



Halal Governance system based on Islamic Philanthropy in universities, pesantren, and hospitals in Central Java

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ABSTRACT

The development of halal industry in Indonesia is not only part of the global Sharia economic dynamics but also shows that Muslims are becoming more aware of the importance of halal assurance in all areas of life. As demand increases for a comprehensive halal system, including in education, religious boarding schools, and healthcare services, the need to manage these systems professionally has become increasingly important. A strategic method worth exploring is the integration of halal governance with Islamic philanthropic practices, which hold immense potential in supporting the sustainability of Islamic institutions. A compelling case study was Sultan Agung Islamic University (UNISSULA) in Semarang, a waqf-based university with an integrated ecosystem that includes higher education institutions, student pesantren (Islamic boarding houses), and the Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital (RSI SA). Therefore, this study aims to investigate halal governance model based on Islamic philanthropy in UNISSULA environment, treating the university, pesantren, and hospital as an interconnected ecosystem. To achieve this objective, a qualitative with a case study method and a multidisciplinary perspective were used, combining Islamic law and halal system management. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation, involving university lecturers, and healthcare professionals at RSI SA. The results showed that halal governance model at UNISSULA was strongly supported by structured and institutionalized Islamic philanthropic values. Therefore, the synergy between halal systems and Islamic philanthropy could foster institutions that was competitive, accountable, and oriented toward public welfare (*maslahah*).

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1 Introduction

In the modern era, the implementation of halal principles has become a key indicator of whether products and services correspond to Islamic teachings. The growing awareness among Muslim communities regarding the importance of halal products is not merely a matter of consumers preference, but also reflects a deeper commitment to living in accordance with Sharia principles. This awareness transcends food and beverages to education, healthcare services, and various other sectors. In this context, the effective implementation of a well-managed halal system in institutions, such as educational establishments, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic hospitals is increasingly essential. Despite the growing awareness of halal practices, the comprehensive application of halal systems in the mentioned institutions, particularly those supported by Islamic philanthropy, still faces several challenges (Rofiah *et al.* 2024).

A key gap identified in implementing halal systems in Islamic institutions is the suboptimal use of Islamic philanthropic funds, such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf, to support comprehensive halal system management. Islamic philanthropy holds significant potential to finance various aspects of halal operations, from managing Islamic financial institutions to providing standardized halal services and products. However, many Islamic educational institutions, pesantren, and Islamic hospitals have not effectively managed and integrated these philanthropic funds to comprehensively support halal system implementation. As a result, there remains a gap in halal governance that fails to fully meet the operational needs of Islamic institutions, food services, and healthcare systems based on Sharia principles (Musataklima 2021).

The urgency of this study lay in the pressing need to develop a professional and integrated governance system for halal implementation in Islamic educational and healthcare institutions. In the context of Islamic campuses, particularly waqf-based universities such as Sultan Agung Islamic University (UNISSULA), the importance of maintaining halal

standards transcends consumable products to all aspects of institutional management, including administrative processes and services provided to students and the broader community. In this regard, zakat, infaq, and waqf can serve as important sources of funding to support the sustainability of halal system, while also fostering the quality of educational services and the general well-being of the academic community (Choirudin 2024).

A similar challenge is faced by Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital (RSI SA), one of the leading Sharia-based hospitals in Semarang. The implementation of halal system in hospitals transcends providing halal food and beverages for patients to the management of pharmaceuticals, the administration of medical services in accordance with Sharia principles, and the conduct of interactions between medical staff and patients in line with Islamic ethics. This emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive halal system, which not only improves the quality of healthcare services but also upholds the image and integrity of the hospital as an institution founded on Sharia principles (Ali 2019; Sudarto 2020).

All aspects should be well-coordinated in a holistic and accountable management system. An integrated halal system, specifically one supported by Islamic philanthropy, holds significant potential to create a sustainable impact in Islamic institutions, focusing not only on material benefits but also on the broader welfare of Muslim community (Zainudin 2024). Therefore, there is a pressing need for an innovative governance model grounded in Sharia principles that can be comprehensively implemented across Islamic educational institutions, pesantren, and hospitals (Sudiyo & Fitriani 2019). The novelty of this study lay in its integration of various dimensions of halal governance in educational institutions, pesantren, and hospitals, as well as the emphasis of Islamic philanthropy as a key driver of the sustainability in halal system (Farasiah *et al.* 2023).

This study was crucial in addressing the gap in the studies on the integration of halal systems and Islamic philanthropy in modern institutions. Furthermore, it was expected to contribute not only theoretically to the fields

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of management and Islamic law but also practically by offering a model for managing competitive and professional Islamic institutions that remained firmly rooted in Sharia values. This study was relevant for bridging modern management theory, Sharia principles, and contemporary Islamic institutional practices, specifically in building an inclusive and measurable halal system focused on the welfare of the ummah.

2 Methodology

This study used a qualitative method with a case study design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the governance patterns of philanthropy-based halal systems in three primary environments, namely campuses, pesantren, and Islamic hospitals (Abdussamad 2021). The qualitative method was selected for its ability to contextualize social realities, explore the meanings behind institutional practices, and show the dynamics of interaction among the actors involved in halal system management (Abdussamad 2022). The study focused on UNISSULA in Semarang, which historically and structurally held a strategic role in promoting the integration of Islamic values, institutional management, and Sharia-based philanthropic practices (Ali 2019).

This study used a multidisciplinary method, combining perspectives from halal system management and Islamic law (Chanifudin 2016). A managerial perspective was used to analyze institutional structures, halal quality control systems, and the integration of philanthropic programs into institutional governance (Salaman & Rosidi 2024). Respondents included teachers from student-based Islamic boarding schools, lecturers at UNISSULA, as well as professionals and staff at RSI SA, including both managerial personnel and medical staff such as doctors and nurses.

Data were collected using three main methods: (1) In-depth interviews with key informants from the three main environments—pesantren, UNISSULA campus, and RSI SA (Sukijan, Interview at UNISSULA Semarang, 2023); (2) Participatory observation to examine managerial practices, daily activities, and the application of halal and philanthropic principles in institutional dynamics (Sugiyono 2019); and (3) Documentation, which involved collecting secondary data such as halal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), ZISWAF activity reports, the organizational structure of halal management, and archives of integrative programs between the campus and the hospital (Hasanah 2017; Murdiyanto 2020). All collected data were analyzed using the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, comprising three main stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles *et al.* 2014).

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Halal Governance Model in Islamic Universities Based on Islamic Philanthropy

The governance of zakat and waqf should not be viewed as two separate entities, but as an integrated and mutually supportive system for building community welfare (Aditya *et al.* 2024). In this model, zakat was likened to software that functioned to develop human resources, while waqf served as the hardware used for the development of productive infrastructure (Syuhada & Munir 2020). The management of zakat and waqf funds requires a deep understanding of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), applicable regulations, and socio-cultural conditions (Lubis & Latifah 2019). Without a balanced consideration of these aspects, zakat and waqf funds risk stagnation and may fail to develop as expected (Sari *et al.* 2023).

The Rectorate of UNISSULA commends Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) that implement modern and effective information technology systems, even in remote areas (Sudarto 2020). Information Technology (IT)-based financial transaction systems allow students (santri) to carry out various transactions using a single student card, which can also be monitored remotely by parents (Jogja 2024; Zaenurrosyid 2024). Furthermore, the boarding school's infrastructure, such as the installation of underground electrical cables, is designed to maintain environmental aesthetics while ensuring high safety standards (Unissula 2024).

Synergy between Islamic institutions in the management of ZISWAF (zakat, infaq, sadaqah, waqf) and pesantren is crucial. Considering that UNISSULA operates a pesantren for its students, this collaboration is expected to strengthen zakat and waqf management in both institutions (Zaenurrosyid & Nuruddin 2019).

In the era of free trade and Industry 4.0, products without halal certification risk becoming less competitive compared to certified alternatives. The issue has become even more critical with the enactment of the 2019 Halal Product Law, aiming to protect the public from goods and services that do not meet halal standards.

On June 18, 2019, Sultan Agung Waqf Foundation (YBWSA) officially declared the establishment of halal ecosystem across all its units and affiliated institutions. Hasan Toha Putra stated that this declaration was made in the continuous pursuit of Allah SWT's mercy and blessings. All foundation employees were further urged to uphold four key principles:

- Consuming and using products with clearly halal and pure (*thayyib*) status, ensuring all items used by foundation members are both lawful and high-quality (Aset & Tahun 2020).

- Avoiding products containing unlawful (*haram*) or doubtful (*syubhat*) elements, in order to maintain spiritual purity and adherence to Islamic teachings.
- Prioritizing the purchase and use of products owned by Muslims, as a form of support for Islamic economic movement.
- Conducting transactions and business activities in accordance with *Sharia* principles, avoiding usury (*riba*) and other prohibited practices (Sudarto 2020).

The declaration was attended by prominent figures such as former Central Java Governor Ali Mufidz, UNISSULA Rector Prabowo Setiawan, Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital Director Masyhudi, and thousands of foundation employees (Zaenurrosyid *et al.* 2023). Ever since, RSI SA has remained committed to providing high-quality healthcare services and has continued to earn public trust (Ali 2019). A significant transformation occurred between 2002 and 2010, marked by extensive renovations of facilities and upgrades to meet growing demands (Agung 2011).

The philanthropy-based halal system in education and healthcare involves the application of halal principles across consumption, services, institutional management, and economic development, supported through Islamic philanthropic funds (Sari *et al.* 2023).

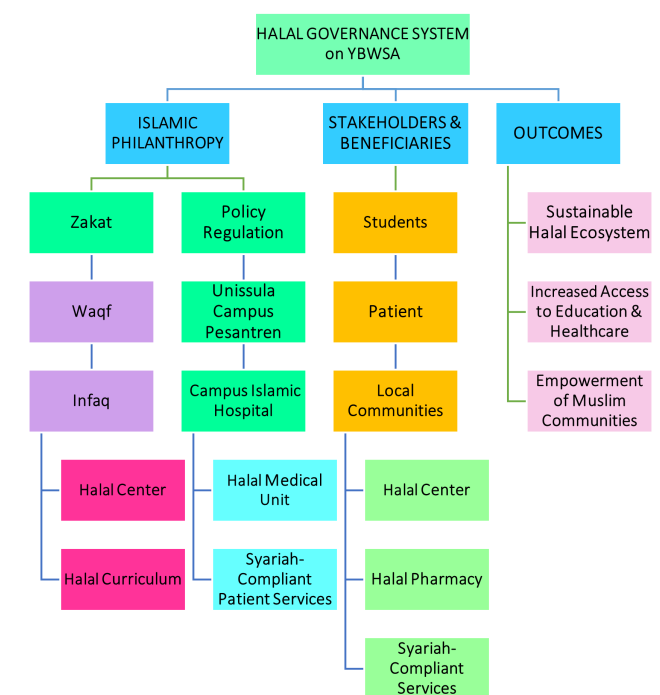


Figure 1: Halal governance system on Sultan Agung Waqf Foundation (YBWSA)

In the context of education and healthcare, the theory of halal-based philanthropy involves two primary aspects, first, ensuring that all elements related to educational and healthcare services adhere to Sharia principles, and second, optimizing the management of philanthropic funds (zakat, waqf, infaq, and sadaqah) to support halal system (Zainudin 2024).

In the education sector, particularly in Islamic-based institutions such as UNISSULA, the implementation of halal-based philanthropy is reflected in the creation of an educational environment corresponding to Islamic values (UNISSULA 2024). According to Sukijan (Interview, UNISSULA Semarang, September 8, 2023):

"This includes halal food management, supporting facilities, and the use of philanthropic funds to support educational activities corresponding to Islamic values. In this context, halal-based philanthropy theory plays a role in ensuring that the education received by students is not only intellectual but also spiritual."

In the healthcare sector, the theory similarly guides operational practices in Islamic hospitals, such as Rumah Sakit Islam Sultan Agung (RSI SA). According to Samsudin (Interview, UNISSULA Semarang, October 8, 2024):

"This theory ensures all aspects of hospital operations—from the management of medications and medical services to patient food—are carried out in accordance with halal principles."

The utilization of philanthropic funds in the healthcare sector aims to improve service quality, provide Sharia-compliant facilities, and expand access for underprivileged communities through health-related zakat or waqf programs (Istadi *et al.* 2019).

3.2 Halal Governance Based on Philanthropy at UNISSULA from Islamic Perspective

Halal governance model based on philanthropy at UNISSULA can be analyzed through three main dimensions, namely Sharia financial

management, food management, and human resource management. From an Islamic perspective, each of the dimensions should be regulated in a manner that reflects the principles of justice, transparency, and sustainability, in line with Sharia teachings. The programs can also be implemented with a focus on justice and without compromising halal principles (Fikriyah 2021). In terms of food management, UNISSULA is responsible for ensuring that all food served on campus strictly meets halal standards. Moreover, campus facilities related to food should adhere to the principles of cleanliness and food safety in accordance with halal standards (Zaenurrosyid *et al.* 2024).

"The implementation of halal system in this area should not be limited to students meals but should also include food for lecturers, staff, and guests present on campus (Samsudin and Secretary of YBWSA (2023), Interview in Semarang, 17 Juni, 2024)."

Human resource management at UNISSULA is expected to be rooted in Islamic principles, ensuring that all staff members receive adequate training and education related to halal management. This includes instruction in Islamic business ethics, human resource management, and the application of halal principles in both academic and non-academic fields. From the perspective of an Islamic hospital like RSI SA, halal governance based on philanthropy can be applied by optimizing zakat, infaq, and waqf funds to improve Sharia-compliant healthcare services. This includes financing halal-certified medical facilities, managing patient meals, and ensuring pharmaceuticals are managed in accordance with Sharia principles, all while maintaining high-quality service standards (Agung 2011).

A fundamental aspect of halal governance based on philanthropy in Islamic universities and hospitals is the management of Sharia-compliant financial institutions. At UNISSULA, an Islamic educational institution with a large student and staff population, the management of philanthropic funds such as ZISWAF should be carefully organized in accordance with Sharia principles (Rasiam *et al.* 2023). In this context, financial institutions managing philanthropic funds are expected to operate with a transparent and well-structured system (Zainudin 2024; Zainuri *et al.* 2022). The management of food and facilities on campus is also a key element in establishing halal environment. At UNISSULA, food services should ensure that all items provided in cafeterias and other dining areas are halal, from the sourcing of raw materials to food preparation and serving methods. The presence of non-halal food, whether due to ingredients or preparation practices, can tarnish the image of Islamic campus and undermine its credibility as an institution committed to educating students in accordance with Sharia principles (Thayyibi & Subiyantoro 2022).

The implementation of halal system is equally important in pesantren environments (Amalia *et al.* 2024). As Islamic educational institutions rooted in traditional values, pesantren play a significant role in promoting halal governance based on philanthropy. Pesantren serve not only serves as centers of religious education but also as communities that develop students (*santri*) to live according to Islamic teachings in all aspects of life, including the management of philanthropic funds (Rahmah 2022; Iskandar *et al.* 2021). In this regard, Islamic philanthropy plays a crucial role, with proper management, these funds can be maximized to improve both the educational experience and the general welfare of the *santri* (Triatmo *et al.* 2020).

A key challenge faced by pesantren in managing halal-based philanthropic system is the limited availability of human resources with expertise in zakat and waqf management (Rahmah 2022). Therefore, targeted training and capacity-building programs for pesantren administrators are essential to facilitate the management of these funds with transparency, accountability, and high efficiency (Hafidz 2021). In addition, the management of halal food, facilities, and human resources in pesantren should be comprehensively addressed to ensure students (*santri*) grow and develop in an environment that fully corresponds to Islamic teachings (Wildan & Subiyantoro 2022). At RSI SA, philanthropic funds can be utilized to provide free or subsidized healthcare services for underprivileged patients, support investigations on halal medicine, and improve hospital facilities to better accommodate patients with special needs. For example, the use of halal-certified medications and the assurance that all medical treatments and procedures comply with Islamic law are essential components of Sharia-based healthcare. The management of food in Islamic hospitals also requires special consideration. Hospitals should ensure all meals served to patients and staff are entirely halal, both in terms of ingredients and preparation methods (Usman 2017). This management transcends the hospital cafeteria to patients meals, expected to comply with Sharia regulations while also supporting the physical and spiritual well-being of patients (Ali 2019).

The implementation of Islamic philanthropic funds, such as zakat and waqf, plays a crucial role in financing halal system at UNISSULA campus and RSI SA. These funding sources support the development and sustainability of halal governance by enabling programs and facilities corresponding to Islamic principles (Choirudin 2024). A well-managed zakat system can significantly benefit communities surrounding the campus, including students from underprivileged families (Sholihah & Zaenurrosyid 2021). It can also support scholarship programs that provide students

greater access to quality education (Juliati & Hrp 2024). The implementation of a philanthropy-based halal governance system at UNISSULA, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), and Islamic hospitals aims to improve the quality of education, healthcare services, and general well-being of Muslim community (Sari *et al.* 2023). This model ensures the physical and institutional environment reflects the values of halal governance, thereby improving both the effectiveness of both educational and healthcare services (Fauzia & Hermawan 2023 ;Pradingga *et al.* 2024).

Ziswaf funds can be allocated for the construction of lecture halls, laboratories, classrooms, or other educational facilities at UNISSULA to improve the quality of education. In Islamic hospitals such as RSI SA, waqf funds can be used to develop modern, patient-friendly healthcare facilities, and to provide free or subsidized services for underprivileged patients. When properly managed, waqf offers long-term benefits due to its sustainable nature and potential to be passed down through generations (Musthafa *et al.* 2022). Moreover, effective waqf management serves as a tool for the economic empowerment of Muslim ummah, offering the wider community access to and benefit from waqf assets (Harrieti & Suwandono 2024).

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, implementing a philanthropy-based halal governance system in Islamic educational institutions, pesantren, and Islamic hospitals along Java's northern coast has significant potential to improve professionalism, accountability, and Sharia compliance. Furthermore, integrating philanthropic funds into management could sustain high-quality education and healthcare services that fully corresponded to Islamic values. Properly utilized waqf funds could provide long-term financial support for infrastructure, such as lecture halls, laboratories, healthcare facilities, and patient services. Meanwhile, zakat management was crucial role for supporting underprivileged students through scholarships. Waqf resources could also fund the construction of modern, patient-friendly healthcare services and offer free medical treatments for those in need. Through proper governance, these systems contributed to the well-being of Muslim community, fostered economic empowerment, and created sustainable models for Islamic education and healthcare. Generally, implementing a well-structured and integrated halal governance system based on Islamic philanthropy could significantly strengthen the role of Islamic institutions in improving education, healthcare, and the economic welfare of the community in Indonesia, particularly in the coastal areas of Java.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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