

Sustainable Tourism Development: A Study of the Development of Pasar Sawahan Tourism in Kalongan Village

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Abstract

The development of tourism villages has become a key strategy in Indonesia's rural development to support economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, many tourism villages still face challenges in applying sustainable tourism principles, especially those with limited institutional capacity and governance. Pasar Sawahan tourism in Kalongan Village is a community-based destination with strong local wisdom but still faces challenges in infrastructure, environmental management, and governance. Previous studies tend to focus on tourism villages in general, while limited research examines sustainability in traditional community-based tourism markets. This study aims to analyze the implementation of sustainable tourism principles and identify key challenges in Pasar Sawahan. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected from eight participants through interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The results show sustainability efforts through community participation, MSME empowerment, cultural preservation, and environmental programs, although challenges remain in institutional strengthening, digital promotion, and youth involvement.

Keywords

Community Empowerment; Kalongan Village; Pasar Sawahan; Sustainable Tourism



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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the strategic sectors in national economic development that contributes significantly to increasing community income and encouraging regional economic growth (Mahmud et al., 2024). In Indonesia, the tourism sector contributes approximately 5.1% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbs more than 12.5 million workers (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). Along with the increasing global awareness of environmental preservation and social welfare, tourism development has shifted toward the concept of sustainable tourism development, which emphasizes the balance between economic growth, environmental conservation, and socio-cultural sustainability (Pratt, 2022) (Dwyer, 2023).

Sustainable tourism development highlights the importance of managing tourism destinations by considering long-term impacts on community welfare and environmental resilience (Baloch et al., 2023) (Laga Hae & Nugroho, 2021) (Han et al., 2023). In Indonesia, this commitment is reinforced through the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy No. 9 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism Destinations, which emphasizes sustainable management, economic feasibility (Gherdan et al., 2025), cultural preservation, and environmental protection (Kemenparekraf, 2024). Furthermore, stakeholder collaboration and community participation are recognized as key factors in ensuring sustainable destination development (ZAMZAMI et al., 2025) (Sharpley, 2020).

One form of tourism development that reflects these principles is the development of tourism villages. Tourism villages are designed to integrate local community life, culture, and environmental uniqueness as tourism attractions (Mujahiddin, 2025) (Vuksanović et al., 2024). Although the number of tourism villages in Indonesia continues to increase as part of the national rural development agenda (Amoiradis et al., 2023), Previous studies indicate that many tourism villages still face sustainability challenges, particularly related to environmental management, community participation, and long-term economic impact (Yin et al., 2024). Previous research has generally focused on tourism village development from the perspectives of economic impact or destination attractiveness (ARINTOKO et al., 2020), but limited studies specifically examine how sustainability principles are implemented at the operational level of community-initiated tourism attractions, especially traditional tourism markets based on local wisdom (WAHYUNINGSIH et al., 2025).

This research attempts to fill this gap by examining the development of Pasar Sawahan tourism in Kalongan Village, Semarang Regency, Central Java (Mahmud et al., 2024). Pasar Sawahan is a community-based tourism initiative that promotes

traditional market experiences alongside local cultural attractions (Mujahiddin, 2025; Vuksanović et al., 2024). This destination attracts visitors through traditional culinary products, local cultural performances, and educational tourism activities rooted in rural traditions (SUMARMI et al., 2024).

However, despite its potential, preliminary observations indicate several sustainability challenges, including limited supporting infrastructure, relatively low digital promotion capacity, and the need to strengthen environmental management practices. In addition, empirical information regarding visitor development trends, local economic impacts, and sustainability practices in Pasar Sawahan remains limited in previous studies. This condition indicates the need for more contextual research to understand how sustainable tourism principles can be effectively implemented in community-based tourism destinations.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of sustainable tourism development principles in Pasar Sawahan tourism and to identify the main challenges and development strategies needed to support its sustainability. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on analyzing sustainability practices in a traditional community-based tourism market model, which has received limited attention in previous sustainable tourism studies. Furthermore, this study contributes by providing a practical model of sustainable tourism development based on local wisdom, community participation, and small-scale rural tourism management.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the literature on sustainable tourism development, particularly in the context of community-based tourism villages. In practice, this research provides recommendations for local governments, tourism managers, and communities to develop sustainable tourism strategies that enhance economic benefits while preserving cultural identity and environmental sustainability.

2. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to explore stakeholders' experiences and perceptions regarding the implementation of sustainable tourism development in Pasar Sawahan, Kalongan Village. A phenomenological approach was selected because it allows researchers to understand the meaning of experiences from the perspective of individuals directly involved in tourism management and development (Lavee & Itzchakov, 2023); (Lim, 2025)). This approach is particularly relevant for examining how local tourism actors interpret and practice sustainability principles.

The research was conducted in Kalongan Village, Ungaran Timur District, Semarang Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, where Pasar Sawahan has developed as a community-based tourism destination. The study was conducted from January to March 2025.

The research participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in tourism management activities. A total of 8 informants participated in this study, consisting of: the Head of the Tourism Awareness Group (*Pokdarwis*), the Head of Kalongan Village, three *Pokdarwis* members, two local traders, and one tourist visitor. These participants were selected because they possess direct knowledge and experience related to tourism sustainability practices.

The main research instrument was the researcher, supported by interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentation checklists. The interview guide was developed based on four dimensions of sustainable tourism development: sustainable management, economic sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability, and environmental sustainability. Observations focused on tourism activities, environmental conditions, visitor interactions, and local economic activities.

Data collection was carried out through several stages. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences and perspectives regarding sustainable tourism practices. Each interview lasted approximately 30–60 minutes and was recorded with participant consent. Second, non-participant observation was conducted during tourism activities at Pasar Sawahan to identify actual sustainability practices. Third, documentation analysis included tourism activity reports, visitor documentation, photos, and village tourism development records. Fourth, a literature review was conducted to strengthen the theoretical framework through national and international scientific publications.

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (2015), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Operationally, data reduction involved transcribing interviews, coding relevant statements, and grouping them into sustainability themes. Data were displayed in thematic matrices based on sustainability indicators. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns, relationships, and key findings related to sustainable tourism implementation.

To ensure data validity, this study applied the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was ensured through source triangulation (village government, *Pokdarwis*, traders, and tourists) and technique triangulation (interviews, observation, and documentation) (Sugiyono,

2020). Detailed contextual descriptions of the research setting supported Transferability. Dependability was ensured through an audit trail of the research process, while confirmability was strengthened through documentation of field findings.

This study also considered research ethics. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the research objectives and their voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained before interviews were conducted. Participants' identities were kept confidential, and the data collected were used solely for research purposes.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Profile of Pasar Sawahan and Conditions of Kalongan Village

Pasar Sawahan is a traditional market in Kalongan Village that offers a variety of traditional culinary delights. This market plays an important role as a tourist destination, offering views of the highlands and vast rice fields, thus attracting both local and foreign tourists who want to enjoy the atmosphere (Mahmud et al., 2024). Pasar Sawahan was established, inspired by Pasar Papringan in Temanggung. Thus, in May 2019, Pasar Sawahan was established on rice field land, which was later developed and managed into a tourist destination.

The establishment of the Pasar Sawahan in Kalongan Village was also initiated by the Head of Kalongan Village and *POKDARWIS* Kalongan Village as part of the transformation of Kalongan Village into a tourist village. The idea of creating the Pasar Sawahan was motivated by observing the activities of the community, who were already active and interested in entrepreneurship (Kisworo et al., 2022). At that time, these entrepreneurial activities were carried out by the community in the rubber plantations of Kalongan Village. However, due to management-imposed licensing constraints, *POKDARWIS* came up with a new idea and decided to continue these community entrepreneurial activities at Pasar Sawahan.

Kalongan Village is one of the villages administratively located in East Ungaran Subdistrict, Semarang Regency. Geographically, Kalongan Village is located at an altitude of 339 meters above sea level. Kalongan Village covers 868.3 ha (8.68 km²) and comprises 12 hamlets, 20 neighborhood associations (RW), and 105 community associations (RT). Administratively, Kalongan Village borders several areas, including:

1. Northern Border: Mluweh Village and Susukan Village.
2. Eastern Border: Kawengen Village and Bergas Subdistrict.
3. Western Border: Kalirejo Village and Leyangan Village

4. Southern Border: Bergas Subdistrict

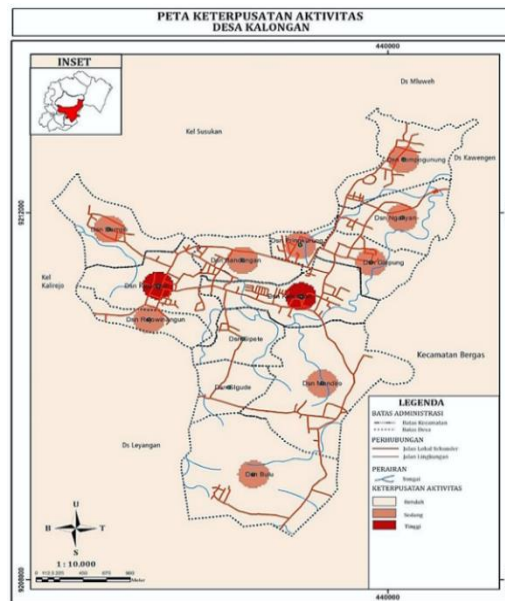


Figure 1. Kalongan Village Administration Map

3.2. Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism development is the process of developing an area without depleting available resources. This can be achieved through the supervision and maintenance of resources so that they can be enjoyed in the future. Sustainable tourism development focuses on balancing tourism growth with the natural and social capacity of the community (Shabrina et al., 2024). This concept prioritizes sustainability to ensure tourism does not have a destructive impact.

The goal is to ensure that resource exploitation can be properly controlled. Tourism should not be carried out excessively, to the point of exceeding the environment's carrying capacity. This approach views the success of tourism not only in terms of the number of tourists, but also in terms of the quality of its impact (Roberts, 2023). Sustainable tourism development also includes tourism's ability to preserve the identity and cultural sustainability of local communities. This concept emphasizes that culture as a tourist attraction must be preserved, not exploited (Ammela Maulani & Fakhruddin Fakhruddin, 2025).

This study applies sustainable tourism as defined by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which is tourism that fully considers current and sustainable management, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental (Canton, 2021). The conceptual framework applied in this study is as follows:

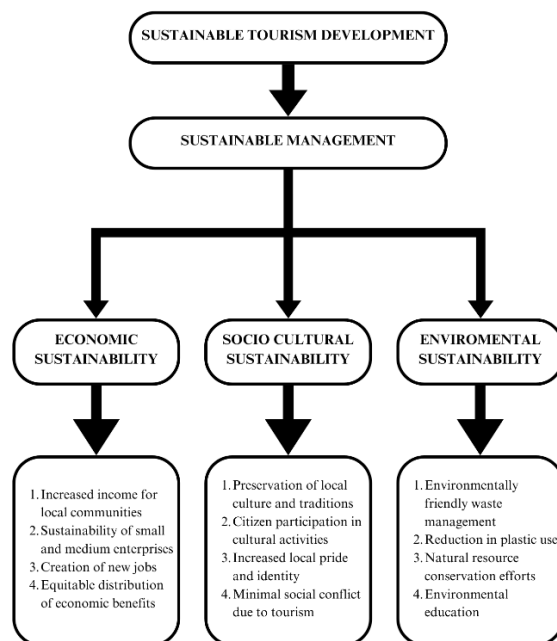


Figure 2. Sustainable Tourism Development Process

3.3. Sustainable Management of Pasar Sawahan

The Head of Kalongan Village implements sustainable governance in the management of Pasar Sawahan in a structured manner by forming the Kalongan Village Tourism Awareness Group (*POKDARWIS*). In this organizational structure, *Pokdarwis* members are active members of the community who are involved in tourism in the village. 25 representatives are selected to carry out activities in accordance with their duties and responsibilities as outlined in the rules of the tourism village management structure. The tasks carried out are as follows:

1. Conducting routine meetings one day before the Pasar Sawahan activity takes place.
2. Instruct tourists to exchange rupiah for uli money at the main post called “Bank Uli.”
3. Maintaining order among tourists when exchanging money.
4. Assisting vendors who will prepare or clean up their stalls during the event.
5. Maintaining activities and public facilities that tourists will use.

The structure of the Tourism Awareness Group (*Pokdarwis*) is arranged according to local needs and potential, allowing each division to work within the community’s capacity. Task distribution is carried out through deliberation involving all members as a form of transparency in governance. This system enables each program to be developed realistically in line with existing human resource capabilities (Laga Hae & Nugroho, 2021). Activity monitoring is conducted independently, with residents

reminding one another. This shows that the village's social control mechanism significantly contributes to the sustainability of governance (Muazza et al., 2025).



Figure 3. Pokdarwis Meeting in Preparation for the Pasar Sawahan Activity

The village government is also involved in the management of tourism villages, where it acts as an advisor and provides input to assist in and manage the implementation of tourism activities. This can take the form of input or advice that helps manage tourism activities. In addition, MSME actors involved as traders in the market can also submit complaints and obstacles to the village government to improve the sustainability of market management. This is in line with Lukman et al., (2025), where village governments can play a strategic role in managing tourism by acting as catalysts and contributing to the improvement of public facilities and additional services.

To manage Pasar Sawahan's sustainability, *Pokdarwis* has prepared a strategic plan comprising a Destination Management Plan (RPD) and short- and long-term Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This ensures optimal tourism development by adhering to professional governance in accordance with Permenparekraf No. 9 of 2021. In addition, a plan is formulated based on deliberations by the *Pokdarwis* during a monthly routine meeting or before the implementation of Pasar Sawahan activities.

The sustainability of Pasar Sawahan also depends on the availability of resources, such as infrastructure and management personnel. The village government continues to improve facilities, including merchant stores, toilets, parking areas, and cultural performance spaces. Capacity building for managers is carried out through training in tourism management, public services, and waste management. The readiness of these resources ensures that the market can continue to operate even with an increase in visitor numbers (Qarni et al., 2025). Adequate facilities also enhance tourist comfort. With strong resources, the market's sustainability can be maintained in the long term.

3.4. Economic Sustainability of Pasar Sawahan

Sustainable tourism will be a powerful tool for growing the local economy. Through sustainable tourism, the local community of Kalongan Village, which sells its goods at the rice field market, is gradually moving out of poverty. At the rice field market, all the vendors selling there are residents of Kalongan Village. The community contributes maximally to economic growth in Kalongan Village through the rice field market. Thus, indirectly, the rice field market provides entrepreneurial opportunities for the people of Kalongan Village.

This event is the main gateway to supporting the local community's economic growth. The income generated from the rice field market will flow to the community, namely *POKDARWIS* and the vendors at the rice field market, which will then drive economic growth. Although all funds from the rice field market go to *POKDARWIS*, the market's profits will be returned regularly to support its development and maintenance. Economic sustainability in the Pasar Sawahan in Kalongan Village is reflected in the market's ability to sustain stable local economic circulation at each event.

This market has revived the traditional buying and selling of local village products. Traders' incomes show an upward trend week to week, driven by the increasing number of visitors. Additionally, the prices of products sold are adjusted to remain affordable for tourists while still providing significant profits for businesses (Famimsyina et al., 2025). This finding is in line with (Zambrano-Mieles et al., 2025) Community-based tourism village development can drive local economic transformation by increasing participation and diversifying income sources. Economic activities at Pasar Sawahan create business opportunities for various community groups, including homemakers, youth, and MSME actors who previously lacked a marketing platform. Products offered include traditional cuisine, handicrafts, processed agricultural products, and souvenirs typical of Kalongan.

Anyone who wants to sell goods can obtain business space by paying a rental fee ranging from Rp. 350,000 to Rp. 700,000, depending on the size of the space provided, which includes water and electricity costs, making it easier for sellers to sell their goods. This opportunity can make the market an inclusive medium for economic empowerment (Hernita et al., 2021). The local economic structure also becomes stronger because many actors support it. Thus, business diversification is the key to the sustainability of this market economy.



Figure 4. The Process of Exchanging Uli Money to Be Used by Visitors

Economic equality in Pasar Sawahan activities is highly structured: profits are distributed after activities are completed, and sellers exchange the uli money they earn for rupiah. The system of exchanging rupiah for uli money aims to introduce traditional transactions and become an icon in the unique buying and selling process (Afandi et al., 2024). Sellers then provide input and evaluations during the buying and selling process.

3.5. Socio-Cultural Sustainability of Pasar Sawahan

Social and cultural sustainability at Pasar Sawahan is achieved through villagers' consistent efforts to preserve local traditions. Every week, the market showcases traditional cuisine, old-fashioned games, and local arts that are rarely found in modern markets. The use of simple traditional clothing, such as a jarik and headbands, by traders creates an authentic atmosphere of the past. This cultural preservation not only maintains the heritage of ancestors, but also reintroduces local culture to the younger generation (Yidan et al., 2025).

Cultural activities at Pasar Sawahan are developed as a key aspect of tourist attraction, not just a complement to economic activities. Art performances such as kuda lumping, traditional dances, and angklung music are held regularly to ensure tourists have an authentic experience. Handicraft products such as bamboo weaving and village batik are also promoted to preserve local cultural identity. By presenting culture as a key asset, the market becomes an educational space for visitors (Nurchayanti et al., 2025). Traditions that were originally displayed only at village events now have a permanent place in tourism activities. This strengthens the foundation for long-term cultural sustainability.



Figure 5. Kuda Lumping Performances as a Form of Socio-Cultural Sustainability in Kalongan Village

The socio-cultural sustainability of Pasar Sawahan is evident in the cooperation between older and younger generations in preserving traditions. Senior citizens serve as cultural resource persons, teaching local cuisine, craft-making techniques, and village history. Meanwhile, the younger generation utilizes social media to promote this culture to a wider audience. The combination of the older generation's experience and the younger generation's creativity creates a relevant and interesting cultural blend (Kay Smith et al., 2022).

One indicator of socio-cultural sustainability in Pasar Sawahan is the minimal conflict arising from tourism development. This is because market management has been participatory and transparent from the outset. Policies regarding the allocation of sales locations, performance schedules, and vendor rotation are decided jointly. This system prevents social jealousy and unhealthy competition among residents. Fair decisions make the community accept the market as a joint activity (Roberts, 2023). With minimal conflict, tourist activities can run harmoniously every week.

3.6. Socio-Cultural Sustainability of Pasar Sawahan

Environmental conservation and biodiversity are important aspects of sustainable tourism development (Nurhaliza et al., 2025). In the context of Pasar Sawahan, efforts to preserve the environment and biodiversity are key elements in maintaining the appeal and sustainability of this destination. Environmental sustainability at Pasar Sawahan begins with a strict waste management system implemented by the management and the village community. Every vendor is required to use environmentally friendly containers such as banana leaves, recycled paper, or reusable tableware (Sarkar et al., 2020).

The use of single-use plastics is restricted to reduce waste accumulation. The management provides sorting points for organic and non-organic waste to facilitate processing (Alacevich et al., 2021). The involvement of *Pokdarwis* and residents in

maintaining cleanliness keeps the market environment comfortable for tourists. In addition to traders, visitors are also educated to support plastic waste reduction in the market area. The management provides information boards on the importance of maintaining cleanliness and the impact of waste on the village environment.

Every tourist is encouraged to bring their own shopping bags and dispose of waste in its proper place. This education increases tourists' awareness, so that their activities do not add to the burden on the environment. With consistent education, environmental sustainability becomes easier to achieve (Obrecht et al., 2022). Pasar Sawahan preserves local vegetation as an important element in providing green space. Naturally growing trees are left standing to provide shade for visitors. This green area helps maintain air quality and creates a cool atmosphere in the market. In addition, residents plant ornamental and medicinal plants to beautify the market area (Quick et al., 2022).

The impact of these environmental and biodiversity conservation efforts has been very positive. First, the area around Pasar Sawahan has been well preserved, allowing visitors to enjoy the beautiful, cool natural surroundings. Second, Pasar Sawahan has become an example for other tourist destinations on how to maintain harmony between tourism and nature. In addition, these conservation efforts have also influenced tourist preferences (Mariyam et al., 2024). The more tourists who care about the environment, the greater the chance they will choose destinations that uphold the principles of sustainable tourism.

However, efforts to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions in the Pasar Sawahan have not been fully realized. Energy management has not been implemented in its implementation, and the community still generally uses electricity rather than renewable energy, such as solar panels, for lighting and other facilities (Sun et al., 2025). In addition, visitors to the Pasar Sawahan come not only from the surrounding community but also from a wider area, so many still drive to the Pasar Sawahan in their own vehicles rather than by public transportation or bicycle. However, so far, the Pasar Sawahan has succeeded in promoting the concept of "reduce, recycle, and reuse" to reduce plastic waste and hazardous materials that can cause high carbon emissions.

The go-green policy is a guideline for Pasar Sawahan's management. Energy use and carbon emissions are strictly controlled to minimize adverse environmental impacts. Tourist activities at Pasar Sawahan are designed to avoid disturbing the natural balance of the village environment. The number of stalls and activity areas is regulated to ensure they do not exceed the safe space capacity. Tourist activities that

require new land are considered for their impact on vegetation and soil quality. These regulations ensure that physical development does not damage the village ecosystem (Sannigrahi et al., 2020). By maintaining this balance, environmental sustainability is better guaranteed. The market continues to grow without disturbing the local ecology.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that sustainable tourism development in Pasar Sawahan, Kalongan Village, has been implemented through community-based management that integrates principles of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability. Sustainable tourism is implemented through participatory governance by *Pokdarwis*, local economic empowerment through MSME involvement, preservation of traditional cultural practices, and environmental initiatives such as waste reduction programs and eco-friendly tourism activities. These findings indicate that Pasar Sawahan has applied the main dimensions of sustainable tourism outlined in Permenparekraf No. 9 of 2021, although it has not yet been fully institutionalized.

The main challenges identified in this study include the limited institutional strengthening of tourism governance, uneven economic benefits among community members, limited digital promotion capacity, and the need to increase youth participation in sustaining local cultural practices. From an environmental perspective, challenges also remain in strengthening sustainable transportation practices and expanding environmentally friendly infrastructure.

The novelty of this research lies in its analysis of sustainable tourism implementation in a traditional community-based tourism market model that integrates local wisdom, social participation, and micro-economic empowerment. Unlike previous studies that generally focus on tourism villages at a macro level, this study provides a more contextual understanding of sustainability practices at the operational level of small-scale rural tourism destinations.

This research contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it strengthens the discourse on community-based sustainable tourism development by demonstrating how sustainability principles can be implemented through local institutional arrangements. In practice, this study suggests strengthening tourism governance institutions, improving digital marketing strategies, developing youth-based cultural regeneration programs, and enhancing environmentally sustainable tourism infrastructure.

The policy implications of this study suggest that village governments and tourism managers should prioritize institutional capacity-building, sustainable tourism training programs, and integrated sustainability planning. Furthermore,

strategic development directions may include strengthening collaborative partnerships, expanding green tourism innovation programs, and developing measurable sustainability indicators to ensure long-term tourism resilience.

Overall, Pasar Sawahan demonstrates strong potential to serve as a replicable model for community-based sustainable tourism development, particularly for rural tourism destinations that seek to integrate local culture, community empowerment, and environmental sustainability within a holistic development framework.

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