



Human Resources and Local Government Support For Sustainable Tourism Event Development: Evidence From Lahat Regency, Indonesia

**Khadijah^{1*}, Hanif Hasan², Muhammad Halfi Indra Syahputra³, Femmy Indriany Dalimunthe⁴,
Dewi Yanti⁵**

^{1,2,3} Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang, Indonesia

^{4,5} Politeknik Pariwisata Medan, Indonesia

*Email: khadijahplg23@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Tourism events can strengthen destination visibility, local identity, and local economic activity, but their continuity depends on the human and institutional capacity that supports event development. This study examines how human resource (HR) capacity and local government support shape sustainable tourism event development in Lahat Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative single-case-study approach was employed. Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted from January to March 2026 with five purposively selected informants: three representatives of the Lahat Regency Tourism Office, one community stakeholder, and one business stakeholder. Because the interviews were not audio-recorded, the analysis relied on contemporaneous interview notes that were organized thematically around the three research questions. The findings show a strong convergence across informants. First, HR capacity for supporting tourism events is considered very limited, creating a clear need for continuous and event-specific training. Second, local-government support has been constrained during the two years preceding the interviews because of regional budget-efficiency measures, which resulted in several planned activities not being implemented. One adaptive response has been collaboration with Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang through research and community-service activities, particularly training for local HR capacity development. Third, Lahat possesses important enabling conditions, including cultural and natural assets, strong community interest, and a policy shift toward better-quality tourism development. However, sustainable event development remains constrained by fragmented planning between government and non-government actors, limited supporting infrastructure, insufficient Pokdarwis capacity and funding, and weak cross-sector coordination. The study shows that sustainable local tourism events require the simultaneous strengthening of operational human capacity and governance coordination under realistic fiscal conditions.

Keywords: *Tourism Events; Human Resources; Local Government; Event Governance; Sustainable Event Development*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism events have become an important instrument for destinations seeking to create reasons to visit, extend visitor experiences, strengthen place identity, and stimulate local economic activity. Event tourism research shows that planned events can perform several destination functions simultaneously, including attraction, image building, community engagement, and place marketing (Getz, 2008; Getz & Page, 2016). Yet the value of an event is not created by visibility alone. Local destinations must repeatedly convert an event concept into a reliable visitor experience, a coordinated public service process, and measurable destination outcomes. From a destination-marketing perspective, events also function as communication platforms that can reinforce positioning, visitor engagement, and destination visibility when they are connected with broader promotional strategies (Dewi et al., 2025). Evidence from Pagar Alam, South Sumatra, further indicates that social-media marketing can support event-based tourism development, particularly through engaging and credible destination communication (Hasan et al., 2025).

At the local-government level, this challenge is closely connected to two structural foundations. The first is the capacity of the people who plan, coordinate, deliver, and communicate events. Human capital theory proposes that knowledge, skills, and training are productive investments because they improve the quality and efficiency of work (Becker, 1964). In event settings, this logic is especially relevant because planning, visitor services, crowd management, safety, digital communication, and stakeholder coordination depend on practical competencies rather than on event ideas alone. Evidence from an Indonesian festival context also suggests that limited local capacity can restrict the strategic involvement of communities in festival management, while training and structured participation can strengthen engagement (Sakitri, 2018).

The second foundation is local governance. Government support for tourism events extends beyond funding and ceremonial endorsement. It includes policy direction, inter-agency coordination, infrastructure readiness, permits, safety support, public services, and continuity across annual event cycles. Whitford (2009) cautions that local event policy can become ad hoc and reactive when it lacks proactive, theoretically informed direction. Similarly, research on government-hosted festivals shows that public administration can strongly shape event content and management, making governance quality central to event performance (Tepeci et al., 2022). Stakeholder research further emphasizes that festival sustainability depends on how the power, interests, and contributions of multiple actors are coordinated (Freeman, 1984; Adongo & Kim, 2018).

Recent studies increasingly discuss festival sustainability, stakeholder relations, community engagement, and policy mechanisms, including in Indonesian settings (Liu et al., 2019; Batubara et al., 2024). However, these streams are often treated separately. Less attention has been given to how event-specific HR capability and local-government governance operate together in a local destination, particularly when public resources are constrained. This gap is important because strong tourism assets and community enthusiasm do not automatically produce sustainable events when human capability, infrastructure, planning integration, and coordination remain weak. Emerging studies from South Sumatra provide an important regional context for this problem. Research on tourism-event potential in PALI identifies strong opportunities for cultural festivals and community events but also emphasizes the need for stronger infrastructure, amenities, and coordinated event management (Hasan et al., 2024). A study of the Karang Asam Festival similarly shows that community-based event delivery can remain dependent on experience when written operational procedures and centralized coordination are limited (Priyanto et al., 2026). These studies demonstrate that tourism-event potential alone is insufficient;

however, they do not specifically explain how HR limitations, fiscal constraints, and local-government support interact in shaping event sustainability in Lahat Regency.

Lahat Regency provides a relevant local case for examining this interaction because tourism development is supported by substantial cultural and natural assets, while event implementation still faces limitations in human-resource capacity, public funding, supporting infrastructure, and coordination among government, community, and business actors. The current study therefore focuses on how these actors perceive the practical conditions that shape tourism-event development and continuity. Rather than treating HR limitations and government support as separate administrative issues, the study examines how they interact under conditions of constrained resources and how local assets and stakeholder participation can support more sustainable event development.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: RQ1. How does human resource capacity shape tourism event development in Lahat Regency? RQ2. How do local government support and governance shape tourism event development in Lahat Regency? RQ3. What enabling and constraining factors influence the transition toward sustainable and higher-quality tourism event development in Lahat Regency?

The study contributes a governance-focused explanation of tourism event development by integrating human capital, stakeholder, event-tourism, and event public-policy perspectives. Its central proposition is that sustainable local event development requires two mutually reinforcing capabilities: an operational engine based on event-specific human resources and a governance engine based on local-government policy, facilitation, and coordination. The study further examines how these capabilities are conditioned by local assets, community participation, infrastructure, fiscal constraints, and institutional collaboration.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design and Study Context

A qualitative single-case-study design was used to examine how human resource capacity and local-government support shape tourism event development in Lahat Regency. A case-study approach is appropriate when a study seeks to understand a contemporary process within its real-world context and when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its institutional setting cannot be treated separately (Yin, 2018). The qualitative design also allows the analysis to focus on how participants from government, community, and business backgrounds interpret operational challenges, governance practices, and the conditions that enable or constrain event continuity.

Participants and Sampling

Primary data were obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews with five informants who had direct knowledge of tourism and event development in Lahat Regency. Purposive sampling was used because the study required participants who could explain event-development conditions from institutional, community, and business perspectives. The informants consisted of three representatives of the Lahat Regency Tourism Office, one community stakeholder, and one business stakeholder. To protect confidentiality, the participants are reported by category codes rather than by personal name or specific position.

The composition of the informants was considered appropriate for this focused case study because it combined the perspective of the local tourism authority with two external stakeholder perspectives directly connected to local tourism development. The study does not claim statistical

representativeness; instead, it uses these five informed perspectives to identify convergent themes relevant to the three research questions.

Table 1
Informant Profile

Code	Informant category	Number	Primary perspective represented
G1-G3	Lahat Regency Tourism Office	3	Tourism policy, event planning, public support, and coordination
C1	Community stakeholder	1	Community participation, local tourism groups, and local readiness
B1	Business stakeholder	1	Business participation and private-sector perspective on tourism events

Data Collection

The interview guide was organized around the three research questions. Questions explored: (1) the availability and capability of human resources needed to support tourism events and the type of capacity development considered necessary; (2) forms and limitations of local-government support, including budgeting, facilitation, collaboration, and coordination; and (3) factors that enable or constrain sustainable tourism-event development, including local assets, community participation, infrastructure, Pokdarwis capacity, and cross-sector coordination. The semi-structured format allowed the interviewer to use follow-up questions when informants raised specific implementation problems or development opportunities.

Data collection was conducted over a three-month period from January to March 2026 in Lahat Regency. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and were not audio-recorded. The interviewer therefore relied on written notes taken during the interviews and subsequently organized the notes according to the issues raised under RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. Interview duration was not standardized and followed the depth of each participant's responses. The analysis in this article is based on the interview material; no claims are made for documentary or observational evidence that was not part of the reported data collection.

Data Analysis

The interview notes were analyzed using thematic analysis, informed by the general procedure of Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis began by reading and organizing the notes from each interview, identifying statements directly related to the three research questions, and assigning initial codes. Related codes were then grouped into categories and compared across the five informants to identify areas of convergence and difference. The categories were developed into higher-order themes and interpreted in relation to relevant event-tourism, human-capital, stakeholder, and public-governance literature. The final thematic structure focused on: (1) limited HR capacity and the need for training; (2) government support under fiscal constraints and collaborative capacity building; and (3) enabling and constraining conditions for sustainable event development. A research-question-to-theme matrix was maintained to preserve the link between the interview evidence and the final interpretation.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Trustworthiness was addressed through source triangulation, a transparent analytic trail, and careful separation between participant evidence and literature-based interpretation. Source triangulation

was achieved by comparing perspectives from three Tourism Office informants with those of a community stakeholder and a business stakeholder. The analysis did not assume that the participants would provide identical views; instead, interview notes were compared across the five informants to identify convergence and divergence. In this study, the principal findings showed substantial convergence: all five informants emphasized limited HR capacity and the need for training, recognized constraints on local-government support, and identified a broadly similar set of enabling and constraining conditions for tourism-event development.

Dependability was strengthened by maintaining a structured matrix linking each research question to interview notes, initial codes, categories, and final themes. Because the interviews were not audio-recorded, the study does not present reconstructed statements as verbatim quotations. Instead, the Results and Discussion section reports paraphrased evidence and collective patterns from the interview notes. This approach reduces the risk of presenting wording that cannot be verified against recordings. Confirmability was supported by distinguishing the informants' reported views from recommendations developed through comparison with previous studies. Ethical considerations were addressed by protecting participant identities in the manuscript and reporting participants only through category codes (G1-G3, C1, and B1). No personal identifiers or sensitive individual information are disclosed, and the findings are reported at an aggregate or coded level to minimize reputational risk to individual informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis produced three interrelated findings that correspond directly to the research questions. First, the five informants consistently described the availability and capability of HR for tourism events in Lahat as limited and emphasized the need for continuing training. Second, government support was described as constrained during the two years preceding the interviews because of regional budget-efficiency measures, although collaboration with Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang provided an alternative mechanism for research, community service, and HR capacity building. Third, informants identified strong cultural and natural assets, community interest, and an emerging policy orientation toward better quality as important enabling conditions, while fragmented planning, inadequate infrastructure, limited Pokdarwis capacity and funding, and weak cross-sector coordination remained major constraints. Table 2 summarizes the alignment between the research questions and the final analytical themes.

Table 2
Alignment between Research Questions and Analytical Themes

RQ	Empirical focus	Main theme	Interpretive emphasis
RQ1	HR availability and capability	Operational capacity gap	Limited HR and need for continuous, event-specific training

RQ2	Government support and resource constraints	Governance under fiscal constraint	Budget efficiency limits activities; institutional collaboration becomes an adaptive support mechanism
RQ3	Sustainability conditions	Enablers and constraints	Local strengths versus planning, infrastructure, Pokdarwis, and coordination constraints

Limited Human Resource Capacity and the Need for Event-Specific Training (RQ1)

The first research question asks how HR capacity shapes tourism event development in Lahat Regency. Across the five interviews, the most consistent response was that the human resources available to support tourism activities and events remain very limited. The concern was not framed only as a shortage in the number of people involved, but also as a shortage of practical competencies needed to plan, organize, coordinate, and improve tourism events. The convergence of views from G1-G3, C1, and B1 suggests that HR capacity is a cross-stakeholder issue rather than an internal problem of the Tourism Office alone.

HR Limitations as an Operational Capacity Gap

The interview evidence indicates that limited HR capacity creates an operational gap between the potential of tourism events and the ability to implement them consistently. Informants associated stronger event development with personnel who understand event preparation, service delivery, stakeholder involvement, and practical implementation. When such competencies are scarce, the sustainability and quality of event delivery become more dependent on a small number of experienced individuals and on temporary problem solving.

Evidence pattern: G1-G3, C1, and B1 consistently described HR for tourism-event development in Lahat as limited and identified capacity development as a priority. Because the interviews were not recorded, this evidence is reported as a paraphrased consensus rather than as a verbatim quotation.

This finding is consistent with human capital theory, which treats skills, knowledge, and training as productive investments that improve the quality of work (Becker, 1964). It also supports the event-tourism literature's emphasis on professional capability in converting destination resources into organized event experiences (Getz & Page, 2016). In the Lahat context, the central issue is therefore not only whether the regency has attractive tourism resources, but whether local actors possess sufficient event-specific capability to translate those resources into reliable tourism products. This interpretation is also consistent with recent evidence from the Karang Asam Festival in South Sumatra, where operational planning involved logistics, communication, site management, risk handling, and accommodation coordination, while several activities still relied more on experience than on formalized procedures (Priyanto et al., 2026). This comparison strengthens the argument that event-specific HR development should build practical and transferable operational capability, not only general tourism knowledge.

Training as the Primary HR Development Response

All five informants emphasized the need for training to strengthen the capacity of people involved in tourism-event development. Training was viewed as a practical response to current HR limitations and as a means of improving readiness for future events. The required capacity building should be closely connected to actual event tasks rather than limited to general tourism awareness. Relevant areas include

event planning, implementation discipline, visitor service, stakeholder coordination, basic event safety, promotion, and post-activity learning.

Evidence pattern: the five informants converged on training as the most immediate intervention for overcoming the current HR gap. This consensus provides the empirical basis for treating capacity building as a central recommendation of the study.

The finding also implies that capacity development should include both government personnel and non-government actors who participate in event delivery. Tourism events are co-produced by public officers, communities, Pokdarwis, businesses, and other local stakeholders. Training that reaches only one institutional group may therefore improve individual capability without resolving broader implementation weaknesses.

HR Development as a Multi-Stakeholder Process

The participation of community and business stakeholders in the interviews reinforces the view that HR development should be treated as a multi-stakeholder process. Local tourism events depend on government direction, community involvement, and business participation. Capacity building is therefore more sustainable when knowledge and practical skills are distributed across these actors rather than concentrated within a single organization.

pattern: the community and business perspectives supported the Tourism Office view that local human capacity needs to be strengthened if Lahat is to use its tourism potential more effectively through events.

This interpretation is consistent with Indonesian festival research showing that community engagement becomes more strategic when local actors have stronger capacity and clearer roles (Sakitri, 2018). It also aligns with community-capacity literature that emphasizes participation, local management skills, and decision-making capability as important conditions for tourism development (Aref & Redzuan, 2009). Thus, the answer to RQ1 is that limited HR capacity currently constrains event development, while targeted and continuing training represents the most immediate pathway for strengthening operational capability.

Local Government Support under Fiscal Constraints (RQ2)

The second research question examines how local-government support shapes tourism-event development. The five informants described a clear change in the practical support environment during the two years preceding the interviews. Regional budget-efficiency measures reduced the resources available for tourism activities, and several planned activities could not be implemented. This finding shows that government support in Lahat cannot be assessed only in terms of policy intention; it must also be understood in relation to the fiscal capacity available for implementation.

Budget Efficiency and Reduced Event Implementation

Informants consistently linked the reduction in tourism-event activities to budget efficiency at the regional level. The constraint affected the ability of the local government to translate event plans into implementation. In this setting, the governance challenge is not simply the absence of ideas or priorities, but the gap between planned tourism activities and the public resources available to execute them.

Evidence pattern: G1-G3, C1, and B1 agreed that local-government support had become more limited during the two years preceding data collection because of budget-efficiency pressures, and that a number of tourism activities consequently could not be implemented.

Whitford (2009) warns that local event policy can become reactive when implementation is disconnected from a proactive development framework. The Lahat case adds a practical fiscal dimension to this argument: even where a tourism direction exists, resource contraction can interrupt continuity. A more resilient event-development framework therefore needs to distinguish essential strategic activities from optional activities and identify alternative forms of support when direct public expenditure is constrained.

Institutional Collaboration as an Adaptive Form of Government Support

Under constrained budgets, the informants identified collaboration with Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang as one practical form of continued support. The collaboration takes the form of research and community-service activities, particularly training intended to strengthen local HR capacity. This arrangement shows that government support does not have to be interpreted solely as direct event financing; it can also operate through institutional partnerships that mobilize knowledge, training, and external expertise.

Evidence pattern: informants pointed to cooperation between the local government and Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang as an important response to current resource constraints, especially for HR development through research and community-service training activities.

This finding broadens the meaning of public facilitation. In a resource-constrained setting, collaborative capacity building can help preserve institutional learning even when event budgets are limited. Such collaboration cannot fully replace adequate public funding or infrastructure, but it can reduce the risk that HR development stops when event implementation is reduced. A related event-management study shows that sponsorship can provide financial, service, and product support when event organizers develop structured external partnerships (Putri et al., 2025). Although sponsorship is not equivalent to government funding, this evidence supports the broader principle that tourism-event continuity under fiscal constraint may benefit from diversified institutional and private-sector resource mobilization.

Governance Requires Coordination Beyond Funding

The interviews also indicate that funding is only one component of government support. Sustainable event development requires the ability to coordinate tourism authorities, community groups, Pokdarwis, business actors, and other relevant sectors. This becomes especially important when public resources are limited because fragmented actions can further reduce the effectiveness of the resources that remain available.

Evidence pattern: although the informants recognized institutional collaboration as useful, they also identified weak cross-sector coordination as a persistent constraint. This indicates that partnership initiatives need to be embedded in a broader coordination mechanism rather than depend on isolated activities.

This result is consistent with stakeholder theory, which emphasizes the need to coordinate actors with different interests and resources (Freeman, 1984), and with festival research showing that stakeholder relationships affect sustainability and inclusion (Adongo & Kim, 2018). In response to RQ2, the study therefore finds that local-government support remains important but is currently shaped by fiscal constraints; under these conditions, institutional collaboration and stronger cross-sector coordination become critical governance mechanisms.

Enabling and Constraining Conditions for Sustainable Tourism Event Development (RQ3)

The third research question examines the conditions that can support or inhibit more sustainable and higher-quality tourism-event development. The five informants showed broad agreement on both sides of this issue. Lahat possesses strong destination resources and social interest, but the ability to convert these strengths into sustainable events is restricted by planning, infrastructure, organizational-capacity, funding, and coordination problems.

Enabling Conditions

1. Rich cultural and natural assets. Informants viewed Lahat's cultural heritage and natural attractions as a strong substantive base for developing tourism events with a distinctive local identity.
2. Community interest. Local interest and willingness to participate provide social support for tourism-event activities and create potential for stronger community involvement.
3. Policy movement toward better quality. Informants perceived an emerging policy direction that places greater attention on improving the quality of tourism development rather than merely increasing the number of activities.
4. Institutional collaboration. Cooperation with external institutions, including Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang, provides a practical mechanism for research, training, and local capacity development when government resources are limited.

These enabling conditions suggest that Lahat does not face a shortage of tourism potential. The central challenge lies in converting existing assets, community enthusiasm, and a quality-oriented policy direction into coordinated event programs. In other words, the development problem is primarily one of capacity and governance rather than destination-resource scarcity.

Constraining Conditions

1. Fragmented planning. Tourism-development programs are often separated across government, community, and privately managed activities, limiting integration between destination priorities and event implementation.
2. Insufficient supporting infrastructure. Gaps in infrastructure reduce the ability of destinations and event organizers to provide reliable access, facilities, and supporting services.
3. Limited Pokdarwis capacity and funding. Tourism-awareness groups face constraints in organizational capacity and financial resources, reducing their ability to sustain local tourism initiatives and event involvement.
4. Weak cross-sector coordination. Coordination among public institutions and non-government stakeholders remains insufficient, making tourism development more fragmented and less cumulative across programs.

These constraints reinforce the stakeholder perspective that tourism-event sustainability depends on how local actors align resources, responsibilities, and participation (Freeman, 1984; Adongo & Kim, 2018). They also resemble findings from sustainable-festival research in which infrastructure, human-resource empowerment, policy support, and stakeholder participation function as interconnected conditions rather than isolated variables (Liu et al., 2019; Batubara et al., 2024). The infrastructure finding is also consistent with evidence from destination-service capacity research in Sabang, where limitations in accessibility, amenities, and attraction capacity were identified as bottlenecks to tourism development (Hasan & Karo Karo, 2023). Likewise, research in PALI indicates that tourism-event

potential requires supporting infrastructure, adequate amenities, and coordinated event management before local assets can be converted into stronger tourism outcomes (Hasan et al., 2024).

The contrast between these enabling and constraining conditions is consistent with research that treats festival sustainability as a multi-stakeholder outcome rather than the product of a single resource or organization (Liu et al., 2019). Recent Indonesian evidence likewise shows that sustainable festival development depends on the interaction of policy support, human-resource empowerment, infrastructure, promotion, and local participation (Batubara et al., 2024). In Lahat, the practical issue is therefore how existing assets and community interest can be connected to stronger planning, infrastructure, local organizational capacity, and cross-sector coordination.

From Tourism Potential to Sustainable Event Capability

The combined evidence from RQ3 shows a clear contrast between tourism potential and event-development capability. Lahat has the cultural and natural resources and community interest needed to support tourism events, and informants also perceived a gradual policy movement toward better quality. However, these strengths do not automatically generate sustainable events. They need to be connected through integrated planning, adequate supporting infrastructure, stronger Pokdarwis capacity, sufficient resources, and reliable cross-sector coordination.

Evidence pattern: G1-G3, C1, and B1 converged on three principal enabling conditions - cultural and natural assets, community interest, and a policy orientation toward better quality - and on four major constraints - fragmented planning, infrastructure gaps, limited Pokdarwis capacity and funding, and weak cross-sector coordination.

The answer to RQ3 is therefore relational: sustainability depends less on the existence of a single dominant factor than on whether local assets, human capability, institutional resources, and stakeholder coordination can be connected in a consistent development process. This interpretation provides the basis for the integrative discussion below.

Table 3
Matrix of Interview Findings by Research Question

RQ	Consensus across five informants	Main theme	Meaning for event development
RQ1	HR supporting tourism events is very limited; continuous training is needed.	Operational capacity gap	Event quality and continuity require stronger practical competencies among government and local stakeholders.
RQ2	Government support has been limited by budget efficiency during the previous two years; some activities were not implemented. Collaboration with Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang supports research, community service, and HR training.	Governance under fiscal constraint	Government support increasingly needs resource prioritization, partnership, and non-budgetary capacity-building mechanisms.

RQ3 - Enablers	Cultural and natural assets; community interest; policy movement toward better quality.	Local development potential	Lahat has a strong substantive and social base for developing distinctive tourism events.
RQ3 - Constraints	Fragmented planning; insufficient infrastructure; limited Pokdarwis capacity and funding; weak cross-sector coordination.	Institutional and implementation barriers	Tourism potential will not translate into sustainable events without stronger integration, infrastructure, local organizational capacity, and coordination.

Integrative Discussion: A Dual-Engine Model of Local Tourism Event Development

Taken together, the three research questions suggest an integrated explanation of tourism-event development in Lahat. The first component is operational capability: HR limitations reduce the capacity to convert cultural and natural assets into consistently planned and delivered event experiences. The second component is governance capability: local government remains central to tourism-event development, but its current room for action is constrained by budget efficiency and therefore increasingly depends on prioritization, collaboration, and coordination. The findings also show that these two capabilities operate within a wider local ecosystem that includes community interest, business participation, Pokdarwis, infrastructure, and external knowledge partners.

The 'dual-engine' interpretation remains useful, but the Lahat evidence adds an important qualification. The operational engine cannot be strengthened through training alone if fragmented planning, infrastructure gaps, funding limitations, and weak cross-sector coordination remain unresolved. Likewise, government support cannot be evaluated only through event budgets because institutional partnerships can continue to build capacity even when direct expenditure is constrained. Sustainable tourism-event development therefore depends on the interaction between HR capacity, governance coordination, local assets, community participation, and the ability to mobilize institutional support under realistic fiscal conditions.

Practical and Policy Implications

The findings suggest five practical priorities for Lahat Regency. First, HR development should be continuous and event-specific, covering planning, implementation, visitor service, stakeholder coordination, promotion, and basic event-safety competencies. Second, the collaboration between the local government and Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang should be developed as a structured capacity-building partnership through research and community-service programs that respond directly to local event needs. Third, tourism-event planning should be integrated across government, community, Pokdarwis, and business actors to reduce fragmentation. Fourth, infrastructure gaps that directly affect event access and visitor services should be prioritized in tourism-development planning. Fifth, Pokdarwis capacity should be strengthened not only through training but also through clearer coordination roles and more sustainable access to program resources. As a literature-informed extension of these recommendations, future capacity-building programs may also incorporate digital event marketing and integrated communication skills. Research in event tourism highlights the role of digital marketing and integrated marketing communication in strengthening visitor engagement and experience (Hasan et al., 2026), while destination-marketing literature emphasizes the importance of connecting

branding, promotion, digital communication, and sustainability within an integrated destination strategy (Dewi et al., 2025). This digital component should be treated as a future development priority rather than as a direct empirical finding from the five Lahat interviews.

These recommendations should be interpreted as a realistic development pathway under fiscal constraint. Lahat does not need to enlarge the number of events before its human and governance capacity is ready. A more appropriate sequence is to strengthen people and local organizations, integrate planning, improve essential supporting infrastructure, use institutional partnerships to compensate for limited resources, and progressively concentrate on events that express Lahat's cultural and natural identity with better quality and continuity.

CONCLUSION

This study examined tourism-event development in Lahat Regency through three research questions and five informant perspectives. In response to RQ1, all informants considered the available HR for supporting tourism events to be limited and emphasized training as the primary route for strengthening operational capability. In response to RQ2, informants reported that local-government support had become more limited during the two years preceding data collection because of regional budget efficiency, causing several planned activities not to be implemented. At the same time, collaboration with Politeknik Pariwisata Palembang through research, community service, and HR training emerged as an adaptive form of institutional support. In response to RQ3, Lahat's cultural and natural assets, community interest, and a policy shift toward better quality were identified as important enabling factors, while fragmented planning, inadequate supporting infrastructure, limited Pokdarwis capacity and funding, and weak cross-sector coordination were identified as the principal constraints.

The principal contribution of the study is to show that the challenge of sustainable tourism-event development in Lahat is not a lack of destination potential. It is a capability-and-governance problem: strong local assets and community interest must be matched by stronger HR competencies, integrated planning, adequate infrastructure, capable local tourism organizations, and coordinated institutional support. Under constrained public budgets, the relationship between the operational engine of human capacity and the governance engine of local government becomes even more important, while partnerships with educational institutions can provide a complementary pathway for maintaining capacity development.

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