

The Impacts Of Covid-19 To Saudi Arabia's Economic Sector And Hajj Pilgrimage Policy Of The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: Saudi Arabia is a state located in the Middle East, which is apart from being one of the largest oil producers in the world, is also the prime destination of religious tourism for Muslims worldwide. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all activities in Saudi Arabia have stopped, including Umrah and Hajj pilgrimage. This condition is exacerbated by the fall of the world's oil price that led to a drop in public revenues for the country. In this research, the authors will use the theory of Mercantilism as well as using the qualitative method with the explanatory approach and secondary data to review the case. The findings of this article found that COVID-19 makes an impact on both the economy and religious tourism in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia, COVID-19, Spiritual Vocation

1. Introduction

In December 2019, an epidemic of pneumonia of unknown cause emerged in Wuhan, China, and began to spread around the world. The emergence of a new public health crisis that now threatens the world is identified as the 2019 Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) or the Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This virus originates from bats and is transmitted to humans through intermediate unknown animals in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019 (Singhal, 2020). Since then, the highly contagious COVID-19 has spread across the globe, and the number of deaths caused by it is steadily increasing. In response, in March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic outbreak as more than one million people infected and around 75,000 deaths globally. However, after the declaration of the pandemic status, the number of cases has continued to increase to date as of 23 April 2020, a total of 2,549,632 people have been reported confirmed for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) globally. Among these, there were 175,825 reported deaths related to COVID-19 (WHO, 2020).

The disease is transmitted by inhalation or contact with infected droplets, with the incubation period ranges from 2 to 14 days. The symptoms are usually fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, malaise, and others. The disease is usually limited to only cause mild reaction in most people, but certain people (usually the elderly and people with comorbidities) can develop pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), and multi-organ dysfunction. The estimated case fatality rate is between 2 and 3%. If someone is suspected of contracting the disease, the said person is diagnosed by showing the virus in respiratory secretions by special molecular tests. This virus spreads faster than its two ancestors, SARS-CoV and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) coronavirus, but thankfully has a lower mortality rate compared against both. (Singhal, 2020; Santos et al., 2019).

There are different measures against each infectious disease outbreak as each one requires different multiple approaches. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments all around the world are implementing quarantine and social distancing measures to facilitate containment and reduce transmission of the virus on an unprecedented scale. This effort has proven to be effective in reducing transmission rates. Work from home rules as well as online education learning has been implemented to maintain social distancing for workers and students alike. Likewise, other forms of mass association must be postponed as well, including the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages in Saudi Arabia which are held regularly every year. Hajj is an annual service based on the lunar calendar, where KSA prepares each year so that it can be carried out properly and orderly, while The Umrah is an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca that can be undertaken at any time of the year. In 2020, the Hajj pilgrimage is scheduled to fall closer to June 2 and lasts up to 10 days.

For the first time in the eight decades, the history of Muslim pilgrimages to holy sites in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is suspended. On February 27, 2020, KSA imposed restrictions on incoming Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. The Hajj is the largest mass association in the world that welcomes pilgrims to the chitty Mecca, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) from all over the world from more than 180 countries in the world (Qanta

A.Ahmed, 2020). KSA in this case is very aware of the dangers of this outbreak and is wary of the possibility of a coronavirus outbreak since the beginning of the spread of the virus to international pilgrim travelers.

Hajj is an obligatory pilgrimage in Islam and is included in one of the five pillars of the Muslim faith thus the Hajj becomes a very important act of worship in the life of a Muslim of which they often wait for decades to fulfill. Every Hajj at least brings in more than 2.5 million participants, even up to nearly 3 million "Guests of God" as considered by KSA for the pilgrims (Qanta A. Ahmed, 2020). Safeguarding the lives of millions of pilgrims is the main duty and honor of the Custodian of the Two Holy Cities in Islam namely Mecca and Medina and is the main national priority of the KSA and the ruling king. Protecting the lives of pilgrims during Hajj is not just a matter of setting national policies for the KSA and its kings, but a divinely ordained duty. The stakes for protecting the hajj were therefore very high not only in scale but also in terms of religious mandates.

And although considered to be a "lesser" pilgrimage compared to Hajj, In 2019, KSA welcomed 7.5 million religious visitors including visitors who performed Umrah worship in addition to the Saudi national congregation, a large population of migrant workers living in KSA, and those from visa-free countries such as the countries that are members of the Gulf Cooperation. Council (GCC). As Umrah services can be held at any time of the year, KSA issues visas throughout the year. With such a large number of pilgrims from nearly every country in the world, Hajj planners and the KSA government have focused on ways to contain the coronavirus through an international perspective.

As the pandemic threatens mass gatherings such as the Hajj and Umrah significantly. KSA is working on ways to reduce the risk of religious pilgrims. As previously mentioned the 2020 Hajj was forced to be postponed for the sake of global security and prevention of the spread of the domestic virus in KSA. KSA also halted the e-Visa program that was recently introduced, banned travel of people from countries affected by COVID19, and restricted travel of GCC nationals who have traveled to countries affected by COVID-19 (Shahul H. Ebrahim, 2020). Islam mandates that the sanctity of human life is placed above all other rights including the right to demand the worship of God by mankind. With this in mind, KSA in postponing the 2020 Hajj is still very much in line with the ideals and teachings of Islam and will greatly contribute to the safety of mankind in doing so. With the 2020 Hajj postponed, Hajj planning and the Saudi government largely set the tone for the international community in dealing with many mass gatherings. If public health planners fail to anticipate the coronavirus outbreak during this international mass-gathering event, the effects will be global. This is because every large mass gathering activities such as the pilgrimage have the potential to spread infection. Mass gathering activities can facilitate the spread of COVID-19 which can even exceed the center of the spread in Wuhan, China.

Fortunately, KSA's public health and medical experts are experienced in dealing with epidemics, and thus so the necessary precautions have been prepared before things get worse. KSA has experienced various outbreaks such as the SARS-CoV outbreak, the Ebola virus (EVD) outbreak, the rift valley fever (RVF) outbreak, the Zika virus, the H1N1 influenza pandemic, and the MERS-CoV outbreak all in the last decade (Ahmed, 2020). Management of this outbreak involves close collaboration with various institutions both domestically throughout KSA and international collaboration between governments.

At first, KSA like most countries at the start of the pandemic made limited preventive measures such as thermal screening of all entry points and providing travel guidelines such as for pilgrims especially for the elderly and young children as well as pilgrims who have a history of serious illnesses such as diabetes and others not to attend Hajj because they are at risk from the threat of the coronavirus. In addition, KSA also emphasizes basic prevention including cough etiquette, calls for regular hand washing or using alcohol hand sanitizer to maintain hand hygiene, and the use of face masks (Ahmed, 2020).

But as previously mentioned, In February, the kingdom took the extraordinary decision to close the holy cities of Mecca and Medina to migrants due to the increased risk that is presented by the virus and to ban Haj and Umrah temporarily by restricting religious tourism from all international destinations, a step not taken even during the 1918 flu epidemic which killed tens of millions worldwide (Vahdat, 2020). For the time being, this prohibition has withdrawn the rights of millions of Muslims to fill Islamic religious sites. This has been widely supported by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and WHO as well as by other individual Muslim governments (Ahmed, 2020). This prohibition can still be implemented because the prohibition is in line with the Sharia principle of the right to human life above all else, a right that Muslims must defend for all mankind regardless of belief or belief. Nevertheless, the decision still caused difficulties for many Muslims, as well as the economy of KSA.

The oil industry gives rise to economic strength in the Middle East, especially in Arab countries. Among the Arab oil countries, Saudi Arabia stands out as the world's leading oil exporter because it has a quarter of the world's proven reserves, and has the capacity to continue to expand its oil production. Saudi oil reserves are very significant

in influencing the international monetary system in general and the US dollar in particular. Driven by huge revenues from oil exports, the economy of the Kingdom boomed during the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, unlike most developing countries, Saudi Arabia has a lot of capital, and extensive development projects have sprung up, turning a once backward country into a modern one. The economic system which the Kingdom's embraced is a commitment to a free enterprise economy that's fundamentally based on Islamic guidelines and traditions. The Kingdom has concluded that the economy cannot make full use of the opportunities open to it except through the full use of private initiatives, and by encouraging private enterprises of all sizes and shapes to undertake activities it will be carried out more efficiently than by the government.

But along with that belief is the doctrine of mercantilism that has existed in the economy of Saudi Arabia and formed the modern Islamic state. Mercantilism (also called economic nationalism) is most closely related to the political philosophy of realism, which focuses on the efforts of the state to accumulate wealth and power to protect people from physical harm or the influence of other countries. In theory, the state is a legal entity and an autonomous system of institutions governing specific geographic areas and "nations." Since the mid-seventeenth century, the state has been the dominant actor in the international community based on the principle that it has the power to exercise sovereignty (final authority) over its own affairs. Countries use two types of power to protect themselves Hard power and Soft power (Balaam, 2014).

KSA's soft power is derived from religious influence and cultural strength, namely as the religious center for Muslims in the world. Soft power itself is a selective tool that reflects and projects the cultural values, beliefs, and ideals of a country (Balaam, 2014). It can be said that Saudi Arabia is the center of four important worlds: the Middle East, the Arab world, the Muslim world, and the global energy world. As a result, the Saudis have emerged as the natural leaders of important regional and international communities. Taking into account the political and economic interests of these four networks, the fact that Saudi Arabia is the key to the four networks makes the country one of the most important and influential countries in the world.

The economy of Saudi Arabia contains elements of a unique economic model because it's based on the basic sources of Islam, namely the Quran, Hadith, and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. However, these basic sources do not fully concern the economic foundations of Islamic economics as the foundation is grounded on a code of moral behavior. The first of these principles relate to private ownership of the means of production and the right to inheritance. Second, the Qur'an explicitly states that inequality of property distribution and hierarchical social stratification is permissible. Third, involvement in lucrative employment or wage labor relations is encouraged. Fourth, commercial activity is chosen as a laudable endeavor if it is carried out fairly. Fifth, profit or "fair profit" is an acceptable source of income. To ensure fairness, a series of constraints are imposed on the free behavior of entrepreneurs: (1) usury is prohibited; (2) speculative contracts are discouraged; (3) trading in certain goods is prohibited, for example, wine and pork; and (4) Muslims must pay a single wealth tax, Zakat, at a rate of about 2.5 percent (Sharshar, 1977).

The pattern of distribution of ownership between the public and private sectors of the Saudi economy presents one of the basic sources of Saudi "mercantilism". The most valuable resource, namely, oil resources, is owned by the public. This explains the dominant role that the Saudi government plays as a recipient of oil revenues and as a recipient of that revenue. Since oil production began in the late 1930s, the Saudi economy has developed a large dependence on oil (Sharshar, 1977). KSA's income mostly comes from its fossil fuels, but Hajj and Umrah religious events are also significant contributors to its economy.

The kingdom is very dependent on oil revenues as it is the main source of income, contributing no less than 87 percent of its total budget. The oil-related industry also contributes 42 percent of KSA's GDP. Haj and Umrah add an estimated \$ 12 billion to the GDP of Saudi Arabia annually, which accounts for 20 percent of the country's non-oil GDP and 7 percent of total GDP. The Saudi Government has plans to increase revenue from the pilgrimage to \$ 150 billion by 2022 and hopes that wealthy visitors will be willing to pay thousands of dollars per night to stay in the newly built hotel suites, which include views of the Kaaba (TRT World, 2020). In addition to the direct monetary benefits that pilgrims bring, more than half a million people are employed in the tourism industry in Saudi Arabia, which is very religiously-oriented helps the Kingdom's revenue.

With the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, The impact felt by Saudi Arabia is very significant, especially in terms of its economy, namely the drastic decline in oil prices and the prevention of mass gatherings, namely delaying Hajj and Umrah. For their part, Saudi Arabia has taken major steps to contain the spread of the coronavirus, including suspending several flight routes and temporarily halting entry for religious pilgrims who come to the kingdom for Haj, but it did not change the fact that these two factors form the main source of revenue for Saudi Arabia and has very much adversely affected it.

2. Research Methods

In this paper, the research we did is qualitative. A qualitative approach is more to describe the data that has been collected and obtained. After that words or pictures are formed rather than numbers. This opinion was conveyed by Ezmir. In a qualitative approach, much of the focus is on human relationships so that this approach is identified with *professional knowledge* and *clinical knowledge*. In conducting qualitative research, there are also many interpretations made by researchers. So that humans become the main instrument in research. Humans are also researchers, objects of research, and concurrently become parties who interpret research. In qualitative research, there are several characteristics, one of which is having a scientific background; and raise questions such as *why* as well as *what*.

In addition, this research also has placed limitations on the problems it research, namely:

1. The COVID-19 problem that is spreading all over the world
2. Focussing on economic problems in general and Spiritual Vocation in particular
3. Will COVID-19 affect Saudi Arabia in the economic sector, especially the religious tourism that is there
4. The efforts made by Saudi Arabia in dealing with COVID-19
5. The data in this research are taken based on accurate data and literature from journals, articles, and other sources.

In this qualitative research, according to Stake, humans are the main source. Where humans have an important role in conducting research, research objects and also become actors who play a role in interpreting research. The data in this research is used to answer the formulation of the problem that has been made by the researcher. Therefore, the data taken were taken from books, journals, news, and other documents related to this research.

3. COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia announced the first case related to COVID-19 in the country in March 2020. This case was found in a citizen of Saudi Arabia who recently returned from Iran. Through its official social media account, the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia revealed that the patient immediately underwent quarantine at the hospital in Qatif. Since then, COVID-19 cases began to enter the country and the Saudi Arabian government commits itself to make every effort to prevent the spread of this virus to a higher level. The Ministry then said that the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health had prepared 25 special hospitals to handle coronavirus cases complete with facilities that could support the quarantine process of infected victims.

At the end of March 2020, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia confirmed the first case of death from the coronavirus. On the same day, positive cases also increased by 205 new cases. Along with these two events, the Saudi Arabian government has enacted several regulations to anticipate the spread of corona cases. This was done by issuing policies to close schools, public facilities such as restaurants, shopping centers, and cinemas, as well as implementing a national curfew to limit the mobility of local residents. The teaching and learning process method has been changed to an online method and all citizens are encouraged to do all their work at home or work from home (WFH).

Saudi Arabia is a country with a long history of the development of Islam that is deeply rooted in ethnic history. Saudi Arabia is also a country that is synonymous with the holy cities of Muslims, namely Mecca and Medina. Every year, a number of foreign nationals from various parts of the world are busy visiting Saudi Arabia. Therefore, in addition to religious tourism, Saudi Arabia is also widely visited for pilgrimage and Umrah. Because of this, the Saudi Arabian government has also made policies to control the spread of the virus on a larger scale. The policies taken include:

1. The temporary suspension of the Umrah pilgrimage

Official Umrah activities have been temporarily suspended by the Saudi Arabian government. This was done to prevent the spread of the coronavirus from getting worse. This ban applies to all local residents since the announcement of the second death case due to corona in Saudi Arabia. For foreign citizens who wish to perform Umrah pilgrimages, the Saudi Arabian government has also stopped issuing Umrah visas to minimize the possibility of the spread of the coronavirus from other countries (CNN Indonesia, 2020). Even so, the government still allows local residents to visit Mecca and Medina for the purpose of praying, not Umrah. Therefore, the government of Saudi Arabia asked Muslims to postpone their Umrah pilgrimage plans at least until the spread of this virus has subsided. The Saudi Arabian Ministry also said that, for now, people who have purchased Umrah visas and those that cannot be used will be refunded (BBC News, 2020).

2. The closure of mosques

Apart from suspending Umrah worship activities, Saudi Arabia has suspended the implementation of daily prayers and weekly Friday prayers inside and outside the walls of two mosques in Mecca and Medina to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Previously, the suspension of congregational prayers had been imposed at other mosques in the country except for the al-Haram Mosque and the an-Nabawi Mosque, in Mecca and Medina, respectively. However, this policy was also applied to mosques in Mecca (Al Jazeera, 2020).

3. The temporary closure of the Kaaba

Not only mosques in Mecca and Medina, but the location of the Kaaba also became deserted for the congregation because it was closed by the government of Saudi Arabia. A place that is usually crowded with congregations of the faithful now only visited by local cleaners who pass by. The cleaning team disinfects the tawaf area near the Kaaba, a black box building in the mosque compound. The holy building area was forced to close to reduce residents' activities to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

4. The closure of schools and universities

Since early March 2020, the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia made a policy that schools and universities throughout Saudi Arabia would be closed as part of efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The Minister of Education recommends that schools and other educational institutions conduct distance education while schools are closed to ensure that the education process continues in an effective and quality manner (Middle East Monitor, 2020).

5. The Closure of shopping places and restaurants

The Saudi Arabian government ordered the closure of malls, restaurants, coffee shops, and other public facilities in an effort to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Exceptions are supermarkets, pharmacies, and food delivery which are still running as usual (Kalin, 2020). The governments of the City of Riyadh, Jeddah, and the Eastern Province have all announced new efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus including shutting down all commercial complexes and closed malls and halting all activities inside, including closing restaurants and play areas for children. The municipality also banned eating and drinking inside restaurants and cafes, whether open or closed and restricted the provision of services to taking orders via drive-thrus and by delivery only. They also prohibit gatherings in open and closed public places including parks, beaches, and the like (Khalid, 2020).

6. Prohibiting international flights

In addition to prohibiting visits from a number of countries to Saudi Arabia, now the Saudi Arabian authorities are also suspending international flights. The flight suspension starts March 25 for a renewable two-week period as the United Arab Emirates suspends all inbound, outbound, and transit passenger flights to combat the spread of the coronavirus. These steps are taken to protect the public against the spread of the virus (CNBC, 2020).

4. Spiritual Vocation in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a comparatively large country in the Middle East region, with its territories almost occupies all of the Arabian Peninsula. The founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia itself occurred because of several factors that support the founding of this country. From once led by a caliph, the collapse of the caliphate and other historical factors led to an Arabian state to be formed, led by the Saudis. Until now, the Saudis remain the leaders in this country of Saudi Arabia (Wahyuddin, 2018). It is also in the region that many of the world's major religions have begun to emerge and develop to spread throughout the world, thus becoming its center. Among the countries of the region, Saudi Arabia boasts many spiritual tourist attractions that belong to the Islamic faith such as the Grand Mosque, Safa Hill, and Marwa and the most iconic one is the Kaaba.

As Islam continues to be the most widely practiced religion in the country, Saudi Arabia became a country that specialized in an Islamic tourist attraction. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 84% of the people of Saudi Arabia are Sunni Muslim, 10% Shiite Islam, 3% Roman Catholic, 1% Hindu, and 2% have no religion or other religion. Islam is the official religion and state religion in Saudi Arabia. So that Islamic traditions and tours are plentiful to be enjoyed in every corner of the city. And with such strong background in the spiritual tourism industry, it can be used as state cash income for this country. At least based on existing data, the arrival of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims provides income for Saudi Arabia annually contributing US \$ 12 billion, equivalent to Rp.171 trillion (Aria, 2020).

Thus, when talking about spiritual vocation or spiritual tourism in Saudi Arabia, the lenses of the Islamic point of view became paramount to takes into account. As previously mentioned, many spiritual tourism spots are located in Saudi Arabia. All Muslims around the world have, when living their religious life, aspirations to go to Saudi Arabia. The main form of Saudi spiritual tourism is in the form of going to Medina and Mecca to carry out Hajj

and Umrah. Hajj is a pillar of Islam, if a Muslim is able to do it, then it is obligatory to do it. And usually, this Hajj tour is carried out in a certain month, namely the month of Dzulhijah. With the sheer amount and willingness that pilgrims around the world are showing to perform this religious ritual, the Hajj pilgrimage tour provides a lot of income for the country of Saudi Arabia. Indeed, to carry out the Hajj it may take a Muslim somewhere between 1 to 15 years in waiting lists to be able to do it. The waiting time for the implementation of this Hajj is returned to the quota and the pilgrims who wish to perform the Hajj themselves. In addition, this pilgrimage tour helps the economy of the people around the area and also helps those who work in the travel or travel sector.

Umrah tours also have a significant role in the income of the state treasury. As previously explained, the Umrah pilgrimage is also a recommendation for Muslims who are able to carry it out. Pilgrimage and Umrah are not that much different. Often this pilgrimage is referred to as a "minor pilgrimage". In addition, this Umrah service can be carried out in months other than the month of Dzulhijah. So that very many Muslim people in the world carry out Umrah before the pilgrimage. These two worships are both carried out in the same place and things like going around the Kaaba, going to the Grand Mosque, Arafah, Mina, and also Muzdalifah. However, in the implementation of Umrah, wukuf is not carried out at Arafah as is done during the pilgrimage.

In addition, mosques and caves, which are believed by Muslims to be spiritual places, have also become one of the destinations for spiritual tourism in Saudi Arabia. Like the Grand Mosque or also known as the great mosque of Mecca. This mosque is a place where the center or qibla of Muslims throughout the world is the Kaaba. As a place that must be visited during the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages, the Grand Mosque is also a spiritual tourist spot for Muslims worldwide. Given that the Grand Mosque is a large mosque in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The mosque led by Imam Abdurrahman As-sudais has 9 minarets and a large area that can accommodate 900,000 to 4,000,000 worshippers during the Hajj season.

Masjidl Haram also keeps a lot of stories and history about the Islamic world. The Grand Mosque is also the largest mosque in the world. When he arrived in Mecca, this mosque became the main destination for religious tourism apart from the Al-Rahma mosque, the Abraj Al-Bait tower, and others. Based on data provided by Gulf News, at least 4 million visitors visited the Grand Mosque in the first half of 2019 (Gulf News, 2019). Of these 4 million visitors, at least more than half of these visitors are people who are doing spiritual vocation such as Hajj and Umrah.

The Prophet's Mosque is also a spiritual tour that Muslims must visit when they are in Medina. The mosque, which was built by the Prophet, is also a witness to the da'wah struggles carried out by the Prophet and Muslims in Medina. This mosque is the second largest mosque in the world after the Grand Mosque. With all its uniqueness and characteristics, in this mosque, there are also 3 graves of noble people, namely the Prophet Muhammad SAW, Umar Bin Khattab, and Abu Bakr. So that in this mosque is also believed to be the place where the garden of heaven is located and is commonly called Raudhah.

With time, more changes occur to this Nabawi mosque. Lots of expansion and improvements have been made so that the comfort of worship can be guaranteed. Every year the number of visitors to this mosque continues to increase concurrently with how fast the addition of Muslims in the world who want to visit Saudi Arabia. Based on the data obtained, approximately 1 million visitors can be accommodated by this Nabawi Mosque (BBC News, 2019). And in the planning, by 2040 this mosque is expected to accommodate 1.2 million visitors.

Apart from the Prophet's Mosque and the Grand Mosque, there are also mosques that must be visited if you are already in Saudi Arabia. The mosque is named Al-Rahma Mosque, this mosque in the city of Jeddah has its own uniqueness and characteristics. Judging from the location, this mosque is above sea surface so that this mosque is also known as the floating mosque. In addition, the architectural style of this mosque is a mixture of traditional and modern which is equipped with a good lighting system and neat lighting. Not infrequently, East Asian Muslims are frequent visitors to this Floating Mosque (Arab News, 2019).

Apart from traveling to mosques, Saudi Arabia also provides other spiritual vocation. Like Madain Saleh, an old city in the north of the city of Medina, it has its own uniqueness. Here are buildings attached to the hills. So that many opinions think that this building was owned by the prophet Saleh who is known in Islam. There is also Mount Uhud as one proof of the Prophet's struggle in delivering his preaching. In this place, there was a war between the Muslims and the Meccan army known as the Uhud War. Hira Cave, which is the most visited cave, is not only in the Hajj and Umrah season but on normal days, this cave is not empty of visitors. Furthermore, there is Jannat al-Baqi, this is a burial place that is visited by many visitors because here is the tomb of the Prophet's wife and also other relatives of the Prophet.

As a country that almost occupies the entire Arabian Peninsula, the country of Saudi Arabia also offers many other spiritual tours. Given that there are so many events or relics of the past that still leave certain relics and evidence that can be used as tourist attractions. In addition, Saudi Arabia is also pursuing development in the tourism sector, seeing the huge opportunities that Saudi Arabia can seize.

5. The Impacts of COVID-19 to Economic Sector in Saudi Arabia

The COVID-19 was officially considered a global pandemic by the WHO in March 2020. Since then, this virus outbreak has given various impacts in countries around the world, including countries in the Middle East Region. This virus does not only impact the health sector but also affects other aspects of life. In general, this viral outbreak has also had a significant impact on the economy. Indeed, a number of experts have predicted that this virus will not only have a direct impact but also have implications for the future economies of Middle Eastern countries. The economies of the Middle Eastern countries, especially Saudi Arabia, have experienced a severe decline since the emergence of this coronavirus outbreak. The decline in the rate of economic growth was exacerbated by the significant drop in oil prices. The threats and measures to contain the virus outbreak have affected trade and business activities which are generally expected to have a major impact on Saudi Arabia's non-oil economy. A significant decline in the economy occurred in the religious tourism sector and crude oil sales. As a response to this problem, Saudi Arabia is known to have forcibly closed religious tourism and stopped issuing Umrah visas, which so far have provided an income of 7% of the country's GDP. Also, seeing the decline in oil demand, Saudi Arabia also plans to reduce its dependence on the oil sector because currently the development of the Saudi Vision 2030 plan is hampered (Gavlak, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, in addition to the coronavirus outbreak, the economy of Saudi Arabia is also exacerbated by the condition of oil prices which have decreased since last year. Although the performance of the non-oil sector is still strong due to the support of private consumption and investment, the contraction in the oil sector continues to cause sluggish growth. The medium-term fiscal balance is expected to continue to be in deficit, and this casts doubt on the ability to realize Vision 2030. In this situation Vision 2030 is essential for diversification and Saudi Arabia needs to abandon its dependence on the oil sector.

The fall in oil prices makes the biggest economic impact. Oil is a core export for most of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Even before the pandemic, the price of a barrel of oil was falling, in large part as a consequence of US shale oil production and alternative renewable energy sources coming into effect. Oil prices also fell in free-fall after OPEC and Russia failed to reach a mutual agreement to cut oil production. Annoyed by Moscow's relapse, Riyadh decided to flood the market with oil, resulting in a particularly bad fall in oil prices. The impact of the pandemic will further depress oil prices as demand dries up. As of March 2020, the price of a barrel of crude oil is US\$ 31.35. Consider that at the beginning of the year the price of the same barrel was estimated at US\$ 60. While oil prices are expected to moderate again and trade at US\$ 40 per barrel in December 2020, this is well below the break-even point for oil producers in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa region) (Abigail, 2020).

Growth initially will pivot towards higher oil production as announced in March 2020, pending further approval with OPEC + and G20 countries. Weaker growth is anticipated in the non-oil sector which reflects low domestic demand as the COVID-19 shutdown and suspension disrupt key sectors of the economy; these effects are assumed to be concentrated by 2020. Although there are spending cuts to address falling oil revenues, the fiscal deficit is expected to widen by 2020. Health expenditures related to COVID-19 will be prioritized, for example commitment to free medical treatment for all residents (not just citizens country). The deficit narrowed thereafter as oil prices recovered sufficiently to levels below consensus assumptions at the start of the year. There are two main downside risks, both of which manifest at the same time. First, the recent lapse of the OPEC + agreement put further downward pressure on oil prices as several major players reported plans to increase production, sometimes at deep discounts, to the sizeable existing market surplus. Saudi Arabia is participating in efforts to stabilize prices, through the existing production coordination mechanisms (OPEC +) and the G20. Second, global growth prospects continue to be lowered due to COVID-19 and its impact on energy demand and hydrocarbon revenues. In addition, limited information about the extent and duration of the outbreak makes it difficult to evaluate channels of indirect impact in the economy, for example, value chains and tradable sectors; precautions taken by the authorities, for example, travel restrictions and suspension of work for the public and private sectors; or potential savings measures in response to reduced income (The World Bank, 2020).

In the last two decades, Saudi Arabia's current economic situation is rated as the worst of the time. It is predicted that the rate of economic growth in Saudi Arabia will continue to decline, reaching minus 3.2 percent. Al-Jadaan, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Finance, said that in order to finance the government deficit caused by lower oil prices and the coronavirus crisis, Saudi Arabia was forced to borrow about \$ 26 billion more this year and would withdraw

up to \$ 32 billion from its reserves. Al-Jadaan also said last month that the budget deficit could widen to a maximum of seven to nine percent of GDP by the end of the year, from a previous projection of 6.4 percent. Last March, Riyadh raised its debt ceiling to 50 percent of GDP from the previous 30 percent to finance a widening deficit caused by lower oil prices and an economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Whereas this month he borrowed \$ 7 billion in the dollar debt market. It plans to cover most of the estimated deficit through borrowing, which is expected to total around \$ 58 billion this year. Oil production cuts promised by Saudi Arabia under recent agreements with international producers could wipe out tens of billions of dollars from this year's state revenue, analysts say (MEE, 2020).

The Saudi Arabian government is currently working on creating and establishing strict policies in the country. As a result of these poor economic conditions, the government of Saudi Arabia has been forced to cut government budgets and postpone major projects to be built, including *Saudi Vision 2030*. In addition, this country has also stopped providing subsidies and started imposing tax increases on Value Added Taxes (VAT), a huge divergence from the previously free taxes policy of the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia has launched plans to triple the value-added tax (VAT) and stop monthly payments to citizens. Record low oil prices and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic are weighing on them even more. Saudi Arabia has decided to cut living costs from June and increase VAT from 5% to 15% from July 1. However, the steps taken by the government of Saudi Arabia are judged by the UN to be inefficient, unsustainable, poorly coordinated, and threaten comprehensive social protection for those most in need. In addition, these austerity policies provoked an angry public reaction amid the already high cost of living and oversight of multibillion-dollar state projects. It is predicted that in the future 20% of the 34 million Saudis will live in poverty (Harper, 2020).

6. Conclusion

As a country in the Middle East region, Saudi Arabia has a lot of history and stories. The three major world religions out of the many religions in the world come from the Middle East region. Islam is one of them, the religion that emerged in Mecca left many historical remains which are still used as places that are considered sacred by this religion. Saudis, as the suzerain of the region, used these places used as tourist objects to draw and care for pilgrimages in the Muslim world community. In turn, Saudi Arabia can get a lot of income from the country's treasury from this religious tourism sector.

With COVID-19 spreading dangerously in the world community, In March 2020, WHO as a world health organization determined the status of a pandemic in COVID-19. With such a rapid spread, many countries have taken measures of precautions by locking down their respective countries. This lockdown status raises many negative impacts that affect various countries of the world. Though in general, all sectors will be affected by COVID-19, For Saudi Arabia itself, as a country known as the largest oil producer, has suffered many losses due to the drastic drop in crude oil prices.

Besides, the economic sector gets its second blow with the closure and decline of the spiritual vocation, which has been greatly affected by COVID-19. Given that many countries have stopped their foreign travel routes, both land, sea, and air routes, it has made many religious tourism places in this country to be deserted. Especially in the Hajj and Umrah sector, the sector that provides the most income to the state treasury was especially affected by this COVID-19. At least, as much as approximately Rp.171 trillion of income from Hajj and Umrah was lost by COVID-19.

So that the country's economy does not fall too far into a downward spiral, Saudi Arabia has implemented several mitigating policies in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. These policies are: to postpone the work on the *Saudi Vision 2030*, cutting back on the state expenditure, stopped subsidies, and most drastically imposed taxes, and increased VAT taxes.

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