

THE TATHWIR DA'WAH PARADIGM: ALTRUISM AS THE BEHAVIORAL MECHANISM OF EQUITABLE HALAL TOURISM GOVERNANCE IN AN INDONESIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Ahmad Hidayatullah¹, Fajriatul Mustakharoh², Shochifah Diyah Puspitasari³, Mustofa Hilmi⁴,
Kharisma Shafrani⁵

¹UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Indonesia

²UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia

³Universitas Diponegoro Semarang, Indonesia

⁴UIN Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia

⁵University of Mysore, India

*e-mail Correspondence: ahmad.hidayatullah@uingusdur.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines how the tathwir da'wah (development and empowerment) paradigm is enacted through altruistic practices in Dieng Kulon Village, Indonesia, to support equitable and Sharia-compliant tourism governance amid concerns over tourism revenue leakage to external investors. **Design/methodology/approach:** A qualitative case study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with homestay owners, POKDARWIS officials, and religious leaders, supported by non-participant observation and document analysis. Data were analyzed thematically using the tathwir da'wah, community empowerment, and social solidarity perspectives. **Findings:** Altruism translates Islamic values of honesty, justice, and compassion into collective governance practices, including restrictions on land sales to outsiders, profit-sharing cross-marketing among Sharia homestays, and adherence to Sharia hospitality standards despite potential short-term profit reductions. These practices are reinforced by communal land tenure and social solidarity rooted in kinship and local identity, helping limit investor-driven economic leakage. **Research limitations/implications:** As a single-village qualitative study, its transferability should be examined through comparative and quantitative research in communities with different social and land-tenure structures. **Practical implications:** The Dieng Kulon model offers a community-based governance framework for values-driven and locally controlled tourism development, with relevance for POKDARWIS groups and local tourism policy. **Originality/value:** This study integrates the tathwir da'wah paradigm, altruism, and social solidarity into an explanatory model of halal tourism governance, extending da'wah management scholarship into debates on tourism inequality. **Keywords:** Altruism; Community Empowerment; Halal Tourism Governance; Social Solidarity; Tathwir Da'wah

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Tourism is widely promoted as a route out of poverty, yet its benefits often bypass the very communities that host it, from Bali to East Africa. This study shows how the Muslim community of Dieng Kulon, Indonesia, has avoided that trap by anchoring its homestay-based halal tourism industry in altruism: residents forgo land sales to outsiders, share guests and income across neighboring homestays, and uphold Sharia hospitality standards even when it costs them business. The case demonstrates that religious values, translated into concrete governance habits, can keep tourism revenue circulating within a community rather than flowing out to external investors an insight relevant to policymakers, tourism-awareness groups, and rural and faith-based communities worldwide seeking to develop tourism on their own terms.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is no longer regarded merely as a supplementary economic activity; it is now widely positioned as a strategic shortcut to regional welfare, a phenomenon visible at both the global and local levels. The World Tourism Organization projected that international tourist arrivals would grow at an average annual rate of 3.3 percent between 2010 and 2030, yet actual growth in 2011–2013 exceeded this forecast, reaching 4.96, 4.02 and 5.02 percent respectively, before accelerating further to 21.88 percent in 2016–2017 (Kemenparekraf, 2018). In Indonesia specifically, domestic tourist movements in the first semester of 2023 reached 433.57 million trips, a 12.57 percent increase over 2022, while international arrivals rose by 196.85 percent over the same period; experts surveyed by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy projected 7–9 million international visits for 2023 as the sector recovered toward pre-pandemic levels (Kemenparekraf, 2024). These figures illustrate why tourism is treated by governments across the Global South as a near-automatic engine of prosperity.

Yet a substantial and growing body of international literature complicates this optimism. A meta-analysis of econometric studies concludes that tourism expansion systematically widens income inequality across countries (Zhang, 2021), a finding corroborated by threshold-based panel analysis showing that tourism growth eases inequality only in lower economic- and financial-development regimes while worsening it once a country crosses a critical development threshold (Wang & Tziamalis, 2023). Community-based tourism research reaches a parallel conclusion at the village scale: even where local commons-based governance succeeds initially, unequal power dynamics with government or external partners tend to re-concentrate benefits among a select few (Suyatna et al., 2024). Comparable patterns of foreign ownership, revenue leakage and elite-level employment have been documented in East African luxury tourism, where premium positioning fails to translate into local benefit, and in Bali, where soaring land prices and environmental strain from mass tourism have marginalized native residents even as tourist volumes have grown (Utama et al., 2024). Within the Islamic economic and da'wah literature, however, empowerment scholarship (Sambas, 1999; Zimmerman, 2000; Harahap, 2018) and halal-tourism bibliometrics (Ratnasari et al., 2024; Hariani et al., 2026) have rarely been brought into direct conversation with this tourism-inequality evidence, leaving open the question of how, if at all, a religiously anchored community can develop tourism without replicating the extractive patterns observed elsewhere.

This fragmentation constitutes a clear research gap. On one side, the tourism-inequality literature is largely macro-economic and quantitative, treating community agency as an outcome

rather than an explanatory variable (Wang & Tziamalis, 2023; Suhartana et al., 2025). On the other, the da'wah-management and Islamic community-empowerment literature remains predominantly normative and textual, articulating what tamkīn al-dakwah (empowerment through da'wah) ought to achieve without empirically tracing the behavioral mechanism through which such values are converted into governance practice in a concrete tourism setting (Aziz, 2010; Hidayatullah et al., 2025). No study has yet integrated the tathwir da'wah paradigm, altruism as a psychological-ethical construct (Khan et al., 2025; Erlandsson & Dickert, 2025), and social-solidarity theory (Cake & Pederson, 2024) into a single explanatory account of how a Muslim community insulates itself from investor-driven tourism inequity. Accordingly, this study aims to examine how the tathwir da'wah paradigm is enacted through altruistic practice among the Muslim community of Dieng Kulon Village in developing halal tourism, and to identify the specific governance mechanisms through which altruism translates Islamic empowerment values into equitable collective outcomes. The research is guided by the question: how does altruism function as a behavioral bridge between community-empowerment theory and social-solidarity theory within a halal-tourism governance system, and what does this bridging mechanism reveal about alternatives to investor-driven tourism development documented elsewhere in the Global South?

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of the tathwir da'wah paradigm, altruism, and social-solidarity theory into a single explanatory framework – an approach rarely applied in prior tourism-inequality or da'wah-empowerment scholarship. Theoretically, the study extends the tathwir da'wah paradigm by empirically demonstrating how altruism operates as the behavioral mechanism linking community empowerment and social solidarity in a concrete tourism setting, thereby narrowing the gap between da'wah studies and the broader tourism-inequality literature. Practically, the findings offer a replicable, values-anchored governance model for other Muslim or rural communities and for the tourism-awareness groups (POKDARWIS) and local governments that support them seeking to pursue tourism-based prosperity without ceding control to external capital.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the interdisciplinary discourse of da'wah science, particularly the paradigm of tathwir or tamkīn al-dakwah (da'wah development and empowerment), community-empowerment theory, and social-solidarity theory. Tathwir da'wah conceptualizes empowerment not as a one-directional act of charity but as a structured process that enables communities – both the privileged (aghniyā') and the underprivileged (fuqarā' wa al-masākīn) – to build mutual reinforcement grounded in Islamic values of honesty, justice and compassion (Sambas, 1999). Within Islamic da'wah, this empowerment is termed tamkīn al-dakwah, involving activities of inviting, motivating, facilitating and advocating for the community so as to foster unity among the ummah (wahdat al-ummah) despite differences in social or economic status (Aziz, 2010).

This paradigm intersects with modern community-empowerment theory, understood as an intentional and participatory process through which people gain control over the decisions and resources affecting their lives (Zimmerman, 2000; Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991). Empowerment is further defined as the capacity-building of groups who do not yet possess the strength to independently meet basic needs (Harahap, 2018), realized through development that

is people-centered, participatory, empowering and sustainable (Sumodiningrat, 1999; Alfitri, 2015). Complementing this framework, social-solidarity theory explains how shared values and mutual dependence bind community members together, distinguishing mechanical solidarity rooted in a shared conscience typically associated with small, kinship-based communities from organic solidarity arising from interdependence in the division of labor (Durkheim, 2018). Contemporary applications of Durkheim's typology continue to demonstrate that mechanical solidarity is not confined to pre-industrial societies: ethnographic evidence from voluntary, high-trust communities such as long-distance hiking networks shows that mechanical solidarity can be deliberately cultivated in modern settings through shared identity and reciprocal norms (Cake & Pederson, 2024), lending empirical support to the possibility that a contemporary tourism-dependent village can likewise sustain mechanical solidarity through shared religious identity rather than through geographic isolation alone.

Within this theoretical constellation, altruism defined as the disposition to prioritize others' welfare without expectation of personal reward serves as the psychological and ethical foundation that activates empowerment and solidarity in practice (Myers, 2012; Sarwono, 2002). Recent psychological scholarship refines this construct by distinguishing altruistic motivation from adjacent but distinct prosocial goals such as principlism and collectivism, showing that altruism is best understood as a goal-directed response to another's welfare rather than a diffuse personality trait (Erlandsson & Dickert, 2025). Empirically, altruism has also been shown to mediate ethical consumption decisions through self-identity and ascribed responsibility (Khan et al., 2025), suggesting that altruistic disposition operationalizes into observable economic choices a proposition directly relevant to understanding how homestay operators in a halal-tourism setting might forgo individually rational profit-maximizing behavior in favor of collectively beneficial norms.

Existing tourism-development literature converges on the finding that economic growth generated by tourism is not distributed equitably by default. Beyond the meta-analytic and threshold evidence already discussed (Zhang, 2021; Wang & Tziamalis, 2023), commons-based governance research shows that community-based tourism initiatives, however successful initially, remain vulnerable to elite capture once external actors intervene (Suyatna et al., 2024), while heritage-tourism research in Bali demonstrates that indigenous social capital can, under the right conditions, protect communities from exactly this kind of capture (Suhartana et al., 2025). Comparable dynamics have been observed in the neighboring Sembungan Village, where strict, community-based regulation of land ownership has generated cross-subsidized health and education outcomes for local residents (Hidayatullah, 2022b), and in Dieng Kulon itself, where a companion study documents that social solidarity underwrites the management of Sharia homestays (Hidayatullah et al., 2025) and where the community's religious identity is traced to a centuries-long process of Islamic indigenization by the Sayyid network (Hidayatullah, 2022a). Despite these contributions, prior studies remain segmented: tourism-inequality research is macro-economic and rarely engages da'wah or Islamic-empowerment frameworks, while da'wah and empowerment literature rarely traces empirically how altruistic community practice materializes within a specific halal-tourism setting. No study to date integrates the tathwir da'wah paradigm, altruism and social-solidarity theory into a single explanatory framework for how a religious community can develop tourism equitably without sacrificing collective welfare or Islamic identity.

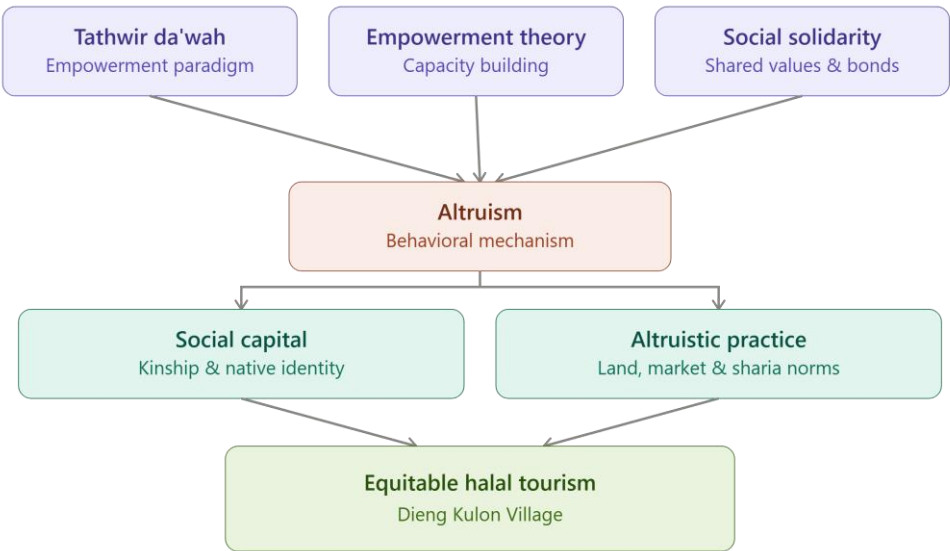
Research Propositions

Because this is a qualitative case study, the analysis is guided by research propositions rather than statistically testable hypotheses. Proposition 1: the tathwir da’wah paradigm, understood as the development and empowerment of both da’i and community, provides a normative framework through which Muslim communities can pursue tourism-based prosperity without displacement by external capital. Proposition 2: altruism functions as the behavioral mechanism that translates empowerment theory into practice, manifested through communal land protection, cross-marketing cooperation among homestay owners, and adherence to Sharia principles even where doing so entails forgone profit. Proposition 3: social solidarity, reinforced by both genetic kinship and shared native identity, constitutes the social capital that sustains collective action and guards against the inequities documented in the broader tourism literature (Zhang, 2021; Utama et al., 2024; Suyatna et al., 2024).

Research Model

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model guiding the analysis. The tathwir da’wah paradigm supplies the normative content (honesty, justice, compassion) that altruism operationalizes as a behavioral mechanism; altruism, in turn, activates two mutually reinforcing pillars community empowerment and social solidarity which together generate the collective-governance practices examined in the Results and Discussion sections, ultimately yielding a halal-tourism system that is both economically viable and religiously legitimate (“blessing-oriented,” or *berkah*).

Figure 1.
Conceptual Framework of Altruism-Driven Halal Tourism Development
Based on The Tathwir Da'wah Paradigm



Source: Authors’ elaboration (2026), synthesizing Sambas (1999), Zimmerman (2000) and Durkheim (2018).

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case-study design situated within the interpretivist tradition, selected because the research question how altruism operates as a behavioral mechanism within a specific halal-tourism governance system concerns meaning, process and context rather than the measurement of variance among predefined variables. A single-case design was chosen over a comparative multi-case design because Dieng Kulon offers a theoretically information-rich, critical case: a religiously homogeneous (99.6 percent Muslim), NU-affiliated community that has sustained rapid tourism growth (from roughly 132,000 annual visits in 1995 to over 350,000 in 2015) without the investor-driven displacement documented in comparable Indonesian and international destinations, making it an unusually clear site for observing the hypothesized altruism mechanism in operation.

Research Setting and Sample

The research was conducted in Dieng Kulon Village, Batur District, Banjarnegara Regency, Central Java, a village of 3,641 residents (as of late 2021) comprising Dieng Kulon and Karang Sari hamlets and hosting the majority of tourist attractions in the Banjarnegara portion of the Dieng Highlands, including Arjuna Temple and Sikidang Crater. Informants were selected through purposive, criterion-based sampling to ensure information richness rather than statistical representativeness. Eligible informants included Sharia homestay owners and managers, officials of the Dieng Pandawa Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS), local religious leaders (kyai) and long-term native residents (“ring one” zone) with direct experience of land-tenure norms and cross-marketing arrangements. Sampling continued until thematic saturation was reached, at which point additional interviews yielded no substantively new categories.

Data Collection

Data were generated through three complementary instruments. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with homestay owners, POKDARWIS officials and religious leaders, using an interview guide covering land-tenure norms, cross-marketing practices, Sharia-compliance standards and perceived tensions between profit and religious obligation; illustrative informant testimony (e.g., a 45-year-old resident’s account of the unwritten prohibition on non-local land ownership in the “ring one” zone) is reported in the Results section. Second, non-participant field observation was carried out at Sharia homestays and at community events (including the annual Dieng Culture Festival) to document dress codes, identity-verification practices for room rentals, and the physical and social organization of hospitality services. Third, documentary analysis drew on village administrative records, Banjarnegara Regency Government tourism-visit data, POKDARWIS institutional documents, the Decree of the National Sharia Board of the Indonesian Ulema Council (DSN-MUI) No. 108/DSN-MUI/X/2016 on Sharia-based tourism, and prior scholarship on Dieng Kulon and the neighboring Sembungan Village (Efendi, 2016; Hidayatullah, 2022a, 2022b). Fieldwork was triangulated across these three sources to strengthen construct validity.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following an iterative coding process: verbatim interview transcripts and field notes were first open-coded to identify recurring concepts (e.g., land-tenure restriction, cross-marketing royalty, identity-document verification), which were then axially grouped into higher-order categories corresponding to the study’s three theoretical constructs tathwir da’wah, altruism, and social solidarity before being synthesized into the explanatory account presented in the Results and Discussion. Analytic rigor was supported through source triangulation (interviews, observation, documents), member-checking of key informant claims where feasible, and continual cross-reference to the theoretical propositions articulated in the Literature Review, consistent with recommended standards for qualitative case-study research in the management and da’wah literatures (Hidayatullah et al., 2025).

RESULT

Informant Characteristics

A total of fourteen informants were interviewed across four categories, summarized in Table 1. This profile situates the findings reported below and allows readers to assess the adequacy of the sample relative to the phenomenon under study.

Table 1
Informant Characteristics

No.	Informant Category	n	Approx. Age Range	Relevant Experience
1	Sharia homestay owners/managers	6	32–58 years	3–15 years operating a homestay
2	POKDARWIS Dieng Pandawa officials	3	35–50 years	Involved since 2007 establishment or DCF organization
3	Religious leaders (kyai / ustadz)	2	40–65 years	Local NU-affiliated religious authority
4	Native “ring one” residents (non-operator)	3	28–67 years	Lifelong residency; land-tenure knowledge

Source: Fieldwork interviews, 2025.

The Tathwir Da’wah Paradigm in Practice

Da’wah science examines the paradigms, behaviors, motivations and interactions of humans as tangible manifestations of faith directed toward worldly and eternal wellbeing. Tathwir or tamkīn al-dakwah – the development and empowerment of da’wah – operates on two levels: increasing the capacity of da’wah actors (da’i) and simultaneously the target community (mad’u), and positioning da’wah itself as an instrument for community advancement, with clearly identifiable formal and material objects (Sambas, 1999). Within Islamic da’wah, empowerment is termed tamkīn al-dakwah, encompassing invitation, motivation, facilitation, mediation and advocacy directed at both the wealthy (aghniyā’) and the underprivileged (fuqarā’ wa al-masākīn), with the aim of fostering unity among the ummah despite differences in social or economic status (Aziz, 2010).

Informants consistently framed their tourism activity in these terms: land and natural blessing (rezeki) were described not as individually owned windfalls but as an amanah (trust) to be managed for collective benefit. This framing is corroborated by the DSN-MUI (2016) Sharia-tourism decree, which several homestay owners cited directly when explaining why their business practices differ from purely commercial competitors in neighboring, non-Sharia-branded accommodations.

Altruism as Observed Practice

Consistent with Myers’s (2012) definition of altruism as the motive to increase another’s welfare without conscious regard for self-interest, informants repeatedly described business decisions that ran counter to individually rational profit maximization. Most prominently, a cross-marketing network operates among Sharia homestay owners: when one operator’s property is full, guests are referred to a neighboring homestay, and the referring operator receives a mutually agreed royalty. This arrangement generates income not only from an operator’s own guests but from acting as a marketing agent for neighbors a deeply rooted mutualistic symbiosis that stands in contrast to the zero-sum competition typically observed in commercialized tourism markets.

A second altruistic practice concerns communal land protection. According to one resident (informant R, 45 years old), an unwritten but strictly observed rule in the “ring one” zone of Dieng Kulon prohibits non-local residents from purchasing land, notwithstanding land prices reaching 5 to 7 million IDR per square meter. Residents explained this restraint as a recognition that short-term financial gain from land sales would yield only temporary material pleasure at the cost of long-term communal displacement a risk realized elsewhere, as in the neighboring village of Karangtengah, where weak social solidarity failed to prevent water-resource damage from a geothermal power project, in contrast to Bakal Village, where organized resistance in 2023 successfully halted a comparable expansion by Geo Dipa Energi.

Halal Tourism Development in Dieng Kulon Village

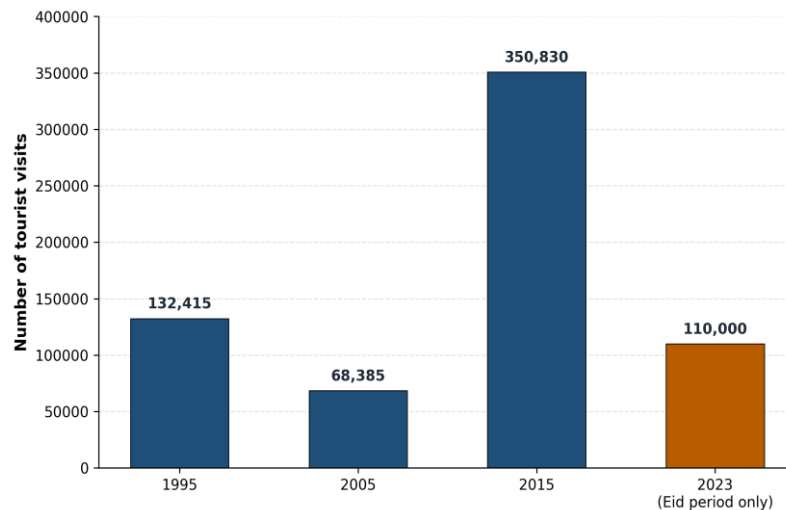
Tourism management in Dieng Kulon has followed a documented growth trajectory since the mid-1990s. Table 2 and Figure 2 summarize available visitation data, which while drawn from heterogeneous reporting periods illustrate the scale of the opportunity that the community has had to manage.

Table 2
Tourist Visitation Data, Dieng Kulon Village

Year	Recorded Visits	Note	Source
1995	132,415	Early institutionalization of tourism management	Efendi (2016)
2005	68,385	Post-institutionalization decline	Efendi (2016)
2015	350,830	Strong positive trend, pre-Dieng Culture Festival maturity	Efendi (2016)
2023	110,000	Eid al-Fitr holiday period only	Banjarnegara Regency Government (2023)

Source: Compiled by authors from Efendi (2016) and Banjarnegara Regency Government (2023).

Figure 2.
Tourist Visitation Trend in Dieng Kulon Village, 1995–2023



Source: Authors' elaboration from Efendi (2016) and Banjarnegara Regency Government (2023).

The Dieng Pandawa Tourism Awareness Group (POKDARWIS) was formally established in 2007 through Decree of the Head of the Banjarnegara Regency Tourism Office No. 556/136.a, with the dual mandate of instilling the Sapta Pesona (Seven Charms) culture of tourism awareness and improving members' welfare through business activity. Since 2016, POKDARWIS has organized the Dieng Culture Festival (DCF), which attracted approximately 100,000 tourists in its inaugural year and, after a pandemic-driven suspension, has resumed as an annual flagship event benefiting not only Dieng Kulon but satellite villages across the Dieng Highlands.

Sharia-Compliance Configuration of Homestays

Because 99.6 percent of Dieng Kulon's population is Muslim – predominantly Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)-affiliated, following the Ash'ari/Maturidi school in theology, the Shafi'i school in jurisprudence, and the Sufi lineage of al-Ghazali, Junaid al-Baghdadi and Abdul Qadir Jaelani – homestay operators have adopted the “Syariah Homestay” concept in preference to hotel development, citing lower capital requirements and closer alignment with communal, small-scale, non-elitist values. Table 3 maps observed practice against the DSN-MUI (2016) Sharia-tourism standard.

Table 3
Sharia Compliance of Homestays against DSN-MUI Decree No. 108/2016

No.	DSN-MUI Standard	Observed Compliance in Dieng Kulon
1	Prohibition of facilities enabling pornography, immorality or shirk	Fully observed; identity documents required for room rental
2	Halal-certified food and beverages	Fully observed
3	Adequate worship and purification (wudhu) facilities	Fully observed

No.	DSN-MUI Standard	Observed Compliance in Dieng Kulon
4	Sharia-compliant staff attire and conduct	Fully observed
5	Standard operating procedures for ongoing compliance	Substantially observed; informal but consistent
6	Verification documents (ID, marriage certificate, family card) for guests	Fully observed
7	Transactions through Sharia Financial Institutions	Not observed; no Sharia bank presently operates in the village

Source: Field observation and interviews, cross-referenced with DSN-MUI (2016).

The single point of non-compliance reliance on conventional rather than Sharia banks is explained by informants not as a doctrinal compromise but as a structural constraint: Dieng Kulon currently hosts only two state-owned banks (BRI, BNI) and one private bank (BPR Surya Yudha), with no Sharia-compliant financial institution physically present, a gap that mirrors residents' pre-existing reliance on conventional agricultural credit.

DISCUSS

Altruism as the Behavioral Bridge Between Empowerment and Solidarity

The findings indicate that community empowerment, as theorized by Zimmerman (2000) and Gutierrez and Ortega (1991), and social solidarity, as theorized by Durkheim (2018), do not operate as independent forces in Dieng Kulon; they are actively bridged by altruism functioning as a behavioral mechanism. Erwin (2015) identifies two pillars of social capital required for empowerment to translate into poverty alleviation: communal land as a productive asset, and strong social solidarity in the form of mutual trust and cooperation. Both pillars are factually present in Dieng Kulon, but their persistence under commercial pressure land prices of 5–7 million IDR per square meter, and a tourism market attracting over 350,000 annual visits at peak cannot be explained by the mere presence of these pillars alone. What sustains them is altruism: the willingness of individual homestay owners to redirect guests (and income) to competitors, and of landholders to decline lucrative sales, precisely because doing so serves a collectively defined good rather than individual advantage. This is consistent with recent psychological evidence that altruism is a goal-directed orientation toward another's welfare, distinct from self-interested or purely principle-based motivations (Erlandsson & Dickert, 2025), and with evidence that altruistic disposition can mediate concrete economic choices such as ethical consumption (Khan et al., 2025).

This bridging function distinguishes Dieng Kulon from the community-based tourism cases documented by Suyatna et al. (2024) in Nglanggeran, Indonesia, where an initially successful commons-based governance arrangement was gradually captured by a select group of villagers partnering with external government actors once the state intervened. In Nglanggeran, empowerment and solidarity existed at the outset but lacked an internally generated behavioral mechanism strong enough to resist externally introduced power asymmetries. In Dieng Kulon, by contrast, altruism is doctrinally reinforced rooted in Islamic values of honesty, justice and compassion (Sambas, 1999) and reinforced by a cultural narrative of wingit (mystical sanctity) in which norm violations invite *kualat* (misfortune), illustrated by legendary accounts such as the disappearance of Legetang Hamlet and the release of toxic gas on Mount Prau's peak

following hikers' misconduct. Whatever one's assessment of these narratives' empirical validity, they function sociologically as a mechanism reinforcing the same behavioral norms that Islamic doctrine supplies, giving the community's altruism a redundancy both religious and cultural that appears largely absent in the Nglanggeran case.

Comparison with Global Evidence on Tourism and Inequality

Set against the broader international literature, the Dieng Kulon case reads as a positive deviant. Wang and Tziamalis's (2023) threshold analysis of 71 countries over two decades finds that tourism growth reduces income inequality only in lower economic- and financial-development regimes, turning regressive once a country's development crosses a critical threshold; Zhang's (2021) meta-analysis reaches a structurally similar conclusion using different econometric methods. Both studies model inequality as an emergent property of macro-structural conditions GDP per capita, financial-market depth, institutional quality with limited attention to community-level behavioral variables. Dieng Kulon's experience suggests that these macro-structural findings describe a default trajectory that community-level altruism can, at least locally, interrupt: despite operating within a middle-income, moderately financially developed national economy precisely the regime in which Wang and Tziamalis (2023) find tourism growth most likely to widen inequality Dieng Kulon has sustained internally redistributive practices (the cross-marketing royalty network) that function as an informal analogue to the formal redistribution mechanisms these authors identify as necessary to offset tourism's regressive tendency.

The contrast with East African luxury tourism and with Bali is equally instructive. Recent research on luxury tourism in Kenya and Tanzania finds that foreign ownership structures confine local employment to low-level positions while revenue leaks abroad through imported goods and foreign management a leakage problem rooted in the fact that capital, not community norms, determines who captures tourism rents. Bali's trajectory, meanwhile, illustrates how the absence of a Dieng Kulon-style land-protection norm allows soaring property prices to displace native residents even amid extraordinary visitor volumes, producing environmental degradation and social conflict as documented by Utama et al. (2024). Where Sanur's indigenous community has, in some domains, mobilized customary social capital to protect heritage-tourism assets (Suhartana et al., 2025), and where Bali's rural tourism economy continues to exhibit conflict-based resource dynamics between customary and commercial claims (Rosalina et al., 2023), Dieng Kulon's land-tenure restriction operates pre-emptively and comprehensively across the entire "ring one" zone rather than being negotiated reactively around specific contested sites. In each of these comparator cases East Africa, Bali, and Nglanggeran the missing ingredient is not empowerment rhetoric or solidarity sentiment, both of which are typically present in some form, but the specific behavioral commitment to individual sacrifice for collective benefit that this study identifies as altruism.

This is not to suggest that Sharia branding alone accounts for the difference; the wider halal-tourism literature shows that religious branding without accompanying community-governance mechanisms produces uneven welfare outcomes, with bibliometric reviews noting that most existing halal-tourism scholarship remains conceptual and rarely traces empirically how multi-stakeholder collaboration is achieved on the ground (Ratnasari et al., 2024; Hariani et al., 2026). Dieng Kulon's outcome depends specifically on the community's success in embedding altruism into land tenure and cross-marketing arrangements a specificity that helps

explain why halal branding succeeds in some Muslim-majority tourism destinations and not others.

Theoretical Contribution

Theoretically, this study extends the *tathwir da'wah* paradigm beyond its normative and textual formulation by empirically identifying altruism as the specific mechanism that bridges community-empowerment theory and social-solidarity theory within a concrete tourism setting, thereby narrowing the gap between *da'wah* studies and the broader tourism-inequality literature. It also contributes to the social-solidarity literature by providing a contemporary, non-Western illustration of mechanical solidarity persisting and adapting under commercial pressure complementing recent Western evidence that mechanical solidarity can be deliberately cultivated in voluntary modern communities (Cake & Pederson, 2024) with evidence that it can equally be sustained through doctrinal and cultural reinforcement in a religiously homogeneous, tourism-exposed rural community. Finally, it contributes to the altruism literature by demonstrating a real-world economic setting in which altruistic motivation (as distinct from principlism or collectivism; Erlandsson & Dickert, 2025) manifests as an observable governance practice with measurable distributive consequences, rather than remaining confined to laboratory or survey-based operationalizations.

Practical and Policy Implications

Practically, the Dieng Kulon experience offers a replicable model for other Muslim or rural communities seeking to develop tourism without ceding control to external capital. By cultivating altruism as a deliberate behavioral norm reinforced through religious instruction, communal narrative, and visible modeling by respected community members communities can institutionalize communal land governance, profit-sharing or cross-marketing arrangements among small tourism operators, and business conduct anchored in shared religious and cultural norms. Local governments and tourism-awareness groups (POKDARWIS) elsewhere may draw on this model when designing community-based, values-anchored tourism policies, particularly in contexts identified by Wang and Tziamalis (2023) as most vulnerable to tourism-driven inequality where national economic and financial development have progressed enough to attract investor interest but not enough to guarantee strong formal redistribution mechanisms. For destinations beyond Muslim-majority settings, the transferable insight is not the specific religious content of Sharia compliance but the general design principle: pairing communal asset protection with an internally redistributive marketing or revenue-sharing mechanism, underwritten by a locally credible normative framework, whether religious, customary, or civic.

Limitations and Future Research

As a single-village qualitative case study, these findings are context-bound and may not be directly generalizable to communities with different kinship structures, religious compositions, or land-tenure systems. Reliance on interviews and observation leaves room for social-desirability bias, particularly in informants' accounts of their own altruistic motives, and the study does not quantitatively measure the actual distribution of tourism income among residents. Future research would benefit from comparative case studies across other halal-tourism villages to test whether altruism consistently plays this bridging role elsewhere; quantitative assessment of income equity using methods comparable to those of Wang and

Tziamalis (2023) or Zhang (2021), adapted to the village scale; and longitudinal observation of whether these altruistic and solidarity-based practices remain resilient as tourist volume and external investment pressure continue to grow, particularly given the elite-capture risk documented in comparable Indonesian cases (Suyatna et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The primary contribution of this study is the demonstration that altruism functions as the behavioral mechanism through which Islamic empowerment values are translated into collective tourism governance. Rather than remaining an abstract normative ideal, the *tathwir da'wah* paradigm becomes observable and operational in Dieng Kulon Village precisely because altruism converts spiritual and ethical commitments into concrete governance practices: communal restrictions on land sales to outsiders, a cross-marketing network among Sharia homestay owners that redistributes tourism income across households, and adherence to Sharia-based hospitality standards even where doing so entails forgone profit. In this sense, altruism does not merely accompany empowerment and solidarity as parallel values; it actively bridges them, transforming Islamic principles of honesty, justice and compassion into a functioning system of collective tourism management that stands in clear contrast to the inequitable, investor-driven tourism patterns documented in Bali, East Africa, and comparable Indonesian commons-based initiatives.

This behavioral mechanism is sustained by two forms of social capital that the Dieng Kulon community factually possesses: communal land assets protected from external capital pressure, and social solidarity rooted in both genetic kinship and shared identity as native inhabitants. These two pillars provide the structural conditions under which altruism can operate consistently, while altruism itself supplies the motivational force that keeps land governance, income redistribution and Sharia compliance from collapsing under commercial pressure. The result is a halal-tourism system that fosters mutualistic symbiosis among residents while minimizing social jealousy a pathway to prosperity that is simultaneously material and, in the community's own terms, blessed (*berkah*).

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, A.H.; methodology, A.H. and F.M.; software, S.D.P.; validation, A.H., F.M. and M.H.; formal analysis, A.H. and K.S.; investigation, A.H., F.M. and S.D.P.; resources, M.H.; data curation, S.D.P.; writing – original draft preparation, A.H.; writing – review and editing, F.M. and K.S.; visualization, S.D.P.; supervision, A.H.; project administration, M.H.; funding acquisition, A.H. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study as it involved anonymized interviews with adult community members on non-sensitive tourism-management topics, consistent with institutional guidance for minimal-risk social-science fieldwork.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used an AI-assisted language tool to support literature retrieval, structural reorganization in line with journal formatting requirements, and language editing. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

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