



# The Science of Sustainability Approach in Halal Tourism Development Based on the Useful Power of the Malay Community in Palembang

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Received: January 13, 2026

Revised: February 08, 2026

Accepted: March 25, 2026

Published: March 31, 2026

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DOI: [10.29303/jppipa.v12i3.14807](https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v12i3.14807)

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**Abstract:** This research investigates the construction of halal tourism development grounded in the sustainability science approach, specifically leveraging the useful power (*daya guna*) of the Malay community in Palembang, Indonesia. While halal tourism has grown globally, existing models often prioritize commercial metrics over substantive religious values and local cultural wisdom. This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to analyze how the Malay community constructs the meaning of "halal" within their socio-cultural context. The results indicate that sustainable halal tourism requires integrating Islamic principles with local Malay identity, encapsulated in the philosophy "Sondok Piyogo: Adat Dipangku, Syariat Dijunjung." A conceptual model is proposed wherein community empowerment serves as the central variable for economic resilience and cultural preservation. The study concludes that halal tourism must transcend marketing gimmicks to become a vehicle for human welfare (*maqasid al-shariah*), ensuring ecological, social, and economic sustainability through active community participation.

**Keywords:** Community empowerment; Halal tourism; Sustainability science

## Introduction

The global tourism industry has undergone a significant paradigm shift in the early 21st century, driven by an increasing demand for travel experiences that align with specific ethical and religious values (Wang et al., 2026; Wilkesmann & Bassyiouny, 2025; Yang & Ning, 2025). Among the emerging sectors, halal tourism has garnered substantial attention, recognized not merely as a niche market but as a robust sector supporting the growth of the Sharia economy (Antonio, 2025; Gössling et al., 2021; Tarkan et al., 2024). Statistical data indicates that the growth rate of halal tourism averages 27% per year, outpacing the general world tourism industry (Bose & Becken, 2024; Curtale et al., 2023; Hidayat & Musari, 2022). This surge is correlated with the rising number of middle-class Muslim societies adopting a halal lifestyle, where religious values become a critical consideration for travelers when selecting

destinations (Fischer & Nisa, 2025; Susanty et al., 2025; Utami et al., 2024). Consequently, halal tourism is increasingly viewed as an innovative breakthrough capable of enhancing national income and fostering economic development in Muslim-majority countries (García-Pérez & Castillo-Ortiz, 2024; Karudin et al., 2025; Rejeb et al., 2021). Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population in the world, holds a unique position to leverage these opportunities, evidenced by its consistent top rankings in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) in recent years (Abraham et al., 2023; Fenni et al., 2024; Tahir et al., 2023)

However, despite its rapid expansion, the conceptualization and implementation of halal tourism remain subjects of intense academic and practical debate. A significant portion of scholarly critique suggests that current practices often devolve into the commercialization of religion within the tourism context (Fuchs et al., 2024; Mehrez, 2025; Phuoc, 2026).

## How to Cite:

Fauzi, M. A., Rusli, R., Junaidi, H., & Hilda. (2026). The Science of Sustainability Approach in Halal Tourism Development Based on the Useful Power of the Malay Community in Palembang. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA*, 12(3), 544-552. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v12i3.14807>

Prominent scholars argue that halal tourism frequently functions merely as a marketing gimmick lacking deep religious substance, where aspects such as compliance with Islamic law (Sharia), spiritual values, and Islamic ethics in service are often neglected in favor of pursuing economic profit alone (Brown et al., 2025; Buckley et al., 2024; Saville & Mahbubi, 2021).

Many destinations bearing the "halal" label fail to comprehensively understand or apply Sharia principles, reducing the concept to superficial attributes like halal food certification while ignoring broader ethical and social implications. Furthermore, existing indices and models, such as the GMTI or the Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI), tend to be technical in nature, focusing on infrastructure and services (Access, Communication, Environment, Services) while failing to fully accommodate Islamic economic principles such as justice, social welfare, and truth. Management that excludes community elements tends to be capitalistic, potentially threatening the sustainability of the sector (Fajriyati et al., 2020; Resti et al., 2025).

To address these gaps, the development of halal tourism must transcend technical compliance and embrace a sustainability science approach grounded in local wisdom and community empowerment. Sustainable halal tourism development entails ecological sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability, and economic sustainability for both current and future generations. This requires integrating Islamic principles with local cultural identity, ensuring that tourism activities fulfill the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shariah*), which aim to create benefits for humanity across five aspects: religion, soul, intellect, lineage, and wealth (Al-Ghazali; Asy-Syatibi). In this context, local wisdom serves as a tourism magnet and a foundation for nation-building, where community activities are utilized as livelihoods to add income and preserve existing arts and culture. Therefore, a comprehensive construction model is needed that positions the community not as an economic object, but as the main subject in the process of constructing halal meaning and managing destinations (Dunlap, 2022; Nadegger, 2023; Sadeghi et al., 2025).

South Sumatra Province, specifically Palembang City, presents a critical case study for this development. Known as the center of the Sriwijaya Kingdom and the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate, Palembang possesses strong cultural capital encapsulated in the local philosophy "Sondok Piyogo: Adat Dipangku, Syariat Dijunjung" (Customs Held, Sharia Upheld). This motto signifies that Malay customs are held firmly while Sharia is upheld high, offering a robust framework for synthesizing Islamic values and cultural identity in tourism. Palembang has a number of historical, cultural, and religious tourist attractions, such as Kemaro Island,

Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar, and various heritage sites along the Musi River, which align with the blue economy paradigm emphasizing the sustainable utilization of water and aquatic resources. However, over time, various problems have emerged in Palembang tourism, including issues regarding tourist comfort, criminality at destination locations, and concerns over tourism sustainability. The operationalization of halal tourism in Palembang faces challenges in adopting a concept that respects the thick Malay culture while meeting modern halal standards.

The core issue lies in the need to find a formula that effectively adopts the halal tourism concept within the specific socio-cultural context of Palembang. Current developments indicate a lack of community awareness regarding their pivotal role in building sustainable tourism. The government often acts as the primary driver, while the community remains passive. For tourism development to be sustainable, it requires a shift towards Community Based Tourism (CBT), where the host community participates fully in development according to their human resource capabilities. The concept of "Useful Power" (*Daya Guna*) of the community becomes central here, defined as the ability of the community to utilize social, cultural, and economic potentials effectively and sustainably. Strengthening the harmony between culture, religion, and economy realized by the local community is the core of this concept. Without empowering the Malay community as the main actors in the process of constructing halal meaning and distributing economic benefits, halal tourism in Palembang risks becoming another instance of superficial commercialization that fails to deliver long-term welfare.

Scientific research plays a vital role in enhancing Indonesia's halal tourism potential by providing empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks that bridge the gap between policy and practice. While previous studies have examined halal tourism trends, regulatory models, and tourist satisfaction, there remains a limited treasure of research focusing on the social construction of halal based on community useful power within a specific Malay-Islamic context. Most existing literature focuses on marketing strategies, regulatory frameworks, or consumer behavior, often overlooking the endogenous power of the local community in defining and sustaining halal tourism. This study seeks to fill that void by investigating how the Palembang Malay community constructs the meaning of "halal" within their socio-cultural context and how this construction can be leveraged for sustainable development.

Based on the background described, the focus of this study is formulated to address the construction of

halal tourism grounded in the sustainability science approach, specifically leveraging the useful power of the Malay community in Palembang. The research aims to move beyond technical indicators to understand the substantive values that drive community participation and sustainability. Accordingly, the objectives of this research are threefold: first, to know and analyze how the Palembang Malay community interprets the concept of "halal tourism" in their social and cultural practices; second, to know and analyze what factors (social, economic, institutional) facilitate or hinder the construction of halal tourism based on the useful power of the Malay community in Palembang; and third, to find a model of halal tourism development that is effective, sustainable, and based on the useful power of the Palembang Malay community. By achieving these objectives, this study intends to contribute to the academic discourse on Islamic civilization studies and provide practical policy directions for creating competitive, sustainable halal tourism destinations.

## Method

### *Research Design*

This study employs a phenomenological research design within a qualitative approach. Phenomenology was selected as the primary methodological framework because the core objective of this research is to understand the lived experiences and subjective meanings attributed to "halal tourism" by the Malay community in Palembang. According to Berger and Luckmann's theory of social constructionism, reality is not merely an objective fact but is formed through interaction, interpretation, and shared agreement within society. Therefore, a phenomenological approach allows the researcher to uncover how the Palembang Malay community constructs the reality of halal tourism through their daily social and cultural practices, rather than merely measuring technical compliance with halal standards.

The study utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach to intensively and meticulously describe the social phenomena related to community-based halal tourism development. This approach is appropriate for exploring the complex interplay between Islamic values, Malay cultural identity, and economic sustainability. By focusing on the "useful power" (*daya guna*) of the community, the research seeks to reveal the invisible dynamics of community empowerment, participation, and ownership that quantitative metrics might overlook. The data collected is non-numerical, consisting of interview transcripts, field notes, personal documentation, and official records, which are analyzed

to construct a comprehensive model of sustainable halal tourism.

### *Research Setting and Participants*

The research was conducted in Palembang City, South Sumatra, Indonesia. Palembang was chosen as the focal location due to its historical significance as the center of the Sriwijaya Kingdom and the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate, embodying the local philosophy "Sondok Piyogo: Adat Dipangku, Syariat Dijunjung" (Customs Held, Sharia Upheld). This cultural capital provides a unique context for examining the integration of Malay customs and Islamic Sharia in tourism. Specific sites selected for observation include high-potential halal tourism destinations such as Kemaro Island, the Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar monument, the Ki Gede Ing Suro Mosque, and cultural heritage sites along the Musi River. These locations represent the intersection of religious, historical, and cultural tourism where community interaction is most prominent.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques to ensure they possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding the research focus. The primary subjects included: the Palembang Malay community, residents living around tourist destinations who act as hosts and potential beneficiaries of tourism; government officials, the head of the Palembang city tourism office and administrators responsible for policy and implementation; tourism business actors, private parties and entrepreneurs managing hotels, restaurants, and travel services; tourists, both domestic and international visitors to understand their perceptions and satisfaction; and community leaders, figures who influence social norms and community mobilization.

This diverse group of participants ensures a multi-perspective analysis of the factors facilitating or hindering halal tourism development based on community useful power.

### *Data Collection Techniques*

To ensure the richness and validity of the data, three primary data collection techniques were employed:

**In-Depth Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather primary data regarding the construction of halal meaning and community participation. Interview guides were developed based on the research questions, focusing on interpretations of "halal," experiences of empowerment, and perceptions of sustainability. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with tourism office officials, community members, business actors, and tourists. This method allowed for the exploration of deep subjective experiences and the uncovering of implicit cultural values.

**Participant Observation:** Systematic observation was carried out to obtain an initial and general picture of the halal tourism ecosystem. Researchers engaged in direct observation at tourist destinations to record visible symptoms of community interaction, facility compliance (e.g., prayer rooms, halal food signage), and social behavior. This technique helped verify the congruence between stated policies and actual practices on the ground, particularly regarding the "useful power" of the community in managing destinations.

**Documentation:** Document analysis was used to collect secondary data and confirm objective conditions. This included reviewing work programs (daily to annual), policy documents, infrastructure plans, halal tourism development strategies, and visual evidence (photos, videos) of implemented policies. Documentation from the Palembang Tourism Office and related institutions provided context on the institutional framework supporting or constraining community-based tourism.

#### *Data Analysis Techniques*

Data analysis was conducted iteratively throughout the research process, from data collection to conclusion drawing. The analysis followed an interactive model comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

**Data Reduction:** This process involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data collected from field notes, interviews, and documents. Given the volume of qualitative data, reduction was necessary to identify core themes related to the social construction of halal, community empowerment indicators, and sustainability factors. Irrelevant data was discarded to sharpen the focus on the research problems.

**Data Display:** Reduced data was organized into coherent narratives, matrices, and conceptual maps to facilitate understanding. This step allowed the researcher to see patterns regarding how the Malay community mobilizes local wisdom as a sustainable economic asset.

**Conclusion Drawing and Verification:** Initial conclusions were drawn based on the displayed data and were continuously verified against new data collected during the fieldwork. This ensured that the final model of halal tourism development was grounded in empirical evidence.

#### *Data Validity and Trustworthiness*

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, triangulation techniques were employed. Triangulation involves cross-checking information from various sources and methods to confirm the accuracy of the data.

**Source Triangulation:** Findings obtained from interviews with one group (e.g., government officials) were cross-verified with data from other sources (e.g., community members, tourists, and documents). This minimized bias and ensured a balanced perspective on the issues of comfort, safety, and sustainability in Palembang tourism.

**Method Triangulation:** Data collected through interviews were compared with observations and documentation. For instance, claims regarding facility availability were verified through direct observation at tourist sites.

**Theory Triangulation:** The findings were interpreted using multiple theoretical perspectives, including Social Constructionism, Community Empowerment Theory, and Islamic Economic Principles (Maqasid Al-Shariah). This prevented individual researcher bias and enriched the depth of understanding, particularly when comparing findings with existing literature on halal tourism models.

**Researcher Triangulation:** Where possible, data collection and analysis involved multiple researchers or peer debriefing to ensure that interpretations were not solely dependent on a single researcher's perspective.

Through this rigorous methodological framework, the study aims to produce a robust and valid model for halal tourism development that is effective, sustainable, and deeply rooted in the useful power of the Palembang Malay community. The combination of phenomenological inquiry and triangulated data analysis ensures that the resulting conceptual framework accurately reflects the social reality and potential for sustainable economic growth in the region.

## **Result and Discussion**

Results should be clear and concise. The discussion should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. A combined Results and Discussion section is often appropriate. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature.

This section presents the empirical findings derived from phenomenological analysis of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted in Palembang City. The results are organized around three core themes aligned with the research objectives: the social construction of halal meaning, factors influencing community useful power, and the emerging model for halal tourism development.

#### *The Social Construction of Halal in the Malay Community*

Based on in-depth interviews with 25 participants (including community leaders, tourism officials, business actors, and tourists), the Palembang Malay

community constructs the meaning of "halal tourism" through three integrated dimensions:

**Religious Compliance Dimension:** All participants agreed that basic halal standards must be met, including: Availability of prayer facilities (mosques, mushallas) at tourist destinations; halal food and beverage certification; absence of prohibited activities (gambling, alcohol, nightclubs); and separation of facilities for unrelated men and women where applicable.

One tourism office official stated: *"The foundation of halal tourism is ensuring all facilities comply with Sharia principles. Without this, we cannot call it halal tourism."*

**Cultural Authenticity Dimension:** Community members emphasized that halal tourism in Palembang must preserve Malay cultural identity. Key elements include: traditional Malay arts (Tanggai Dance, Dzikir Saman); culinary heritage (Pempek, Tekwan, Model) prepared according to halal standards; historical sites related to Sriwijaya Kingdom and Palembang Darussalam Sultanate; and traditional architecture and clothing that reflect Islamic-Malay identity.

A community leader from Kemaro Island noted: *"Halal is not just about food. It is about maintaining our Malay identity that has always been connected to Islam. Our culture is already Islamic."*

**Social Ethics Dimension:** Participants identified behavioral standards as integral to halal tourism: hospitality and respectful treatment of tourists; safety and security at destinations; fair pricing without exploitation; and moral conduct in tourist-community interactions.

A homestay owner explained: *"If we cheat tourists or if the area is unsafe, it is not halal even if the food is certified. Halal includes how we behave."*

*Factors Facilitating and Hindering Community Useful Power*

**Table 1.** Facilitating Factors

Factors	Evidence from Field
Cultural Capital	Historical sites (Kemaro Island, Al-Qur'an Al-Akbar, Ki Gede Ing Suro Mosque) serve as strong tourism magnets
Community Participation	"Kampung Kreatif" program has mobilized 150+ families in homestay and culinary businesses
Religious Awareness	95% Muslim population naturally supports Sharia-compliant practices
Government Support	Collaboration with MUI and DSN for halal certification and facility development
Local Philosophy	"Sondok Piyogo: Adat Dipangku, Syariat Dijunjung" provides cultural framework

**Table 2.** Hindering Factors

Factors	Evidence from Field
Infrastructure Limitations	60% of observed destinations lacked adequate prayer facilities or cleanliness standards
Safety Concerns	Criminality incidents reported at 3 major tourist spots (Ampera Bridge area, Musi River banks, night markets)
Economic Constraints	78% of SMEs reported insufficient capital to upgrade facilities to halal standards
Ecological Threats	Waste management issues along Musi River affecting 40% of river-based tourism sites
Standardization Gaps	Confusion regarding halal tourism standards beyond food certification

**Table 3.** Tourism Visitor Data (2015-2022) based on documentation from Palembang City Tourism Office:

Year	Domestic Tourists	International Tourists	Total
2015	1,724,275	8,028	1,732,303
2016	1,899,887	9,261	1,909,148
2017	2,002,567	9,850	2,011,417
2018	2,110,898	12,249	2,123,147
2019	2,189,407	12,433	2,201,840
2020	893,890	2,022	895,912
2021	1,206,448	0	1,206,448
2022	1,542,485	0	1,542,485

The data shows consistent growth before the pandemic (2015-2019), significant decline during COVID-19 (2020-2022), and gradual recovery post-pandemic.

*Community Participation Levels*

Observation data revealed varying levels of community participation across destinations: High Participation (40% of sites): Community-managed homestays, culinary centers, cultural villages; Medium Participation (35% of sites): Partial community involvement with government oversight; and Low Participation (25% of sites): Externally managed with minimal community benefit

Participants in high-participation sites reported: 35% higher income stability compared to non-participants; Stronger sense of ownership and pride in destination; and better maintenance of facilities and cleanliness

*Emerging Model Components*

From the data analysis, five core components of a halal tourism model emerged: Input, Islamic Values & Malay Culture of Palembang; Process, Social Construction of "Halal" → Participation and Community Useful Power; Output, Community-Based Halal Tourism Model (homestays, culinary centers, cultural

villages, religious tours); Outcome, Economic Increase & Cultural Preservation; and Impact, Sustainable Tourism & Community Welfare

This section explores the significance of the findings presented above, connecting them to theoretical frameworks and broader implications for halal tourism development. The discussion addresses how the results advance understanding of sustainability science in halal tourism, community empowerment, and Islamic economic principles.

*Reconceptualizing Halal Tourism Beyond Technical Compliance*

The finding that the Palembang Malay community constructs halal meaning through three integrated dimensions (religious compliance, cultural authenticity, and social ethics) challenges the dominant paradigm in halal tourism literature. Existing indices such as the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) and Indonesia Muslim Travel Index (IMTI) focus primarily on technical indicators—access, communication, environment, and services (ACES). While these are necessary, they are insufficient for achieving substantive sustainability.

The integration of cultural authenticity as a core dimension aligns with the local philosophy "Sondok Piyogo: Adat Dipangku, Syariat Dijunjung." This suggests that halal tourism cannot be standardized globally without accounting for local cultural constructions. The social ethics dimension, particularly the community's emphasis on safety and fair treatment, directly connects to the Islamic principle of *maqasid al-shariah* (objectives of Islamic law), specifically the protection of life (*hifz an-nafs*) and wealth (*hifz al-maal*).

This finding addresses the critique raised by scholars such as Jamal, McGrath, and Ghauri that halal tourism often functions as a "marketing gimmick" lacking religious substance. The Palembang case demonstrates that when local wisdom is integrated, halal tourism transcends commercial metrics to become a value-based system. The community's internalization of Sharia principles through the lens of Malay custom creates a self-regulating mechanism that is more robust than external certification alone.

*Community Useful Power as the Linchpin of Sustainability*

The correlation between community participation levels and destination quality (as evidenced by the 35% higher income stability in high-participation sites) supports Community Based Tourism (CBT) theory. However, this research extends CBT by introducing the concept of "useful power" (*daya guna*)—the community's capacity to utilize social, cultural, and economic potentials effectively and sustainably.

The hindering factors identified (infrastructure limitations, safety concerns, economic constraints,

ecological threats) reveal critical gaps between potential and operationalization. The issue of criminality at tourist destinations is particularly significant because it directly violates *maqasid al-shariah*. A destination cannot be considered sustainably "halal" if it compromises the safety of its visitors or residents. This finding suggests that halal tourism certification must include safety and security metrics, not just facility compliance.

The economic constraints faced by SMEs (78% reporting insufficient capital) indicate that halal tourism development requires more than marketing—it requires financial inclusion. Islamic financing mechanisms could be leveraged here to align economic empowerment with Sharia principles. This connects to research by Encep Saepudin on integrating halal tourism value chains with Islamic banking, though this study focuses on community empowerment rather than financing structures.

*The Halal Malay Tourism Framework: Theoretical Contributions*

The emerging model components identified in the results offer several theoretical contributions: First, the framework places community useful power at the center, arguing that sustainability is impossible without active community ownership. This contrasts with existing models that prioritize infrastructure and services. The framework suggests that "soft" power (community agency, cultural identity, social norms) is as important as "hard" indicators (facilities, certification, accessibility). Second, the model operationalizes *maqasid al-shariah* in a tourism context. By ensuring that tourism activities protect religion (prayer facilities), soul (safety), intellect (educational cultural value), lineage (moral environment), and wealth (fair economic distribution), the framework moves beyond profit maximization to human welfare (*maslahah*). This addresses the critique that halal tourism is often capitalistic. Third, the framework integrates the Blue Economy paradigm specific to Palembang's geography. The Musi River is not just a scenic backdrop but a living resource that must be protected through community action. This aligns ecological sustainability with religious ethics—the concept of stewardship (*khalifah*) over the earth.

**Table 4.** Comparison with Previous Research study differs from prior research in several significant ways:

Previous Research	This Study
(Sutono et al., 2021): Focus on memorable halal travel experience (consumer-centric)	Focus on community useful power (producer-centric)
(Jaelani, 2021): Legal-regulatory model based on Bhineka Tunggal Ika	Socio-cultural implementation model based on local wisdom

Previous Research	This Study
(Susilawati, 2023): Regulatory gaps in halal tourism	Community-driven model that functions alongside regulation
(Saepudin, 2021): Value chain integration with Islamic banking (Lombok)	Community empowerment model (Palembang)
(Wardhani & Purnomo, 2022): Religious reputation culture for sustainability	Malay-Islamic cultural construction for sustainability

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the social construction of halal meaning by the community itself, rather than imposing external standards. This addresses the gap identified in the literature regarding local wisdom integration in halal tourism models.

*Implications for Policy and Practice*

For Policymakers: The findings suggest that regulations should support community empowerment rather than just imposing top-down standards. Incentives for community-based enterprises and training programs are essential. The government's role should transition from direct operator to facilitator who empowers community useful power.

For Destination Managers: Focus should be on building relationships with the local community, ensuring they benefit from tourism. The 40% of sites with high community participation demonstrate better outcomes—this should be replicated across all destinations.

For Business Actors: Understanding the local cultural context is key to marketing halal tourism effectively. The integration of Malay culture with Islamic values creates a unique selling proposition that differentiates Palembang from other halal tourism destinations.

For Community: The research validates that communities have a very important role, both as subjects (actors) and objects (hosts), in serving tourists well and contributing to realizing sustainable tourism. Empowerment programs should focus on capacity building, access to capital, and cultural preservation.

*Limitations and Future Research*

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged: Geographic Scope, the research focuses solely on Palembang City. Comparative studies with other regions (e.g., Lombok, Aceh, West Sumatra) would validate the framework's applicability; Methodological Constraints, as a qualitative phenomenological study, the findings are context-specific. Quantitative research measuring the impact of community empowerment on tourist satisfaction and economic indicators would complement these results; Temporal Limitations, data

collection occurred during post-pandemic recovery. Longitudinal studies tracking sustainability outcomes over 5-10 years would provide stronger evidence; Stakeholder Representation: While multiple stakeholder groups were included, the sample size (25 participants) limits generalizability.

Future research should explore: Quantitative measurement of community empowerment impact on economic indicators; Comparative analysis with other Malay-Islamic regions; Integration of digital technology in community-based halal tourism; and Long-term ecological sustainability metrics for river-based tourism

The significance of this work lies in its demonstration that halal tourism can be a vehicle for holistic human development. By anchoring development in the local wisdom of the Malay community ("Sondok Piyogo"), Palembang offers a replicable model for other regions. It proves that modernity and tradition, economy and spirituality, can coexist synergistically.

The "Halal Malay Tourism Framework" serves not only as a local solution but as a conceptual contribution to the global discourse on sustainable Islamic tourism. The true measure of success is not just visitor numbers, but the welfare and empowerment of the host community. This aligns with the science of sustainability, which seeks systems that can withstand and adapt to change while preserving core values for future generations.

**Conclusion**

This study constructs and synthesizes the cultural identity of the Palembang Malays with Islamic values in developing sustainable halal tourism destinations, responding to criticism that halal tourism is often merely a marketing gimmick without deep religious substance. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study finds that the Malay community of Palembang interprets "halal tourism" through three integrated dimensions: religious compliance, cultural authenticity, and social ethics, which are rooted in the local philosophy of "Sondok Piyogo: Adat Dipangku, Syariat Dijunjung" (Customs are upheld, Sharia is upheld). Factors facilitating development include strong cultural capital, community participation, and religious awareness, while obstacles include infrastructure limitations, security issues, and economic constraints on MSMEs. Based on these findings, this study proposes a "Halal Malay Tourism Framework" that places community utility as a key variable, integrating Islamic values, Malay culture, and the principles of maqasid al-shariah to create tourism that not only meets technical halal standards, but also creates human welfare through

economic improvement, cultural preservation, and community empowerment as the main subject, not an economic object, thus offering a replicable model for the development of sustainable halal tourism in other regions.

#### Acknowledgments

Thank you to all parties who have helped in this research so that this article can be published.

#### Author Contributions

All authors contributed to writing this article

#### Funding

No external funding.

#### Conflicts of Interest

No conflict interest.

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