
HALAL TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT IN ASEAN: EVIDENCE FROM INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, AND THAILAND

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Abstract

Halal tourism has emerged as an important strategy for promoting sustainable destination development in ASEAN, yet comparative evidence on how it contributes to sustainability across different national contexts remains limited. This study examines the role of halal tourism in supporting sustainable destination development in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, with particular attention to the contribution of Digital Business Models for Sustainability (DBMS). Using a comparative qualitative content analysis of secondary data from Our World in Data, the study analyzes three indicators: international tourism expenditure, sustainable tourism monitoring capacity, and tourism's contribution to gross domestic product. The findings reveal distinct development patterns across the three countries. Malaysia demonstrates the strongest institutional integration between halal tourism, sustainability governance, and digital support systems. Thailand exhibits a highly adaptive halal-friendly tourism model characterized by strong economic dependence on tourism and expanding sustainability monitoring mechanisms. Indonesia shows steady growth and significant potential but remains in a consolidation phase marked by uneven governance and monitoring capacity. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of halal tourism as a driver of sustainable destination development depends not only on market growth but also on the integration of digital governance, sustainability monitoring, and institutional capacity. This study contributes to the literature by providing a comparative ASEAN perspective that links halal tourism, sustainable destination development, and DBMS within a unified analytical framework.

Keywords: Halal tourism; Sustainable destination development; Digital Business Model for Sustainability; ASEAN; Comparative analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION [font Garamond 12; 1.5 space; Bold]

Over the past two decades, tourism has grown into one of the most dynamic and influential economic sectors in the world, not only as a source of foreign exchange and job creation, but also as a strategic instrument for sustainable development. In the Southeast Asian region (ASEAN), tourism plays a vital role in driving regional economic growth, social and cultural integration, and environmental conservation, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNWTO, 2018). Amidst this dynamic, halal tourism has emerged as a

rapidly growing global market segment and is increasingly recognized as a catalyst for inclusive, sustainable, and highly competitive destination development.

Halal tourism refers to the provision of tourism products, services, and experiences that comply with Islamic principles, including the availability of halal food, worship facilities, privacy, and service ethics that reflect sharia values (Battour & Ismail, 2016). However, in recent developments, halal tourism is no longer narrowly understood as a religious market, but rather as a value-based tourism model that emphasizes ethics, sustainability, local community welfare, and environmental responsibility (El-Gohary, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). This perspective makes halal tourism relevant not only for Muslim tourists but also for the broader agenda of sustainable destination development.

The ASEAN region occupies a strategic position in the global halal tourism landscape. Indonesia and Malaysia consistently rank at the top of the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), while Thailand, despite its predominantly non-Muslim population, demonstrates a strong commitment to developing halal-friendly services to expand its international Muslim tourist market (Mawardi et al., 2023). The diversity of social, cultural, and policy contexts in these three countries makes ASEAN a rich empirical laboratory for understanding how halal tourism can function as a driver of cross-border sustainable destination development.

Along with global digital transformation, the development of halal tourism is also increasingly linked to digital business models for sustainability. Digital business models enable destinations and tourism industry players to integrate information technology, digital platforms, and data-driven innovations to simultaneously create economic, social, and environmental value (Bocken et al., 2019; Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2020). In the context of halal tourism, digitalization plays an important role in providing halal information, booking services, marketing destinations, and strengthening tourist trust through certification and digital transparency (Abdulrazak et al., 2021). Thus, halal tourism, sustainable destination development, and digital business models form a conceptual intersection that is increasingly relevant but has not been fully explored comprehensively in the ASEAN context.

International literature on halal tourism shows a significant increase in the last decade. Early studies focused on conceptual definitions, market segmentation, and Muslim tourist satisfaction factors (Battour et al., 2014; Battour & Ismail, 2016). These studies confirm that halal attributes such as halal food, worship facilities, and Muslim-friendly environments have a positive effect on tourist visitation intentions and loyalty. However, most of these studies are still demand-side oriented and do not examine the structural implications of halal tourism for sustainable destination development.

As the discourse on sustainability develops, a number of researchers have begun to link halal tourism with the concept of sustainable development. For example, Vargas-Sánchez (2019) argues that Islamic values in halal tourism are normatively consistent with the principles of sustainability, such as social justice, environmental preservation, and economic balance. Other studies show that halal tourism has the potential to strengthen the local economy, support MSMEs, and increase community participation in destination management (Al-Ansi et al., 2018; Henderson, 2016). However, in-depth empirical evidence on how these mechanisms work at the destination level is still relatively limited.

In the context of sustainable destination development, tourism literature emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach that encompasses economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions (Saarinen, 2021; UNWTO, 2018). However, research on sustainable destinations in ASEAN tends to be general in nature and rarely explicitly integrates the perspective of halal tourism. Most studies focus on ecotourism, community-based tourism, or smart tourism, without systematically considering how halal values can enrich the sustainability framework of destinations (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

On the other hand, literature on digital business models for sustainability is growing rapidly, especially in the context of the transformation of the tourism industry. Bocken et al. (2019) and Lüdeke-Freund et al. (2020) emphasize that sustainable digital business models enable organizations to create, deliver, and capture value in ways that support sustainability goals. In tourism, digitalization has been utilized for smart destination management, sharing economy platforms, and sustainable marketing (Gretzel et al., 2020). However, the relationship between digital business models and halal tourism is still a relatively new and fragmented area in the literature.

Several recent studies have begun to highlight the role of digital technology in enhancing the halal tourism experience and operational efficiency (Abdulrazak et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). However, these studies generally use quantitative approaches and focus on a single country or type of stakeholder, thus failing to capture the contextual complexity and cross-actor dynamics in the development of sustainable halal destinations.

Based on a critical review of the literature, there are several significant research gaps. First, although halal tourism and sustainable destination development are both growing topics, conceptual and empirical integration between the two remains limited, especially in the context of developing countries in ASEAN. Second, most previous studies are single-country studies, which are unable to capture the differences in policies, cultures, and halal tourism development strategies across ASEAN countries. Third, from a methodological perspective, the literature is

dominated by survey-based quantitative approaches, which, although useful for testing relationships between variables, are less capable of exploring the meaning, processes, and actual practices of halal tourism development as a driver of sustainable destination development. In-depth qualitative studies, particularly cross-country case studies, are still very limited. Fourth, the role of digital business models in supporting the sustainability of halal tourism is often discussed separately, without an analytical framework that is integrated with the context of destinations and public policy.

This study offers novelty in three main aspects, namely conceptual, contextual, and methodological. Conceptually, this study integrates halal tourism, sustainable destination development, and digital business models into a single integrated analytical framework, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of how halal values and digital innovation reinforce each other. Contextually, this research applies a cross-country approach with a focus on Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, which represent varying levels of halal tourism development in the ASEAN region, thereby providing new empirical contributions to studies that have thus far been fragmented. Methodologically, this research uses a qualitative approach through multiple case studies and thematic analysis, enabling a more in-depth exploration of practices, challenges, and strategies for sustainable halal tourism development.

Based on the background and research gaps, this study focuses on exploring the role of halal tourism as a driver of sustainable destination development in ASEAN, taking into account the contribution of digital business models. This study aims to analyze the implementation of halal tourism in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, identify the role of digital business models in supporting its sustainability, and formulate theoretical and practical implications for sustainable tourism policies. To achieve these objectives, this study asks questions about the contribution of halal tourism to economic, social, and environmental dimensions, the utilization of digital business models by stakeholders, and contextual factors that differentiate strategies between countries. This study uses a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design through in-depth interviews, policy document analysis, and contextual observation, which are analyzed thematically to obtain a deep and contextual understanding.

2. METHODOLOGY [font Garamond 12; 1.5 space; Bold]

This study uses a qualitative approach with Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to examine the role of halal tourism and the Digital Business Model for Sustainability (DBMS) in promoting sustainable destination development in the ASEAN region, particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. The selection of Qualitative Content Analysis is based on the urgency to

understand patterns of meaning, policy narratives, and conceptual representations of sustainability that are constructed in large-scale and cross-national data. Unlike quantitative approaches that focus on testing statistical relationships, QCA allows researchers to interpret the context, intentions, and meaning structures inherent in the data, making it relevant for examining complex phenomena such as halal tourism, which is laden with values, norms, and institutional dimensions (Krippendorff, 2019). In the context of ASEAN, which is heterogeneous in terms of society, culture, and policy, Qualitative Content Analysis provides a flexible yet systematic methodological framework for exploring how digitalization, halal values, and sustainability are produced and represented in the development of tourism destinations (Elo et al., 2014; Mayring, 2014).

Conceptually and operationally, this study adopts a Qualitative Big Data Analysis approach, which is the integration of Qualitative Content Analysis principles with the use of large-scale secondary data interpreted qualitatively (Chen et al., 2014; Knafllic et al., 2020). This approach does not treat big data solely as a source of numbers, but rather as a collection of texts, metadata, narrative indicators, and policy documentation that contain social and institutional meanings. The analysis process is carried out through several main stages. First, data collection, which involves downloading and archiving selected datasets relevant to tourism, sustainability, digital transformation, and socio-economic development. Second, data filtering and selection, which is done to ensure the suitability of the data with the research focus, by eliminating indicators that are irrelevant or inconsistent across countries. Third, qualitative coding, which is the process of grouping data into analytical categories and themes derived inductively and deductively, such as the dimensions of sustainability (economic, social, environmental), the role of digital technology, and the implications for halal tourism. Coding is done iteratively to maintain consistency and reliability of interpretation. Fourth, thematic interpretation and synthesis, which is the interpretation of relationships between themes to build a holistic understanding of how DBMS contributes to the development of sustainable halal destinations in ASEAN. This approach is in line with sustainable tourism research practices that increasingly utilize big data in a reflective and interpretive manner (Gretzel et al., 2020; Sigala, 2020).

The main secondary data source in this study comes from Our World in Data (OWID), a research-based global data platform that provides transparently curated and documented datasets on sustainable development, economics, tourism, technology, and social welfare (Nikiforova, 2021). The types of data used include indicators related to international tourism, the contribution of the service sector to GDP, digital technology adoption, human development, and environmental sustainability indicators relevant to the destination context. The selection of

indicators was based on three main criteria: (1) conceptual relevance to halal tourism, DBMS, and sustainable destination development; (2) availability and consistency of cross-country data for Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand; and (3) credibility and traceability of data sources, including their connection to international institutions such as the World Bank, UNWTO, and OECD. OWID data is not analyzed statistically inferentially, but rather treated as text and policy artifacts that represent the development narratives and strategic priorities of each country. Through Qualitative Content Analysis, the data is used to compare national contexts, identify thematic patterns, and interpret the implications of DBMS for the development of sustainable halal tourism in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. This approach enables the study to produce findings that are comparative, contextual, and oriented toward deep understanding, in line with the methodological standards of qualitative research in reputable international journals (Elo et al., 2014; Krippendorff, 2019).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents empirical research findings on the role of tourism, with an emphasis on halal tourism and the support of the Digital Business Model for Sustainability in the development of sustainable destinations in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. The results are presented descriptively, comparatively, and contextually based on secondary data from Our World in Data (UNWTO) for the periods 1995–2022 and 2008–2022, focusing on three main indicators, namely international tourist expenditure abroad, sustainable tourism monitoring, and the contribution of tourism to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The Dynamics of International Tourist Spending as an Indicator of Tourism Activity

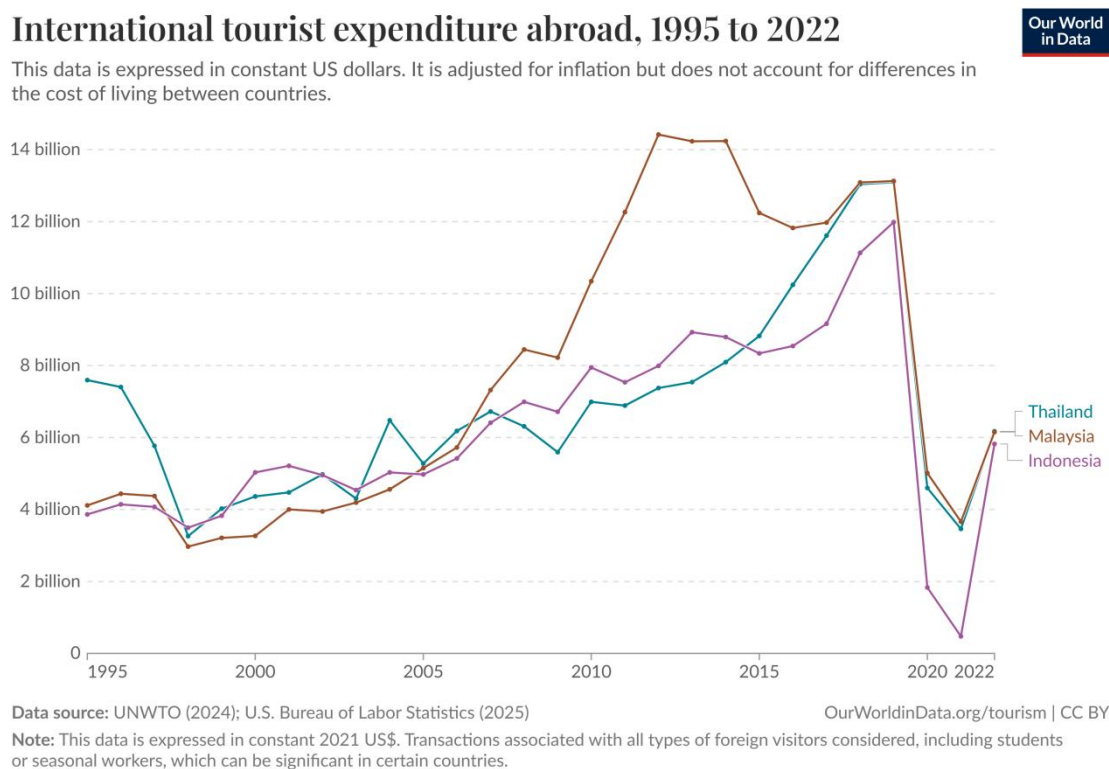
Data on international tourist spending abroad shows different but interrelated dynamics between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand throughout the period 1995–2022. Thailand and Malaysia generally recorded higher spending levels than Indonesia, particularly from the mid-2000s until before the COVID-19 pandemic. Malaysia showed significant growth from around 2005, with spending peaking in the 2012–2014 period at over USD 14 billion, before experiencing fluctuations and a sharp decline in 2020 due to the pandemic. Thailand showed a relatively stable growth trend with strong acceleration after 2015, reaching around USD 13 billion in 2019, which signifies the central role of the tourism sector in cross-border mobility and consumption.

Indonesia, despite having lower spending levels than the other two countries, has shown consistent growth since the early 2000s until 2019. The gradual increase from around USD 4

billion to more than USD 11 billion in 2019 reflects Indonesia's increasing integration into the international tourism flow. An extreme decline in 2020–2021 was seen in all three countries, with the most drastic impact on Indonesia, which recorded a decline to below USD 1 billion. However, 2022 data shows an initial recovery in all three countries, although they have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels.

Comparatively, these results show that Thailand and Malaysia have stronger structural resilience in international tourism activities, while Indonesia is still in a consolidation phase. In the context of halal tourism, this pattern indicates that countries with more mature service ecosystems, including the use of digital platforms for information, reservations, and mobility of Muslim tourists, tend to have greater capacity to maintain and restore cross-border tourism activities.

Figure 1. International Tourist Expenditures Abroad in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, 1995–2022 (constant US\$)



Monitoring Sustainable Tourism as a Representation of Governance Capacity

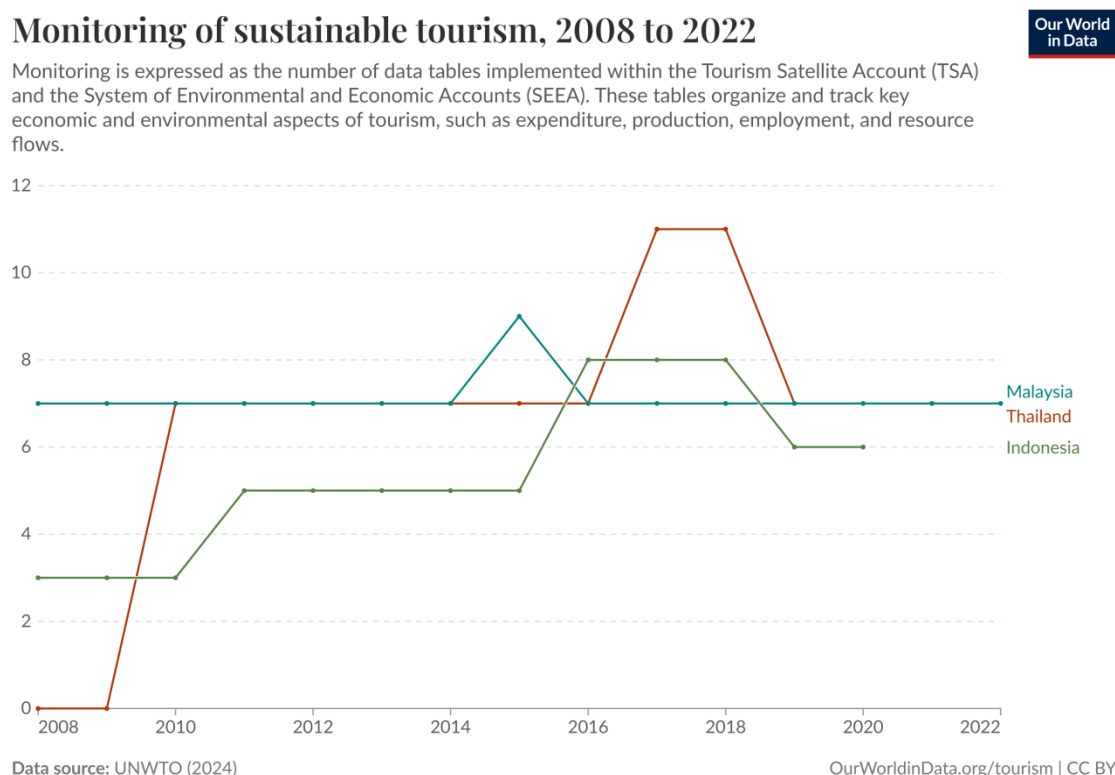
Sustainable tourism monitoring indicators, measured by the number of data tables in the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and System of Environmental and Economic Accounts (SEEA) frameworks, show striking differences in governance capacity and sustainability readiness between countries. Malaysia has consistently maintained a relatively stable number of

monitoring tables (around seven tables) throughout the 2008–2022 period, with little variation. This indicates a sustainable and standardized institutional approach to monitoring the economic and environmental impacts of the tourism sector.

Thailand shows more fluctuating but progressive dynamics. After having almost no monitoring system in 2008–2009, Thailand experienced a significant increase in 2010 and peaked in the 2017–2018 period with more than ten monitoring tables. Despite a decline after 2019, this achievement indicates Thailand's serious investment in a sustainable tourism monitoring system, which is relevant to its data- and digital-based halal-friendly destination strategy.

Indonesia shows a pattern of gradual growth in sustainable tourism monitoring. From around three tables in 2008–2010, Indonesia increased to five tables in the early 2010s, then reached eight tables in the 2016–2018 period before declining again to six tables in 2019–2020. This pattern indicates a strengthening of monitoring capacity, although it is not yet fully stable. In the context of the Digital Business Model for Sustainability, these findings show that the readiness of data and digital systems to support sustainable decision-making still varies, with Malaysia being relatively the most consistent, Thailand the most aggressive in expansion, and Indonesia in the institutional strengthening phase.

Figure 2. Level of Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Monitoring Systems in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, 2008–2022



Contribution of Tourism to GDP as an Indicator of Economic Impact

The contribution of tourism to GDP shows the economic role of this sector in national development in all three countries. Thailand consistently recorded the highest contribution, increasing from around 3.5% in 2010 to more than 7% in the 2016–2019 period. This confirms Thailand's economic dependence on the tourism sector. The drastic decline in 2020–2021 to below 1% shows high vulnerability to external shocks, although it also confirms the scale of tourism's impact on the national economy.

Malaysia and Indonesia show more moderate but stable contributions. Malaysia recorded a tourism contribution of around 5–6.5% before the pandemic, peaking around 2019, while Indonesia was in the range of 4–5% during the same period. Both countries experienced a decline in 2020, but 2022 data shows a faster recovery in Malaysia than in Indonesia. This pattern suggests that economic diversification and the use of digital business models in the tourism sector have the potential to influence the speed of post-crisis recovery.

In the context of halal tourism, its contribution to GDP in Indonesia and Malaysia reflects the role of this segment as part of a broader national economic strategy. Although the data does not directly separate halal tourism, the stability of its contribution in both countries indicates that the Muslim tourist market and the halal service ecosystem contribute to the resilience of the tourism sector as a whole.

Figure 3. Contribution of Tourism to Gross Domestic Product in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, 2008–2022



Comparative Patterns and Synthesis of Key Findings

Overall, the research results show three main patterns. First, there are differences in the level of tourism maturity between countries, with Thailand excelling in the scale of the tourism economy, Malaysia in the consistency of governance and monitoring, and Indonesia in long-term growth potential. Second, monitoring capacity and digitalization are important differentiating factors in supporting sustainable destination development, as reflected in the variety of sustainable tourism monitoring systems. Third, resilience and post-crisis recovery show that countries with stronger integration between data, policy, and the tourism business ecosystem have a relative advantage.

These empirical findings indicate that halal tourism, when supported by a Digital Business Model for Sustainability, has the potential to serve as a driver of sustainable destination development in ASEAN. Although the three countries are on different paths and in different contexts, the data show that integration between tourism activities, sustainability monitoring systems, and economic contributions are key elements in the dynamics of sustainable destination development in the region.

This discussion aims to interpret and elaborate on empirical findings from research on the role of halal tourism and the Digital Business Model for Sustainability (DBMS) in promoting sustainable destination development in the ASEAN region, particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Unlike the descriptive results section, the discussion section places the research findings in critical dialogue with international literature and the institutional and socioeconomic contexts of each country.

Halal Tourism, International Tourist Activities, and Economic Resilience

Research findings indicate that Thailand and Malaysia have higher levels of international tourist spending than Indonesia, particularly in the pre-pandemic period. These results are consistent with literature that positions Thailand as a global mass tourism destination with mature tourism infrastructure and an extensive international market network (Henderson, 2016; UNWTO, 2019). Malaysia, although not as intensive as Thailand in mass tourism, is consistently identified as one of the world's leading halal destinations, with an integrated national strategy

between policy, halal certification, and digital promotion (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Zailani et al., 2019).

In the context of Indonesia, findings that international tourist spending is growing more slowly but steadily support the argument that Indonesian tourism is in a phase of consolidation and diversification, including through the strengthening of halal tourism as a strategic segment (Henderson, 2016). Previous literature shows that the enormous potential of the Muslim tourist market in Indonesia is often not fully realized due to limitations in infrastructure, policy coordination, and digital integration (Al-Ansi et al., 2018). Thus, the empirical findings of this study reinforce the view that halal tourism in Indonesia functions as an emerging driver of sustainable destination development, rather than as a primary driver as in Malaysia.

The drastic decline in international tourist spending in 2020–2021 in all three countries confirms global findings regarding the vulnerability of the tourism sector to external crises (Sigala, 2020). However, the relatively faster initial recovery in 2022 in Malaysia and Thailand indicates that countries with more digitized and integrated tourism ecosystems have higher adaptive capacity. This is in line with research emphasizing the role of digital business models in enhancing the resilience of the tourism sector (Gretzel et al., 2020).

Digital Business Model for Sustainability and Sustainable Tourism Governance

One of the key findings of this study is the significant variation in sustainable tourism monitoring capacity, as reflected in the implementation of the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) and the System of Environmental and Economic Accounts (SEEA). Malaysia shows the highest consistency in monitoring, Thailand shows a significant surge in certain periods, while Indonesia shows a gradual but still unstable increase. These findings are in line with the literature emphasizing that destination sustainability is highly dependent on institutional capacity and data-driven governance (Bocken et al., 2019; Saarinen, 2021).

From a DBMS perspective, a consistent monitoring system reflects a destination's ability to leverage data as a source of strategic value. Previous studies show that digitization and data integration enable more adaptive, transparent, and inclusive decision-making in tourism management (Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2020). Thus, Malaysia's excellence in sustainable tourism monitoring can be understood as the result of adopting a relatively more mature business model and governance, including in the context of halal tourism.

In contrast, fluctuations in monitoring in Thailand indicate a more experimental and responsive approach, in line with Thailand's character as a non-Muslim destination that pragmatically adopts halal-friendly strategies (Henderson, 2016). These findings expand on

previous literature that has mostly highlighted Thailand from a mass tourism perspective, showing that digitization and sustainability monitoring are also part of the destination's adaptation to the halal tourist segment and global sustainability demands.

Contribution of Tourism to GDP and Sustainability Implications

The results show that Thailand has the highest contribution of tourism to GDP, followed by Malaysia and Indonesia. This finding is consistent with previous studies that place Thailand as one of the countries with the highest economic dependence on the tourism sector (UNWTO, 2019). However, the literature also warns that high dependence on tourism can increase vulnerability to crises, as reflected in the sharp decline in GDP contribution during the pandemic (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

In the context of Malaysia and Indonesia, the more moderate but relatively stable contribution of tourism supports the argument that economic diversification and the integration of halal tourism into national development strategies can enhance long-term resilience (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019). The findings of this study are in line with studies that state that halal tourism not only contributes to economic growth but also to social inclusiveness and the welfare of local communities, particularly through the strengthening of MSMEs and community-based economies (Al-Ansi et al., 2018).

However, the differences in post-pandemic recovery rates between the three countries show that the economic contribution of tourism alone is not sufficient to ensure the sustainability of destinations. Recent literature emphasizes the importance of integrating economic, social, and environmental values within the framework of sustainable destination development (Saarinen, 2021). In this regard, the findings of this study indicate that countries with stronger sustainability monitoring and more consistent use of DBMS tend to have more adaptive recovery paths.

Halal Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Destination Development in ASEAN

Overall, the discussion of the findings of this study reinforces the argument that halal tourism has the potential to serve as a driver of sustainable destination development in ASEAN, but with different mechanisms and intensities between countries. In Malaysia, halal tourism operates as an integral part of a digitized and institutionalized national tourism system, thereby contributing directly to destination sustainability. In Indonesia, halal tourism acts as a developing catalyst, with great potential to strengthen sustainable destination development if supported by the strengthening of DBMS and data-based governance.

Thailand, as a predominantly non-Muslim country, shows that halal tourism can be strategically integrated into a broader framework of sustainable destination development without having to change the identity of national tourism. These findings support the literature that views halal tourism as an inclusive and value-based approach, rather than merely a religious market (El-Gohary, 2016; Vargas-Sánchez & Moral-Moral, 2019).

Thus, this discussion confirms that the role of halal tourism in sustainable destination development in ASEAN is highly dependent on the national context, digital capacity, and business models adopted. The integration of halal tourism and DBMS emerges as a key factor that distinguishes the paths of sustainable destination development in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, and provides empirical contributions that enrich the literature on sustainable tourism and halal tourism at the international level.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that halal tourism plays a significant role as a driver of sustainable destination development in the ASEAN region, albeit with different levels of contribution and mechanisms in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Based on a comparative analysis of indicators of international tourism activity, sustainability monitoring capacity, and tourism's contribution to GDP, the research findings show that the success of sustainable destination development is greatly influenced by the integration of halal tourism, data-driven governance, and the use of the Digital Business Model for Sustainability. Malaysia shows the most consistent and institutionalized model, Indonesia is in a phase of strengthening and consolidation, while Thailand displays an effective adaptive halal-friendly approach despite being in a predominantly non-Muslim country. These findings directly answer the research question of how and to what extent halal tourism, with the support of a sustainable digital business model, contributes to the economic and governance dimensions of sustainable destination development in ASEAN.

The main contribution of this study lies in three aspects. Conceptually, this study enriches the literature by integrating halal tourism, Digital Business Model for Sustainability, and sustainable destination development into a comprehensive analytical framework. Empirically, this study provides cross-country evidence from ASEAN by comparing Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, which represent the spectrum of halal tourism development from majority Muslim countries to adaptive non-Muslim countries. Methodologically, the use of Qualitative Content Analysis based on large-scale secondary data from Our World in Data offers an alternative approach that enables comparative and contextual exploration of the dynamics of sustainable

destination development, particularly in relation to the role of digitalization and data-driven governance.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis is based on aggregate secondary data that does not specifically separate the contribution of halal tourism from tourism in general. Second, the limitations of available cross-country sustainability indicators limit a more in-depth exploration of social and environmental dimensions. Therefore, further research is recommended to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches (mixed methods), using primary data through interviews or case studies of specific halal destinations, as well as expanding the geographical coverage to other ASEAN countries. Further research could also explore the role of more specific digital technologies such as halal platforms, digital certification, and big data analytics in strengthening the sustainability of halal tourism destinations at the local and regional levels.

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