



## JOURNAL OF EVENT, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY STUDIES

<http://e-journal.uum.edu.my/index.php/jeth>

How to cite this article:

Saffinee S.S., Jamaludin, M.A., Rosli, N.L.I., Amid, A. & Hasyun-Hashim, K.S. (2024). Sustainable and ethical vicegerency in halal tourism practices. *Journal of Event, Tourism and Hospitality Studies*, 4, 111-126. <https://doi.org/10.32890/jeth2024.4.8>

### SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL VICEGERENCY IN HALAL TOURISM PRACTICES

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Received: 1/1/2024

Revised: 1/3/2024

Accepted: 28/5/2024

Published: 31/7/2024

### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the sustainable and ethical vicegerency of Halal tourism and the Islamic principles influencing sustainable tourism, particularly in the context of Muslim travel. By conducting a literature review and case study analysis, the qualitative research design was implemented, involving a total of 10 informants. Additionally, successful programs and best practices that implement these concepts to enhance the sustainability of tourism destinations and experiences were investigated. The results indicate that there are components that can enhance the sustainability of tourism and the experiences of Muslim guests. The paper highlights the importance of incorporating Islamic themes into tourism sustainability frameworks to promote ethical and culturally sensitive behaviours. This paper provides governments and other tourism stakeholders with valuable insights into sustainable tourism programs that cater to the requirements of Muslim travelers and promote sustainability.

**Keywords:** Ethical tourism, Ethical vicegerency, Halal tourism, Khalifah concept, Maqasid al-Shariah, Sustainable tourism.

## INTRODUCTION

The Halal industry comprises a diverse array of products and services that strictly adhere to the dietary and ethical criteria prescribed by Islamic principles. The etymology of the term “Halal” can be traced back to the Arabic language, where it signifies the concept of permissibility or lawfulness. The term “Halal” is employed to denote any entity or action that conforms to the principles and regulations outlined in Islamic law, also known as Shariah. The Halal industry encompasses a wide range of areas, extending beyond food and beverages. These sectors include cosmetics, medicines, finance, fashion, travel, and tourism.

The term “Halal tourism” refers to travel and tourism activities that comply with Islamic norms and values and have been developed to meet the requirements and preferences of Muslim tourists. It involves various aspects, such as accommodation, dining, leisure activities, and services, all of which must conform to Halal (permissible) laws, such as the availability of Halal food, prayer facilities, and etiquette concerns. The continually growing population of Muslims worldwide, as well as their expanding demand for travel experiences that are aligned with their religious beliefs and rituals, is the driving force behind the relevance of Halal tourism (Musa et al., 2023). According to estimations made by the Pew Research Centre, the number of Muslims living in the world will reach 2.2 billion by the year 2030. This will make up nearly 26% of the total population of the entire world. This shift in population has resulted in a significant increase in the demand for Halal tourism experiences.

The global market for Halal tourism has experienced a substantial expansion in recent years, positioning it as one of the sectors with the highest compound annual growth rate within the overall tourism industry. According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2020-2021 findings, the total amount spent by Muslims worldwide on travel in 2019 amounted to around \$189 billion, with a predicted annual growth rate of 3.2% from 2019 to 2024. The importance of the Halal tourism business and its expansion can be attributed to several factors. The increase in both financial resources and available leisure time within the middle class of Muslim communities (Yousaf, 2023) has facilitated broader participation of Muslims in global travel endeavours. The combination of this factor, the growing awareness, and preference towards Halal-certified services (Saffinee et al., 2019) and amenities has played a significant role in the emergence and progression of Halal tourism (Suryanto et al., 2022).

In addition, governments and other players in the tourism industry are aware of the economic potential of the Halal tourism market, and as a result, companies have taken steps to expand into this sector (Suryanto et al., 2022; Yustica & Widiandari, 2022; Ahmed & Akbaba, 2023). Countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates, for instance, have established Halal tourism programmes and the infrastructure to support them to attract Muslim tourists. Saffinee et al., (2017) discussed the introduction of Muslim-friendly hotels that have obtained certification. These hotels feature Halal-certified kitchens, providing a variety of Halal cuisine options, as well as the provision of prayer facilities. The Halal tourism industry is important, not only because it contributes to the economy, but it plays an important role in promoting cultural interchange, discussion between different faiths, and understanding between other religions and cultures. Additionally, Muslim communities worldwide are given a stronger sense of self-identity and satisfaction as Halal tourism helps preserve and promote Islamic lifestyles (Mat et al., 2018).

This paper aimed to investigate the objective of integrating sustainable and ethical vicegerency values in shaping the tourism industry, particularly within the context of Halal tourism. It also intended to shed

light on the practical implications and benefits of adopting these Islamic principles into tourism practises by studying relevant findings and engaging in in-depth discussions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Vicegerency in Halal Tourism

The concept of vicegerency, which is closely associated with Islamic principles, can be understood as being synonymous with the term Khalifah. In Islamic theology, Khalifah refers to an individual who acts as a steward or caretaker. As stated by Saffinee et al. (2020), there is a belief that humans have been given the task of acting as representatives of God on Earth. Consequently, they are obligated to assume accountability for their actions and how they distribute and utilize the planet's resources. The concept of vicegerency in Islamic philosophy is closely connected to the notions of human responsibility and obligation (Barazangi, 2011). Barazangi (2011) asserted that within this particular belief system, it is argued that individuals are entrusted with the duty of maintaining principles of justice, ethics, and righteousness in their interactions with both the external world and their fellow human beings.

Muslims believe that although humans can exercise free will, they bear responsibility for their choices in the presence of the divine (Reda, 2019). The concept of accountability in this context is contingent upon individuals' adherence to the tenets of faith, moral conduct, and their fulfilment of the tasks that are inherently linked to their role as representatives of God on Earth. Vicegerency in Islam means that God appoints people as custodians and representatives on Earth to follow God's teachings, preserve justice, and care for the planet and its inhabitants (Saffinee et al., 2020). This notion emphasises ethical and moral behaviour and caring for the divine creation.

The principles of vicegerency emphasise the importance of conducting oneself properly and ethically, while also promoting sustainable practices, equality, and environmental preservation (Bsoul et al., 2022). Islamic vicegerency promotes equality, sustainability, and environmental conservation. Vicegerency calls for equality by exemplifying God's impartiality on Earth, advocating respect, fairness, and justice for all. To conserve the world's state, protecting ecosystems and biodiversity becomes a religious duty. Travel and tourism demand vicegerency. Halal tourism fosters informed decisions that honour religious beliefs and promote responsible stewardship, social equity, and ethical conduct.

The concept of vicegerency holds significant relevance within the domain of Halal tourism. Halal tourism is a variant of travel that conforms to the principles and customs of Islam, placing significant emphasis on catering to the requirements of Muslim travellers. The integration of the vicegerency concept into the field of Halal tourism necessitates a comprehension of the significance of assuming the role of a responsible steward of the destinations visited and the individuals involved.

Sustainable practices, cultural and religious sensitivity, local economic assistance, and preservation of heritage and authenticity are all essential components of vicegerency in the Halal tourist industry. These concepts originate from Islamic teachings that stress the importance of humanity in fulfilling its role as stewards of the Earth. The Quran emphasises the significance of protecting the environment and using sustainable methods. Allah The Almighty declares in Surah Al-A'raf (7:56), "And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reform." The following line emphasises the need for preserving the ecological

balance of the planet and avoiding harm or corruption. The concept can be used for Halal tourism by engaging in ethical travel that has minimal negative impact on the environment. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (peace be upon him) further emphasised the preservation of natural resources in a Hadith in which he advised against wasting water, even when performing ablution in a moving river (Sunan Ibn Majah).

Halal tourism prioritizes sensitivity to cultural (*al-uruf*) and religious beliefs (Islamic belief). Muslims are urged by the Quran to treat everyone with respect and kindness. Allah declares in Surah Al-'Ankabut (29:46), "And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them." Respectful interactions with people of all religions and origins are emphasised in this passage. Also, through his encounters with many communities, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (peace be upon him) served as an example of cultural awareness and respect. According to his Hadith reported by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Ās, "Whoever does not show mercy to our young ones and recognize the rights of our elders is not one of us" (narrated by Abu Daud, Tirmizi, and Ahmad).

One important part of vicegerency in Halal tourism is helping the local economy. Fair market activity and economic justice are important, according to the Quran. "Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend from that in which He has made you successors," Allah commands in Surah Al-Hadid (57:7). This text emphasises the part that Believers have in fostering their local economies. By encouraging fair trade practices, supporting local businesses, and making sure that tourism activities have a beneficial economic impact on locals, Muslim travellers may uphold this obligation.

Another aspect of virtue in Halal tourism is the preservation of heritage and authenticity (Ahmar bin Mohd Sanip & Mustapha, 2020). The Quran stresses the significance of protecting historical sites and cultural assets. The Prophet Moses' life is mentioned in Surah Al-Qasas (28:77), where Allah again stresses the value of conserving cultural heritage. He says, "Rather, seek the reward of the Hereafter by means of what Allah has granted you, without forgetting your share of this world. And be good to others as Allah has been good to you. Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah certainly does not like the corruptors." This verse represents harmony between the pursuit of the spiritual realm and the value and preservation of the material world.

### **Sustainability in Halal Tourism**

Sustainability is extremely important in Halal tourism since it includes the long-term well-being of the environment, society, and economy (Soumaya Hamdi, 2020; Keliat & Sentanu, 2022; Saffinee et al., 2022). Adopting sustainable practices is necessary to ensure the preservation of natural resources, promote community engagement, and foster economic stability for future generations of Muslim travellers. These goals can be achieved by embracing sustainable practices.

The preservation of the natural world and its interconnected ecosystems is the primary focus of the environmental component of sustainability. In tourism, this refers to behaviours that seek to reduce the damage done to the natural environment while simultaneously fostering ecological harmony (Esfandiar et al., 2022). It entails lowering waste production, saving energy and water, boosting renewable energy sources, and protecting natural habitats, among other things. Halal tourism guarantees the protection of natural landscapes and resources, as well as the preservation of biodiversity and a reduction in the effects of climate change because it emphasises ecological sustainability. One such verse is from Surah

Ar-Rum (30:41), where Allah The Almighty says, “Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned, so Allah may let them taste part of the consequence of what they have done so that perhaps they will return to righteousness.” This verse highlights the consequences of human actions on the environment and reminds us to be mindful of our impact on the natural world. It encourages the practice of behaviours that minimize harm and corruption, aligned with the concept of sustainability in Halal tourism.

The social component of sustainability in Halal tourism focuses on tolerance and the welfare of communities. It entails interacting with the local communities in a way that is respectful and helpful to all parties. This includes honouring their cultural norms and beliefs, providing support for their economic development, and fostering social equality. Sustainable Halal tourism practises are those that acknowledge the importance of cultural sensitivity (Aminah & Bhakti, 2023), encourage constructive relationships between tourists and locals (Keliat & Sentanu, 2022; Saffinee, 2022), and contribute to the broader social framework of the locations that are visited. This aligns with the teachings of Islam, which emphasise the principles of justice, fairness, and kindness towards others.

The Quran also encourages Muslims to be fair in their dealings with others. In Surah Al-Ma’idah (5:8), Allah The Almighty says, “O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives.” This verse highlights the importance of upholding justice and fairness in all interactions, including those with local communities during Halal tourism experiences.

The economic component of sustainable Halal tourism is centred on promoting economic viability and prosperity for the communities the industry serves. It comprises supporting local businesses, promoting fair trade practises, and generating chances for people to generate income for themselves (Maskuroh, 2023; Nazaruddin et al., 2023; Supryadi et al., 2023). Sustainable Halal tourism aims to ensure that tourism activities contribute to the economic well-being of the areas they visit by more fairly dispersing the economic advantages generated by tourism among the local population. In addition, this aspect promotes entrepreneurialism, diversity, and the development of sustainable tourist infrastructure, all of which work together to make the involved communities more resilient and stable economically.

In terms of transportation (Sapry et al., 2020), sustainable Halal tourism encourages using environmentally friendly forms of travel. This includes supporting measures for carbon offsetting, encouraging the use of low-emission automobiles, and lobbying for efficient public transit systems. In addition to this, it entails selecting transport companies that emphasise ecological friendliness in their business practices and encouraging responsible behaviour among Muslim tourists.

Regarding accommodation, sustainable practices involve selecting hotels and resorts that prioritize energy and water conservation, waste management, and the use of materials that are beneficial to the environment. The availability of prayer spaces and Halal food alternatives are also essential components of a Muslim-friendly accommodation (Saffinee et al., 2017). Muslim tourists can help reduce their overall environmental impact and encourage the development of more sustainable hospitality practices by choosing to stay in environmentally friendly accommodations.

For destination attractions and activities (Saffinee et al., 2019; Mohtar et al., 2022; Nisha & Cheung, 2022; Sodawan & Hsu, 2022), sustainable Halal tourism promotes engagement with the natural world, cultural traditions, and community-based projects. This entails travelling to protected areas such as national parks and natural reserves while following established criteria for responsible tourism. In

addition to that, it means financially supporting cultural preservation programmes, paying historical monuments the appropriate amount of care and attention, and participating in community-led efforts that encourage sustainable livelihoods.

Additionally, individuals who engage in tourism activities, as well as other key participants in the tourism industry, have the potential to foster a more responsible and ethical tourism sector by endorsing sustainable practices within the field of Halal tourism. In addition to mitigating the negative environmental effects, the adoption of environmentally friendly travel practices in several aspects such as lodging, transportation, and tourist attractions can enhance the whole travel experience for Muslim travellers. The promotion of a favourable and enduring trajectory for Halal tourism facilitates the harmonious integration of religious beliefs, cultural appreciation, and conscientious environmental stewardship.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative approach to examine how ethical vicegerency principles could be applied to sustainable tourism through a literature review and case study. This methodology examined these concepts' relevance and practical applications to sustainable tourism.

### **Sampling and Data Collection**

Purposive sampling was used to select the tourism stakeholder experts. This sampling strategy was appropriate because the concepts of ethical vicegerency can be applied in the context of sustainable tourism in the early phases of the study. According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), the criteria for selection should be based on the respondents' significant expertise and experience working in the relevant industry for at least five years.

Interviews were conducted with ten experts, as indicated in Table 2, from various fields related to tourism. They included local tourism stakeholders, experts on sustainable tourism, education specialists, tourist guides, and local communities. The goal of incorporating experts from various fields and having had a diversity of experiences was to collect thoughts and opinions from various points of view. Face-to-face interviews with semi-structured questioning formats were used to acquire the necessary data for analysis. The questions that were asked investigated how ethical vicegerency affects the sustainability of Halal tourism and how Islamic principles should govern sustainable tourism practices, particularly those that cater to Muslim travellers (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

#### *Interview Questions*

No.	Interview questions
1.	How do the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah and vicegerency (khalifah) align with the values and objectives of ethical and responsible tourism?
2.	In your opinion, how does the concept of vicegerency (Khalifah) contribute to the promotion and preservation of human values in the context of ethical and responsible tourism?

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3. In your view, what are the future prospects and opportunities for enhancing ethical vicegerency and sustainability in Halal tourism?

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As suggested by Mishra and Swain (2017), data collection can be stopped when data saturation has been reached. Saturation was reached in this study through ten in-depth interviews with significant industry representatives. Following the guidelines outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2017), the interviews were manually recorded, and permission was obtained from the interviewees in advance to record the audio. The informants' profiles are given in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

*Profiles of Informants*

<b>Informant No.</b>	<b>Justification/ Background</b>	<b>Field of Work</b>
1	Deputy Tourism Manager	Local tourism stakeholders
2	Vice-Chair, UNESCO Global Geopark	Sustainable tourism expert
3	Head of Research, Cultural Heritage, and Social Sustainability	Education Expert
4	Naturalist, President Langkawi Tourist Guide	Tourist Guide
5	Georimbawi Tours	Tourist Guide
6	Head of Kubang Badak Fisherman	Local Community
7	Head of Kilim Village Fisherman	Local Community
8	Shariah background	Islamic studies expert
10	Shariah background	Islamic studies expert

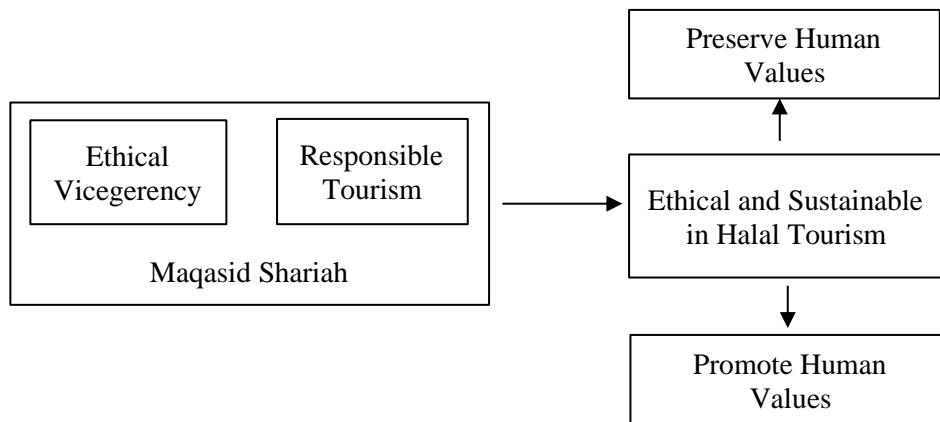
## DISCUSSION

### **Maqasid al-Shariah and vicegerency (Khalifah) towards the ethical and sustainable tourism**

Sustainable and ethical vicegerent in Halal tourism must adhere to the Maqasid Shariah practices. Maqasid al-Shariah is based on Islamic teachings, and its objectives are very similar to the goals and ideals of ethical and sustainable tourism. Maqasid al-Shariah focuses on preserving (hifz) and promoting (ta'ziz) human ideals including justice (Adl), compassion (Rahmah), respect (Ihsan), and well-being (Maslahah) (Kamali, 1989; Al-Jayyousi, 2016). Islam believes that Muslims should follow these rules to live a balanced (wasatiyyah) and good life (Hayah jayyidah). Ethical and responsible tourism also attempts to uphold those principles by encouraging practices that are good for individuals, communities, and the environment (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*Ethical and Sustainable in Halal Tourism*



*Justice (Adl)*

According to *Maqasid al-Shariah*, justice is important in every aspect of life. Justice in ethical and responsible tourism means treating all stakeholders fairly, including local communities, employees, and tourists. It entails providing equitable economic gains, respecting host communities' rights, and creating social equality.

Informant 8 explained the basic principles of environmental care, such as the prohibition of damage, and in the event of damage, it should be repaired properly. In short, it is not a problem in the context of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, which emphasises the role of the *Khalifah* in creating mechanisms for improving the local community and socio-economy. This results from protecting religion, life, intellect, dignity, and wealth. Therefore, *Khalifah*'s role among tourism stakeholders is one of responsibilities, as carrying out tourism operations still necessitates using Islamic knowledge to support conventional products and services. While some tourism stakeholders claim they have made good decisions, comparisons by Noor and Shah (2017) showed otherwise. The understanding of caring for the environment, knowledge of local community involvement, and preserving the social economy should extend beyond profit and prosperity while covering the importance of maintaining the *Maqasid al-Shariah* by practising the role of *Khalifah* to preserve the continuousness of Halal tourism.

*Compassion (Rahmah)*

Compassion is a priority in *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Compassion is embraced in ethical and responsible tourism by considering the well-being and dignity of persons and communities. It entails minimising harm, protecting vulnerable populations, and participating in humanitarian projects encouraging local development. The spirit principles are to love nature, respect the local community, be good at communicating, and avoid bad behaviours. To ensure that these principles are followed, local communities must understand their role in determining the effectiveness of each government plan, policy, and programme.

There are a few roles and duties related to religious and sustainable components in local communities.

Believe and do good: The main point is to develop a deep belief that every good thing is seen and rewarded by God. This is because actions taken with knowledge of their benefits will last longer than those taken without such knowledge. Thus, providing Halal gastronomy, mosques, and homestays for travellers is a way to do good.

Good local customs: Local communities must uphold cultural values in spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical ways. This protects human *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Humans require happiness. Friendly, helpful, courteous, and trustworthy local communities play a part in the sustainability of Halal tourism. They are also an important source of reliable, educational information.

Faith and ethics: Being a Servant of Allah requires trusteeship and responsibility. Local communities must be environmentally conscious to sustain relationships, as evident by cleanliness, comfort, safety, and convenience. Servants of Allah help travellers fulfil their wants (hajiyah) as well as care for the aspects of religion, life, intellect, property, and ancestry (dharuriyyah). These will in turn inspire local communities to mitigate environmental issues.

Informants 3 and 4 stated,

*“By the sense of empowerment, the local communities are willing to sustain the development.”*

Local communities help sustainable Halal tourism by improving socioeconomic conditions. As a result, some destinations are growing due to Muslim tourism and community involvement.

### **Respect (*Ihsan*)**

The Maqasid al-Shariah stresses the need of respecting individuals regardless of their backgrounds. This principle is upheld by ethical and responsible tourism, which promotes cultural sensitivity and preserves local traditions and customs. It entails respectfully engaging with local communities, recognising their viewpoints, and avoiding behaviours that may go against their values.

Tourism stakeholders' sustainable tourism approaches vary. Understanding knowledge-based exterior (hissi) and internal (ma'awi) is essential. Man knows the external but not the internal. A clear understanding of Islam can be reflected in the attitudes shown by Man. An informant expressed that Islam's need for clear understanding can help with consciousness, i.e. what individuals believe and accept as truth. The heart should also repose the truth without any mixture of doubt and suspicion.

*“When we understand that is the earth, it is mean that there are responsibilities in Islam as a human being and as a guide. We need to share with the tourist.”*

*(Informant 4)*

Understanding knowledge is a prerequisite to applying the concept properly. The statement is supported by the local community's leader.

*“Cleanliness, awareness at first, is not encouraging. However, after the existence of AJK (local committee) in the Kilim area, change can take place. For the residents, they are beginning to understand the need for nature care. At first, they used mangroves for charcoal. Nevertheless, after being exposed to the importance of mangroves, everyone understands.”*

(Informant 7)

This response suggests that Islamic values are practiced. People believe that doing good to nature will lead to nature being sustained. By practicing ethics and morals in actual lifestyle, the tourism destination attraction will be preserved. The basic information regarding sustainable Halal tourism needs to be linked by sharing and resulting in a memorable event. The feedback from one of the informants related to the principle (Info-Share-Memorable) is as follows:

*“Like the straightforward question, why Kilim has many eagles, how I am going to link these three elements:*

- 1. Beautiful limestone, limestone itself, the eagle when building the nest on the mountain, on the hill, it is better than building in mangrove trees, much safer.*
- 2. Not because of eagle feeding, the fisherman is already there. They damage the net on the river, but what we are introducing is sustainable.*
- 3. Local people did not practice because they do not want, and they did not understand. That way, everyone must work as a team.”*

(Informant 4)

Sustainable Halal tourism needs support from community participation to be developed. As one of the informants stated.

*“Sense of empowerment, the local community are willing and able to sustain and further develop initiative begun.”*

(Informant 3)

This expressed the belief regarding the success of the Geopark which was based on the local communities. To implement the programmes and public policies, the role of community participation is essential. Many informants responded with similar statements.

*“What is meant by participation? We are enjoying and involving, sharing, and respecting. We want to make the citizens' involvement in the decisions making process of the state so that they can increase their influence on public policies and programmes.”*

(Informant 3)

*“Therefore, community participation in Geopark every many responds to the regional and local characteristics of the political and socio-cultural contexts. We cannot go upon from the technology that is important to understanding the local heritage and social culture itself.”*

(Informant 3)

*“If you follow the Kilim Road by the locals, some time is no story about geology. It is all about biodiversity and other things, meaning that they are still not comfortable to add. But some of the guides that have been trained and know a little bit have started to include some geological story.”*

(Informant 4)

Local communities are neither aware of the actual situation through observation nor have the opportunity to directly experience it. Hence, the role of trust and responsibility to practice sustainable Halal tourism must follow external and internal practices correctly, led by *Shariah* Law. Thus, the outcomes of the content analysis show that the informants of the study had a positive reaction to the

implementation of *Maqasid al-Shariah* and ethical vicegerency in Halal tourism, although current practice shows that many matters need to be improved.

### **Well-being (*Maslahah*)**

*Maqasid al-Shariah* places a high value on human well-being (*Maslahah*). This objective is promoted by ethical and responsible tourism, which prioritises tourist health and safety, supports sustainable livelihoods for local populations, and protects destinations' natural and cultural heritage. It entails encouraging responsible consumerism, conserving the environment, and improving the overall quality of tourism experiences.

In regulating the practice among tourism stakeholders, the perceived *maslahah* in all activities was under their control. Among the informants, there was a realisation of the need to secure benefits. In sustainable tourism, volunteerism, and values, human capital is one of the important practical benefits. People tend to care about nature when their sense of belonging increases, usually via shared values, wellness, and well-being.

*“By lifelong learning, value human capital, and volunteerism. Moreover, for the environment, by increasing sense of belonging ‘shared value,’ wellness and well-being.”*

*(Informant 5)*

The point is that a *maslahah* for a Muslim community must not be abandoned except when it is impossible to achieve. The *maslahah* in maintaining community participation depends on cooperative-based initiatives combined with a top-down approach among tourism management.

*“Local community roles depend on the logic of consequentiality. More collaborative and cooperative-based initiatives combined with the top-down approach are a great combination for successful management of forest parks.”*

*(Informant 2)*

In Islamic law, the outcome must agree with *Shariah*, as mentioned by Informant 1.

*“Sustainable tourism comes with conserving and development. We need to generate more products.”*

*(Informant 1)*

Tourism stakeholders are responsible for the ideas. However, the right idea and intention could not be relied on when it ends up with *mafsadah*. Based on developing sustainable Halal tourism, the authorities have looked at the outcome of the security benefit and eliminating or preventing *mafsadah*. As mentioned by the geologist,

*“So, I always tell the geologist, if we happen to build geo-tourism it doesn’t mean other tourism stops. But it just continues but further improves and we introduce the good geo-tourism product.”*

*(Informant 2)*

To sum up, the *maslahah* is considered a policy of securing benefits such as “we need to generate more product” (Informant 1). Therefore, by considering the sustainable Halal tourism approach with conservation and development, the *maslahah* can be seen as interchangeable if the benefits became

*mafsadah*. The opportunity seems optimistic, but leaving it is necessary when it leads to destruction and pollution.

### **Contributions of Ethical Vicegerency**

The concept of vicegerency (Khalifah) significantly contributes to promoting and preserving human values in the context of ethical and responsible tourism in line with *Maqasid al-Shariah*. The concept of vicegerency in Islamic teachings refers to the idea that humans are entrusted as stewards of the Earth and are responsible for its well-being. This concept has several implications for ethical and responsible tourism:

#### ***Environmental Preservation (Hifz al-Bi'ah)***

The concept of vicegerency emphasises people's responsibility to safeguard and preserve the environment. This refers to adopting sustainable practices that reduce the negative impact of tourism on the environment. Ethical and responsible tourism adheres to the characteristics of vicegerency, assuring preserving the planet's resources for future generations by practising appropriate waste management, preserving energy and water, and encouraging eco-friendly initiatives.

#### ***Human Preservation (Hifz al-Insan)***

Vicegerency also highlights the significance of justice and fairness in interpersonal relationships. This translates into ensuring social justice for local populations and advancing their well-being in the context of tourism. By upholding the rights and dignity of local communities, assisting in their economic development, and promoting social equality, ethical and responsible tourism seeks to reduce any detrimental social effects. Ethical employment practices, involvement in the community, and encouragement of inclusivity and cultural awareness are some examples of this.

#### ***Cultural Preservation (Hifz al-adat)***

The concept of vicegerency acknowledges the value of conserving variety and cultural heritage. The host communities' cultural traditions, customs, and beliefs are respected and valued in ethical and responsible tourism. It facilitates genuine cultural encounters, develops cultural awareness, and dissuades behaviours that can exploit or commercialise regional traditions. Ethical tourism practices help to promote and preserve human values by maintaining and respecting cultural heritage.

#### ***Economic Welfare Preservation (Hifz al-Mal)***

The concept of vicegerency incorporates the idea of accountable economic management. Ethical and responsible tourism aims to ensure that local communities benefit economically from tourism-related activities. This entails encouraging fair commerce, assisting small businesses and entrepreneurs in the area, and ensuring that tourism income is fairly shared among the host communities. Ethical tourism practices promote sustainable economic growth, which benefits people's quality of life and the prosperity of their communities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Vicegerency (Khalifah) offers a comprehensive framework for ethical and sustainable Halal tourism. It aligns with promoting and preserving human values by emphasizing environmental stewardship, social justice, cultural preservation, and economic welfare. By integrating the principles of vicegerency into tourism practices, stakeholders can contribute to a more sustainable and ethical tourism industry that respects the environment, local communities, and cultural authenticity. However, it is important to recognise the limitations and challenges in applying this concept and further research is needed to enhance its practical implementation and effectiveness.

By recognising Man as stewards of the Earth and emphasising their responsibility towards the environment and society, vicegerency offers a holistic framework that integrates Islamic principles with sustainable tourism principles (Aimon et al., 2023). This provides a valuable perspective for understanding the ethical dimensions of tourism and guides stakeholders in making responsible choices that align with human values and contribute to a more sustainable future. From a practical standpoint, the concept of vicegerency has practical implications for tourism stakeholders. As stated by Cheng & Chen (2022), it encourages responsible choices that prioritise the preservation of natural resources, respect for local communities, and the promotion of cultural authenticity. Implementing vicegerency principles can lead to the development of sustainable tourism policies, codes of conduct, and certification programmes that cater to the needs and values of Muslim travellers. By embracing these principles, stakeholders can contribute to the preservation of destinations, the well-being of local communities, and the overall sustainability of the tourism industry. However, it is important to address the challenges of interpretation, integration within existing frameworks, and cultural contextualisation to effectively implement vicegerency principles in diverse tourism contexts. Further research and practical applications are needed to explore and refine the implementation of vicegerency in Islamic ethical and responsible tourism.

One limitation of the research on sustainable and ethical vicegerency in Halal tourism practices is the potential for subjective interpretations of Islamic principles and the concept of vicegerency. Individuals or communities may have different interpretations and uses of these concepts, resulting in differing opinions on what constitutes sustainable and ethical tourism. Furthermore, cultural and contextual differences between destinations and areas may make it difficult to execute consistent practices that adhere to the principles of vicegerency. These limitations indicate the need for further research and explanation of the practical implications of vicegerency in Halal tourism. Future research could concentrate on various issues to improve understanding and implementation of sustainable and ethical governance in Halal tourism. For starters, comparative research across different destinations and cultural contexts can help to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how vicegerency can be contextualised and adapted to different settings. In addition, studies might look into developing and accessing practical tools, guidelines, and certification programmes that encourage sustainable and ethical practices in Halal tourism, providing clear frameworks for industry stakeholders to follow.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research has been funded by Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia and the Ministry of Education under grant number (FRGS19-178-0787). This fundamental research is part of a dissertation which was submitted as partial fulfilment to meet requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

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