [54]. However, the development of halal infrastructure in Africa lags behind that of Indonesia and Hong Kong. Policies in several African countries tend to be limited to promoting religious tourism destinations, such as mosques and Islamic historical sites, while services such as accommodation and halal food are still in the development stage [55]. Nonetheless, African countries have great potential to increase halal tourism, especially with their rich natural resources and cultural heritage [56].

Indonesia's success in developing halal tourism is primarily attributed to its sizable Muslim population. Hence, the demand for halal services extends not only to foreign tourists but also to residents. In addition, strong government support through policy and promotion, as well as the presence of established halal institutions such as the MUI, accelerate the development of this sector. However, the biggest challenge in Indonesia is infrastructure problems in several regions, which are not yet fully ready to meet international halal tourism standards [57].

Hong Kong faces different challenges in developing halal tourism, namely the lack of understanding of Muslim tourists' needs among local industry players. However, Hong Kong has managed to overcome some of these challenges by providing flexible and Muslim-friendly services despite not having a large Muslim population base. Support from the private sector is crucial, particularly in hospitality and restaurants.

Africa, despite its vast potential, still faces serious infrastructure challenges. Many tourist destinations in Africa are not ready to attract Muslim tourists due to the lack of halal facilities, both in the form of food and accommodation [58]. Apart from that, limitations in promotion and branding as halal tourist destinations hinder the progress of African countries compared to Indonesia and Hong Kong.

Social and cultural factors play an essential role in the success of halal tourism [59]. In Muslim countries like Indonesia, halal tourism receives widespread support from local communities because it is based on religious and cultural values. This creates a conducive environment for Muslim tourists, both domestic and international. In contrast, in non-Muslim countries such as Hong Kong, acceptance of halal tourism is more adaptive, with a focus on inclusive services to attract tourists from the Muslim market segment. Cultural factors in Hong Kong tend not to reject halal services, though knowledge of halal tourism among the general public still needs improvement.

Social and cultural factors in Africa also vary across countries and regions. In some countries, such as Morocco, halal tourism naturally occurs due to the country's Islamic cultural background. However, in other African countries that are not Muslim-majority, cultural and social challenges can be more significant in developing halal tourism. In these countries, more inclusive strategies and education of local communities are crucial to success in developing this sector [60].

Based on a synthesis of the literature, it is evident that the economic impact of halal tourism varies between Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Indonesia exemplifies a model of cultural congruence, where halal tourism thrives in harmony with the majority culture, supported by state regulations. Hong Kong features a market adaptation model, with a strategy of tailoring services to attract overseas Muslim tourists. Africa represents a resource-based model with great potential, but it still faces structural barriers in realizing halal infrastructure.

Table 2 shows that these findings support the multiplier effect theory in tourism economics, which holds that the presence of halal tourists can drive economic activity across various sectors. In Indonesia, the multiplier effect is particularly evident in MSMEs, the hospitality sector, and the transportation sector. In Hong Kong, the effects were more dominant in the retail and luxury accommodation sectors. In Africa, the multiplier effect remains limited, but it has significant potential as halal awareness grows. This study emphasizes the relevance of cultural congruence theory in Muslim countries, market adaptation in non-Muslim countries, and resource-based views in developing regions. This strengthens the research contribution by providing a cross-country comparative framework that has not been widely described in the previous literature.

Table 2. Comparison of the Economic Impact of Halal Tourism.

Economic Indicators	Indonesia (Muslim Country)	Hong Kong (Non-Muslim Country)	Africa (Mixed Muslim & Non-Muslim)
Contribution to GDP	High, >20% of national tourism	Moderate, limited to a specific segment	Low, still limited to certain regions
Labor Absorption	Significant in the hospitality and MSME sector	Significant in hospitality & retail	Limited, great potential if developed
MSME Growth	Strong, especially culinary & craft	Weak due to a small domestic market	Limited, depending on the majority Muslim area
Halal Infrastructure	Relatively well-established (halal certification, mosque)	Partial (halal restaurant, prayer room)	Minimal, still in the development stage
Key Challenges	Global promotion & equitable infrastructure	Low understanding of halal in the industry	Weak infrastructure & limited promotion

Source: Meyer [61]; Raimi [62]; Nugraha [63].

The conceptual framework linking halal tourism to economic outcomes integrates the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) model, Maqasid al-Shari'ah, and Community-Based Tourism (CBT). This framework maps how Islamic destination attributes influence tourist behavior, which directly impacts GDP growth and local income. The Maqasid al-Shari'ah theory supports comparative analysis by providing ethical benchmarks for evaluating the distribution of economic benefits between countries, such as Singapore and the United Kingdom. This theoretical consistency ensures that the analysis and conclusions focus not only on profitability, but also on economic justice (*'adl*) and the protection of cultural values in accordance with Sharia principles.

The findings of this research demonstrate that halal tourism has a significant economic impact, though its magnitude varies by country. Indonesia has successfully leveraged its Muslim demographic to strengthen the halal tourism industry; Hong Kong has demonstrated strategic market adaptation despite its small domestic Muslim base; and Africa holds great potential that requires policy support and infrastructure investment.

4. Conclusions

The research concludes that halal tourism has a significant economic impact in both Muslim and non-Muslim

countries, although the scale and form of contribution are different. In Indonesia, halal tourism has become a key driver of regional economic growth, contributing significantly to GDP, creating jobs, and empowering MSMEs. Government policy support, halal certification, and international promotion strengthen Indonesia's competitiveness as a global halal destination. In Hong Kong, although the number of domestic Muslims is relatively small, halal tourism has made a significant contribution through market adaptation strategies. The presence of high-net-worth Muslim tourists from the Middle East and Southeast Asia is driving the growth of the hospitality, retail, and halal culinary sectors. An inclusive strategy that provides Muslim-friendly facilities has proven effective despite limited infrastructure. In Africa, halal tourism remains underdeveloped. Countries with a majority Muslim base, such as Morocco and Tunisia, have begun to harness this potential through the promotion of Islamic historical and cultural tourism. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, the challenges of infrastructure, regulation, and halal branding still hinder optimal contributions. Africa's great potential can only be realized through policy strengthening, infrastructure investment, and consistent international promotion. The findings of this study confirm that halal tourism is not only relevant in Muslim countries but can also be an instrument of economic diversification in non-Muslim countries. From a theoretical perspective, this research strengthens the concept of the multiplier effect in tourism economics. It shows the variation in the application of cultural congruence, market adaptation, and resource-based view theories in the cross-border halal tourism.

Based on the results of the analysis, several recommendations can be proposed: 1) For Indonesia, it is necessary to strengthen international promotion by focusing on differentiating halal tourism products compared to global competitors such as Malaysia and Turkey. The equitable distribution of halal infrastructure in all tourist destinations is also important, ensuring that halal tourism is not concentrated in a single area. 2) For Hong Kong, an education strategy for local tourism industry players regarding halal standards is key so that market adaptation is not only symbolic but truly meets the needs of Muslim tourists. Cooperation with international certification bodies can also increase tourist confidence. 3) For African countries, it is necessary to build a more structured national policy on halal tourism. Investing in halal infrastructure, such as Muslim-friendly hotels, restaurants, and transportation, will create new economic opportunities. In addition, halal tourism branding should highlight Africa's rich culture, Islamic history, and natural beauty. 4) For global development, it is important to have an international standardisation of halal certification in tourism so that Muslim tourists feel safe and comfortable wherever they travel. Cross-border collaboration between Muslims and non-Muslims can expand the halal tourism market while strengthening cultural and economic diplomacy. Thus, this study not only confirms the importance of halal tourism in the global economy but also provides a cross-border comparison framework for policymakers, academics, and industry players. The subsequent research is expected to expand the analyses using a quantitative approach to measure the economic impact in more detail, utilizing GDP data, tourist visit statistics, and the contribution of the MSME sector in each country.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, H.H.A. and K.I.; methodology, M.S.; software, M.S.; validation, H.H.A., K.I. and M.S.; formal analysis, H.H.A.; investigation, K.I.; resources, M.S.; data curation, M.S.; writing—original draft preparation, H.H.A.; writing—review and editing, K.I.; visualization, M.S.; supervision, H.H.A.; project administration, K.I.; funding acquisition, M.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study because the sample consisted of locations rather than individuals.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was not used in the research, as short, informal, and occasional dialogues with members of the local population do not yield direct data. The information was

useful in strengthening our general understanding of sustainable tourism through the synergy between religious tourism and eco-tourism.

Data Availability Statement

Research material cannot be published for privacy reasons. However, all the materials that could make this research interesting were included in this article.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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