

Village Tourism Potential Based on Local Wisdom: A Sharia Economic Perspective

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Abstract

Rural poverty in remote areas is often driven by geographical isolation, traditional economic structures, and the underutilization of local potential. Singkuang Village, located in Muara Batang Gadis District, Mandailing Natal Regency, possesses village tourism potential based on local wisdom that has not been optimally developed. This study aims to analyze the potential of local wisdom based village tourism from the perspective of Islamic economics as a strategy for community economic empowerment. This research employs a qualitative approach, with data collected through direct observation, literature review, and in depth interviews with village officials, tourism managers, local communities, and the village community empowerment office. The results indicate that the development of Batu Badaun Beach tourism has contributed to increasing economic independence among local residents, particularly fishermen, through community based economic activities. Local wisdom reflected in traditional products, rural architecture, and cultural practices supports the development of a creative economy aligned with Islamic economic principles, including justice, empowerment, and sustainability. The novelty of this study lies in integrating local wisdom based tourism development with an Islamic economic perspective, demonstrating its relevance as an effective poverty alleviation model and positioning Singkuang Village as a potential pilot village for sustainable rural tourism development.

Keywords: Tourism Potential; Based On Local Wisdom; Islamic Economics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ironically, although tourism based on local wisdom has been proven to strengthen cultural identity while simultaneously supporting rural economic development, many rural areas in Indonesia have not yet optimized this potential in a well-planned manner (Pahriah et al., 2025). Recent literature studies indicate that local wisdom plays a crucial role in cultural preservation, sustainable natural resource management, and strengthening the identity of rural tourism destinations when local communities are actively involved in their development (Putranto et al., 2024). On the other hand, empirical studies in several tourism villages reveal that limitations in human resource capacity, weak coordination among stakeholders, and a lack of marketing strategies and infrastructure



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constitute significant barriers to the development of local wisdom-based tourism (Nisak et al., 2025). This condition also potentially occurs in Singkuang Village, Muara Batang Gadis District, which possesses natural landscapes and traditional culture but has not yet been strategically managed to become a leading tourism destination.

Furthermore, the urgency of developing tourism based on local wisdom is reflected in the need to integrate cultural values into sustainable tourism strategies, not only to attract tourists but also to inclusively empower local communities (Pratiwi & Wikantiyoso, 2024). Local wisdom such as the tradition of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), traditional agricultural systems, and Mandailing customs that are still preserved can actually serve as authentic tourism differentiators compared to other destinations (Pratiwi & Wikantiyoso, 2024). Without a proper framework for community empowerment and good governance, this cultural potential risks being subjected to commercialization pressures that may diminish its intrinsic cultural value (Politeknik Pariwisata Negeri Makassar, 2025). Therefore, studies examining the development of local wisdom-based tourism in Singkuang Village are essential to formulate sustainable empowerment and cultural preservation strategies while generating positive socio-economic impacts for the local community.

Tourism has become one of Indonesia's key focuses in efforts to improve the economic conditions of its citizens (N, R., Putra & Sari, 2015). In addition, community-based tourism development has been proven to enhance local community welfare when managed inclusively and sustainably (Kurniawan & Wijayanti, 2020).

Tourism destination development strategies utilize natural beauty as well as cultural diversity, traditions, and local wisdom of communities. All provinces in Indonesia possess diverse characteristics. Its vast territory and natural beauty, which are rarely found in other countries, have not yet been fully developed. Some provinces are well known for their Islamic atmosphere; for instance, Aceh Province, which implements Islamic law, was designated as the Best Muslim-Friendly Cultural Destination at the National Halal Tourism Competition (KPHN) in 2016. This achievement should be leveraged by developing the halal industry in the food, fashion, and tourism sectors (Batubara & Harahap, 2022). The halal tourism trend is further reinforced by increasing global tourist interest in destinations that provide Sharia-compliant services, including accommodation, culinary offerings, and tourism activities (Samori et al., 2016). (Samori et al., 2016).

The tourism sector is one of the strategic fields that plays a significant role in increasing regional income and community welfare. According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2023 report, the halal tourism sector is among the fastest-growing segments worldwide, with the global Muslim traveler market projected to reach 283 million by 2028. As the country with the largest Muslim population, Indonesia has great potential to develop Sharia-based tourism, considering that halal tourism trends are increasingly popular at both domestic and international levels (Nasution et al., 2022). This opportunity is even more

relevant because Muslim tourists tend to seek destinations that prioritize spiritual comfort and halal consumption security (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

Mandailing Natal Regency (Madina) in North Sumatra is endowed with rich natural and cultural resources that characterize the region. It is well known for Mandailing traditional customs, hilly landscapes, clear rivers, and coffee and rubber plantations. However, despite its substantial tourism potential, the contribution of the tourism sector to Mandailing Natal's Regional Original Revenue (PAD) remains low. Economic development largely relies on plantation and mining sectors. One village with significant tourism potential is Singkuang Village in Muara Batang Gadis District. This village offers pristine natural beauty, well-preserved culture, and unique Mandailing culinary traditions. In fact, rural areas like this possess characteristics suitable for the development of tourism villages based on authenticity and ecotourism (Suryani & Setiawan, 2021).

Mandailing local wisdom, such as the philosophy of *Dalihan Na Tolu*, which emphasizes social harmony, mutual cooperation, and balanced roles within society, constitutes a fundamental value in community-based tourism management. This philosophy is highly relevant to the community-based tourism approach, where local communities act as the main actors in planning, managing, and benefiting from tourism destinations (Putra & Pitana, 2021). However, in practice, rural tourism development still faces various challenges, including limited tourism management capacity, low access to capital, and the lack of systematic integration between local wisdom values and Sharia economic principles. If tourism potential is not aligned with Islamic values, there is a risk of economic practices containing elements of *riba*, *gharar*, or cultural exploitation that contradict principles of justice and public benefit. Therefore, the development of local wisdom-based tourism integrated with Sharia economic principles is crucial to ensure fair and sustainable tourism governance while preserving cultural and religious values within the community (Ascarya, 2020).

The integration of Sharia values into tourism is believed to foster more ethical and sustainable economic practices (Henderson, 2016). The phenomenon underlying this research is the increasing interest in halal tourism in Indonesia, in line with global trends. The Indonesian government has even targeted positioning the country as a global halal tourism hub. However, at the village level, tourism development remains underdeveloped, including in Mandailing Natal Regency. Singkuang Village, despite its considerable natural and cultural tourism potential, has not been optimally managed. No systematic Sharia-based management concept has been implemented, even though the majority of the population is Muslim. In fact, the application of Islamic economic principles such as justice, prohibition of *riba*, transparency, and consultative-based management can positively impact community welfare. Furthermore, social changes driven by globalization and modernization threaten the sustainability of Mandailing local wisdom. Values of mutual cooperation and the *Dalihan Na Tolu* tradition are gradually fading as societal orientation shifts toward purely economic gains. If left unaddressed, tourism development risks benefiting only a small group while

neglecting cultural and religious values (Sinta Aulia Haikal et al., 2024). This condition underscores the importance of a tourism village development model that balances economic, cultural, and religious values (Rahmawati, 2020).

Although Singkuang Village possesses significant tourism potential in terms of natural beauty, Mandailing culture, local wisdom, and distinctive cuisine, this potential has not yet contributed significantly to community welfare or regional revenue. Tourism development in this area still faces several fundamental problems.

First, tourism management remains suboptimal due to insufficient managerial capacity among both the community and village government. There are no planning documents, management models, or clear tourism development strategies. Second, although the majority of Singkuang Village residents are Muslim, there is no systematic integration between tourism potential and Sharia economic principles, which may lead to practices inconsistent with Islamic values, such as *gharar*, unequal profit distribution, or cultural exploitation for purely commercial purposes. Third, Mandailing local wisdom—particularly the *Dalihan Na Tolu* philosophy rooted in harmony and mutual cooperation—is gradually declining due to modernization. If neglected, this cultural value risks erosion, causing tourism to develop without a strong local identity. Fourth, global interest in halal tourism continues to grow, yet villages like Singkuang are not prepared to seize this opportunity due to limited Muslim-friendly facilities, lack of public understanding of halal tourism concepts, and the absence of Sharia-based regulations in destination management. Fifth, while many studies discuss halal tourism in urban or developed areas, there is a lack of in-depth research on local wisdom-based tourism villages integrated with Islamic economic principles in the context of Mandailing Natal. This creates a significant research gap.

This condition highlights a disparity between potential and management. Rich natural and cultural tourism resources remain underdeveloped due to the absence of Sharia-based development concepts, limited application of Islamic economic approaches, low community awareness of halal tourism, weak planning and governance, and the lack of a sustainable Mandailing local wisdom-based tourism village model.

This article explains existing tourism village development potential that has not yet received adequate support. Such potential is evident in Singkuang Village, Muara Batang Gadis District, Mandailing Natal Regency, which offers unique attractions through natural management and supportive facilities. The rural tourism concept involves tourists staying in or near traditional environments. A tourism village model based on cultural wisdom and natural resources allows tourists to recognize, appreciate, enjoy, and learn about village uniqueness, which becomes the main attraction (Susyanti, 2013). This model also supports local community empowerment through capacity building and strengthening community roles (Fitriani & Fauzi, 2021).

However, a gap remains between potential and management. Based on preliminary observations, challenges include limited community understanding

of halal tourism concepts, insufficient capital for facility development, and the absence of regulations governing Sharia-based tourism management. Therefore, this study aims to explore the tourism potential of Singkuang Village, utilize local wisdom as a foundation, and assess its alignment with Islamic economic principles. A Sharia-based approach can also ensure more equitable economic benefit distribution through consultative mechanisms and social justice (Ridwan, 2019).

Previous studies indicate that research on halal tourism and Sharia economics predominantly focuses on urban destinations or developed regions. Meanwhile, studies on local wisdom-based tourism villages systematically integrated with Islamic economic principles—particularly in rural Mandailing Natal—remain very limited. There is no comprehensive conceptual model examining village tourism potential, Mandailing local wisdom, and the implementation of Sharia economic principles as a strategy for rural community economic empowerment. This research gap forms the basis and urgency of the present study.

Based on this background, the urgency of this research is increasingly evident, given that halal tourism has become a global focus and the Indonesian government actively promotes halal tourism destinations across regions. However, most prior research has concentrated on urban or developed destinations, while villages rich in local wisdom such as Singkuang have received little attention. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to examine the potential of local wisdom-based tourism villages and how their management can align with Islamic economic principles aimed at generating economic benefits without neglecting cultural and religious values. The research questions addressed in this study are: What is the local wisdom-based tourism potential of Singkuang Village in supporting tourism village development. How can the development of Singkuang Village tourism be viewed from a Sharia economic perspective.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to examine the potential of local wisdom-based tourism and its implementation within the framework of Islamic economics. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture social, cultural, and religious meanings embedded in community tourism practices through direct interaction with research participants. The study was conducted in Singkuang Village, Muara Batang Gadis District, Mandailing Natal Regency, Indonesia, from May to July 2025. The research site was purposively selected due to its significant local cultural tourism potential that has not yet been optimally managed or systematically integrated with Islamic economic principles. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to represent key stakeholders involved in village tourism development. Eight informants participated in the study, including the village head, traditional and cultural leaders, religious leaders, local business actors, and community representatives.

Data saturation was used to determine the adequacy of the sample, as no new substantive information emerged from additional interviews. This composition enabled a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between local cultural values, community economic practices, and Islamic economic principles.

Data were collected through field observations, semi structured in depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations focused on physical conditions, community activities, and existing tourism resources, while interviews explored informants' perspectives and experiences related to local wisdom and Islamic economic practices in tourism development. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data credibility was ensured through triangulation of sources, methods, and time to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study finds that Singkuang Village has significant potential to become a local wisdom-based tourism destination, with natural attractions such as clear rivers as one of its main assets, green hills, and well preserved forests. In addition, the community strongly upholds traditional and customary values passed down through generations, including strong Islamic cultural practices embedded in daily life.

In the context of tourism potential, three main aspects stand out: nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and educational tourism. Nature-based tourism includes scenic hilly landscapes, clear river streams, and forest areas suitable for trekking and camping activities. Cultural tourism is reflected in various community traditions, such as customary ceremonies, traditional music performances, and distinctive Mandailing cuisine with unique flavors. Meanwhile, educational tourism can be developed through the introduction of local wisdom values, traditional agricultural systems, and Islamic teachings that guide the community's way of life. However, interviews with community leaders and village government officials indicate that this potential has not yet been optimally utilized. One of the key constraints identified relates to the lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure, including homestays, adequate worship facilities, and proper transportation access. In addition, tourism promotion remains very limited, resulting in Singkuang Village not being widely recognized by tourists.

From a Sharia economic perspective, tourism development in Singkuang Village offers substantial opportunities to be implemented in accordance with Islamic principles. The majority of the population is Muslim, allowing tourism management to be designed in compliance with Sharia provisions. These principles include ensuring the halal status of products offered, avoiding activities that contradict religious teachings, and implementing management

systems based on Sharia contracts such as *musyarakah* or *mudharabah* to achieve fairness in profit-sharing.

Based on an interview with the Head of Singkuang Village, he stated:

“Our village has a lot of potential. We have clear rivers, well-preserved forests, and unique culture. However, we still lack adequate facilities and infrastructure. Our hope is that tourism can be developed in the future while continuing to preserve our customs and Islamic law.”

Meanwhile, according to a local traditional leader, tourism potential must align with local wisdom to avoid eroding the village’s cultural identity. He stated:

“If tourism is developed, it should not damage our customs. We have traditions of mutual cooperation, traditional farming methods, and religious values that must be preserved. These can also become tourism attractions.”

Interviews with local business actors revealed the economic opportunities that could be gained by the community:

“If tourism develops, we can sell traditional food, agricultural products, and handicrafts. But currently, there are no facilities and promotions, so the village remains quiet.”

In addition, one community representative emphasized that Sharia-based tourism is highly compatible with their way of life:

“We agree if tourism is developed as halal tourism. All food must be halal, and there should be no entertainment that violates religious teachings. That way, when outsiders come, we still feel religiously secure.”

These findings reinforce that the community supports tourism development as long as it adheres to Sharia principles and local wisdom. However, several major constraints remain, including limited infrastructure, insufficient promotion, and the absence of village regulations governing halal tourism.

From a Sharia economic perspective, tourism management in Singkuang Village can be conducted based on principles of justice (*‘adl*), public benefit (*maslahah*), and Sharia compliance. These principles can be applied through *musyarakah* (joint capital cooperation) or *mudharabah* (profit-sharing) contracts involving the village government, business actors, and the community. Thus, tourism not only serves as a recreational activity but also provides added economic value for residents without violating religious principles. To address existing challenges, development strategies are needed, such as enhancing human resource capacity through halal tourism management training, formulating village regulations on Sharia-based tourism, and establishing cooperation with third parties, including local governments, academics, and investors concerned with halal tourism.

The discussion also reveals challenges in realizing Sharia-based tourism in the village, including limited community knowledge of halal tourism concepts, financial constraints for infrastructure development, and the absence of village regulations specifically governing Sharia-based tourism management. To

overcome these barriers, development strategies may include strengthening human resource capacity through Sharia tourism management training, drafting village regulations related to halal tourism, and fostering collaboration with local governments, business actors, and academics to ensure that tourism development aligns with Sharia principles and delivers economic benefits to the community.

Tourism Potential of Singkuang Village

Singkuang Village has highly promising tourism potential, both in terms of natural beauty and well preserved local cultural richness. Geographically, the village is located in Muara Batang Gadis District, Mandailing Natal Regency, a region known for its pristine and relatively untouched natural landscapes. The natural tourism potential of Singkuang Village is reflected in its green hills, well preserved tropical forests, and clear, natural river flows. These environmental conditions provide opportunities for developing various nature-based tourism activities, such as trekking, camping, and river tourism, which align with sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism concepts.

In addition to nature-based tourism, Singkuang Village also possesses strong cultural tourism potential through the continuity of Mandailing community traditions. Various cultural heritages, such as customary ceremonies, traditional *gordang sambilan* music, and distinctive Mandailing cuisine, are still practiced in the daily lives of the community. This cultural wealth not only reflects local identity but also holds authentic value that can become a unique tourism attraction distinct from other destinations. Furthermore, the community's way of life, which maintains traditional agricultural systems and upholds values of mutual cooperation and Islamic teachings, opens opportunities for developing educational tourism based on local wisdom, where tourists can learn about sustainability values, local culture, and the socio-religious practices of the village community.

Despite its substantial potential, tourism utilization in Singkuang Village has not yet been optimized. Tourism management remains simple and unstructured, as indicated by the absence of a dedicated institution or management body responsible for village tourism development. Moreover, limitations in supporting facilities such as homestays, worship facilities, transportation access, and minimal promotional activities hinder tourism growth. This condition indicates that Singkuang Village's tourism potential requires more systematic planning and management to generate sustainable economic benefits for the community.

Sharia Economic Perspective on Tourism Development

Based on interviews and field observations, tourism development in Singkuang Village has strong potential to be integrated with Sharia economic principles. The application of Sharia economics in the tourism sector emphasizes that all tourism activities must align with Islamic values, particularly the

principles of *tawhid*, justice, public benefit (*maslahah*), and the halal status of products and services offered. Tourism activities should not involve elements that contradict Islamic teachings and must ensure fair distribution of benefits for all parties, especially local communities as the primary stakeholders.

Opportunities for implementing the Sharia tourism concept in Singkuang Village are supported by the social condition of the community, which is predominantly Muslim, making Sharia values relatively easy to accept and internalize. In addition, Mandailing traditional cuisine, which inherently complies with halal principles, can be developed as a flagship halal tourism product. Tourism activities can also be aligned with customary and religious values through cultural and religious education programs that not only enhance tourism attractiveness but also strengthen local community identity.

Nevertheless, the implementation of Sharia economics in tourism development in Singkuang Village still faces several challenges. Limited community understanding of halal tourism and Sharia economics concepts is a major obstacle, compounded by insufficient capital for developing tourism facilities that meet Sharia standards. Furthermore, the absence of village regulations specifically governing Sharia-based tourism management has resulted in suboptimal and uncoordinated implementation.

As an implementation strategy, tourism development in Singkuang Village may adopt various Sharia economic schemes, such as *musyarakah* partnerships between the village government and the community in providing tourism facilities, as well as *mudharabah* profit-sharing schemes for investors seeking fair and transparent investment opportunities. Additionally, the utilization of Islamic social funds, such as *infaq* and productive *waqf*, can be directed toward the development of tourism facilities that support public welfare and sustainable village economic growth. This approach is expected to position Singkuang Village as a model for developing tourism villages based on local wisdom and Sharia economics.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study emphasize that the tourism potential of Singkuang Village lies not only in its natural beauty and cultural richness but also in the strong social and religious capital of its community. This reinforces the argument within community-based tourism (CBT) theory, which asserts that the success of tourism development is largely determined by active local community participation and the alignment of tourism management with local socio-cultural values (Yoeti, 2008). In contrast to several previous studies that emphasize the role of government or investors as the main actors, the results of this study demonstrate that the people of Singkuang Village place customary and religious values as primary prerequisites in tourism development, thereby underscoring the importance of a participatory approach grounded in local values.

From the perspective of natural potential, these findings are consistent with (Inskeep, 1991) who argues that environmental authenticity is a key asset in sustainable tourism development. The clear rivers, green hills, and forested areas of Singkuang Village possess characteristics aligned with ecotourism concepts. However, this study extends previous findings by demonstrating that natural advantages alone are insufficient without community-based governance and the integration of religious values. In this regard, the present findings complement existing literature that has tended to separate natural resource management from religious and ethical dimensions.

The cultural potential and Mandailing local wisdom such as the *Dalihan Na Tolu* philosophy, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and traditional arts support the views of (Sedyawati, 2010) and (Smith, 1992), who argue that sustainable cultural tourism must originate from the lived experiences of local communities rather than merely symbolic attractions. The findings indicate that the people of Singkuang Village perceive local wisdom as both a cultural identity and a mechanism of social control in tourism development. This represents an important contribution to the cultural tourism literature, as it affirms that local wisdom functions not only as a tourism attraction but also as an ethical foundation for destination governance.

From a Sharia economic perspective, this study provides conceptual reinforcement for the application of *maslahah*, justice, and sustainability principles in the tourism sector. Unlike previous studies that generally position halal tourism primarily in terms of worship facilities and halal product compliance (Battour & Ismail, 2016) the findings of this study suggest that Sharia economics can be applied more substantively through management mechanisms based on Sharia contracts, such as *musyarakah* and *mudharabah*, to ensure equitable distribution of economic benefits. Accordingly, this study broadens the understanding of halal tourism from a consumption-oriented perspective to one that emphasizes economic governance.

Furthermore, local economic potentials in the form of agricultural products, traditional cuisine, and community handicrafts demonstrate strong relevance to the principles of *halal* and *thayyib*. These findings align with the Islamic economic concept that positions economic activities not merely as profit-oriented endeavors but as mechanisms for generating social welfare. By integrating local products into the tourism value chain, tourism development in Singkuang Village has the potential to serve as a community-based poverty alleviation instrument rather than merely a recreational sector.

Nevertheless, this study also identifies a gap between potential and implementation. Constraints such as limited infrastructure, minimal promotion, low literacy regarding halal tourism, and the absence of Sharia-based village regulations indicate that tourism development cannot occur spontaneously. This confirms (Inskeep, 1991), assertion that tourism development requires systematic planning and strong institutional frameworks. In the context of Singkuang Village, the absence of Sharia-based village regulations represents a critical gap that has received limited attention in previous research.

Thus, the position of this study's findings within the literature lies in affirming that the development of local wisdom based tourism villages will be more sustainable when conceptually and practically integrated with Sharia economic principles. This study not only strengthens CBT and halal tourism theories but also offers an integrative perspective that positions customary values, religion, and economic considerations as a unified framework in tourism village development. This approach has the potential to serve as an alternative model for tourism village development in other regions with similar socio cultural and religious characteristics.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Singkuang Village, Muara Batang Gadis District, Mandailing Natal Regency, has strong potential to be developed as a local wisdom based tourism village from a Sharia economic perspective. This potential is reflected in the presence of well preserved natural resources, the richness of Mandailing cultural heritage, and socio-religious practices that are aligned with the principles of *tawhid*, justice, and *maslahah*. The findings indicate that tourism activities, particularly in the Batu Badaun Beach area, have created economic opportunities for local communities through the development of halal culinary businesses, local products, and transportation services, thereby contributing to increased participatory economic self-reliance.

The application of Islamic values in tourism management is understood as an effort to preserve the community's social and religious norms; however, its implementation remains informal due to the absence of village regulations, systematic planning, and strong management institutions. Therefore, the development of a local wisdom-based and Sharia-compliant tourism village in Singkuang Village requires policy support through the formulation of village regulations, enhancement of human resource capacity, strengthening of infrastructure and promotion, and synergy among government authorities, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and business actors to ensure that economic benefits are distributed fairly and sustainably across the community.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS:

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