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## SHARIA MARKETING STRATEGY FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) IN THE RELIGIOUS TOURISM SECTOR

**Nailul Mashuri, Indra Hidayatullah, Muhammad Farid**

Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Universitas Islam Syarifuddin Lumajang,  
Jl. Pondok Pesantren, Wonorejo, Lumajang City, East Java, 67358, Indonesia.

e-mail: [nllmashuri@gmail.com](mailto:nllmashuri@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Sharia marketing is not merely a theoretical concept, but rather a business practice based on Islamic values, emphasizing theistic, ethical, and humanistic principles. In its application, Sharia marketing focuses on Islamic values to prevent business actors from prohibited practices, such as usury and other transactions that can undermine market morality. This concept emphasizes the importance of ethics, honesty, transparency, and fairness in every transaction. Furthermore, Sharia marketing also provides new insights for the public regarding the application of Islamic values in the business world, thereby creating a more moral, fair, and beneficial trading system for all parties. The focus of this research is how the Sharia marketing strategies of MSMEs in religious tourism increase revenue. The purpose of this paper is to provide an understanding of the Sharia marketing strategies of MSMEs in the religious tourism sector to increase revenue. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. The results show that MSMEs apply Sharia principles through honesty in transactions, friendly service, and maintaining product quality. The marketing strategies employed include a personal approach through word-of-mouth communication, social media utilization, and the use of digital payment systems. Implementing these principles and strategies has been proven to increase consumer trust and directly impact business revenue.

**Keywords:** Sharia marketing strategy , MSMEs , religious tourism, MSMEs, increasing revenue turnover.

### INTRODUCTION

Sharia marketing is known as marketing that prioritizes Islamic values in running a business to avoid undesirable transactions such as usury or other forms of fraud. This emphasizes the importance of moral ethics, transparency, and fairness in all transactions. (Puspita & Fasa, 2024) . Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are one of the important pillars of the Indonesian economy. MSMEs play a very strategic role in increasing economic growth and reducing poverty and unemployment. (Wenqing et al., 2024). One of the MSME sectors that continues to grow is the tourism industry, including religious tourism. Religious tourism in Indonesia, particularly that related to places of worship, has become a draw for many domestic and international tourists. One example is the Habib Sholeh Tanggul Mosque, which has significant potential to support the local economy through the thriving MSME sector surrounding it (Hanafi, 2023) .

East Java is known as one of the provinces with the most and most popular religious tourism destinations in Indonesia (Hanafi, 2023; Mahsun et al., 2022). Religious tourism in this province is very diverse, ranging from the tombs of the saints, historic mosques, to sacred sites maintained by the local community. Popular religious tourism includes the tombs of the Wali Songo and various historic mosques. Some of the most famous pilgrimage sites in East Java are the tombs of Sunan Ampel, Sunan Giri, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Drajat, and Sunan Gresik. In addition, Jember is also famous for its religious tourism potential with the tomb of Habib Sholeh Jember is better known for its religious tourism potential because it also has many visitors from five countries. ( *Exploring Religious Tourism in Jember from the Tomb of Habib Sholeh Tanggul and Other Spiritual Destinations, HERE IS THE COMPLETE* , 2025) .

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating around the tomb have seen growing business opportunities along with the increasing number of visitors. Small businesses in the area are becoming increasingly busy, creating a sustainable economic environment. This provides a dual benefit, not only as a spiritual site but also as a driver of

economic growth in the surrounding area. Through this phenomenon, the Tomb of Habib Sholeh bin Muhsin Al-Hamid Tanggul has become a symbol of the integration of religious aspects and local economic potential. Its presence not only provides spiritual benefits to pilgrims but also has a positive impact on the social and economic development of the surrounding area. (Huda, 2024)

The presence of Habib Sholeh's tomb not only holds profound spiritual significance but also has a direct impact on the economic growth of the surrounding community. This is evident in the proliferation of various micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) within the mosque's vicinity. Approximately 25 MSMEs are reported to be actively operating in this area, ranging from traditional food vendors and religious souvenir sellers to herbal vendors, to parking services and simple accommodations. ( Subhan Achmad, 2025)

In this context, it is important to examine MSME marketing strategies from a sharia economic perspective. Sharia economics focuses not only on profit but also prioritizes ethical values, justice, and blessings in running a business. In the world of religious tourism, which is closely linked to religious and social values, marketing strategies based on sharia economic principles are expected to create a more positive impact, both for MSMEs and for society as a whole. (Puspita & Fasa, 2024) Therefore, it is important to analyze how MSMEs around the Habib Sholeh Tanggul Mosque implement marketing strategies in the face of increasingly fierce competition, and how a sharia economic perspective can serve as a foundation for designing marketing strategies that are not only effective but also in line with existing religious and social values.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review serves as the theoretical foundation used to strengthen this research. This section contains a description of concepts, theories, and previous research findings relevant to the topic. Through the literature review, the author attempts to demonstrate the relationship between theory and practice in the field.

### Sharia Marketing

Sharia marketing is a business approach based on Islamic principles, where all marketing activities are carried out while upholding the values of justice, honesty, openness, and moral responsibility. This concept prohibits all forms of detrimental practices, such as *riba* (interest), *gharar* (excessive uncertainty in transactions), and *maysir* (speculation or gambling). In today's context, growing consumer awareness of the importance of ethics in the business world makes Sharia marketing increasingly relevant, especially among the growing global Muslim community. By implementing this approach, companies not only pursue profits but also build trust and blessings in sustainable business relationships. (Wenqing et al., 2024)

### Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are a sector that plays a vital role in the economies of Indonesia and other developing countries. MSMEs serve not only as job providers but also as drivers of an inclusive and sustainable economy. Various theories regarding MSMEs focus on their crucial role in economic development, the challenges they face, and strategies that can be implemented to strengthen their sustainability and competitiveness. (Yuliaty et al., 2020)

### Religious Tourism

Religious tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on spiritual and religious experiences. This activity typically involves visits to religious sites, places of worship, and activities related to religious teachings and practices. The uniqueness of religious tourism lies not only in the physical experience but also in the emotional and spiritual experiences visitors experience, both deepening their religious beliefs and seeking inner peace.

In line with this, González defines religious tourism as a form of travel that connects travel with religious objectives. This includes pilgrimages to holy sites and participation in religious activities that provide spiritual value. Thus, religious tourism can be understood as a combination of travel and religious practices that provide numerous benefits. (Hanafi, 2023)

**Table 1. Previous Research on Sharia Marketing Strategies for MSMEs in the Religious Tourism Sector**

Researchers	Title	Results
Dzakiyyah Nur Nabila Firdaus	Analysis of Islamic Tourism Empowerment for MSMEs at the Tomb of Sunan Kalijaga, Kadilangu, Demak	The results of this study indicate that the empowerment of Islamic tourism for MSMEs in the Sunan Kalijaga Tomb area has been running well until 2024, through three stages of empowerment: awareness, knowledge transformation, and intellectual empowerment. (Issa, 2019)
Lutfi Agus Hermawan	Strategy of Islamic Marketing: A Case Study on Religious Tourism	The overall results of this study indicate that the recommended Islamic marketing strategy emphasizes an ethical, humane, and religious approach throughout the marketing process, aiming not only to achieve economic profit but also to achieve blessings and the common good in accordance with Islamic values. (Hermanzah & Sopingi, 2022)
Ahmad Fanzuri	Sharia Marketing Strategy for Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Special Souvenir Centers in Bengkulu City in Facing the New Normal Era	The results show that the implemented Sharia marketing strategy adheres to the business principles of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and utilizes the 4P marketing mix (product, price, promotion, and place). However, in the new normal era, there are challenges in the promotion aspect, which is not being optimally implemented. (Fanzuri, 2022)
Maghfirotnunnisak, Ariya Rifki, M Hikmah	Marketing Strategy for Sate Karak at the Sunan Ampel Tomb Religious Tourism Site in Surabaya	The results of this study indicate that promotion is primarily conducted through word of mouth, but they are also beginning to utilize social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, as well as collaborations with hotels, restaurants, and travel agents to expand market reach and build strong branding. (Maghfirotnunnisa et al., 2023)
5 Pradana's Gift	Sharia Marketing to Increase the Number of Visitors at Lawere Beach, Pinrang Regency.	The results of this study indicate that the application of sharia principles in the development of sharia tourism at Lawere Beach has been met in several aspects, thus Lawere Beach has the potential to become a more optimal sharia-compliant tourism destination in the future. The main obstacles to

increasing visitor numbers are natural factors and a lack of support from relevant agencies such as the Youth and Sports Agency (Dispora). Therefore, the development of sharia tourism at Lawere Beach requires human resource readiness, seriousness, concentration, and support from various parties to achieve optimal results. (Anugrah Pradana, 2024)

Based on a review of five previous studies, it can be concluded that empowerment and marketing strategies based on sharia principles in the religious tourism sector and general tourism destinations have a significant contribution to improving MSME performance and tourist attractions. The implementation of empowerment, such as that carried out at the Tomb of Sunan Kalijaga, proceeds through systematic stages (awareness raising, knowledge transformation, intellectual empowerment), despite facing obstacles such as differences in character, limited funding, and low participation of some business actors. Overall, all of these studies confirm that the application of sharia principles in MSME empowerment and marketing strategies in the tourism sector can create an ethical, sustainable, and highly competitive business ecosystem, while strengthening Islamic values in economic activities.

## METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. (Sugiyono, 2011) This research will be conducted around the Tomb of Habib Sholeh Tanggul, which is one of the religious tourism destinations in Indonesia, to examine how the surrounding MSMEs develop their marketing strategies to face competition and how they integrate sharia economic principles in marketing activities. The research was conducted from June to July 2025. The data collection techniques used were primary and secondary data, using interviews, observation, and documentation. To assess the accuracy of the data, it was necessary to analyze the data first using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. (Serrano Cardona & Muñoz Mata, 2013). To ensure data validity, this study uses source triangulation and technical triangulation, with three stages, namely: orientation or pre-field stage, field activity stage and data analysis stage.

## RESULTS

### **Sharia Marketing of MSMEs in the Religious Tourism of Habib Sholeh's Tomb**

The application of sharia principles is highly relevant given the role of MSMEs as a key pillar of the community's economy. In practice, MSMEs are not only required to sell products but also to build trust and establish harmonious relationships with consumers through business behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings. This is evident from research results in the religious tourism area of the Tomb of Habib Sholeh Tanggul, where the application of sharia marketing principles has been realized through two main approaches. First, maintaining honesty in every transaction and providing friendly service to consumers. Second, ensuring the quality of the products offered is maintained to provide satisfaction and foster customer loyalty. Thus, sharia marketing practices are not only oriented towards profit, but also on the value of blessings and benefits. This principle aligns with the marketing concept exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). As explained by Abdullah Syahroni, the Qur'an has referred to the term product with two key words: al-thayyibat and al-rizq. The word "al-thayyibat" is used 18 times and refers to something good, pure, clean, and beneficial, while the word "al-rizq" is mentioned 20 times, meaning sustenance from Allah in the form of a pleasant and beneficial gift. (Sahroni, 2020)

Based on this concept, it can be understood that a Sharia-compliant product is one that is halal, beneficial, and efficient, thus providing not only material benefits but also moral and spiritual benefits to consumers. Conversely, something that is not beneficial or even prohibited by Sharia cannot be classified as a product from an Islamic perspective. Therefore, the application of Sharia marketing to MSMEs is not only a business strategy but also a manifestation of the implementation of Islamic values in daily economic activities.

### **Sharia Marketing Strategy for MSMEs at Habib Sholeh Tourism**

In an effort to increase revenue, an appropriate strategy is required, encompassing marketing, service, and product packaging. A strategy is essentially a plan or set of steps designed to achieve specific goals, overcome challenges, and capitalize on existing opportunities. In a business context, strategy refers to the course of action chosen by an organization or business to gain a competitive advantage and survive in the marketplace. In reality, most MSMEs around Habib Sholeh's Tomb still operate their businesses traditionally. However, they are beginning to adapt their business practices to Sharia marketing principles. This demonstrates an awareness that business success is determined not only by material gain but also by the blessings that arise from the application of Islamic values in business.

The research findings indicate that the sharia marketing strategy implemented by MSMEs in the religious tourism area encompasses several important aspects. First, polite and friendly service, in accordance with Islamic advice to respect and honor others. Second, fair pricing, reflecting fairness and avoiding practices that harm consumers. Third, maintaining the cleanliness and neatness of product displays to ensure they are fit for consumption and provide a sense of comfort for buyers. Fourth, conducting promotions in a simple and moderate manner, in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize balance and avoid excess (*israf*).

Furthermore, religious moments are optimally utilized as promotional tools while maintaining values of politeness and spirituality. This aligns with the concept of sharia marketing, which prioritizes not only economic profit but also values of honesty, justice, blessings, and benefit to the wider community. Therefore, the strategies employed by MSMEs around the tomb of Habib Sholeh Tanggul are not merely efforts to increase revenue but also the concrete implementation of Islamic business practices that balance worldly and spiritual aspects. In addition to utilizing religious moments as a promotional tool, the marketing strategies employed by MSMEs around the tomb of Habib Sholeh Tanggul essentially reflect the application of sharia marketing principles. Research findings indicate that these businesses have implemented the Marketing Mix (4Ps) concept in a simple yet effective manner. From a product perspective, they strive to maintain quality by presenting clean, attractive, and consumable merchandise, ensuring consumer comfort and trust. Pricing is set fairly and in accordance with market conditions without any detrimental effect on buyers. (Samosir, 2023)

Meanwhile, the place aspect is evident in the strategic location of the business, namely close to religious activity centers, thus facilitating access for visitors. The promotional strategy relies more on simple methods such as word-of-mouth, which is considered more natural and in line with values of politeness. Thus, the marketing strategy implemented by this MSME is not only oriented towards increasing revenue but also based on sharia values such as honesty, politeness, and blessings. This also aligns with Philip Kotler's view on the importance of building long-term relationships through quality products, fair prices, appropriate locations, and ethical promotions.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the data obtained, the implementation of sharia marketing by MSMEs in these locations has been quite effective, although most still employ simple, experience-based methods. In practice, these businesses implement sharia marketing principles through

honesty in transactions, fair pricing, friendly customer service, and responsibility for the quality of their products. These values stem not only from an understanding of religious teachings but are also reinforced by the advice of local leaders and ethical trading traditions.

This situation demonstrates that the implementation of sharia-based marketing strategies by MSMEs in the Habib Sholeh Tanggul Religious Tourism area is not only an ethical guideline for commerce, but also proven to improve service quality, maintain product quality, and encourage marketing innovation. By synergizing sharia values, professionalism, and adaptability to consumer needs, MSMEs in this area have successfully built competitiveness, expanded market share, and contributed to sustainable local economic growth.

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