

Sustainable Tourism Development Through Social Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: This research aims to develop a sustainable tourism development model through social empowerment, prioritizing local wisdom, infrastructure, and Human resources management strengthened by government rule.

Methodology: This study uses a quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires to 270 tourists using convenience sampling techniques, who visiting the main destinations in Jambi province consisting of 9 districts and 2 cities and the data is processed using smart PLS, a qualitative method by conducting Focus Group discussions to obtain validation of the findings of the research results that are adjusted to the facts from the opinions of experts.

Finding: This study found that local wisdom and human resource management significantly influence sustainable tourism development, while infrastructure does not directly contribute to tourism sustainability. Social empowerment plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between local wisdom, infrastructure, and human resource management through government rule.

Conclusion: The key implication of these findings underscores the importance of effective social empowerment and governance in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector. Therefore, policies that encourage active participation of local communities in tourism management should be developed, supported by training and capacity-building programs to enhance workforce adaptability to market and technological changes. Tourism industry players in Jambi to integrate local wisdom into business models and destination management to enhance attractiveness and sustainability. Further research is needed to explore more effective mechanisms for strengthening social empowerment and tourism governance through community-based approaches, as well as to examine the impact of fiscal policies and economic incentives on tourism sustainability. Overall, this study highlights the necessity of collaboration between governments, local communities, and private sector stakeholders to build a resilient and sustainable tourism ecosystem.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Local Wisdom; Infrastructure; Human Resource; Social Empowerment; Givernement Rule.

Submitted: 11-10-2024

Revised: 28-02-2025

Accepted: 07-03-2025

Article Doi:

http://dx.doi.org/10.22441/jurnal_mix.2025.v15i1.008

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism must be developed because it will impact environmental, economic, and sociocultural aspects (Streimikiene et al., 2021). The tourism sector plays an important role in supporting economic growth, including in Jambi Province, which has a variety of tourism with its own uniqueness and attractions (Dahmiri et al., 2023; Fitriaty, Shofia, et al., 2023). However, this tourism development still needs to improve, with the low participation of local communities, minimal use of local wisdom in tourism management, and limited infrastructure and quality of human resources in the tourism sector (Atmaji & Qodir, 2021).

Jambi Province is included in the list of 88 national tourism strategy areas (KSPN), namely KSPN Candi Muaro Jambi and its surroundings and KSPN Kerinci Seblat and its surroundings. This encourages vertical and horizontal integration of tourism-supporting factors, adding value and principles to the balanced development approach between economic development, environmental protection, and sociocultural development (triple bottom lines). The richness of culinary, local culture, and supporting ecosystems still needs to be utilized because the community has not yet optimally obtained income and benefits from tourism activities.

Social facts show that communities in tourist destinations in Jambi Province still need to be more actively involved and empowered in tourism management (Fitriaty et al., 2022). Many local communities have not been optimally empowered, so the economic benefits of tourism activities have not been felt evenly (Fitriaty, Lubis, et al., 2023). This is due to low levels of digital literacy, minimal tourism skills training, and lack of involvement in the decision-making process related to tourism governance (Fitriaty et al., 2021). On the other hand, cultural diversity and local wisdom in Jambi have yet to be fully integrated into tourism development strategies. However, local wisdom has great potential to support the achievement of sustainable tourism.

Research Gap

Several studies have been conducted on the importance of local wisdom, infrastructure, and human resources in supporting sustainable tourism (Harto et al., 2021; Lubis et al., 2020). Local wisdom is essential in developing sustainable tourism; this aligns with research by (Abas et al., 2022; Arsal et al., 2023; Sulaiman et al., 2022) who found that local wisdom can enrich tourist attractions while preserving regional cultural identity. In addition to local wisdom, infrastructure also plays a vital role in developing sustainable tourism; according to research by Dangi & Petrick, (2021) good infrastructure and governance can create a better tourism experience, increase tourist satisfaction, and contribute to tourism sustainability. Human resources also play an essential role in the development of sustainable tourism because of the importance of the quality of human resources in driving sustainable tourism growth (Darsana & Sudjana, 2022; Streimikiene et al., 2021).

Despite these insights, there remains a critical research gap in integrating these factors into a comprehensive model that explains their interconnections and collective impact on sustainable tourism. While existing studies have investigated these variables individually, research that simultaneously examines local wisdom, infrastructure, and human resources within a unified framework is still scarce. More importantly, the role of social empowerment as a mediating variable in tourism development remains underexplored. Understanding how social empowerment facilitates the relationship between these key factors and sustainable

tourism could provide valuable insights for policy and practice. Additionally, the moderating role of governance rule ensuring that regulatory frameworks align with sustainability principles has yet to receive adequate scholarly attention.

Addressing these gaps, this study aims to develop an integrative model that examines the influence of local wisdom, infrastructure, and human resources on sustainable tourism, with social empowerment as a mediating variable and governance rule as a moderating factor. By filling this research gap, the study contributes to the theoretical discourse on sustainable tourism governance and social empowerment, offering empirical evidence to support the development of more effective tourism policies and governance strategies. This contribution is particularly significant in enhancing the theoretical understanding of how governance mechanisms and social empowerment interact to shape sustainable tourism outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable tourism development has become essential in academic studies and government rule (Farsari, 2023). Sustainable tourism is an effort to balance economic, social, and environmental needs to maintain the sustainability of natural and cultural resources and benefit local communities (Alvin, 2021). Local wisdom is one of the essential elements in achieving this goal, where traditional values and local cultural practices play a role in preserving the environment while enhancing the tourism experience (Abas et al., 2022). The use of local wisdom can not only maintain cultural identity but also increase authentic and sustainable tourism attractions (Qiu et al., 2024).

Tourism infrastructure and governance are other factors that directly affect the sustainability of the tourism sector. Research by (Baggio et al., 2020; Bhuiyan et al., 2022) emphasizes the importance of adequate infrastructure, both physical and digital, to support quality tourism experiences and support sustainable tourism development. Good infrastructure not only improves accessibility but also ensures environmental sustainability and tourist satisfaction (Gillovic & McIntosh, 2020). On the other hand, good tourism governance involves ongoing planning, regulation, and supervision, which encourages active participation from various stakeholders, including local communities (Zhang et al., 2024).

Human resources in the tourism sector are also crucial to ensuring sustainability, the quality and competence of human resources in tourism significantly affect tourist satisfaction and destination competitiveness (Mior Shariffuddin et al., 2023). Training and capacity building for local communities are essential to increase their involvement in the tourism sector and ensure long-term sustainability (Fretes et al., 2023; Saptaria, 2022).

Furthermore, social empowerment has been identified as an essential mediator in sustainable tourism development (Y. Hermawan et al., 2023). Through empowerment, local communities can participate more actively in the decision-making and management of tourism destinations (Kia, 2021). Previous research has shown that social empowerment can increase local ownership of tourism projects, ultimately positively impacting tourism sustainability (Bhatta & Joshi, 2023). In addition, governance rules or regulations play an essential role as a moderating factor that ensures alignment between government rule and sustainable tourism principles. Supportive regulations, strict supervision, and inclusive governance can increase the success of sustainable tourism implementation in various destinations (Fathani et al., 2023).

Hypothesis Development

Local Wisdom Towards Sustainable Tourism

Local wisdom, which includes traditional values, culture, and practices of local communities, has been shown to play an essential role in supporting sustainable tourism Qiu et al., (2024) showed that local wisdom enriches the tourist experience while preserving culture and the environment. Similarly, Dogra et al., (2022) found that applying local wisdom in tourism management can help protect natural and cultural resources, the main pillars of sustainable tourism development. Philipp et al., (2022) also highlighted that local wisdom contributes to the attractiveness of a destination and helps maintain the ecological balance in the tourist area. (Lapotulo et al., 2024) added that local wisdom ensures community involvement in tourism development, which is essential for maintaining sustainable tourism in the long term. Meanwhile, Susanto et al., (2022) found that local wisdom-based tourism management increases local communities' sense of destination ownership, strengthening their commitment to preserving the tourist area. Based on this evidence, local wisdom is predicted to influence sustainable tourism positively.

H1: Local wisdom has a positive influence on sustainable tourism.

Social Empowerment Towards Sustainable Tourism

Social empowerment is a concept that refers to efforts to increase the capacity of individuals or groups in society to participate in decision-making, access resources, and develop skills needed to improve social and economic well-being (Rachman et al., 2022). In the context of tourism, social empowerment is very important because the involvement of local communities in the development and management of tourist destinations is a critical factor in creating sustainable tourism (Nyamboke, 2023).

Previous studies have shown that social empowerment significantly influences sustainable development, including tourism. Study by (Y. Hermawan et al., 2023) showed that social empowerment in local communities supports sustainable tourism development because it increases the active involvement of communities in resource conservation and tourism destination management. Another study by (Samal & Dash, 2023) showed that when local communities are socially empowered, they are better able to manage conflicts between tourist needs and environmental conservation and contribute to local economic stability. In addition, social empowerment can improve local communities' skills in dealing with challenges arising from tourism, such as changes in the local economy or cultural impacts. Social Empowerment also allows communities to take advantage of economic opportunities that come with tourism independently and sustainably. For example, a study by (Dangi & Petrick, 2021) underlines the importance of community empowerment in creating a sense of ownership of the local tourism industry, ultimately improving tourism destinations' long-term sustainability. A study by (Brooks et al., 2023) confirms that active community involvement in tourism planning and management can improve sustainability, primarily by reducing dependence on external investors who only sometimes pay attention to the long-term interests of local communities. Based on these studies, social empowerment plays a vital role in promoting sustainable tourism. When local communities are empowered to actively manage tourism resources and destinations, they are more committed to supporting sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism practices. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is:

H2: Social Empowerment has a positive and significant influence on sustainable tourism.

Tourism Infrastructure and Sustainable Tourism

Good tourism infrastructure and governance are critical elements in supporting sustainable tourism (Dembovska & Zvaigzne, 2021). Adequate infrastructure, such as road access, transportation, accommodation facilities, and digital connectivity, are essential in enhancing the tourist experience (Agha & Ling, 2022). Good infrastructure supports more effective environmental management and increases tourist satisfaction, strengthening tourist destinations' sustainability (Perkumiene et al., 2020). In addition, (Dangi & Petrick, 2021) stated that inclusive tourism governance involving stakeholders, including local communities, is essential to ensure tourism sustainability. According to (Haibo et al., 2020) good destination management can integrate environmentally friendly practices in infrastructure development, thus creating a balance between economic development and environmental conservation. Thus, good tourism infrastructure and governance are believed to positively contribute to sustainable tourism.

H3: Tourism infrastructure and governance have a positive influence on sustainable tourism.

Human Resources for Sustainable Tourism

Human resources (HR) are an essential factor determining the quality of service, management, and administration of tourist destinations (Belias et al., 2020). The quality of HR in the tourism sector significantly affects the competitiveness of destinations and tourist satisfaction, which are critical factors in maintaining tourism sustainability (Dos Anjos & Da Rosa, 2021). (Baker & others, 2024) shows that HR who are trained and have an understanding of sustainable tourism practices can play a role in reducing negative impacts on the environment and local culture. In addition, (Baker & others, 2024) found that improving the skills and competencies of HR in the tourism sector can help destinations achieve long-term sustainability, especially in terms of environmental management. Another study by Dłużewska & Giampiccoli, (2021) stated that empowering local HR in the tourism industry also directly impacts improving the community's economic welfare, which ultimately supports social sustainability in tourist destinations. Furthermore, Kravariti et al., (2022) stated that competent HR focuses on providing good services to tourists and is involved in sustainable destination management. Therefore, the quality of HR in the tourism sector is predicted to affect tourism sustainability positively.

H4: Human resources have a positive influence on sustainable tourism.

Social Empowerment as Mediation

Social empowerment allows local communities to participate more actively in tourism management, ultimately increasing the sense of ownership of the destination and ensuring sustainable tourism (Nyamboke, 2023). Sabet & Khaksar, (2024) also found that social empowerment not only strengthens community involvement but also provides positive economic impacts that improve the welfare of local communities. A study by Hermawan, (2024) showed that social empowerment improves the relationship between tourism stakeholders and local communities, resulting in more collaborative and sustainable tourism management. This is also supported by Kia, (2021) which found that tourism sustainability is more accessible to achieve when local communities are empowered and directly involved in the decision-making process. Therefore, social empowerment is expected to mediate the relationship between local wisdom, infrastructure, governance, human resources, and sustainable tourism.

H5: Social Empowerment mediates the relationship between local wisdom and sustainable tourism.

H6: Social Empowerment mediates the relationship between infrastructure and sustainable tourism.

H7: Social Empowerment mediates the relationship between human resources and sustainable tourism.

Governance Rule as Moderation

Dangi & Petrick, (2021) stated that good governance can ensure that tourism policies align with sustainability principles and strengthen synergies between government, communities, and industry players. Transparent and sustainable regulations are essential in preventing the overexploitation of natural resources and ensuring the sustainability of tourist destinations (Agyeiwaah, 2020). Research by Bramwell and (Sentanu et al., 2023) emphasized that transparent and participatory governance supports achieving sustainable tourism goals by involving various stakeholders. Haibo et al., (2020) added that responsive governance can moderate the negative impacts of tourism through clear regulations regarding the use of natural and cultural resources. In addition, (Ogunkan, 2022) found that strict governance policies contribute to more efficient management and ensure a balance between economic, social, and environmental interests. Therefore, governance rules are expected to moderate the relationship between key variables in sustainable tourism development.

H8: Governance rule moderates the relationship between local wisdom and sustainable tourism.

H9: Governance rule moderates the relationship between infrastructure and sustainable tourism.

H10: Governance rule moderates the relationship between human resources and sustainable tourism.

So, the model in this study is as follows:

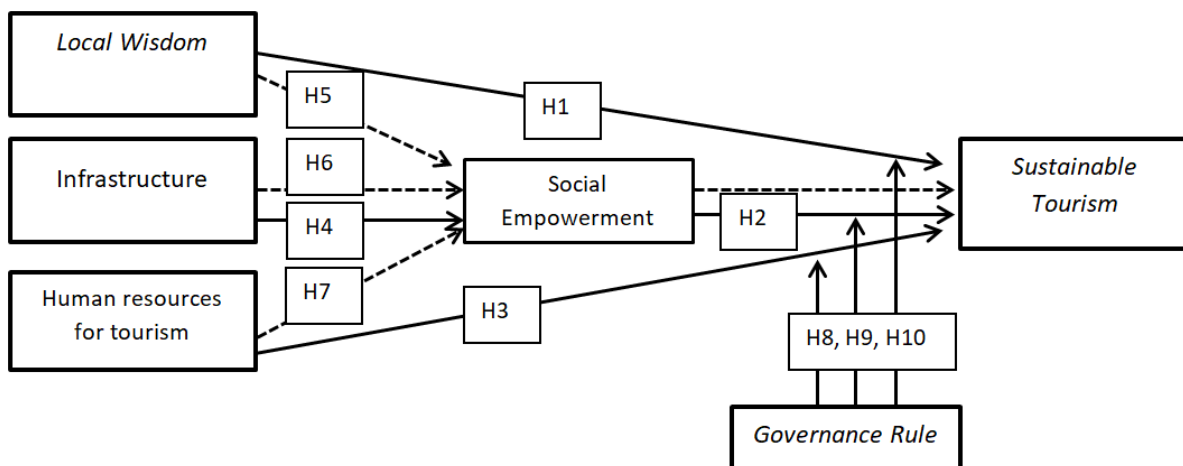


Figure 1. Research Model

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to comprehensively analyze the research objectives. The quantitative approach utilizes a survey method to examine the influence of Local Wisdom, Tourism Infrastructure and Governance, and Tourism Human Resources on Sustainable Tourism, with Social Empowerment as a mediating variable and Governance Policy as a moderating variable. This study falls under the category of explanatory research, aiming to identify causal relationships among the investigated variables.

The target population comprises visitors to various tourist destinations in Jambi Province. A convenience sampling technique was applied to select a total of 270 respondents consisting of 9 districts and 2 cities who are presumed to possess substantial knowledge of tourism management and decision-making processes.

Data were collected from primary sources through structured questionnaires and supported by secondary sources, such as official tourism reports and academic literature. The main instrument for data collection is a questionnaire consisting of several parts, including demographic information, respondents' perceptions of Local Wisdom (Mahrinasari et al., 2024), Infrastructure (Nguyen et al., 2020) and Governance (Mahrinasari et al., 2024), Human Resources (Hareebin, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020), Social Empowerment (Shafieisabet & Haratifard, 2020), and their impact on Sustainable Tourism (Khan et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2020). The influence of Government rule (Cai et al., 2015) is also measured as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between these variables. The measurement scale used is a 5-point Likert scale containing closed questions using a 5-point Likert scale, with points 1 to describe the answer Strongly Disagree and 5 to describe the answer Strongly Agree. This research will be conducted in 2024 at tourist destinations in Jambi province.

The analytical method used in this study is Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The choice of SmartPLS is justified by its suitability for handling complex models with multiple relationships, its ability to work with relatively small sample sizes, and its robustness in assessing both measurement and structural models. Additionally, SmartPLS is particularly effective in exploratory research where theoretical foundations are still evolving, making it an appropriate tool for evaluating the intricate interactions within sustainable tourism development. SmartPLS has ability to handle complex research models with latent variables and overcome problems with non-normal data distribution. The first step in the analysis is to test the outer model to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, where validity is tested through construct validity, and reliability is assessed through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The next step is to test the inner model to analyze the structural relationships between variables, including direct influence, mediation, and moderation.

Hypothesis testing is conducted by evaluating path coefficients and t-statistics values to assess the significance of the relationship between variables. This test aims to test the proposed hypothesis related to the direct influence of Local Wisdom, Tourism Infrastructure and Governance, and Tourism Human Resources on Sustainable Tourism, as well as how Social Empowerment mediates the relationship and how Governance Policy moderates its influence.

In this study, qualitative methods were also used by conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to dig deeper into the results obtained from the hypothesis testing conducted in the quantitative method. This approach aims to gain a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of how variables such as Local Wisdom, Infrastructure, Human Resource Management, and Social Empowerment influence Sustainable Tourism. FGDs

involve stakeholders, including local communities, tourism managers, and tourism and sustainable development experts, to identify underlying factors that may not be revealed through quantitative analysis alone. The findings from these discussions are then compared and combined with the results of quantitative methods to strengthen the validity of the research conclusions and provide deeper insights into the role of social empowerment in mediating the relationship between these factors and sustainable tourism goals. This approach allows researchers to understand the social and cultural dynamics that influence the implementation of sustainable tourism development strategies at the local level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Criteria	Amount	Proportion (%)	
Gender	Man	166	61.48	
	Woman	104	38.42	
	Total	270	100	
Age	10-20 Years	105	38.89	
	21-30 Years	27	10	
	31 - 40 Years	73	27.04	
	41-50 Years	42	15.55	
	51 -60 Years	18	6.66	
	71 – onwards	5	1.86	
	Total	270	100	
Destination	Kota Jambi	Taman rimbo	25	9.25
	Muaro Jambi	Candi Muaro Jambi	25	9.25
	Batanghari	Danau Ugo	20	7.50
	Sarolangun	Bukit Tempurung	25	9.25
		Garden		
	Merangin	Geopark Merangin	25	9.25
	Kerinci	Kayu Aro	25	9.25
	Sungai Penuh	Danau Kerinci	25	9.25
	Bungo	Lubuk beringin	25	9.25
	Tebo	Danau sigombak	25	9.25
	Tanjab Barat	Ekowisata Mangrove	25	9.25
		Pangkal Babu		
	Tanjab Timur	Kampung Laut	25	9.25
		Total	270	100
Education	Elementary School	10	3.70	
	Junior High School	18	6.67	
	Senior High School	56	20.74	
	Bachelor	128	47.40	
	Masters	38	14.07	
	Doctor	20	7.42	
	Total	270	100	

Source: Processed data, 2024

The majority of respondents in this study were male (61.48%), with the most extensive age range being between 10 and 20 years (38.89%). Respondents were spread across various tourist destinations in Jambi Province with an even proportion, each of which was 9.25% for locations such as Taman Rimbo, Muaro Jambi Temple, Merangin Geopark,

and others. In terms of education, most respondents had a Bachelor's degree (47.40%), followed by High School (20.74%), and Masters (14.07%). This reflects the respondents' diversity of age, education, and tourist destinations.

Validity and Reliability Test

Table 2 Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Government Rule	GR1	0.850	0.901	0.927	0.717
	GR2	0.889			
	GR3	0.801			
	GR4	0.866			
	GR5	0.825			
Human Resource Management	HR1	0.843	0.853	0.901	0.695
	HR2	0.781			
	HR3	0.842			
	HR4	0.865			
Infrastructure	IF1	0.902	0.930	0.947	0.782
	IF2	0.883			
	IF3	0.912			
	IF4	0.879			
	IF5	0.843			
Local Wisdom	LW1	0.837	0.879	0.916	0.731
	LW2	0.894			
	LW3	0.831			
	LW4	0.856			
Social Empowerment	SE1	0.836	0.875	0.914	0.728
	SE2	0.895			
	SE3	0.828			
	SE4	0.852			
Sustainable Tourism	ST1	0.899	0.924	0.946	0.815
	ST2	0.921			
	ST3	0.908			
	ST4	0.882			

Source: Processed data, 2024

Based on the analysis's results, all variables and indicators used in this study are valid because each indicator has a loading factor value above 0.7. This indicates that the instruments used in this study can be relied on to measure the influence of Local Wisdom, Infrastructure, Human Resource Management, Social Empowerment, and Governance Rule moderation on Sustainable Tourism.

Overall, all variables tested in this study showed reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 indicates good internal consistency, while composite reliability is above 0.7 for all variables, indicating that the variables are reliable in measurement. AVE values above 0.5 for all variables indicate that each variable can explain most of the variance of its indicators, so all these variables are valid and reliable in this research model.

Table 3 R-Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Social Empowerment	0.755	0.752
Sustainable Tourism	0.768	0.761

Source: Processed data, 2024

The research model can explain the variability in the Social Empowerment and Sustainable Tourism variables based on the R Square value obtained. The R Square value for Social Empowerment of 75.55% indicates that almost three-quarters of the variation in social empowerment can be explained by the independent variables: Local Wisdom, Infrastructure, and Human Resources for Tourism. This confirms that the model used has high predictive power in describing the influence of independent variables on Social Empowerment.

Similarly, the R Square value for Sustainable Tourism of 76.8% indicates that the research model can explain more than three-quarters of the variability in sustainable tourism. This indicates that independent variables such as Governance Policy and Social Empowerment significantly influence sustainable tourism. This value also reflects that the model built has good predictive power in mapping these variables' relationships. Overall, the high R Square value for both dependent variables indicates that the independent variables selected in this study are relevant and significantly contribute to explaining the occurring dynamics. Thus, this research model is valid and reliable in predicting changes that occur in Social Empowerment and Sustainable Tourism, which ultimately can provide a strong foundation for developing policies and strategies related to sustainable tourism based on local wisdom.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 Direct Influence

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Local Wisdom -> Sustainable Tourism	0.248	0.247	0.063	3.918	0.000
Social empowerment -> Sustainable Tourism	0.562	0.566	0.078	7.202	0.000
Human Resource Management -> Sustainable Tourism	0.194	0.190	0.072	2,689	0.007
Infrastructure -> Sustainable Tourism	-0.095	-0.103	0.089	1,066	0.287
Moderating Human Resource Management -> Sustainable Tourism	-0.209	-0.214	0.059	3,516	0.000
Moderating infrastructure -> Sustainable Tourism	0.211	0.218	0.058	3.628	0.000
Moderating Local Wisdom -> Sustainable Tourism	0.030	0.027	0.044	0.666	0.506

Source: Processed data, 2024

Based on the results of the analysis carried out, the results obtained were:

1. H1: Local Wisdom has a positive influence on Sustainable Tourism

The test results show that Local Wisdom significantly affects Sustainable Tourism, with a coefficient value of 0.248 and a P-value of 0.000. This means that local wisdom has a strong positive impact on supporting sustainable tourism.

2. H2: Social Empowerment has a positive effect on Sustainable Tourism

Social Empowerment significantly influences sustainable tourism, with a coefficient of 0.562 and P-Value = 0.000. These results confirm that community empowerment in the tourism sector contributes significantly to achieving sustainable tourism.

3. H3: Human Resource Management has a positive influence on Sustainable Tourism

Human resource management shows a significant influence with a coefficient value of 0.194 and a P-value of 0.007 ($P < 0.05$), which means its influence is significant. This shows that effective human resource management directly contributes to sustainable tourism development.

4. H4: Infrastructure has a positive effect on Social Empowerment

This hypothesis test shows insignificant results with a coefficient value of -0.095 and a P-value of 0.287 ($P > 0.05$). These results indicate that infrastructure, although important, does not directly affect sustainable tourism.

5. H8, H9, H10: Governance Rule Moderation

- Moderation of Human Resource Management on Sustainable Tourism Moderation of Human Resource Management shows significant results with a coefficient value of -0.209 and a P-value of 0.000. This shows that human resource management is essential in strengthening or weakening the relationship between other independent variables and sustainable tourism.
- The moderation of infrastructure in Sustainable Tourism is significant, with a coefficient value of 0.211 and a P-value of 0.000, which indicates that infrastructure can strengthen the relationship between social empowerment and tourism sustainability.
- Moderation of Local Wisdom on Sustainable Tourism The moderating effect of Local Wisdom on Sustainable Tourism is insignificant, with a coefficient value of 0.030 and a P-value of 0.506. This indicates that local wisdom does not strongly mediate the relationship between other variables and sustainable tourism in this context.

Table 5 Indirect Influence

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Human Resource Management -> Social Empowerment -> Sustainable Tourism	0.139	0.142	0.040	3,516	0.000
Infrastructure -> Social Empowerment -> Sustainable Tourism	0.312	0.312	0.054	5,738	0.000
Local wisdom -> Social Empowerment -> Sustainable Tourism	0.083	0.085	0.030	2.725	0.007

Source: Processed data, 2024

H5: Human Resource Management -> Social Empowerment -> Sustainable Tourism

The direct influence of Human Resource Management on Social Empowerment and, subsequently, on Sustainable Tourism has a coefficient of 0.139 with a P-value = 0.000. These results indicate that human resource management significantly contributes to social empowerment, which in turn has a positive effect on tourism sustainability. The t-statistic of 3.516 indicates a fairly good relationship strength, so improving the quality of human resource management can support community empowerment and achieve sustainable tourism.

H6: Infrastructure -> Social Empowerment -> Sustainable Tourism

The analysis results show a more substantial influence, with a coefficient of 0.312 and a P-Value = 0.000. This shows that infrastructure significantly increases Social Empowerment, ultimately contributing to Sustainable Tourism. The high t-statistic, which is 5.738, confirms that this relationship is very strong. This finding shows that adequate infrastructure improvement and development can significantly impact social empowerment and support the sustainability of tourism in an area.

H7: Local Wisdom -> Social Empowerment -> Sustainable Tourism

The results for local wisdom show a coefficient of 0.083 and P-Value = 0.007, indicating a significant influence. Although this relationship is not as strong as that found in infrastructure, the T-Statistics value of 2.725 indicates a very strong relationship. This means that applying local wisdom can significantly increase social empowerment, which supports sustainable tourism practices. Local wisdom that is appreciated and applied by the community encourages active involvement in tourism that focuses on environmental sustainability and local culture.

Discussion and Hypothesis Discussion

Local Wisdom and Sustainable Tourism

The study results show that local wisdom significantly influences sustainable tourism, which aligns with recent findings from various studies. Applying local wisdom values in Indonesia's tourism can increase local communities' ecological awareness, directly supporting environmental sustainability (Aswita et al., 2018). Using local wisdom in tourism management can facilitate active community participation in resource management, thereby strengthening the sustainability aspect of tourism (Vitasurya, 2016). Local wisdom contributes to environmental sustainability and enriches the tourist experience, further increasing the value of the destination (Qiu et al., 2024). In addition, study Tang & Xu, (2023) revealed that the integration of local wisdom in tourism development can strengthen local cultural identity, which is essential in attracting tourists who are interested in culture.

The results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) also support the finding that local wisdom has a significant positive effect on sustainable tourism. The FGD participants, consisting of local stakeholders such as tourism managers, community leaders, and tourism business actors, agreed that the application of local cultural values and traditions in managing tourist destinations not only enriches the tourist experience but also increases community involvement in maintaining and preserving the local environment and culture. These results reveal that local wisdom encourages an attitude of collective responsibility and awareness of the importance of maintaining the sustainability of natural resources, which are the main attractions of tourism. Furthermore, this discussion highlights that integrating local wisdom in tourism development strategies creates a unique identity that distinguishes local destinations

from other tourist attractions, thereby increasing the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of the tourism sector.

Social Empowerment and Sustainable Tourism

The findings of this study also reveal that social empowerment has a significant positive influence on sustainable tourism, as supported by various recent studies. Elshaer et al., (2021) highlighted that the social empowerment of local communities in tourism can increase their active involvement in tourism activities, positively impacting the sector's sustainability. Empowered communities have a higher level of ownership of tourism initiatives, which increases their commitment to environmental sustainability (Khalid et al., 2019). Social empowerment strengthens the capacity of communities to manage resources sustainably and support long-term tourism goals (Purnomo et al., 2020). Finally, social empowerment can create conducive conditions for innovation in sustainable tourism management, demonstrating the relevance of this strategy in increasing the competitiveness of tourist destinations (Wibisono et al., 2023).

This result is in accordance with the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Results. When communities are actively empowered in tourism activities, they become more involved and responsible for preserving the local environment and culture. Through social empowerment programs, communities gain new skills and knowledge that enable them to contribute directly to developing and managing tourist destinations in a more environmentally friendly and sustainable manner. FGD participants also emphasized that with a sense of ownership and active participation, local communities are more motivated to support initiatives that promote sustainable tourism practices. This support not only improves their economic well-being but also strengthens the competitiveness of the tourism destination. The findings of this FGD emphasize the study's results that social empowerment is a critical element in building sustainable tourism by involving all levels of society in the management and preservation of local tourism assets.

Human Resource Management and Sustainable Tourism

The study results indicate that Human Resource Management has a significant positive influence on Sustainable Tourism, which is consistent with recent studies. The development of quality human resources in the tourism sector directly impacts improving tourism services and experiences that support sustainable tourism (Streimikiene et al., 2021). Training and skills development for tourism workers increase their capacity to implement sustainable practices (Booyens et al., 2020). The effective human resource management can motivate employees to contribute to environmental initiatives in the tourism industry (Siyambalapitiya et al., 2018). The right HR management strategy increases awareness of the importance of environmentally friendly tourism (Tanveer et al., 2024).

The results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) support the finding that human resource management significantly influences sustainable tourism. FGD participants agreed that when the workforce in the tourism sector is equipped with relevant skills and knowledge of sustainable practices, this not only improves the tourist experience but also encourages stronger implementation of environmentally and culturally friendly practices—investing in workforce capacity development to ensure that the workforce is highly committed and aware of tourism sustainability goals. A well-trained workforce can be an agent of change in implementing strategies that support environmental and cultural sustainability in every tourism activity. The results of this FGD strengthen the research findings that effective human

resource management is a critical factor in achieving tourism sustainability by optimizing the contribution and participation of industry players.

Infrastructure and Sustainable Tourism

The results of this study indicate that infrastructure has no significant effect on sustainable tourism. This finding aligns with a study by Dembovska & Zvaigzne, (2021), which states that although good infrastructure, such as accessibility to transportation and public facilities, can improve the tourist experience, this impact does not always contribute to long-term sustainability. Agha & Ling, (2022) emphasized that adequate infrastructure does not guarantee tourism sustainability without good management and active participation from local communities. Perkumiene et al., (2020) found that although infrastructure improves destination accessibility, its influence on tourist behavior in supporting sustainable tourism is limited, with factors such as environmental awareness and policies being more influential. Dangi & (Petrick, 2021) infrastructure cannot be separated from the social and cultural context; without synergy with local values and community participation, infrastructure does not contribute to long-term sustainability. Infrastructure development that does not consider sustainability can damage the environment and reduce the attractiveness of tourism in the future (Haibo et al., 2020). Therefore, although infrastructure plays a vital role in tourism development, other factors such as community involvement, environmental awareness, and good management are more influential in determining tourism sustainability. Sustainable tourism development strategies must consider integrating infrastructure development and social and environmental aspects.

The results of the Focus Group Discussion revealed several reasons why infrastructure does not significantly impact sustainable tourism. Participants argued that although adequate infrastructure is essential for tourist accessibility and comfort, it does not always guarantee sustainable tourism. Participants emphasized that tourism sustainability depends more on environmental conservation efforts, community participation, and wise management of natural resources than on physical infrastructure development alone. Participants also noted that with awareness and commitment from the community and industry players to implement sustainable practices, even good infrastructure will be enough to encourage sustainable tourism. In addition, several participants expressed that excessive infrastructure development without considering environmental aspects can damage the natural attractions of a destination and reduce the quality of the tourist experience. Therefore, the results of this FGD support the finding that the role of infrastructure in sustainable tourism is more complex and requires an integrated approach with social and environmental aspects to achieve true sustainability.

Social Empowerment and Sustainable Tourism

The study's results indicate that the Social Empowerment variable mediates the relationship between Local Wisdom, Infrastructure, Human Resource Management, and Sustainable Tourism. This finding aligns with the theory that social empowerment can strengthen the interaction between these factors in achieving sustainable tourism goals.

The relationship between Local Wisdom and Sustainable Tourism shows that increasing local wisdom supported by social empowerment programs can create community awareness and participation in tourism development. Local wisdom integrated with social empowerment initiatives can improve tourist experiences and sustainability because local

communities feel ownership and responsibility for their environment and culture (Pett et al., 2024).

Social Empowerment can also mediate the relationship between Infrastructure and Sustainable Tourism. Research by Dembovska & Zvaigzne, (2021) shows that good infrastructure, accompanied by social empowerment, will improve accessibility and quality of services at tourist destinations. Social Empowerment provides training and development for local communities in managing infrastructure, which can increase tourist satisfaction and support tourism sustainability. The relationship between human resource management and the development of the skills and knowledge of local communities also shows a positive influence on sustainable tourism through social empowerment. According to Tanveer et al., (2024), investment in human resources through training and development programs can increase community involvement in the tourism industry, creating a more sustainable environment.

This study's results emphasize the importance of Social Empowerment as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between Local Wisdom, Infrastructure, and Human Resource Management towards Sustainable Tourism. Social empowerment not only increases the capacity of local communities but also improves tourism sustainability by creating closer relationships between communities, infrastructure, and human resource management. Further research is needed to explore the specific mechanisms through which Social Empowerment mediates this relationship in different contexts.

The results of the Focus Group Discussion showed that Social Empowerment plays a vital role as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between Local Wisdom, Infrastructure, and Human Resource Management towards Sustainable Tourism. The participants agreed that social empowerment can increase community participation and awareness in sustainably maintaining and utilizing local resources. In the context of Local Wisdom, participants said that social empowerment encourages communities to appreciate better and preserve local cultural values and traditions that are the main attractions for tourists. For the Infrastructure aspect, without active community involvement in the management and maintenance of infrastructure, existing facilities tend to be less than optimal in supporting sustainable tourism. Meanwhile, about Human Resource Management, social empowerment is seen as the key to improving the skills and competencies of local communities so that they can be more effectively involved in the tourism industry with a sustainable approach.

Government rules and Sustainable Tourism

The study's results show that the moderation of Government Rules on Human Resource Management and Sustainable Tourism provides significant results. This finding supports the research by Dangi & Petrick, (2021), which revealed that government rule that support effective human resource management contribute to increasing sustainability in the tourism sector. This shows that when the government establishes regulations and policies that encourage human resource development, the impact can be seen in achieving sustainable tourism goals.

Moderation of Government Rule on Infrastructure and Sustainable Tourism also shows significant results. Research by Agyeiwaah, (2020) explains that government rule that improve tourism infrastructure, such as transportation and public facilities, increase tourism sustainability. The right policies can improve the accessibility of tourist destinations, reduce negative impacts on the environment, and improve the tourist experience. In addition, Sentanu

et al., (2023) emphasize that government support in developing sustainable infrastructure is critical to support the growth of environmentally friendly tourism.

However, the moderation of government rule between local wisdom and sustainable tourism did not have a significant effect. This finding is in line with the results of research by Haibo et al., (2020) which shows that although local wisdom has high value, the interaction between local wisdom and government rule only sometimes hastively impact tourism sustainability. In addition, Ogunkan, (2022) noted that although local wisdom can provide identity and uniqueness to a destination, without proper support from government rule, local wisdom cannot effectively contribute to tourism sustainability.

The results of the Focus Group Discussion revealed that Government Rule moderation significantly impacts Human Resource Management and Infrastructure in supporting Sustainable Tourism. However, its effect on Local Wisdom was not significant. Participants emphasized that government regulations effectively strengthen human resource management and tourism infrastructure development. They noted that government rule that support the training and skills development of local workers and investment in infrastructure directly improve the quality of services and accessibility at tourist destinations, contributing to tourism sustainability. However, when discussing the impact of Government Rule on Local Wisdom, most participants agreed that formal regulations often need to be more relevant or fully by local cultural values. Participants expressed that social norms and community traditions influence local wisdom more than government rule, so government regulations have a significant influence on the preservation of local wisdom in the context of sustainable tourism. This indicates the need for a more adaptive and culturally sensitive approach from the government to facilitate the integration of Local Wisdom into tourism development strategies.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study found that local wisdom and human resource management significantly influence sustainable tourism development. However, infrastructure does not directly contribute to sustainability in tourism. Social Empowerment plays a crucial role in bridging the relationship among these variables and further strengthens sustainable tourism through government regulations. These findings highlight the importance of effective social empowerment and governance in ensuring long-term sustainability in the tourism sector.

To enhance sustainable tourism through improved social empowerment and governance, several key recommendations are proposed. For policymakers, it is essential to develop policies that support social empowerment by strengthening local community participation in tourism management. Regulations should ensure that local stakeholders play an active role in decision-making processes to foster inclusive and sustainable tourism development. Additionally, prioritizing training and capacity-building programs for human resources in the tourism sector is crucial to enhance their adaptability to market demands and technological advancements.

For tourism industry players, incorporating local wisdom into business models and service delivery can enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of destinations. Collaboration with local communities in destination management is recommended to promote social empowerment and foster responsible business practices. Furthermore, leveraging digital technology for marketing and operational management can expand market reach and improve efficiency.

For researchers, further studies are needed to explore effective mechanisms for strengthening social empowerment and tourism governance through community-based approaches. Future research should also investigate the impact of external factors, such as fiscal policies and economic incentives, on tourism sustainability. Developing a governance model that integrates local wisdom, social empowerment, and technological advancements will be crucial in ensuring a resilient and sustainable tourism ecosystem.

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that can serve as a foundation for policymakers in designing and implementing policies that support sustainable tourism development. The significant influence of local wisdom and human resource management on social empowerment underscores the need for an integrated approach in tourism planning. Policies focusing on infrastructure development and the preservation of local wisdom can contribute to creating a holistic ecosystem that fosters sustainable tourism growth.

Furthermore, this study highlights the critical role of community empowerment in tourism development. The significant contribution of social empowerment to sustainable tourism emphasizes the necessity of strategies that actively involve local communities in all stages of tourism development, from planning to implementation. Strengthening community participation ensures that tourism initiatives align with local needs and cultural values, enhancing long-term sustainability.

Another key implication of this research is the importance of education and training in the tourism sector. The study's findings indicate that effective human resource management enhances social empowerment, reinforcing the need for quality education and capacity-building programs. Well-trained human resources will be better equipped to address challenges in the tourism industry, ultimately improving the competitiveness and quality of tourism in Jambi. Additionally, this study demonstrates that the success of sustainable tourism development relies on the collective involvement of all stakeholders, including government institutions, local communities, and private sector actors. Establishing effective partnerships among these entities is crucial to ensuring that diverse perspectives and interests are adequately represented in tourism development processes. A collaborative approach will facilitate better decision-making and foster a more inclusive and resilient tourism sector.

Finally, the results of this study open opportunities for further research in the field of sustainable tourism. By delving deeper into the relationships between key influencing factors, future research can generate new insights and contribute to the development of more effective models and strategies. Expanding the scope of analysis will help refine sustainable tourism frameworks, ensuring continuous improvements in policy formulation and implementation.

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