

# Collaborative Partnerships, Religious Reputation Culture, and Digital Tourism Promotion in Support of Halal Tourism Villages

IQTISHADIA  
16,2

265

**Windi NR Wardhani**

Wahid Hasyim University  
*windi@unwahas.ac.id*

**Ratih Pratiwi**

Wahid Hasyim University  
*rara@unwahas.ac.id*

**Purnomo**

Wahid Hasyim University  
*purnomo@unwahas.ac.id*

## Abstract

This study focuses on two primary aspects of investigation. Firstly, it examines the digital methods that Small to Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) utilize and collaborative patterns with branding strategies to cultivate halal tourism villages. It employs a qualitative descriptive approach within the social phenomenology framework. Secondly, it identifies the most suitable alternative for SMTEs' development using a Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM). The research concludes that enhancing SMTEs involves a multifaceted approach, including effective planning, digital transformation, fostering collaboration, and investing in halal-friendly infrastructure with standardization in halal certification. Through a qualitative approach and QSPM analysis, the study identifies strategic priorities like collaborative partnerships, religious reputation culture implementation, and digital tourism promotion as crucial strategies for SMTEs' success. This research significantly contributes to the development of halal tourism enterprises by involving a unique context, employing less common methodology, and focusing on sustainable development. The limitations of this study pertain to the impact of uncontrollable external changes, while the future research agenda explores predictive modeling and regional comparisons to advance further the understanding of strategy outcomes in halal tourism development.

**Keywords:** *Collaborative Partnership, Digitalization, Halal Tourism, QSPM, Religious Reputation Culture, SMTEs.*



IQTISHADIA

Vol. 16 (2) 2023

PP. 265-300

P-ISSN: 1979 - 0724

E-ISSN: 2502 - 3993

DOI : 10.21043/iqtishadia.v16i2.24039

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism emerges as a dynamic and multifaceted industry, playing a crucial role in the global economy (Buhalis, 2019). Its service-oriented nature, diverse interconnections with other sectors, and socio-economic impact significantly contribute to regional development. The ability of tourism to generate foreign exchange without depleting national resources sets it apart. To achieve sustained growth, it is crucial to integrate tourism strategies with broader economic policies, ensuring a harmonious and beneficial relationship between the industry and the overall development of a country (Coles et al., 2017).

Tourists who purchase goods and services offered in tourist destinations positively contribute to the sustainability of Small and Medium-sized Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs). Tourism generates income through imposed taxes, creates job opportunities for local communities, and enhances their standard of living, thereby positively impacting the socio-economic conditions of societies (Nguza-Mduba, 2023). However, some tourists have raised concerns about inadequate services, limited access, insufficient infrastructure, and security challenges (Moza & Ban, 2023). On the other hand, some tourists express satisfaction with the climatic conditions of the area (Joel Kabonda et al., 2023). Significantly, tourists highlight challenges faced by SMTEs, including inadequate infrastructure for accessing accommodation facilities, varied locations of the facilities, and discrepancies in the quality of services provided by different business owners (Coles et al., 2017).

Previous research in the field has primarily focused on the economic aspects of tourism and the challenges faced by SMTEs. The main challenge for SMTEs in the current situation is managing human resources (Joel Kabonda et al., 2023). SMTEs lack a strategic understanding of how to progress in the electronic market. SMTEs primarily use the Internet to promote their properties through a website. They have not yet integrated an e-business strategy into their operations or utilized web-based technologies to assist their internal and external business processes (Ashari et al., 2014).

However, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the specific application of digital strategies in developing SMTEs. Kurniawati et al. (2022) emphasized that the youth took the lead in the digitalization efforts associated with this development. However, Hernández Sánchez and Oskam

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(2022) pointed out a significant challenge, noting that numerous SMTEs lack the necessary knowledge or resources to invest in digital transformation. Hernández Sánchez highlighted the dependence of the transformation process on support and coordination at the destination level.

The complexity of the tourism industry creates significant opportunities for the development of Islamic tourism, involving destination management with the aim of introducing historical Islamic sites as part of efforts to spread Islam worldwide (Muneeza et al., 2019). Although research interest in Islam and tourism has increased (Almuhzzi, 2019), research findings related to religious tourism literature remain very limited due to the complexity of the relationship between tourism and religion (Gorondutse & Hilman, 2019).

Despite Islam serving as the foundation of society and Islamic legal principles supporting tourism policies, development goals, and management in many Muslim countries, information available on the relationship between tourism and Islam is still very limited (Noor et al., 2020). Tourist destinations related to religious history have become a central theme in tourism literature, opening a research field for scholars to delve deeper into the relationship between religion and tourism (Noor et al., 2020).

The promotion of tourism activities, particularly in the context of halal tourism and the development of tourism villages, aligns with Islamic values that emphasize economic growth and job creation (Sayekti, 2019). According to Santoso and Cahyani (2022), tourism contributes significantly to the economy, fostering innovation and job opportunities. However, the limited engagement of Indonesian SMTEs in the global market is hindering their potential (Moza & Ban, 2023). In order to address this issue, it is essential to implement an innovative strategy that takes into account the fundamental principles of Islam.

The digitization of SMTEs is a crucial element representing the shift from conventional systems to digital methods to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of SMTEs' business and operational processes (Nuryanti et al., 2023). The digitalization of SMTEs prompts tourism and creative industry practitioners to transform their management practices from conventional to modern (Balsmeier & Woerter, 2019). Digital entrepreneurship is the process of creating entrepreneurial value using various socio-technical drivers to support the acquisition, processing, distribution, and consumption of digital information (Fabrizio et al., 2022).

Building strong networks with other business stakeholders can also serve as a way to expand business opportunities and gain recognition in the market on a much larger scale (Nguyen et al., 2022). The structure of the tourism network can significantly influence tourism performance (Wardhani & Purnomo, 2021). However, research on the effects of tourism networks typically focuses on a micro perspective, especially exploring the benefits or losses of being part of a tourism network, but the global tourism development can be seen as the evolution of a tourism network; yet, how the network structure affects the tourism industry's performance has not been clearly explained (Zhu & Liu, 2022).

Therefore, the urgency of this research lies in the need to analyze the factors of opportunities and strengths, as well as weaknesses and threats, and to map out collaborative partnership patterns in developing digital-based SMTEs in Jepara Regency tourism villages. The integration of halal tourism principles adds a unique dimension to the study, addressing the gap in the existing literature. This research will reveal the occurring phenomena and be explored in-depth concerning the following aspects: (1) The community's involvement in digitalizing the products and services of SMTEs; (2) The networking pattern and the role of the Karimunjawa Jepara Muria (KJM) Biosphere Reserve Branding Logo in the development of SMTEs in the tourism villages of Jepara Regency.

This research contributes by providing a comprehensive analysis of the digitalization process of SMTEs, emphasizing collaboration patterns, and evaluating the influence of the KJM Biosphere Reserve branding logo on the development of tourism villages in Jepara Regency. The findings are expected to offer practical insights for policymakers, businesses, and local communities in enhancing the sustainability and competitiveness of SMTEs, aligned with halal tourism principles.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Halal Tourism**

Islam recognizes and appreciates the diversity and beauty of Allah's creation, as reflected in numerous verses of the Quran and Hadith that endorse travel and exploration. However, this perspective is constrained by

the ethical and moral values upheld by Islam. Islam teaches an appreciation for the diversity of nature and Allah's creation, with travel seen as a means to comprehend the magnificence of Allah's creation. Tourism is also viewed as a way to acquire new knowledge and experiences. Seeking knowledge and learning about the cultures, histories, and traditions of visited places are regarded as positive activities in Islam. As stated in the Quran, such as in Surah Al-Ghasiyah verses 17-21, individuals are invited to contemplate the creation of Allah as a sign of His greatness.

From the excerpt of Surah Al-Ghasiyah, individuals are reminded to reflect on the greatness of Allah in every aspect of His creation. For instance, when in the mountains, one is urged to ponder how trees grow lush and how animals in the forest seek sustenance without worry. This contemplation is considered a sign of Allah's magnificence, and for believers, pondering nature can be a means to enhance their faith. The greater the love for Allah, who allows us to enjoy the beauty of nature, the more awe and reverence we should have towards Him. This aligns with Surah Ali-Imran verses 190-191, which instruct humans to remember Allah in various situations and contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth as signs of His majesty.

Halal tourism, known by various terms such as Islamic tourism or halal travel, is an activity endorsed by a range of facilities and services provided by communities, businesses, governments, and local authorities in compliance with Sharia principles (Junaidi, 2020). Initially, the concept of halal tourism revolved around tourists engaging in activities motivated by a desire to nurture religious sentiments or values, often involving visits to places of worship, burial sites, or historically significant locations with religious importance (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

As Mohsin et al. (2016) described, halal tourism strongly emphasizes Islamic values throughout each undertaken activity. It extends beyond mere attraction-focused experiences, incorporating considerations for behavior during travel and other complementary facilities (Chandra, 2014). In accordance with the Fatwa issued by the National Sharia Board of the Indonesian Ulema Council (No.108/DSN-MUI/X/2016), halal tourism involves individuals or groups undertaking travel for recreational purposes, self-development, and exploration of unique tourist attractions, all in alignment with Sharia principles. El-Gohary (2016) defines halal tourism as an activity where services and facilities ensure the safety and comfort of

Muslim travelers. Every aspect is tailored to facilitate the engagement of Muslim tourists in activities that align with their religious beliefs.

Battour et al. (2010) characterize halal tourism as a form of travel whose processes adhere to Islamic Sharia principles. This includes a pure intention for worship, appreciation of Allah's creation, continuous adherence to worship throughout the journey, and activities at the destination that remain in harmony with Sharia principles. This encompasses the consumption of halal and tayyib (good and pure) food and drink, fostering gratitude towards Allah even upon the return journey.

### **Small and Medium-Sized Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs)**

Halal tourism, per Islamic principles, can be part of Small and Medium-Sized Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) involving the provision of halal products and services that align with Islamic values. SMTEs contribute to developing Sharia tourism destinations that align with Islamic principles, including accommodations, food, and recreational activities that adhere to religious values. By empowering SMTEs in the tourism sector by integrating Islamic values, an economic ecosystem can be created that is inclusive and sustainable, supports the well-being of local communities, and aligns with the ethical principles of Islam in business. SMTEs refer to businesses in the tourism sector that are characterized by their relatively small and medium scale (Ashari et al., 2014). SMTEs encompass businesses in the tourism sector with fewer than five employees, generating revenue (Collins et al., 2003). These enterprises play a crucial role in fostering positive economic impacts, primarily by employing local individuals in the tourism industry. Common types of SMTEs in the tourism sector include establishments like hotels, homestays, spas, ayurveda centers, cafes, food, and beverage outlets, travel and guiding services, surfing and diving operations, and businesses involved in selling souvenirs and handicrafts (Coles et al., 2017). Beyond just reducing economic leakages, local entrepreneurship through SMTEs amplifies the multiplier effect (Nguza-Mduba, 2023). Furthermore, SMTEs contribute to swiftly integrating tourism expenditures into the local economy (Joel Kabonda et al., 2023).

Despite their smaller scale, SMTEs are essential components of the tourism ecosystem, particularly in promoting cultural authenticity, supporting local economies, and providing unique and personalized



experiences for travelers (Kurniawati et al., 2022). They are often deeply connected to the communities in which they operate, contributing to the socio-economic fabric of the region (Coles et al., 2017). However, SMTEs face various challenges, including limited resources, access to finance, market competition, and vulnerability to external factors like economic downturns or global crises (Hernández Sánchez & Oskam, 2022). Supporting the growth and sustainability of SMTEs is crucial for fostering a resilient and inclusive tourism industry. Strategies may include providing financial assistance, offering training and capacity-building programs, and creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and innovation in the tourism sector (Kurniawati et al., 2022).

### **Digital Entrepreneurship**

Digital entrepreneurship in the Islamic economy utilizes technology to advance ethical, transparent, and Sharia-compliant business practices across diverse sectors, contributing to the advancement and maturation of a digital Islamic economy. It involves the creative utilization of digital technologies and platforms for conducting business activities in accordance with Islamic principles. This includes fostering the expansion of e-commerce platforms specializing in halal products and services. In the realm of Islamic finance technology (fintech), digital entrepreneurship encompasses the creation of digital financial services and platforms adhering to Islamic finance principles, such as interest-free transactions and ethical investment practices. Moreover, digital entrepreneurship explores the use of blockchain technology in Islamic finance, with the primary goal of improving transparency, traceability, and security in financial transactions in accordance with the principles of accountability and fairness in Islam. Moreover, digital platforms play a role in streamlining the halal certification process, offering businesses a transparent and efficient means to obtain and showcase their commitment to halal standards.

The digitization of SMTEs has become a crucial aspect, representing a shift from conventional systems to digital systems as an effort to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its business and operational processes (Ngoasong, 2018). Numerous studies have explored the connection between digitization, partnership networks, and branding in the development of Micro-, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the tourism

industry (Ashari et al., 2014; Collins et al., 2003; Hernández Sánchez & Oskam, 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2022). Digitization of SMTEs prompts stakeholders in the creative economy to transform their business management from conventional practices to modern ones (Moza & Ban, 2023). It goes beyond using technology for product sales; digitization enables financial management, monitoring business cash flow, attracting visitors, gaining destination reputation, obtaining references for destination and MSME product development, and procuring raw materials online. Consequently, digitization plays a crucial role in the overall business process. It not only facilitates expansion into broader markets to attract more customers but also adds a professional touch to the business. This is particularly evident when SMTEs embrace digital platforms, such as having a website and social media presence (Cenamor et al., 2019).

Digital entrepreneurship involves creating entrepreneurial value using various socio-technical drivers to support the acquisition, processing, distribution, and consumption of digital information (Fabrizio et al., 2022). The contribution of digital entrepreneurship to the economy has garnered significant interest from academics and various research industries. The concept is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, involving ecosystems and technology-related practices. Despite being at its peak, digital entrepreneurship has brought monumental changes in how entrepreneurs conduct their businesses (Zaheer et al., 2019).

Various tourist destinations and platforms included in the study point towards a better understanding of destination branding strategies, creative content, and destination identity as driving factors in destination promotion (Tran & Rudolf, 2022). The destination branding selection should align with its potential to represent the attractions and values while showcasing the uniqueness that sets it apart from other destinations (Seraphin et al., 2018).

### **Religious Reputation Culture**

The interplay between conservation and utilization in cultural heritage-based tourism emphasizes conflicts arising from socio-economic issues, poor regulations, and misguided tourism development planning (Timothy, 2021). On the positive side, tourism development rooted in cultural heritage is aided by knowledge ownership, serving as a strategic asset and reflected



in destination storytelling (Kim et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the development of cultural heritage-based tourism can be supported through ownership and understanding of knowledge based on the historical background and cultural heritage of the destination (Wardhani, 2021). Furthermore, this knowledge ownership can be a strategic asset in destination development, manifested in destination storytelling that harmonizes with the historical narrative owned by the destination (Wardhani & Widodo, 2020).

Religious reputation culture, encompassing historical value harmonization, emotional involvement, positive talking behavior, religious reputation, and reputation behavior, has significant implications for tourism destination development (Wardani & Widodo, 2019). Historical Value Harmonization enhances regional economic income through increased tourist visits, drawn by the appeal of exploring historical values; the second dimension is Emotional Involvement, which creates unique and unforgettable experiences, fostering emotional bonds and influencing destination features and infrastructure development. Third, positive Talking Behavior improves destination development effectiveness by fostering positive communication and utilizing networking applications. The fourth is Religious Reputation, which establishes a reputation as a religious destination by providing Muslim-friendly amenities and itineraries. The last is Reputation Behavior, which implements cleanliness and safety standards, catering to changing consumer behavior towards clean, halal, and safe tourism (Wardhani, 2021).

A robust religious reputation culture contributes to Sustainable Quality Tourism Destination, aligning with the theory of Resources-Based View. It influences innovative strategies, emphasizing the importance of unique resources for strategic development (Wardhani & Widodo, 2020). A positive reputation is crucial for tourist destination selection, focusing on specific markets based on desired destination attributes. The attainment of high-quality and sustainable tourism relies on the aggressive nature of destinations and a strong cultural reputation, particularly in religious aspects (Wardhani & Widodo, 2020).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a mixed method with qualitative descriptive study and Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM). The study focuses on two

main aspects. Firstly, it analyzed the digital methods employed by SMTEs and collaborative partnership patterns with branding strategies to develop halal tourism villages. Secondly, it scrutinized collaborative patterns and branding strategies to identify the most suitable alternative for developing SMTEs.

The primary objective of this study was to use a qualitative descriptive method within the framework of social phenomenology, a research methodology that utilizes a straightforward qualitative approach with an inductive approach (Yuliani, 2018). The process begins with an explanatory process or event that ultimately leads to drawing a generalization, which is a conclusion drawn from that process (Kim et al., 2016). The QSPM is a valuable analytical tool used to evaluate and compare the desirability of various strategies. The objective of this tool is to assist tourism stakeholders in identifying and comprehending the critical external and internal elements that are significant to the success of their business unit. The QSPM enables tourism stakeholders to comprehensively assess various initiatives based on these essential success factors. This analysis facilitates informed decision-making by evaluating the comparative desirability and practicality of each approach in relation to the stated parameters (Elezaj & Kuqi, 2023). The QSPM analysis involves formulating strategies by incorporating elements of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for SMTEs in the Jepara Regency. The focus is on formulating strategies to develop halal tourism through digitalization and religious reputation culture.

Data was collected directly through observations, field measurements, documentation, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and interviews. Secondary data were obtained from relevant agencies such as the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), the Department of Tourism and Culture Regional Office of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf), and others in Jepara Regency. Data were collected from FGDs with ten respondents from stakeholders and policymakers, including:

1. The Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda)
2. The Tourism and Culture Office,
3. Five tourism villages managers in the supporting zone of the KJM Biosphere Reserve,

4. The Chairperson of the Tourism Village Association of Jepara Regency,
5. Member of the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) in Jepara Regency,
6. Chairperson of the Coffee Crafters Association in Tempur.

The results of interviews and FGD were formulated into internal and external analyses, which were then quantified using the QSPM method. The outcomes provide insights and recommendations applicable in the broader context of sustainable tourism development.

## **RESULTS**

The Karimunjawa Jepara Muria (KJM) Biosphere Reserve encompasses three regencies in Central Java: Karimunjawa Islands and Muria Mountains in Jepara Regency, Muria Mountains in Kudus Regency, and Pati Regency, covering a total area of 1,236,083.97 hectares. Collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including conservation area managers, local governments, universities, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities, has supported its designation as part of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program (MAB). As a biosphere reserve, it integrates the conservation of biological resources with sustainable socio-economic development. Jepara Regency comprises three management zones: the core zone for conservation, the buffer zone to support the core area and facilitate development, and the transition zone for sustainable economic activities.

The KJM Biosphere Reserve has introduced a branding logo to promote sustainable economic development. This logo aims to enhance the local community's value and attract investment across various sectors. The development of a branding strategy applicable to all segments of society requires collaboration with stakeholders, including the media. The branding logo of the KJM Biosphere Reserve aims to include the local potential and be used to promote and apply products from MSMEs in the three regions.

Based on interviews with several informants from the KJM Biosphere Reserve, internal factors consisting of strengths (S) and weaknesses (W), as well as external factors consisting of opportunities (O) and threats (T) can be identified. The internal factors of the KJM Biosphere Reserve reveal that the

strengths (S) are internal organizational factors that can support the service in the area, including:

1. The KJM Biosphere Reserve has a significant potential for natural tourism.
2. The KJM Biosphere Reserve has diverse traditions, cultures, and historical sites.
3. Investments in culinary and tourism are starting to open up.
4. The community is becoming more open to tourists.
5. Karimunjawa is one of the strategic national tourist destinations.
6. Adequate supporting facilities are available.

Furthermore, Weaknesses (W) are internal organizational factors that can hinder or limit the improvement of public services in the KJM Biosphere Reserve, namely:

1. The potential of tourism villages that lack accurate mapping.
2. The community does not yet understand the benefits of the biosphere reserve.
3. Tourism destination management is not systematic.
4. Village-owned enterprises (Bumdes) and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are not involved.
5. It has not yet moved towards sustainable tourism.
6. Limited digital technology knowledge among SMTE operators.
7. Changes in ocean currents affect many marine organisms, including fish and coral reefs.
8. Many mangrove areas are abandoned.
9. Marketing and promotion of the tourism villages are still sectoral.

The external environment presents opportunities and threats. Opportunities can guide organizational activities, while threats can hinder organizational progress. The external factors discussed in this study include the micro-environment and macro-environment. Here are the external factors in the KJM Biosphere Reserve:

Opportunities are favorable situations faced by the KJM Biosphere Reserve, including:

1. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves of the MAB Program has comprehensive, modern, and open communication and information exchange patterns.
2. UNESCO has designated the KJM area as a biosphere reserve.
3. Government support and world-class organizations are fostering the development of SMTEs in the KJM Biosphere Reserve area.
4. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves of the MAB Program has an effective sustainable development model.
5. Rapid advancements in digital technology.

Meanwhile, threats are unfavorable conditions for the tourism industries in KJM Biosphere Reserve, including:

1. Better management of tourist attractions in other areas.
2. Intense competition among regions to attract tourists.
3. Intensive promotion and marketing of tourism by other regions.
4. The opening of new land in the forests of Mount Muria for industrial expansion, such as resorts, factories, and others.
5. Many ticket scalpers for Karimunjava boat trips.

The internal environment analysis is conducted using the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) matrix. The IFE matrix utilizes the weight and assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each factor to obtain weighted values. These weights and assessments are obtained from questionnaires filled out by competent informants involved in developing the KJM Biosphere Reserve project. The questionnaires yield weights using a comparison matrix, while assessments are provided on a scale from “Not Important at All” (1) to “Very Important” (4). Weighted values are obtained by multiplying the weight by the rating. The sum of all factors yields the IFE score.

Based on the results of the internal factors questionnaire, an IFE matrix can be prepared as follows:

**Table 1: Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE)**

No		Internal Determining Factors	W	R	V
<b>Strength</b>					
1	S1	The KJM Biosphere Reserve area holds considerable untapped potential for natural tourism.	0.084	4	0.292
2	S2	It boasts a rich diversity of traditions, culture, and historical sites.	0.072	3	0.234
3	S3	Investment in the culinary and tourism industry is gradually unfolding	0.081	3	0.254
4	S4	The local society is showing increased openness to tourists.	0.060	4	0.211
5	S5	Karimunjawa is recognized as a national strategic tourist destination.	0.074	4	0.269
6	S6	Adequate supporting facilities are in place to enhance the overall tourism experience.	0.079	3	0.237
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>0.450</b>		<b>1.497</b>
<b>Weaknesses</b>					
7	W1	The tourism village holds untapped potential waiting to be explored.	0.056	2	0.090
8	W2	The benefits of biosphere reserves remain unclear to the local community.	0.063	1	0.086
9	W3	Tourist destinations lack systematic management, leading to inefficiencies.	0.065	2	0.122
10	W4	Limited involvement of Bumdes (Village-Owned Enterprises) and SMTEs in tourism.	0.051	2	0.077
11	W5	Sustainability in tourism has not been effectively achieved.	0.063	2	0.094
12	W6	SMTEs actors possess minimal knowledge of digital technology.	0.065	2	0.114
13	W7	Ocean current pattern changes adversely affect marine biota.	0.056	1	0.077
14	W8	Neglect of many mangrove areas poses environmental concerns.	0.065	2	0.114
15	W9	Marketing and promotion of tourism villages are still conducted in a sectoral manner.	0.067	2	0.109
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>0.550</b>		<b>0.882</b>
<b>Total Value</b>			<b>1.000</b>		<b>2.379</b>



The value categories for the IFE matrix are: Weak: 1.00-1.99, Average: 2.00-2.99, Strong: 3.00-4.00

Based on the IFE matrix table, the total weighted score is 2.379. This indicates that the internal factors of the KJM Biosphere Reserve are in a moderate position. From the analysis of the table above, the IFE strength factors have a total score of 1.497, and weaknesses have a total score of 0.882. This means that the KJM Biosphere Reserve is considered to have relatively strong internal factors for developing its potential or strengths and addressing its weaknesses. The main strength of the KJM Biosphere Reserve, with a score of 0.292, is “The KJM Biosphere Reserve area has significant potential for natural tourism,” while its main weakness is “Non-systematic management of tourist destinations,” with a score of 0.122.

The external environment analysis is conducted using the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrix. The EFE matrix determines the most influential factors in developing the KJM Biosphere Reserve. Afterward, a survey is conducted using questionnaires filled out by experts using weights and ratings. The weights and ratings for each opportunity and threat factor can be used to obtain the weighted values for all external factors in the KJM Biosphere Reserve, which will be used to determine the type of strategy to be employed for its development.

**Table 2: External Factor Evaluation (EFE)**

No	External Determining Factors	W	R	V	
<b>Opportunity</b>					
1	O1	The global network of biosphere reserves operates on a comprehensive, modern, and open communication and information-sharing pattern.	0.108	3	0.365
2	O2	UNESCO designates the Karimunjawa Jepara Muria area as a biosphere reserve, garnering international recognition.	0.111	3	0.376
3	O3	Governments and world-class organizations actively support the development of SMTEs within Biosphere Reserve areas.	0.108	4	0.433
4	O4	The world network of biosphere reserves demonstrates an effective sustainable development model.	0.121	4	0.425

5	O5	The rapid advancement of digital technology contributes to various sectors.	0.095	4	0.333
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>0.544</b>		<b>1.932</b>
<b>Threat</b>					
6	T1	Enhanced administration of tourist sites and landmarks in various regions.	0.079	2	0.157
7	T2	Need for improved management of tourist objects and attractions in other regions.	0.089	3	0.266
8	T3	Intense competition among regions to attract tourists.	0.095	3	0.273
9	T4	Other regions conduct aggressive tourism promotion and marketing.	0.085	2	0.149
10	T5	Presence of numerous touts for Karimunjawa boat tickets.	0.108	3	0.352
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>0.456</b>		<b>1.197</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>1.000</b>		<b>3.129</b>

The value categories for the EFE matrix are: Low: 1.00-1.99, Medium: 2.00-2.99, High: 3.00-4.00.

Based on the IFE matrix table, the total weighted score is 3.129. This indicates that the KJM Biosphere Reserve has a strong position in the external environment. From the analysis of the table above, the EFE Opportunity factors have a total score of 1.932, and Threat factors have a total score of 1.197. This means that the management of the KJM Biosphere Reserve is considered capable of seizing existing opportunities and mitigating the challenges. The local government is seen as having the ability to compete with other regions; however, a more comprehensive strategy is still required to address threats and capitalize on opportunities in the external factors. This is expected to give the tourism area a competitive advantage.

The main opportunity held by the KJM Biosphere Reserve is "Government support and world-class organizations in the development of SMTEs in the Biosphere Reserve area," with a score of 0.433. The main threat faced is "The opening of new land in the forests of Mount Muria for industrial expansion such as resorts, factories, etc." with a score of 0.352. The data processing and analysis found that the internal condition in terms of strengths is still dominant compared to weaknesses. This can be a valuable asset for further development. The external environment is still in a favorable

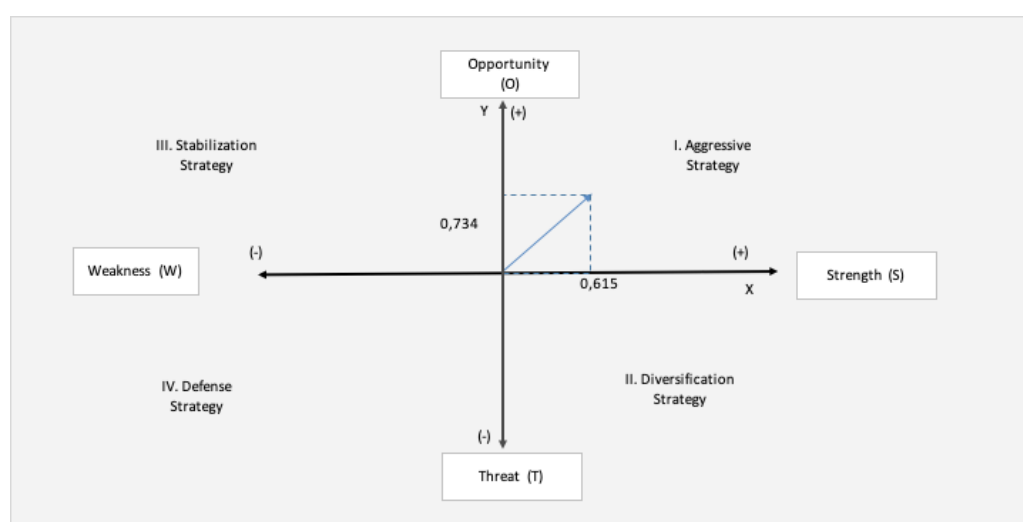
position because the opportunities outweigh the threats.

In order to identify the strategic approach, an evaluation of internal as well as external factors is conducted. This involves subtracting the total strengths and weaknesses on the X-axis and subtracting the total opportunities and threats on the Y-axis as follows:

$$\text{Coordinate X} = S - W = 1.497 - 0.882 = 0.615$$

$$\text{Coordinate Y} = O - T = 1.932 - 1.197 = 0.734$$

In this way, the numbers obtained on both axes (X and Y = 0.615 and 0.734) are positive. For more details, see Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: SWOT Diagram**

The data analysis results on the SWOT diagram yield coordinates of 0.47; 0.76, placing it in quadrant 1, which indicates an aggressive strategy. This suggests a highly advantageous situation. Based on the analysis of internal and external factors, several alternative development strategies can be formulated by maximizing strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats (Benzaghta et al., 2021; Andries, 2007; Wang, 2007). The SWOT analysis has resulted in the formulation of eight alternative tourism development strategies in the KJM Biosphere Reserve.

1. S-O Strategies
  - a. Enhancing the appeal of natural and cultural tourism potential to boost tourist interest.
  - b. Utilizing digital technology for extensive tourism promotion, introducing Karimunjawa Jeparu Muria as a biosphere reserve.
  - c. Implementing comprehensive infrastructure development, encompassing both physical and non-physical structures.
  - d. Fostering a religious reputation culture through the development of customs and traditions, positioning them as integral components of the tourism business
  
2. W-O Strategies
  - a. Forming partnerships with investors to facilitate the development of the tourism sector in the KJM Biosphere Reserve.
  - b. Engaging with diverse stakeholders to establish a sustainable tourism destination management system within the KJM biosphere reserve area.
  - c. Offering training sessions for SMTEs operators to enhance their understanding of the biosphere's potential and its positive impact on the community.
  - d. Employing digital technology to assess and showcase the potential of villages, providing valuable information to the community regarding the tourism prospects in the KJM biosphere reserve.
  
3. S-T Strategies
  - a. Enhancing the distinctiveness of tourist destinations and the natural beauty to establish competitiveness with other tourist locations.
  - b. Establishing a user-friendly reservation system to facilitate visits to the KJM Biosphere Reserve area.
  - c. Implementing stricter regulations on permits for industrial development in the proximity of the KJM Biosphere Reserve.
  
4. W-T Strategies.
  - a. Strengthening the expertise of human resources in the management of tourist destinations to mitigate environmental impact.
  - b. Intensifying tourism promotion by leveraging a broader range of digital media channels.

After obtaining strategic alternatives from the SWOT analysis, the next step is to analyze the QSPM. The matrix calculations have been done by multiplying the weight of each strategy factor by the attractiveness score, as shown in the attached document. The table above indicates that the Total Attractiveness Score (TAS) in the QSPM analysis obtained the highest value.

**Table 3: Sequence of Strategies for QSPM Matrix Analysis Results**

No	Code	Strategy	TAS	Priority
1	SO-1	Develop the potential of natural and cultural tourism in a more attractive way to increase tourist interest.	4.78	11
2	SO-2	Maximize tourism promotion through digital technology to further introduce the KJM biosphere reserve.	5.43	5
3	SO-3	Undertake infrastructure development, both physical and soft structures.	5.41	6
4	SO-4	Develop a religious reputation culture to develop halal tourism destinations.	5.71	2
5	WO-1	Collaborate with investors in the effort to develop the KJM tourism area.	5.43	3
6	WO-2	Collaborate with various stakeholders to create a sustainable tourism destination management system in the KJM biosphere reserve area.	5.75	1
7	WO-3	Provide training for Small and SMTEs operators to better understand the biosphere's potential and its benefits for the community.	5.13	9
8	WO-4	Utilize digital technology to map the potential of villages to provide information to the community about the tourism potential in the KJM biosphere reserve.	5.16	7
9	ST-1	Maximize the uniqueness of tourist destinations and the beauty of nature to compete with other tourist destinations.	4.47	12
10	ST-2	Build a reservation system that makes it easy for people who want to visit the KJM biosphere reserve area.	5.43	3
11	ST-3	Tighten permits for industrial development in the vicinity of the KJM biosphere reserve.	4.47	12
12	WT-1	Enhance the professionalism of human resources in managing tourist destinations to reduce environmental damage.	5.13	9
13	WT-2	Intensify tourism promotion through a wider use of digital media.	5.16	7

Based on the QSPM analysis, it was found that the top priority is the strategy of “Collaborating with various stakeholders in the three districts (Jebara, Kudus, and Pati) to create a sustainable tourism destination management system in the KJM Biosphere Reserve (W-O-2)” with a TAS score of 5.75 (priority 1), followed by the strategy (S-O-4), which is the development of a culture with a reputation for religiosity in the development of customs and traditions in the three districts (Jebara, Kudus, and Pati) as tourism development partners, with a score of 5.71. The third-place strategy, which received a score of 5.43, is “Maximizing tourism promotion through digital technology to further introduce Karimunjawa Jebara Muria as a biosphere reserve”.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Digital-based SMTEs to develop halal tourism villages in the KJM Biosphere Reserve**

Tourism that involves non-compliance with Sharia law, such as gambling or activities considered haram (forbidden) in Islam, can raise concerns from a religious perspective, making the concept of halal tourism a consideration. The halal lifestyle and halal products have become the fastest worldwide global trend. Travel consultancy firms specializing in the tourism industry, such as Crescent Rating for halal-friendly travel authority in Singapore and Dinar Standard in the United States, reported that the growth in spending by Muslim travelers is considered the fastest worldwide. The vast global market for the halal lifestyle presents an opportunity for Jebara, with a majority Muslim population. One avenue to capitalize on this opportunity is through the development of halal tourism. As the development of the halal tourism sector progresses, it also stimulates the growth of various supporting sectors such as accommodation, transportation, restaurants, tourist attractions, and MSMEs offering souvenirs or local products, including handicrafts, clothing, food, and beverages.

Halal tourism is a part of the tourism industry that provides services for travelers based on Islamic principles (El-Gohary, 2016). This form of tourism is designed for Muslim travelers (Muslim-friendly) but is not limited to their use and can also benefit non-Muslim travelers (Junaidi, 2020). The Jebara Regency has the potential to develop halal tourism, given that the majority



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of its population adheres to the Islamic faith, as previous research results indicate that the development of halal tourism in the region is closely tied to religious values (Sholehuddin et al., 2021).

The concept of halal tourism is guided by principles derived from the Quran and Sunnah. In its initial development in 2013, the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with DSN-MUI, established criteria for halal tourism, encompassing nine principles: the well-being of the community, enlightenment, refreshment and tranquility, avoidance of polytheism, superstition, and vice, maintaining proper behavior, ethics, and noble human values, preserving trust, safety, and comfort, being universal and inclusive, preserving environmental sustainability, and respecting social-cultural values and local wisdom (Adinugraha et al., 2020).

Economic movement through SMTEs is one of the components that support the development of halal Tourism and the potential to be developed (Firdausi et al., 2017). As a developing tourism object born on the initiative of the local community, most of the businesses and business actors in the development of tourism villages in Jepara are SMTEs. The informal sector supporting the tourism industry in Jepara includes tourism villages, tour agency services, transportation services, culinary services, accommodation/guest houses, and souvenirs. In tourism industry marketing, the products received by consumers often consist of services, and this is known as service marketing, hospitality marketing, or tourism marketing. It is clearly known that marketing not only promotes products to consumers but goes beyond that. As Saputra and Ardani in their research show, there is a demand for marketing to educate people to utilize various resources such as digital, e-commerce, and websites (Saputra & Ardani, 2020).

At Jepara tourism villages, the SMTEs actors have tried to apply digital technology in their business. The most common media used in this digitalization process is social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, websites, blogs, e-money providers, and many more (Raul Tarazona Montoya et al., 2020) Nevertheless, their digital transformation initiative remains rudimentary as they merely use WhatsApp to create descriptions for their business. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that several individuals lack a designated timetable for doing tasks due to their restricted capacity or limited time. SMTEs also use e-money, such as Quick Response Code Indonesian

Standard (QRIS), within a short period due to the continued preference among business owners for direct payment methods.

As a service product or service encounter, tourism requires strategies to retain customers and increase tourist visits (Pratiwi et al., 2020). Additionally, the resilience of SMTEs, as emphasized by Moza and Ban (2023), hinges on cultivating adaptability through robust networks and digital capabilities. In halal tourism and the formation of tourism villages, this adaptability can be channeled towards responding to evolving market demands, promoting cultural authenticity, and enriching the overall visitor experience (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Mohsin et al., 2016). By incorporating these strategies with Islamic values, SMTEs can flourish in the global market and contribute to the community's comprehensive development, aligning with the principles of halal tourism and Islamic ethics.

In Jepara, the adoption of digital technologies in the tourism industry has introduced a range of outcomes, leading to variations among companies. Larger enterprises in the country benefit from standardization and economies of scale, enjoying certain advantages in the digital landscape. Conversely, SMTEs encounter specific challenges, including limited access to essential infrastructure and financial support.

A comprehensive examination of business ecosystems in the tourism sector has identified four primary archetypes of digital integration. The first archetype, vertical integration, emphasizes a close relationship with tourists, an integrated value chain, and internal data analysis, allowing for direct digital integration throughout the entire business process. The second archetype, multifaceted ecosystems, involves the integration of third-party products, demanding digitization at both structural levels. The third model, modular businesses, entails selling products and services through other companies with limited connections to tourists. Lastly, reseller businesses undergo a specific digitalization process, necessitating continuous innovation to remain competitive (Adinugraha et al., 2020).

Digital platforms in Jepara have gained significant attention due to innovation, prompting SMTEs to strategically find their place within these evolving ecosystems. A strategic approach is crucial, covering the entire tourist journey, from search and booking to preparation, travel, arrival, and post-travel engagement. This strategy should contribute value by considering

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the collective activities and interests of organizations, consumers, and governments. In essence, adapting to digital transformations and establishing a forward-looking strategy is imperative for the sustained success of tourism enterprises in Indonesia's dynamic and evolving landscape (Simanjuntak et al., 2021).

Establishing halal tourism destinations in Jepara necessitates a comprehensive and well-coordinated strategy. This entails conducting in-depth research on the preferences and expectations of halal-conscious tourists and analyzing the current tourism landscape in Jepara to identify potential areas for halal tourism development. Additionally, it involves fostering collaboration with local communities, government entities, businesses, and religious leaders to secure collective support and understanding for halal tourism initiatives. Thus, the involvement of community members in decision-making processes is crucial for fostering inclusion.

Furthermore, investing in halal-friendly infrastructure, including prayer facilities, certified accommodations, and designated dining options, is crucial. Ensuring that transportation services, attractions, and public spaces align with the needs of halal-conscious tourists is paramount. The certification of businesses and services as halal, along with strict adherence to recognized halal standards in all tourism offerings, is essential for building trust among halal tourists.

Islam opposes amoral and hedonistic behaviors. Tourism that involves practices conflicting with Islamic ethical values, such as excessive drinking or entertainment activities that violate moral principles, may be deemed inconsistent with Islamic teachings. This is why the concept of Religious Reputation Culture is necessary so that stakeholders can conduct their tourism businesses in accordance with Islamic values. Promoting the rich Islamic culture and heritage of Jepara is a key aspect of attracting tourists seeking authentic halal-friendly experiences. This involves organizing events and activities that showcase local traditions, crafts, and halal culinary delights. To enhance the competency of human resources, the SMTEs should implement training programs for industry professionals, fostering a culture of hospitality aligned with Islamic values among service providers. This comprehensive approach aims to position Jepara as a desirable destination for halal-conscious travelers.

For implication, to successfully establish halal tourism destinations, a series of steps and activities must be executed, those are :

1. **Effective planning.** The effectiveness of developing a tourism destination relies on meticulous planning and a phased approach that guides the developmental process. Previous research shows that achieving halal tourism's objectives involves garnering attention from diverse cross-sectoral interest groups (Perbawasari et al., 2019).
2. **Digital transformation.** It is essential to adapt to digital transformations and establish a forward-looking strategy. Both policymakers and entrepreneurs should collaborate to enhance awareness of e-commerce through training and education for stakeholders, employees, and consumers. E-commerce cannot be implemented without empowering and enabling tourism stakeholders to leverage new Internet and e-commerce technologies (Coles et al., 2017).
3. **Fostering collaboration.** It involves fostering collaboration with local communities, government entities, businesses, and religious leaders to secure collective support and understanding for halal tourism initiatives. Active support and participation from local communities are deemed fundamental for the successful implementation of this model (Sayekti, 2019).
4. **Investing in halal-friendly infrastructure** and ensuring that transportation services, attractions, and public spaces align with the needs of halal-conscious tourists is paramount.
5. **Standardization in halal certification.** Standardization is essential in halal certification, aiming to streamline the process of certifying businesses and services as halal to instill confidence among tourists. This involves implementing strict adherence to well-established and acknowledged halal standards across all facets of tourism offerings.

### **SMTEs Collaborative Patterns and Branding Strategies in the Advancement of Tourism Villages**

Based on the existing background, the issues that can be concluded are that the technological knowledge of SMTEs in Jepara is still low, it is difficult to find the right digital platform for SMTEs, digital infrastructure is still limited, and there is no more attractive digital marketing strategy. SMTEs in Jepara

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lack resources and face structural difficulties in adapting to and adopting new technologies. Limited access to networks with collaborative partnerships is still limited, thus closing off access to collaborative opportunities, information, marketing, and digital literacy resources.

Local governments have opportunities and strengths that can be leveraged. The strategy to be applied in this situation is to support an aggressive growth policy (growth-oriented strategy). Thus, it appears that the focus of the strategy that can be implemented is to minimize the internal issues, thus making it possible to better utilize the tourism industry opportunities in the KJM area for continued growth and survival in the current conditions, as well as to address potential threats from emerging similar competitors in the tourism sector.

The KJM Biosphere Reserve logo brand plays a crucial role in providing a unique identity and promoting the marketing of products and services offered by SMTEs in the region. The Biosphere Reserve's strong brand sets it apart from other destinations by showcasing its numerous natural, cultural, and historical resources (Lyon et al., 2017). The importance of this brand lies in its ability to reflect the values of sustainability, natural beauty, and local wisdom found around Karimun Jawa Jepara Muria. As a result, this brand enables the location to establish an identity that promotes sustainability and a harmonious relationship with nature, enabling tourists to get involved in a unique journey that supports ecological values.

The marketing of SMTEs' products and services in this area can also be catalyzed by integrating the Biosphere Reserve brand. The logo or icon contained within the brand can be adopted by SMTEs, providing a strong and reliable identifier to consumers. Thus, tourists can easily identify products and services originating from a protected and sustainable environment. The Biosphere Reserve brand can also reflect cultural and religious values in the context of halal tourism. Involving the local community, including SMTEs owners, in shaping and promoting the brand can strengthen their involvement in tourism development. This provides a platform for SMTEs to demonstrate their contribution to environmental preservation, cultural conservation, and local economic advancement.

Thus, the Karimun Jawa Jepara Muria Biosphere Reserve Brand not only provides a unique identity to this destination but also serves as a

primary driver in marketing SMTEs' products and services, creating positive synergy between sustainability, local culture, and economic development. Based on the QSPM analysis to evaluate strategic alternatives objectively, based on the previously identified key success factors, the top priorities are as follows—first, collaboration with various stakeholders for sustainable tourism. A collaborative approach with diverse stakeholders is important in fostering a sustainable tourism destination management system within the KJM Biosphere Reserve. Second, cultivate a religious reputation culture to develop halal tourism villages. Jepara has strong religious and historical backgrounds and offers an opportunity to align tourism development with the principles of halal tourism. Harmonizing the historical background in the development of tourism villages in these regencies is not only about creating a memorable experience for tourists but also about fostering a connection based on emotional attachment.

This connection is vital in halal tourism, where tourists aim to get traveling experiences that resonate with their religious and cultural values. Tourism villages provide services infused with the structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide the behavior within the tourism village. These elements serve as both guidelines and behavioral boundaries, distinguishing the tourism village and shaping collective perceptions and assessments of its reputation.

Religious reputation culture is a multifaceted concept, as highlighted by Wardhani and Widodo (2021). It involves the harmonization of historical values, emotional involvement, positive speech behavior, religious reputation, and reputation behavior. This approach ensures that the tourism villages not only respect the historical and religious context but also actively promote these values, creating an environment that aligns with the preferences of halal tourists. Therefore, integrating religious and historical elements into the development of tourism villages establishes a unique identity that appeals to halal tourists, fostering a positive reputation and enhancing the overall experience for visitors seeking destinations aligned with their religious and cultural values.

The third is optimizing KJM Biosphere Reserve branding to introduce tourism villages in the KJM Biosphere Reserve through digital promotion, which is crucial for SMTEs. Tourist destination branding is one of the essential elements that a business must develop in the era of globalization (George,



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2017; Kasapi & Cela, 2017; Qu et al., 2011) SMTEs need to adapt quickly to stay ahead in the competitive tourism market by innovating and embracing emerging tourism trends. The digital landscape plays a significant role in shaping the reputation of tourism villages, as tourists share their experiences, contributing to a digital word-of-mouth network. Unfortunately, the KJM Biosphere Reserve tourism villages have not fully capitalized on digital media to expand their market presence. A strong brand is easily recognized by consumers, reducing the impact of competitors. A brand is an investment, and it is possible that results may not be immediately visible when promoting branding. A brand is a way to describe a tourist destination that is marketed with simplicity, credibility, uniqueness, memorability, and inspirational words (Wardhani, 2023).

This strategy involves establishing robust partnerships to ensure the implementation of sustainable tourism practices. As part of this initiative, there is a specific focus on integrating the development of the KJM Biosphere Reserve logo. This logo serves as a distinct branding product for both MSMEs and tourism establishments situated in the supporting and buffer zones of the KJM Biosphere Reserve, commonly referred to as the KJM Biosphere Reserve. Emphasizing local elements in the logo creation process is crucial to infuse the identity of the region into the brand. Ultimately, this branded logo is intended to stand as the flagship product identity for the KJM Biosphere Reserve area, symbolizing the unique and authentic offerings of the region.

Challenges include the digital competency of human resources and limited access to data and digital devices. In addition, tourism villages have not fully harnessed their digital resources, necessitating the acquisition of multiliteracy skills through technology exploration. Government and academic interventions are essential to empower tourism villages, enabling them to leverage digital technology for marketing, enhance visitor accessibility through networking applications, and collaborate with content creators to promote destinations effectively (Kurniasih et al., 2022; Santoso & Cahyani, 2022). Building solid networks can also create opportunities for business collaboration, enabling tourism and creative tourism actors to collaborate with other destinations to produce new innovations (Wardhani, 2020). These networks promote new insights about business. By getting to know professionals and joining business communities, entrepreneurs can learn from their experiences (Pulka et al., 2021). Sharing knowledge and experience

from SMTEs involved in the business world provides a wealth of experience that can be used as a basis for learning (Amin Mohamad & Chin, 2019). The knowledge gained is crucial and a key to business success. By engaging in networking, SMTE participants have the opportunity to gather perspectives and insights prior to making decisions (Cenamor et al., 2019).

Collaborative networking patterns for SMTEs and branding strategies in tourism village development in the KJM Biosphere Reserve can be executed within an aggressive growth policy strategy. An aggressive strategy implies that SMTEs should continue maximizing their strengths and opportunities, as well as those of their partners, to advance and achieve greater success. The top three strategies to apply in the Jepara tourism industries are;

1. Collaborative networking with various stakeholders in the three regencies (Jepara, Kudus, and Pati) to create a sustainable tourism destination management system;
2. Cultivating religious reputation culture in developing halal tourism destinations;
3. Maximizing KJM Biosphere Reserve brand in digital tourism promotion.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that a multifaceted approach can be employed to enhance Small and Medium-sized Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) in tourism villages within the KJM Biosphere Reserve. To successfully establish halal tourism destinations, a series of steps and activities must be executed: effective planning, digital transformation, fostering collaboration, investing in halal-friendly infrastructure, and standardization in halal certification.

In the pursuit of enhancing tourism within the KJM Biosphere Reserve, three key strategies have been identified to promote sustainable development and attract a diverse range of visitors, particularly those interested in halal tourism villages : 1) Fostering collaborative networking with various stakeholders across the regencies of Jepara, Kudus, and Pati. This approach aims to establish a robust tourism destination management system, fostering cooperation and coordination among different contributors; 2) Cultivating a religious reputation culture within the development of halal

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tourism destinations. This involves harmonizing historical values, fostering emotional engagement, encouraging positive communication behavior, and creating a Muslim-friendly environment. Such a cultural strategy aligns with the principles of halal tourism, making the destinations more appealing to Muslim travelers; 3) Maximizing the KJM Biosphere Reserve brand in digital tourism promotion emerges as a pivotal strategy. The objective is to enhance the exposure of halal tourism villages by proactively employing this brand on different digital platforms, such as social media. This will help attract a broader target market and develop a unique online identity.

Finally, these initiatives aim to establish a sustainable, culturally diverse, and digitally prominent ecosystem for halal tourism villages within the KJM Biosphere Reserve.

### **LIMITATION**

Although this research offers beneficial insights on how to improve SMTEs in halal tourism villages situated in the KJM Biosphere Reserve, it is important to recognize some limitations. The scope of this study is limited to the particular context of Jepara, Kudus, and Pati regencies; therefore, the results may not be generally applicable. Data limitations and the dynamic nature of the tourism industry pose challenges, and the success of proposed strategies is contingent on factors like technological advancements and external support. Thus, future research should explore the scalability of these strategies to other biosphere reserves, assess the long-term impacts of digital interventions, and consider the socio-economic implications of implementing these strategies. Additionally, understanding the evolving needs and preferences of tourists, exploring innovative technologies, and investigating the role of government policies in promoting sustainable tourism could be intriguing subjects for further investigation.

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