

The Economic Impact of Religious Tourism in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the current state of the literature on the role of religious tourism in economic growth in Indonesia. The research employed the *Systematic Literature Review (SLR)* method using the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA)* protocol. This study also used VOSviewer for keywords analysis. A total of 129 articles were systematically screened, resulting in 19 relevant studies. The findings indicate that religious tourism significantly contributes to income generation, job creation, MSME development, and local government revenue. However, these economic benefits are not evenly distributed across all regions and are influenced by factors such as destination management, community involvement, and government support. Literature trends reveal growing academic interest, yet publications are predominantly from non-indexed journals and focused mainly on Java. In addition based on keywords analysis, identifies five thematic clusters that highlight key research directions in religious tourism, emphasizing its socio-economic impacts, cultural significance, and potential contributions to community welfare and regional development.

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1. Introduction

Indonesia is widely recognized for its religious diversity, officially recognizing six religions that serve as integral components of the nation's cultural and spiritual framework. This diversity has given rise to numerous religious tourism destinations across various regions, making them an integral part of the country's social and cultural life. Indonesians hold deep respect for historical sites, particularly those

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associated with religious figures and ancestors, so that religious tourism objects are regarded not merely as places of visitation but also as symbols of spiritual heritage (Firsty & Suryasih, 2019; Islamiyah & Holis, 2022). In the context of tourism, religious tourism occupies a strategic position as it combines recreational aspects with spiritual dimensions. The experiences offered are not only entertaining but also provide opportunities for religious reflection, the pursuit of inner peace, and the enhancement of individual spiritual quality. Thus, religious tourism addresses both the physical and spiritual needs of individuals. Furthermore, religious tourism activities contribute significantly to regional economic development (Iriany et al., 2021).

This sector serves as a key driver of the economy through income generation and a multiplier effect that stimulates other related sectors (Miarsih, 2018). The development of religious tourism is important not only in preserving culture and spirituality but also in strategically improving the economic well-being of communities across social strata, increasing national income through foreign exchange, boosting regional original revenue (PAD), and creating new employment opportunities for local communities (Arsvendo et al., 2022).

This condition is reinforced by the fact that Indonesia is a country with a predominantly religious population and a wealth of tourism destinations that attract significant interest, as they offer a distinctive combination of spiritual values and recreational experiences. Notable religious tourism destinations in Indonesia, particularly for Muslims, include pilgrimages to the tombs of the Walisongo (Aruba, 2021), royal tombs (Rofianti & Rahmini, 2025), revered pious figures or prominent religious leaders of their time (Rohaeni & Emilda, 2021; Satriawan et al., 2019), and visits to mosques with notable architectural and historical value (Amalina & Achnes, 2017; Hakim & Nasution, 2021).

Religious tourism is also present in various traditions, such as *Tirta Yatra* among Hindus (Aryanatha, 2017), visits to temples and monasteries among Buddhists (Firsty & Suryasih, 2019), pilgrimages to historic churches, Marian grottos, and prayer hills among Christians and Catholics (Ahmad, 2023; Pelealu et al., 2022; Poceratu, 2024; Silitonga et al., 2023), as well as visits to temples (*kelenteng*) among Confucian communities (Ismawati, 2019; Ratnasari et al., 2021).

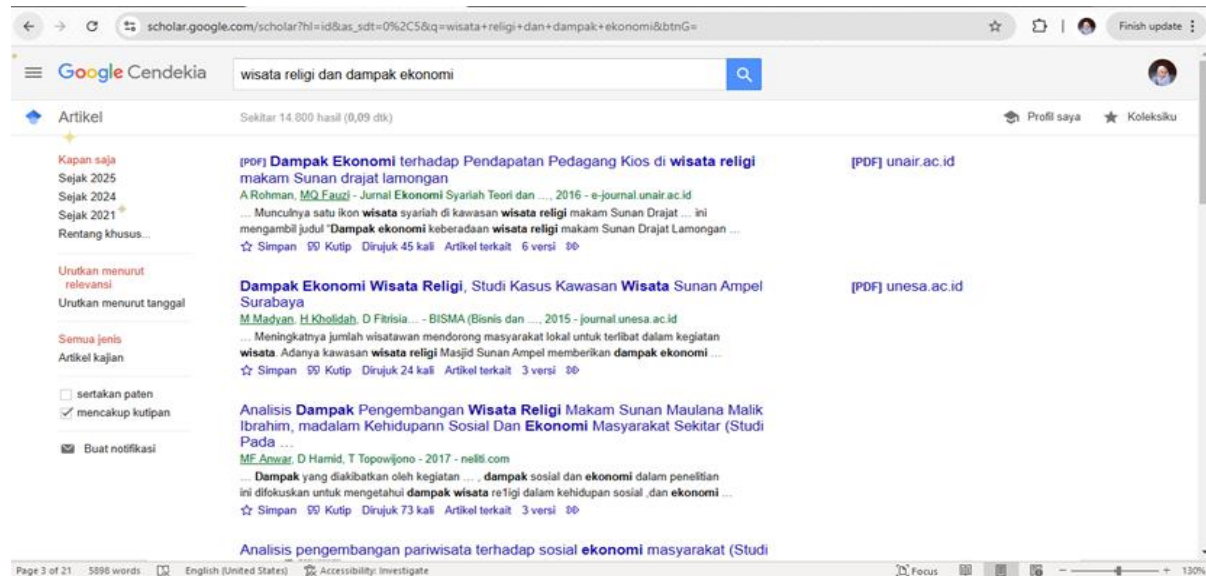
The diversity of religious tourism objects from various belief backgrounds makes religious tourism no less popular than other forms of tourism (Islamiyah & Holis, 2022). Tourism, particularly religious tourism, has the potential to influence the economic growth of communities surrounding tourist locations. This economic growth has a reciprocal relationship with the development of the tourism sector, generating positive impacts through tourism activities that make a fundamental economic contribution, particularly by increasing the income of local communities (i'zzah & Mukhlis, 2022).

One example of religious tourism that impacts the local economy is the Sunan Gunung Jati Tomb, where surrounding communities take advantage of opportunities by providing accommodation, food stalls, and parking services (Salamah, 2022). A similar impact can be observed in Nyatnyono Village, where effective destination management has stimulated the sale of religious-themed products, local culinary

specialties, and supporting services, while also creating new jobs such as tour guides, tourism sector workers, and local artisans (Rahmadani, 2023).

Therefore, many scholars have examined religious tourism and its economic impacts. This is evidenced by a Google Scholar database search using the keywords “Wisata Religi dan Dampak Ekonomi,” which yielded approximately 14,800 studies.

Figure 1. Google Scholar Research Finding



Source: Data analyzed by the researcher

Figure 1 illustrates that many researchers have shown interest in studying the topic of religious tourism and its economic impacts. Existing studies include analyses of the economic impact on kiosk traders at the Sunan Drajat religious tourism site (Rohman & Fauzi, 2016), the economic impact in the Sunan Ampel tourism area (Madyan et al., 2018), the economic impact of religious tourism on street vendors (Syua'bi et al., 2024), and the economic impact of religious tourism on business opportunities (Fatimah et al., 2024).

Although numerous studies have examined religious tourism, research specifically evaluating the economic impacts of this activity in Indonesia remains limited. In fact, religious tourism holds strategic potential for driving local economic growth through job creation, increased community income, and the development of supporting sectors such as the creative industry, culinary businesses, and transportation services. Previous studies have explored religious tourism from various perspectives, including Hindu religious tourism (Astrina et al., 2023), sustainable religious tourism (Khoiriyah et al., 2024), religious tourism supply chains in the post-COVID-19 period (Mittal & Sinha, 2022), destination management and marketing (Moretti et al., 2016), tourist experiences (Shekari, 2023), and interactions among business actors in the religious tourism sector (Heidari et al., 2017), all of which underscore the importance of a comprehensive understanding of the economic contribution of religious tourism in Indonesia.

While many studies have examined religious tourism, to date there has been no research that specifically and systematically maps and evaluates the overall economic impact of religious tourism in Indonesia. Previous studies, such as Riyanto's

(2023) research on the economic impact of the Al-Bayt religious tourism site in Palembang, while relevant, remain limited to a single location and do not provide a comprehensive analytical framework for all religious tourism sites in Indonesia. This gap raises important questions regarding academic literature trends on the economic impact of religious tourism in Indonesia and the extent to which religious tourism contributes to the economic growth of local communities. Therefore, this study aims to analyze academic trends discussing religious tourism and its economic impact in Indonesia, as well as to identify and synthesize the various contributions of religious tourism to local economies. By doing so, it seeks to fill the existing literature gap and provide a basis for evidence-based policy formulation through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Religious Tourism

Religious tourism, also known as spiritual tourism, is a form of travel closely related to religious activities and visits to sacred places intended to deepen spiritual values and enhance religious practices (i'zzah & Mukhlis, 2022; Syua'bi et al., 2024). According to Meriyati & Aravik (2018), religious tourism is also part of culture, reflecting the beliefs and spiritual values of a community. This aligns with Griffin & Raj (2018), who explain that religious tourism encompasses all forms of travel undertaken outside one's usual environment for religious or spiritual purposes – such as pilgrimages, visits to sacred sites, and participation in religious or spiritual events. The forms of religious tourism are diverse, including traditional pilgrimages, religious routes, retreats, as well as missionary and faith-based social activities.

Religious tourism is not only a form of worship but also holds significant historical, and social value, as it often centers around sacred places, the tombs of religious leaders, or historical sites believed to possess spiritual meaning (Anwar et al., 2017; Herdin Muhtarom, 2021). Furthermore, the growth of religious tourism is influenced by factors such as the search for authentic experiences, advances in information technology, affordable air travel, and increasing awareness of cultural and spiritual preservation (Griffin & Raj, 2018). According to the UNWTO as cited in Griffin & Raj (2018), religious tourism plays an important role in sustainable development by enhancing awareness of cultural and spiritual heritage, promoting local economic growth, and strengthening intercultural understanding. Thus, religious tourism is not merely a spiritual journey but also a socio-economic phenomenon that contributes to community welfare.

2.2 Religious Tourism

The economic impact of tourism describes the effects of tourist spending in the economy of particular region. This impact includes changes in sales, income, employment, tax revenue and added value resulting from tourism activities. Unlike the overall economic contribution of tourism, which assesses the sector's general role in the economy, the economic impact focuses on new money entering the economy through tourist expenditures (Mayer & Vogt, 2016). These impacts can be either positive or negative, depending on how destinations are managed. Positive impacts

usually emerge through job creation, increased community income, and the growth of small businesses around tourist destinations (Aulia & Rahmini, 2020). Meanwhile, local governments benefit from higher tax and retribution revenues, and indirect impacts can be seen in changes in economic behavior and greater participation of women in tourism-related employment (Artanti & Adinugraha, 2020).

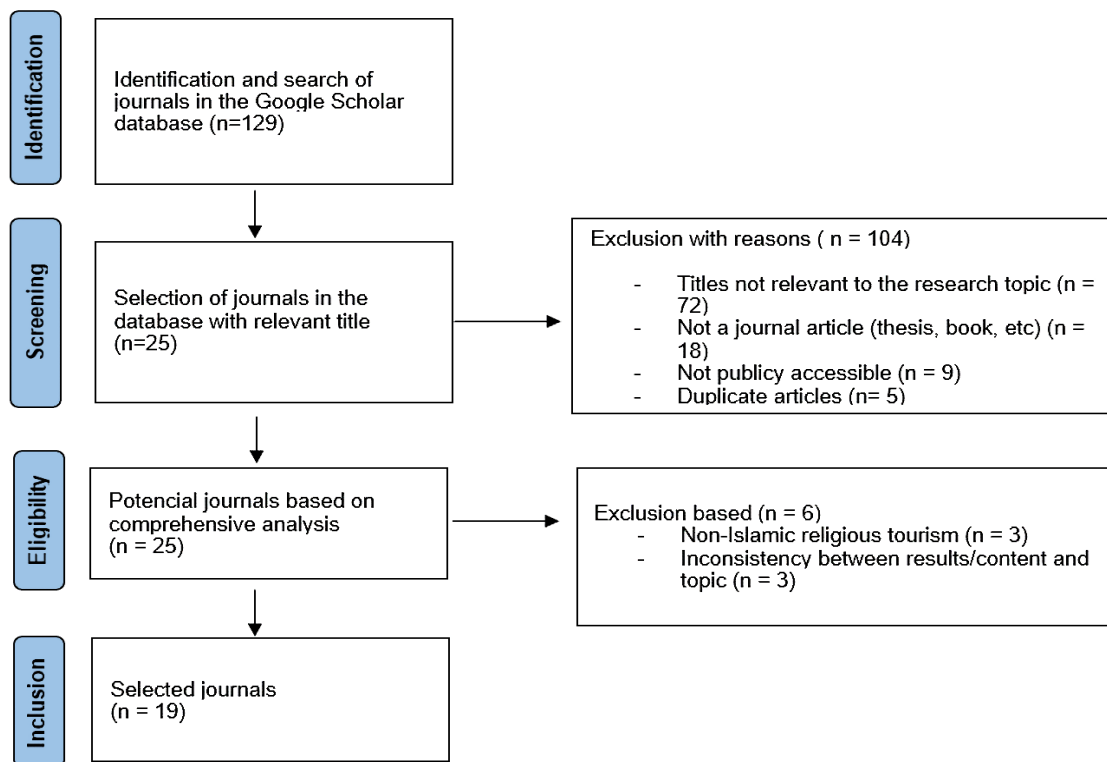
A comprehensive analysis of the economic impact of tourism requires a multidimensional approach. Weidema (2006) explains that measuring the impact of an economic activity should integrate economic, social, and environmental aspects through approaches such as Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). These approaches trace the impact pathways, which describe the links between tourist spending, the circulation of money within local communities, and final outcomes such as social welfare and environmental sustainability. In the context of religious tourism, the economic impact is not only reflected in increased income but also in how tourism activities promote equitable welfare distribution and strengthen local economic structures in a sustainable manner.

Futhermore Kirchherr et al (2017) emphasize that sustainable economic activities must consider three main pillars of development: economic prosperity, social well-being, and environmental quality. This approach aligns with the concept of the circular economy, in which economic value continuously circulates among communities, businesses, and governments through responsible production and consumption practices. In the case of religious tourism, this concept is reflected in the local economic cycle that involves residents as service providers, artisans, traders, and creative entrepreneurs around religious sites. Such active community participation helps create an inclusive and sustainable local economy, while preserving the cultural and spiritual values that attract visitors (Hasanah, 2020). Therefore, religious tourism that is managed with a sustainability-oriented approach can serve as a driver of regional economic growth, while maintaining social harmony and environmental balance.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol (Ghani et al., 2021; Lame, 2019). The research objects are scientific publications on the contribution of religious tourism to local economic growth in Indonesia. The data consist of journal articles obtained from Google Scholar using the Publish or Perish software, with the keywords "Peran Wisata Religi Terhadap Dampak Ekonomi" and "Wisata Religi Dampak Ekonomi."

Figure 2. Diagram PRISMA



The literature selection process followed the PRISMA stages—identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion—resulting in 19 relevant articles (Nyoko & Hanafiah, 2024). The flow diagram of the literature selection process is presented in Figure 2. The variables examined include research themes, methods, year of publication, study region, tourism objects, and main findings. The analysis was conducted using content analysis to classify, synthesize, and systematically evaluate the findings (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). In addition, VOSviewer software was employed to visualize and map the co-occurrence of keywords, enabling the identification of the thematic clusters and research hotspots in the field of religious tourism. This bibliometric mapping not only strengthens the interpretation of current research trends but also provides recommendations for future research directions.

4. Result

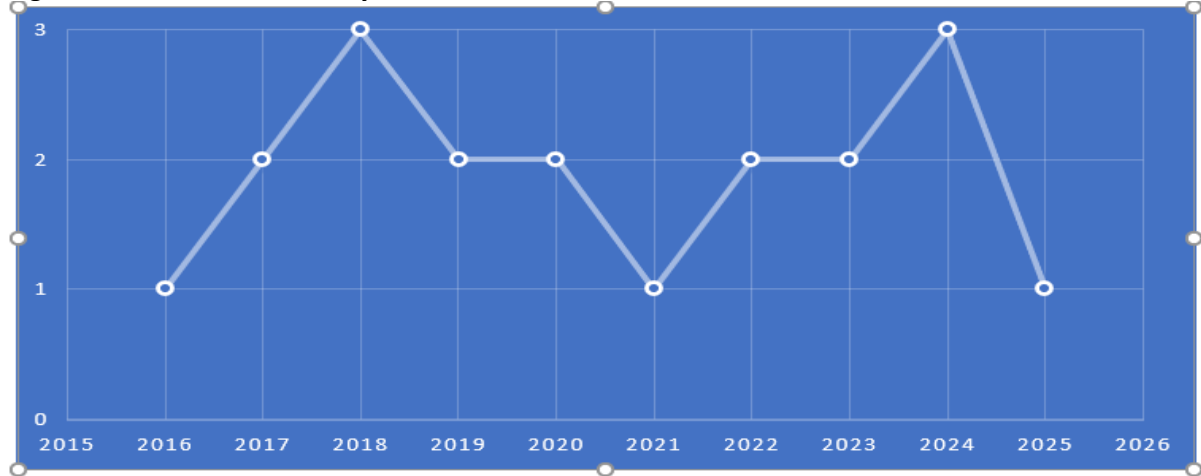
4.1 Publication Year Trends

Based on the PRISMA analysis, 19 articles discussing the economic impact of religious tourism were identified, showing a fluctuating trend during the 2016–2025 period. The number of publications began with only one article in 2016, increased in 2018 and 2024 to three articles indicating a surge in academic interest, but declined between 2019 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which shifted research priorities. Following the pandemic, publications began to recover in 2022–2023 before declining again in 2025.

The fluctuation indicates that scholarly attention to religious tourism and its economic contribution remains unstable, despite the sector’s strategic potential for

MSMEs, transportation, hospitality, and trade in religious tourism areas, thus requiring sustained research to strengthen its role in sustainable regional economic development.

Figure 3. Publication Trends by Year

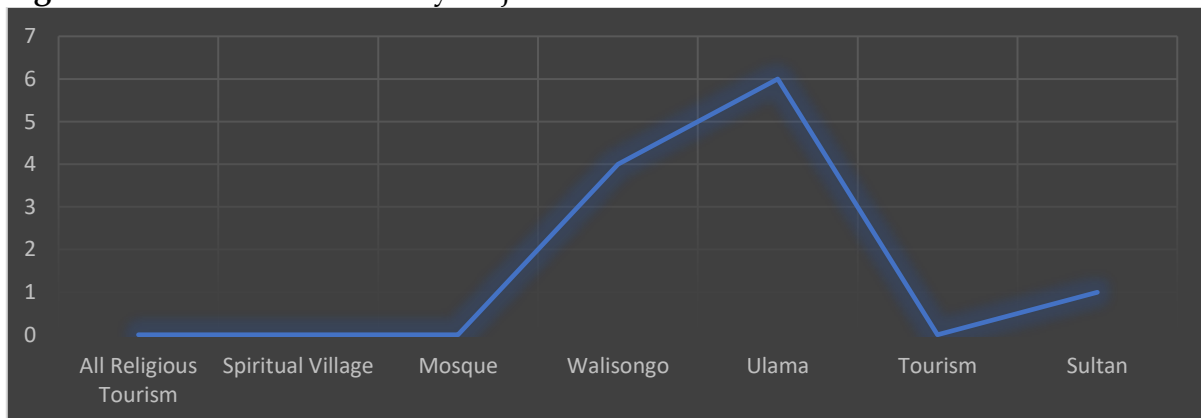


Source: Data analyzed by the researcher

4.2 Trends by Religious Tourism Sites

Based on the graphical data, the most frequently discussed religious tourism object in relation to its economic impact is the tombs of *ulama*, with 6 articles. This indicates that religious scholars hold strong appeal through activities such as *haul* commemorations, pilgrimages (*ziarah*), large-scale religious gatherings (*pengajian akbar*), and other religious events that stimulate trade, transportation, and accommodation sectors. In second place are mosques, with 4 articles, and the Walisongo pilgrimage, also with 4 articles, which are considered prime destinations due to their historical, architectural, spiritual, and religious outreach significance.

Figure 4. Publication Trends by Object



Source: Data analyzed by the researcher

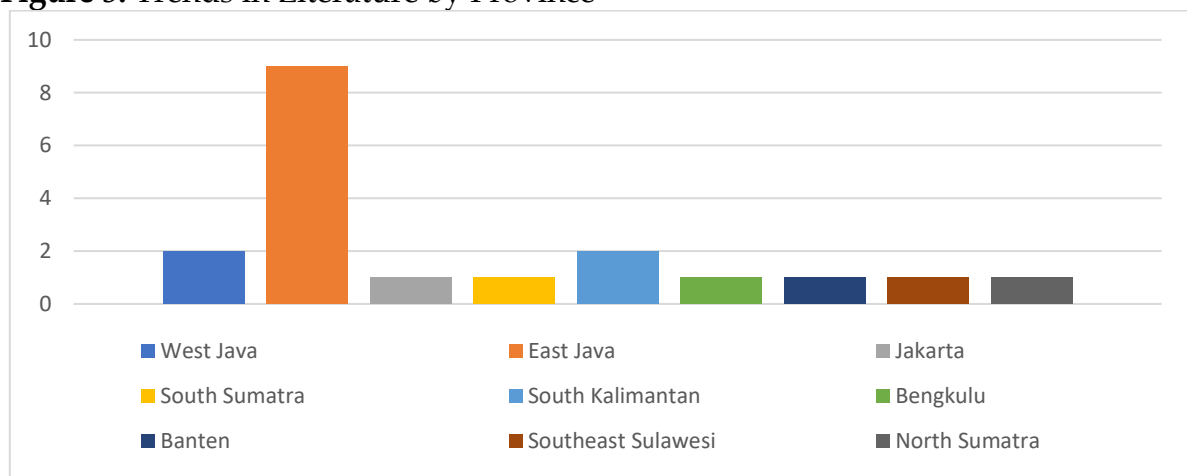
Furthermore, Quran-themed tourism is discussed in 2 articles, while religious villages, general religious tourism, and royal tombs are each addressed in 1 article. These findings suggest that academic attention remains concentrated on figures and sites with deep historical roots and strong cultural influence, whereas other religious

tourism objects are relatively underexplored in studies on the economic impacts of religious tourism.

4.3 Provincial Trends in Religious Tourism Studies

Based on the provincial distribution graph, East Java dominates with 9 publications, reflecting its position as the national center of religious tourism with popular pilgrimage sites such as the tombs of Sunan Ampel and Sunan Drajat that drive the local economy. West Java and South Kalimantan each have 2 publications, indicating growing attention although not as intense as in East Java.

Figure 5. Trends in Literature by Province



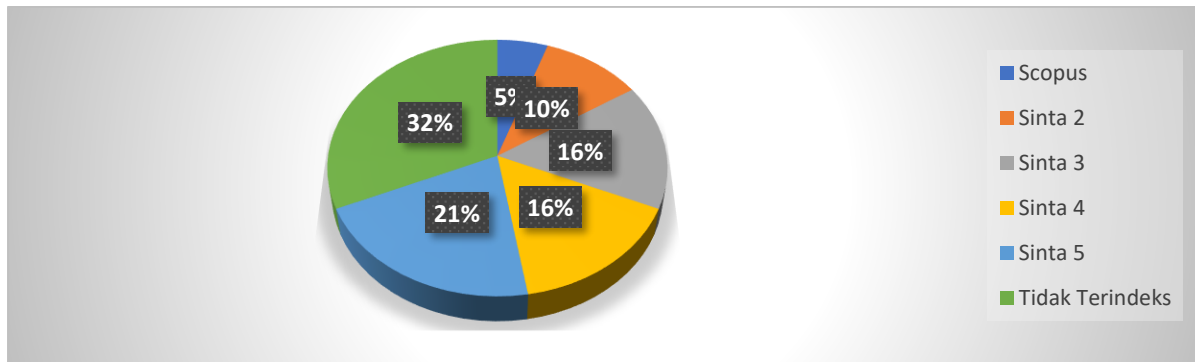
Source: Data analyzed by the researcher

Other provinces such as Jakarta, South Sumatra, Bengkulu, Banten, Southeast Sulawesi, and North Sumatra have only one publication each, suggesting that the potential of religious tourism outside Java remains underexplored. This condition reflects a geographical imbalance in research concentrated in certain regions, highlighting the need for more evenly distributed studies to comprehensively uncover the economic potential of religious tourism across various areas.

4.4 Journal Accreditation Trends in Religious Tourism Studies.

Based on the distribution of journal indexation presented in the diagram, it is evident that most references related to religious tourism and its economic impact still originate from non-indexed journals (32% or 6 articles), followed by Sinta 5 journals (21% or 4 articles), Sinta 3 and Sinta 4 journals (each 16% or 3 articles), Sinta 2 journals (10% or 2 articles), and only 5% (1 article) from internationally reputable Scopus Q1 journals. This pattern indicates that studies on the role of religious tourism remain dominated by literature of moderate to lower academic quality, which limits the strength of arguments and the depth of analysis.

Figure 6. Trends in Literature by Accreditation



Source: Data analyzed by the researcher

The minimal contribution from high-ranking journals reflects the weak integration of this issue into reputable scientific discourse, despite the significant potential of religious tourism to stimulate local economies through MSMEs, local cuisine, transportation, and accommodation. Therefore, enhancing research quality with stronger theoretical and methodological foundations is essential to ensure that this theme gains wider recognition in both national and international academic forums.

5. Discussion

Economic Impact Assessment

5.1 Income Effects of Religious Tourism

Religious tourism has a significant impact on increasing local community income through culinary businesses, souvenir sales, parking services, and accommodations, driven by the flow of visitors who come for pilgrimages while also enjoying the religious atmosphere and local culture (Anwar et al., 2017; Herdin Muhtarom, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2022; Serviani et al., 2024; Syua'bi et al., 2024; Widagdo & Rokhlinasari, 2017). Studies show a substantial rise in income after business owners relocate to areas surrounding religious tourism sites (Azam et al., 2019; Rofiati & Rahmini, 2025). This impact becomes even more apparent during major Islamic events such as the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulid Nabi*), Isra' Mi'raj, and Eid al-Fitr, when revenues can double compared to regular days (Fachri, 2018; Mahfudz, 2023).

Nevertheless, these economic benefits are not evenly distributed across all sectors. Certain businesses, such as motorized rickshaw (*becak motor*) services, experience significant increases only during peak visitation periods on major religious holidays (Satriawan et al., 2019). This indicates that the contribution of religious tourism to the local economy tends to be seasonal and dependent on the type of business as well as specific occasions.

5.2 Business & Employment Opportunities in Religious Tourism

Religious tourism is not only of spiritual value but also has a tangible impact on the local economy through the creation of business opportunities and employment. The increase in tourist visits encourages communities to establish culinary businesses, clothing shops, souvenir stalls, accommodations, as well as parking and cleaning

services (Anwar et al., 2017; Aulia & Rahmini, 2020; Faridani et al., 2023; Herdin Muhtarom, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2022; Meriyati & Aravik, 2018; Serviani et al., 2024; Widagdo & Rokhlinasari, 2017) (Anwar et al., 2017; Widagdo & Rokhlinasari, 2017; Kurniawan et al., 2022; Herdin Muhtarom, 2021; Serviani et al., 2024; Meriyati & Aravik, 2018; Aulia & Rahmini, 2020; Faridani et al., 2023). These activities strengthen the local economy and informal sector while absorbing both permanent and seasonal workers, as seen in the Sunan Maulana Malik Ibrahim Tomb and the Berendo area (Anwar et al., 2017; Serviani et al., 2024).

This phenomenon has also shifted community mindsets from merely being laborers to becoming independent entrepreneurs, as in Cirebon, where residents utilize their homes' strategic locations to open businesses (Widagdo & Rokhlinasari, 2017). High demand further drives traders to hire additional local workers, helping reduce unemployment (Syua'bi et al., 2024). Thus, religious tourism makes a significant contribution to strengthening local economies through the creation of sustainable businesses and employment opportunities.

5.3 Community Welfare and Religious Tourism

A descriptive quantitative study on business actors in the Sunan Drajat religious tourism area revealed that religious tourism has a significant effect on community welfare, with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05) and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.460, indicating that 46% of the variation in welfare is explained by the presence of religious tourism (Hasanah, 2020). Meanwhile, Fatimah et al. (2024) found in their study on the Istiqlal Mosque that religious tourism and business opportunities simultaneously have a significant effect on income; however, when examined partially, religious tourism had a negative impact, whereas business opportunities contributed more positively. These findings highlight that optimizing the economic opportunities arising from religious tourism plays a more decisive role in community welfare than the mere existence of the tourism site itself.

According to Widagdo & Rokhlinasari (2017), the economic welfare of communities is strongly influenced by access to productive economic activities. In the context of religious tourism, communities in areas such as Cirebon leverage their strategic locations to establish independent businesses that serve as sustainable sources of income. Active participation in such enterprises fosters economic stability and enhances welfare, positioning religious tourism not only as a spiritual activity but also as a driver of microeconomic development based on local participation.

5.4 Government Revenue from Religious Tourism

The existence of religious tourism sites has been proven to make a significant contribution to local economic growth, particularly in stimulating informal sector activities. For instance, in Cikadueun Village at the tomb of Sheikh Mansur, most residents depend on the regular annual visits of pilgrims, with income generated from portal fees and vehicle tickets contributing to Regional Original Revenue (PAD) (Fachri, 2018). The increase in economic activity around tourism areas also impacts regional tax revenues, as local governments gain additional income from taxes on local businesses, hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related establishments. This

condition also drives budget allocations for the development of public infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, and other facilities that enhance accessibility to religious tourism areas (Syua'bi et al., 2024). Thus, the economic impact of religious tourism extends beyond individual and community levels, strengthening fiscal capacity and overall regional development.

The growth of the informal sector driven by tourism activities also has a positive effect on increasing public awareness in fulfilling tax obligations. In areas surrounding destinations such as the Religious Tourism Site of K.H.R. As'ad Syamsul Arifin's Tomb, the expansion of economic activities encourages greater community participation in paying taxes, including land and building tax (*Pajak Bumi dan Bangunan* or PBB), business taxes, and parking fees (Satriawan et al., 2019). The accumulation of such economic activities expands the regional tax base, thereby indirectly increasing contributions to PAD (Hasanah, 2020; Widagdo & Rokhlinasari, 2017). This reinforces the argument that religious tourism plays an important role in enhancing the economic welfare of communities while supporting the fiscal sustainability of local governments.

5.5 Economic Impact: Direct, Indirect & Induced

To provide a comprehensive overview of the contribution of religious tourism to economic impacts, an analysis was conducted on four studies that examine the economic effects in terms of direct, indirect, and induced impacts, with the following results:

All four journals indicate that religious tourism has a significant impact on the economy of surrounding communities. Direct impacts include increased income through trade, parking services, food sales, and souvenirs at Sunan Gunung Jati (Widagdo & Rokhlinasari, 2017), a 16% contribution to kiosk revenues at Sunan Drajat (Rohman & Fauzi, 2016), 44% of traders' income at Sunan Ampel (Madyan et al., 2018), and the growth of shop rental and food stall businesses at Guru Sekumpul (Aulia & Rahmini, 2020).

Indirect impacts involve the growth of local transportation and accommodation services (Aulia & Rahmini, 2020), the employment of 8.2% of the workforce at Sunan Ampel (Madyan et al., 2018), a 1.86% increase in business inputs at Sunan Drajat (Rohman & Fauzi, 2016), as well as the participation of women and the adoption of technology at Sunan Gunung Jati (Widagdo & Rokhlinasari, 2017).

Induced impacts include infrastructure improvements and the development of new destinations at Guru Sekumpul (Aulia & Rahmini, 2020), socio-economic transformation at Sunan Gunung Jati (Widagdo & Rokhlinasari, 2017), and labor consumption that remains focused on basic needs at Sunan Ampel and Sunan Drajat (Madyan et al., 2018; Rohman & Fauzi, 2016).

5.6 Promoting Local MSMEs Through Religious Tourism

Religious tourism stimulates the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as drivers of the local economy through job creation and the establishment of new businesses. At the Tomb of Sheikh Mansyur in Cikadueun Village, the majority of residents' income comes from culinary and trade sectors related to tourism, although local government support has ceased over the past three

years (Fachri, 2018). The Berendo area has shown rapid MSME development, including food stalls, souvenir kiosks, and accommodations, supported by a surge in visitors as well as training programs and access to capital (Serviani et al., 2024). A similar synergy is evident at Al-Alam Mosque, where the management provides a designated marketplace with a registration and monitoring system, involving 22 officially licensed MSMEs that boost turnover and job opportunities (Mahfudz, 2023).

However, the economic impact of religious tourism is not always optimal. In some locations, high tourist arrivals do not correspond to increased community income. For example, in Babussalam Besilam Village, tourism development has had no significant effect on residents' welfare, as most visitors engage solely in spiritual activities without interacting with the local economic sector (Faridani et al., 2023).

5.7 Stakeholder-Specific Economic Impacts

Religious tourism generates positive impacts for various stakeholders, particularly traders, visitors, and local governments. For traders, the increasing flow of tourists boosts income and creates opportunities for business expansion, as seen in the Sekumpul area, which has driven the growth of clothing stores, culinary outlets, souvenir shops, and accommodations (Aulia & Rahmini, 2020). For visitors, the growing number of businesses enriches the variety of products and services available, encouraging longer stays and higher tourist spending (Syua'bi et al., 2024). Local governments benefit from increased tax revenues, user fees, and greater incentives to improve tourism-supporting infrastructure (Aulia & Rahmini, 2020; Syua'bi et al., 2024). Thus, religious tourism simultaneously strengthens community income, the MSME sector, and regional development.

5.8 Tourism Visits and Local Economic Dynamics

The increase in tourist visits to religious tourism areas drives a surge in demand for local products and services, particularly traditional cuisine, souvenirs, and gifts, thereby expanding the market for small traders (Syua'bi et al., 2024). At Berendo Mosque, the rise in tourist numbers has boosted traders' incomes, spurred the growth of new businesses such as homestays and guide services, and created jobs that strengthen the local economy (Serviani et al., 2024). A similar phenomenon is observed at the Tomb of Guru Sekumpul, where clothing and culinary businesses have grown rapidly, even reaching consumers from outside the region (Aulia & Rahmini, 2020). Religious tourism, therefore, not only stimulates the direct trade sector but also broadens business opportunities. To ensure the sustainability of these impacts, support is needed in the form of infrastructure development, spatial planning for business areas, and entrepreneurship training for MSME actors.

5.9 Disparities and Challenges in Religious Tourism Development

Religious tourism holds great potential to stimulate the local economy; however, its impact is not always optimal. In Babussalam Besilam Village, despite physical development, tourist activities are largely limited to pilgrimages and spiritual retreats (*suluk*), resulting in minimal interaction with the local economic sector (Faridani et al., 2023). In contrast, in Berendo, government support through

MSME training, capital assistance, and infrastructure improvements has proven effective in strengthening economic impacts, although more targeted and sustainable policies are still required (Serviani et al., 2024).

Challenges are also evident in Cikadueun, where MSME empowerment remains limited, infrastructure is inadequate, and no professional association exists for tourism actors (Fachri, 2018). At Sunan Ampel Mosque in Surabaya, constraints include poorly organized and slum-like areas as well as a lack of promotion for sharia-compliant tourism (Madyan et al., 2018).

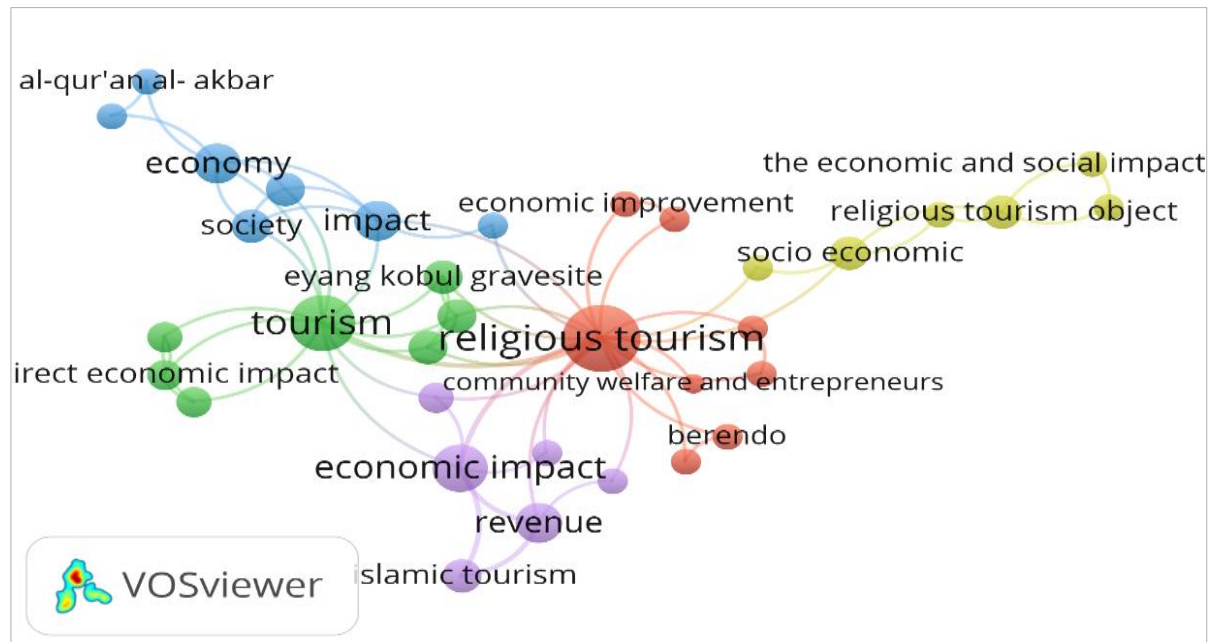
5.10 Religious Tourism's Dynamic Effects: Pre- and During COVID-19

The study by I'zzah & Mukhlis (2022) found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, religious tourism at the Tomb of KH Abdul Hamid made a significant contribution to the local economy, with traders earning between IDR 500,000 and IDR 1,000,000 per day and rickshaw drivers earning between IDR 50,000 and IDR 100,000 per day. However, travel restrictions in 2020 reduced traders' income to IDR 200,000–IDR 500,000 per day and rickshaw drivers' income to IDR 10,000–IDR 50,000 per day, while permanent workers received only IDR 35,000 per day, below the regional minimum wage. This condition underscores the economic vulnerability of communities dependent on the informal sector of religious tourism to external shocks.

5.11 Research Hotspots and Future Directions in Religious Tourism

The figure 6. presents the results of a bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer, which maps the keywords of studies on Religious Tourism and its Social and Economic Impacts. Five main clusters can be identified. The red cluster can be labeled Religious Tourism and Community Welfare, as it highlights the link between religious tourism, community welfare, entrepreneurship, and economic improvement. The green cluster, named Tourism and Direct Economic Impact, emphasizes the direct contribution of tourism to local communities, including specific sites such as the Eyang Kobul gravesite. The blue cluster, referred to as Society, Economy, and Religious Sites, relates to studies connecting the economy, social impact, and religious icons such as the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar. The purple cluster, named Islamic Tourism and Revenue Impact, focuses on the role of Islamic tourism in generating revenue and supporting economic growth. Finally, the yellow cluster, labeled Socio-Economic Impacts of Religious Tourism Objects, addresses the broader socio-economic implications of religious tourism objects.

Figure 7. Bibliometric mapping of religious tourism research



Source: Data analyzed by the researcher

Based on these clusters, five potential research topics can be developed for future studies.

1. From the red cluster, research may focus on the influence of religious tourism on community welfare and local entrepreneurship.
2. From the green cluster, a possible direction is the direct economic impact of religious tourism sites on surrounding communities.
3. From the blue cluster, studies may explore the interconnection between economy, society, and religious sites as cultural icons.
4. From the purple cluster, future research can investigate the contribution of Islamic tourism to regional revenue and the strengthening of the Sharia-based economy.
5. Lastly, from the yellow cluster, studies can be directed toward the socio-economic analysis of managing religious tourism objects in a sustainable way.

6. Conclusion

The SLR analysis of 19 articles indicates that research on religious tourism and its economic impacts in Indonesia remains fluctuating, with publication peaks in 2018 and 2024, and a concentration of studies in East Java. Religious tourism has been shown to contribute significantly to the local economy, particularly through increased income, business opportunities, employment, and community welfare, although these benefits are often seasonal and unevenly distributed. Positive impacts are also observed in the enhancement of local government revenue through taxes, levies, and entrance fees, which support the development of related infrastructure. However, the potential in regions outside Java remains underutilized.

As a practical implication, local governments are encouraged to promote religious tourism development based on local potential by providing infrastructure,

targeted promotion, and entrepreneurship training for the community. Development efforts should be distributed more evenly, particularly in underexplored regions outside Java. For destination managers, improving the quality of facilities and visitor comfort should be a priority, including harmoniously integrating religious activities with economic functions. The formation of local business associations is also recommended to maintain service quality and foster synergy among economic actors. Communities and SMEs are expected to capitalize on existing economic opportunities by developing religious-themed products and services, expanding marketing networks, and enhancing business capacity through continuous training and innovation.

Furthermore, keywords analysis reveals five thematic clusters that highlight diverse research focuses within the field of religious tourism, ranging from community welfare and economic impact to the cultural significance of religious sites. These clusters offer strategic directions for future research, emphasizing the multifaceted socio-economic roles of religious tourism in both local and regional contexts. Lastly, this study also has limitations in the literature search stage, as keywords were only used in Indonesian within the Google Scholar database via Publish or Perish, potentially excluding foreign-language references, particularly in English. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand keywords across multiple languages and utilize a broader range of international databases to produce a more comprehensive review. Lastly, the research suggestion in previous discussion also.

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