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### Identifying the Potential of Berhala Island as a Tourist Attraction and Historical Education Site Sustaining

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#### Abstract

This study aims to explore the potential of Berhala Island as a historical educational tourism destination for the public, students, university students, and teachers. Berhala Island is an entry point to the Riau Islands Province and has historical and cultural significance. The uniqueness of this island lies in its historical heritage related to Jambi Province. The research method used was descriptive qualitative, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that Berhala Island possesses historical relics connected to the origins of the Jambi kingdom, namely the Tomb of Datuk Paduko Berhala. In addition, the island also preserves evidence of the Japanese occupation in Jambi, such as Japanese cannons, kitchens, and bunkers. These historical remains can serve as valuable educational tourism attractions. Furthermore, the natural beauty of Berhala Island supports the development of experience-based history learning and the preservation of local culture for younger generations and the wider community.

[Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali potensi Pulau Berhala untuk dijadikan objek wisata edukasi sejarah bagi masyarakat, pelajar, mahasiswa, dan guru. Pulau Berhala merupakan daerah pintu masuk Provinsi Kepulauan Riau yang memiliki nilai strategis serta daya tarik sejarah dan budaya. Keunikan pulau ini terlihat dari adanya peninggalan sejarah yang berkaitan dengan Provinsi Jambi. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Pulau Berhala memiliki peninggalan sejarah yang berkaitan dengan asal usul raja Jambi, yaitu Makam Datuk Paduko Berhala. Pulau tersebut juga menyimpan bukti sejarah penjajahan Jepang di Jambi berupa meriam Jepang, dapur Jepang, dan bunker pertahanan. Berbagai peninggalan sejarah tersebut dapat dijadikan objek wisata edukasi yang menarik dan bermanfaat. Keindahan alam Pulau Berhala juga mendukung pengembangan pembelajaran sejarah berbasis pengalaman serta pelestarian budaya lokal bagi generasi muda dan masyarakat luas khususnya dapat dijadikan objek wisata edukasi]. © The Authors.

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is defined as a socio economic system involving dynamic interactions among governments, businesses, and communities in managing and serving the needs of tourists both individuals and groups in domestic and international contexts [1]. The primary appeal of tourism lies in its attractions, which must possess intrinsic potential to draw visitors to a destination. In particular, historical and cultural heritage sites stand out due to their aesthetic value, authenticity, and the profound meaning they embody, as evidenced by research showing that cultural heritage sites contribute significantly to sustainable tourism and informal education [2].

One site with high potential is Berhala Island, which administratively falls under Lingga Regency, Riau Islands Province, Indonesia, covering an area of approximately 10 km<sup>2</sup> off the eastern coast of Sumatra. Astronomically, the island is located at coordinates 00°51'00" S and 104°24'20" E. Originally part of Jambi Province, its administrative status was changed to Riau Islands Province based on Decision No. 18/PUU-XI/2013 of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia dated February 21, 2013. The name "Berhala" originates from the legend of Datuk Paduka Berhala (the 17th-century King of Jambi), who frequently visited the island and was buried there after his death, making it a historically significant site rich in symbolic value.

The strategic location of Berhala Island on the outer edge of the Malacca Strait offers significant economic value, supported by natural resources such as mangrove forests, diverse coral reefs, and a sea turtle conservation site on Telur Island. Its historical heritage includes the tomb of Datuk Paduka Berhala, a symbol of the origins of the Jambi Kingdom, as well as artifacts such as a Japanese kitchen, Japanese cannons, and inscriptions from the Riau-Lingga Kingdom, reflecting layers of colonial and pre-colonial history. With a population of only about 60 households, the island offers authentic social uniqueness. This potential makes Berhala Island an attraction for historical educational tourism, ideal for students (high school and university students in the History Education Program) as well as the general public, as its heritage can serve as a resource for learning local history.

Local history learning resources such as these facilitate a contextual understanding of the material, in line with their nature as components of an instructional system that encompasses messages, people, materials, tools, techniques, and the learning environment [3]. The use of historically rich resources develops students' historical thinking skills, including the analysis of primary sources and contextual interpretation. Berhala Island stands out as an educational tourism destination because of: (1) its accessibility from Jambi, the Riau Islands, and North Sumatra; (2) its potential for tourism based on history, science, education, and culture; (3) its status as a vital site for the people of Jambi; (4) its unique demographics; and (5) its role in sea turtle conservation. This background prompted the research titled Berhala Island: A Historical Educational Tourism Attraction and a Source of Local History Learning.

## 2. Method

The type of this research is descriptive qualitative research that explains everything present at the research site. this research was conducted in the Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency.

The data in this research uses primary and secondary data adjusted to the focus and objectives of the study. The primary data source in this research is data provided by informants directly from the community living on Berhala Island and descendants of Datuk Paduko Berhala. The secondary data used in this research includes journals, books, and newspapers.

To obtain primary and secondary data, observations were conducted by directly viewing the conditions of tourism on Berhala Island, then noting, recording, and documenting things that are considered important and relevant to this research problem. Second, the interviews that will be conducted by the researcher are structured and unstructured interviews. In the interview process, the researcher uses data collection tools such as books, writing instruments, a mobile phone as a recording device, and a digital camera for photo and video documentation. Third, documentation; the researcher uses documentation studies to strengthen and support the obtained data. The results of the documentation study include photos and attachments corresponding to the data and issues of this research.

The technique used to test the validity of the data in this research is diligence, with diligent observation aimed at discovering characteristics, elements, and information in situations that are highly relevant to the object being studied. The triangulation chosen by the researcher is source triangulation. Source triangulation means the researcher rechecks the level of truth according to

information based on time and tools. Theory triangulation involves the researcher viewing events from the perspective of theory, opinions, and views of others in written form.

The data analysis technique in this research uses four stages as follows: 1) data collection, where the author collects data around Pulau Berhala and BPCP in Jambi and West Sumatra Provinces. 2) Data reduction, which the researcher performs by summarizing field results from several data, then selecting important aspects useful for answering the research formulation and discarding unnecessary data. 3) Data presentation, which is descriptive in nature, explained in detail and supported by photos obtained in the field. 4) The final stage is data verification by making conclusions.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Geographic and Demographic Profile of Berhala Island

Berhala Island is a small island located within the administrative region of Lingga Regency, Riau Islands Province, Indonesia. Geographically, the island covers an area of approximately 10 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated at the astronomical coordinates 00°51'00" S and 104°24'20" E [4]. This strategic location places Berhala Island in the waters of the Berhala Strait, which connects the waters of East Sumatra with the Riau Islands, making it a potential key access point for the development of marine tourism and historical education. From a demographic perspective, based on 2011 data, the population of Berhala Island was recorded at 124 people according to the Singkep Subdistrict Head's records [5]. This figure reflects a small community that remains dependent on local natural resources, such as fisheries and subsistence agriculture, which can serve as social capital for the development of sustainable ecotourism.

#### 3.2 History of the Ownership Dispute and Its Implications for Tourism Potential

The existence of Berhala Island is inextricably linked to administrative and political dynamics that once gave rise to an ownership dispute between Jambi Province and Riau Province. This conflict stems from the island's strategic value in the context of maritime boundaries and natural resources [4]. Rahim emphasizes that the ownership claims from both provinces are based on the island's historical and economic significance, as it was historically part of Jambi Province. However, through Constitutional Court Decision No. 18/PUU-XI/2013 dated February 21, 2013, ownership of Berhala Island was definitively transferred to the Riau Islands Province. The resolution of this dispute not only stabilizes territorial administration but also opens opportunities for the development of tourism infrastructure and historical education, where visitors can learn about Indonesia's maritime geopolitical dynamics through the island's historical sites.

#### 3.3 Historical artifacts on the Berhala Island

Berhala Island, which was formerly under the administration of Jambi Province and later became part of Riau Province, now serves as an attractive tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors. In addition to its function as a recreational site, the island serves as a venue for social, cultural, and economic interaction, thereby creating a learning space rich in historical context [6].

Some historical relics found on Berhala Island:

##### 3.3.1 The Tomb of Datuk Paduko Berhalo

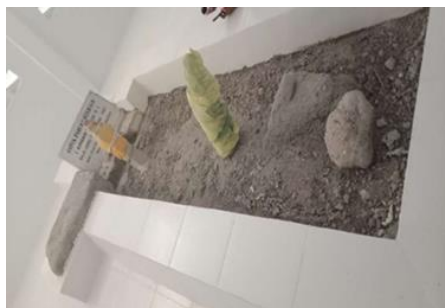


Figure 1. The Tomb of Datuk Paduko Berhalo

Datuk Paduko Berhalo was a Turkish nobleman known as Ahmad Barus II. Datuk Paduko Berhalo was the son of a Turkish king; he set out on a journey to spread Islam but was shipwrecked

on this island. Ahmad Barus II then destroyed the idols that were worshipped on the island, earning him the title Datuk Paduko Berhalo.

Later, Datuk Panduko Berhalo married a queen from the kingdom of Jambi named Putri Salaro Pinang Masak. Datuk Paduko Berhalo and Putri Salaro Pinang Masak jointly ruled the Malay Kingdom II until they passed down their power through successive generations. Their descendants are known to the people of Jambi by the titles Orang Kayo Pingal, Orang Kayo Kadataran, Orang Kayo Hitam, and Orang Kayo Gemuk. Among his descendants, the most well-known is Orang Kayo Hitam, who, wielding the Siginjai keris, became the king of Jambi. Orang Kayo Hitam continued the spread of Islam in the 15th century. He married Putri Mayang Mangurai. During his reign, the center of the Islamic kingdom was moved from Berhala Island (now part of the Riau Islands) to an area called Tanah Pilih. Orang Kayo Hitam aligned the governing ideology of the Jambi kingdom with Islamic teachings, known as Adat Bersendi Syarak, Syarak Bersendi Kitabullah. This integration is evident in the existence of the Undang Nan Delapan (Eight Laws), which are based on the Quran and the Hadith.

The relocation of the royal capital from the coastal region transformed maritime life into an agrarian way of life. The coastal area, which served as a meeting place for merchants, facilitated the acculturation of other cultures in Jambi, such as elements of Islam brought by Arab and Gujarati merchants. Islam initially developed in the Seberang Kota Jambi area. In the Seberang Kota Jambi area, starting from the Arab-Malay neighborhood known as Pacinan (a residential area for Chinese merchants), which has existed since the 18th century CE, as evidenced by artifacts in the Jambi Provincial Museum, such as porcelain vessels from the Ming Dynasty and decorative elements on houses featuring Chinese-style architecture. Arabic lineage can be traced in the Seberang Kota Jambi area, specifically in the Arab Melayu neighborhood and the upper part of the Olak Kemang neighborhood. This demonstrates that the arrival of Islam in Seberang Kota Jambi coincided with the relocation of the Malay Kingdom from the Tanjung Jabung region to Tanah Pilih, located in the city of Jambi. Datuk Paduko Berhalo, even after marrying Princess Salaro Pinang Masak, continued to frequently visit this island and passed away on Berhala Island. His grave is situated to the south, near the residential area of Jambi residents. The grave is located on a hill 10 meters above the residential complex.

### 3.3.2 Japanese Relics on Berhala Island

Japanese colonial presence on Berhala Island began when Japan's colonization of Asia started following its victory over Russia in 1905. Japan was eager to dominate Asia, particularly Indonesia, which was rich in natural resources and raw materials essential for the war effort. Japan began to set its sights on Indonesia during the economic malaise, particularly in Java in 1932; Japan exploited this situation by expanding into the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Japan targeted these three Asian nations because it perceived their defenses as weak, as the Dutch and British were preoccupied with fighting Germany on the European mainland.

The first Japanese relic is the Masak Monument, located on the northeastern side of Berhala Island. This site is situated next to a footpath connecting the tomb of Datuk Panduko Berhala to a fishing village, with the beach just 16 meters (m) away. The cooking monument on Berhala Island is a T-shaped structure measuring 2.7 meters in length, 1.23 meters in width, and 77 centimeters in height. This hearth features three openings on the top and sides. The side openings are used to insert firewood, while the top opening is where the flames exit. The sizes of these openings are not uniform; their diameters are 75 centimeters (cm), 36 centimeters (cm), and 30 centimeters (cm). At this site, remnants of a Japanese-era structure were found in the form of a smaller stove with diameters of 35 cm and 25 cm; however, it is in a damaged condition. Near this hearth, a washing area was discovered, equipped with a drainage channel in the form of a culvert leading to the beach. The platform used for washing measures 180x180 cm. There is also an old well at this site that was likely used for daily needs and cooking.

The second Japanese relic is an earthen bunker located not far from the cooking stove. It is situated on the left side of the footpath leading to the fishing village. This bunker is square in shape, measuring 5 x 5 meters and 1.5 meters deep. The earthen bunker was dug and equipped with a trench on one side. This trench served as an entrance to the bunker, providing protection from enemy fire. The earthen bunker was protected by a raised earthen embankment, which could be described as an earthen fort. This earthen fort was L-shaped, with the upper part of the wall forming a U-shape. The wall measured 140 cm in length, 110 cm in width, and 140 cm in height. The fort faced the cooking stove and the beach.



Figure 2: Earthen Bunker

Japanese Relics: Three large cannons, each 5 meters in length, have a base diameter of 30 cm and a muzzle diameter of 17 cm. These cannons are located on a hill, lying on the ground. The cannon barrels bear saw marks where they were cut to split the barrel. The cannons are placed in a pit with a diameter of 750 cm. On the northern side, there is a trench that extends into the northern hillside. This slope features a flat area measuring 22.70 meters in length and 10 meters in width. To the west of this flat area lies a bunker measuring 3.7 meters in length and 3.7 meters in width, with a depth of 1 meter. This bunker is connected to the one on the south side; a trench links these two bunkers. The southern bunker is 5 meters long, 3.5 meters wide, and 1 meter deep. This bunker served to protect the troops guarding the large cannon. Thus, when an enemy attack occurred, the troops were ready to fire this cannon.



Figure 3. The Great Cannon

The fourth Japanese relic is a concrete bunker located west of the cannon. The opening of this concrete bunker is rectangular, with sides measuring 100 cm in length. At the top of the opening, there are four pillars that have collapsed. These pillars measure 53 cm in length, 50 cm in width, and 65 cm in height. In the center lies a collapsed section of concrete in a hexagonal shape. On the northern side of the bunker, there is a trench leading northward. This trench is so narrow that it cannot be traversed by humans. Its function is to channel water into the bunker. This bunker was intended to monitor and defend each occupied area against enemy attacks aiming to land during wartime. The Japanese constructed this bunker along the coastline to demonstrate vigilance and defensive readiness in protecting their territory.

Japanese Relics: These five Frog Cannons are located 10 meters from their original position on flat ground. The Frog Cannons measure 3.7 meters in length and 3.7 meters in width. The design of these cannons is unique because their barrels are open at the top, with a length of 2.014 meters and a width of 30 cm. These cannons are named.



Figure 4: Frog Cannon

### 3.4 The Historical Educational Potential of Berhala Island

The presence of Datuk Panduko Berhala's tomb and Japanese relics from the colonial period in Jambi adds historical value that can be integrated into the educational curriculum [7]. Therefore, Berhala Island is worthy of being used as a learning resource across all educational levels, from elementary school to higher education, particularly in courses on the History of Jambi and the History of the Indonesian Nationalist Movement. The use of this location as an "outdoor classroom" and a tourist attraction underscores the relevance of Ministry of Education Regulation No. 22/2006, which emphasizes the optimization of the surrounding environment as a learning resource (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional No. 22 tahun 2006).

The outdoor learning method implemented on Berhala Island enables students and faculty to actively participate in the preservation of historical sites, while enriching the learning experience through a contextual approach [8][9]. By linking course material to on-site conditions, students not only gain theoretical knowledge but also develop critical and reflective thinking skills [10]. This approach aligns with the UNESCO framework (2007), which emphasizes four pillars of learning: Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Live Together, and Learning to Be [11]. In particular, the "Learning to Do" pillar contributes to enhancing students' interaction with the physical, social, and cultural environment, which in turn strengthens historical awareness [12]. The implementation of outdoor learning on Berhala Island also supports the objectives of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, which affirms that learning laboratories can take the form of any historical site.

The four pillars of learning proposed by UNESCO provide a conceptual foundation for the design of educational activities on Berhala Island. "Learning to Know" requires students to master historical inquiry techniques not merely memorizing facts, but being able to analyze primary and secondary sources. "Learning to Do" facilitates practical experiences through field surveys, photographic documentation, and the creation of thematic maps linking Japanese heritage sites to the socio-economic dynamics of Jambi during the colonial period [13]. "Learning to Live Together" fosters tolerance and mutual respect across cultures, particularly as students interact with local communities that preserve the island's cultural heritage [14]. Finally, "Learning to Be" reflects the integrative achievement of the previous three pillars, producing graduates with a strong historical identity and a commitment to the preservation of cultural heritage [15]. The combination of these four pillars ensures that the learning process is not fragmented but holistic and sustainable.

In the context of the History Education program, the character values embodied in the heritage of Berhala Island are highly relevant for students to internalize. The value of patriotism, reflected in the struggle of the people of Jambi against Japanese colonial rule, can serve as a basis for reflection to foster a sense of nationalism among students [9]. Additionally, the values of tolerance and cooperation emerge implicitly when students collaborate with local residents in site conservation efforts. Simplicity and a sense of responsibility emerge when students manage waste and protect historical artifacts during field activities [16]. By emphasizing these character traits, the learning process not only produces historical knowledge but also shapes ethical and dedicated citizens [17]. Therefore, the integration of universal values into the Berhala Island site-based curriculum serves as a pedagogical strategy that supports the national character education agenda [18].

The contextual, site-centered approach at Berhala Island also offers a solution to the problem of learning fatigue in traditional classrooms. Research indicates that students engaged in field-based learning demonstrate increased motivation, information retention, and critical thinking skills compared to those who only attend online lectures [19]. Furthermore, the use of tourist sites as "living museums" enables the integration of interdisciplinary courses, such as archaeology, anthropology, and the creative economy [20]. This aligns with the "learning ecosystem" principle, which emphasizes that a learning environment can simultaneously encompass physical, social, and digital spaces [21]. Thus, Berhala Island is not merely a recreational site but an open laboratory fostering pedagogical innovation and interdisciplinary research [22].

Implementing the outdoor learning program on Berhala Island requires a structured framework, ranging from curriculum planning to the evaluation of learning outcomes. The planning phase involves identifying core competencies, setting learning objectives, and developing field activity modules aligned with national standards [23]. Furthermore, the implementation phase emphasizes the use of inquiry-based learning methods, where students become active researchers who collect field data, conduct interviews, and interpret findings. Evaluation can be conducted through portfolio assessment rubrics, presentations of research results, and critical reflections uploaded to the campus e-learning platform [24]. This approach assesses not only cognitive achievements but also affective and psychomotor aspects, thereby providing a comprehensive

picture of the quality of learning [25]. With its integrated mechanisms, the program has the potential to serve as a model for cultural heritage site-based learning for other higher education institutions.

The sustainable preservation of Berhala Island as a learning resource requires cross-sectoral collaboration among the government, universities, and the local community. Local governments can provide regulatory support, such as issuing permits for field activities and providing environmentally friendly infrastructure [26]. Universities serve as academic facilitators, providing instructors, learning materials, and publications of research findings. Meanwhile, the participation of the local community, particularly site custodians and tourism stakeholders, is crucial for maintaining the authenticity and sustainability of cultural values [27]. This partnership model aligns with the principle of “community-based tourism,” which emphasizes community empowerment through education and the creative economy. Through this synergy, Berhala Island can be transformed into an inclusive, sustainable center for historical learning that contributes to national cultural development.

From an educational policy perspective, the utilization of Berhala Island aligns with the Indonesia 2045 vision to improve the quality of culture-based education. This policy emphasizes the importance of “learning places” integrated with the surrounding environment, so that students can connect theoretical knowledge with socio cultural realities [28]. Furthermore, UNESCO’s (2020) recommendations suggest that member states develop “heritage-based learning” as a strategy to strengthen national identity and intercultural tolerance. Implementation on Berhala Island can serve as a best-practice example that can be replicated at other historical sites across the archipelago. Thus, the development of Berhala Island as a learning resource not only supports academic objectives but also the sustainable development agenda mandated by the SDGs [29].

Finally, the evaluation of the long-term impact of the historical education program on Berhala Island must include academic, social, and environmental indicators. Academically, improvements in average exam scores, scientific publications, and participation in conferences serve as measures of success. Socially, this is gauged by the level of community concern for site preservation, as well as increased participation in educational tourism. Meanwhile, environmental impacts can be assessed through the quality of the island’s ecosystem, waste management, and the conservation of flora and fauna. With a comprehensive evaluative approach, stakeholders can implement sustainable improvements and ensure that Berhala Island remains a relevant learning resource for future generations [30].

### 3.5 Public and Tourist Perceptions of Berhala Island as a Tourist Attraction

Table 1. Summary of Tourists’ and Residents’ Perceptions (1–5 Likert Scale; Mean)

| Aspect                 | Tourists (n=10) | Residents (n=5) | Key Challenges                           |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| Historical Attractions | 4.7             | 4.8             | Lack of Accurate Information             |
| Transportation Access  | 2.1             | 2.0             | Pom-poms are risky; it takes a long time |
| Facilities             | 2.8             | 2.4             | Minimal renovation, trash                |
| Educational Potential  | 4.5             | 4.6             | Ideal Outdoor Learning                   |
| Well-being             |                 | 2.2             | Seasonal, Community Education            |

The data shows high ratings for historical appeal and educational potential, but very low ratings for transportation access, facilities, and quality of life. This pattern is consistent with many studies of World Heritage sites. Historical and Educational Appeal

Both tourists (4.7–4.8) and residents (4.5–4.6) rate the historical appeal and educational potential very highly, consistent with the finding that visitors and residents greatly appreciate the beauty, authenticity, layout, and architecture of the historic district [31]. The challenge of “a lack of accurate information” highlights shortcomings in signage, explanations, and interpretation—issues that have also been reported at various heritage sites and museums as obstacles to an optimal learning experience (Hassan et al., 2024).

Transportation accessibility scores were very low ( $\approx 2.0$ – $2.1$ ), with complaints about long travel times and risky modes of transport. Other studies indicate that the quality and comfort of inbound transportation influence satisfaction in heritage cities, and uncomfortable modes of transport diminish the experience. Facility scores are moderate–low (2.4–2.8), with issues of minimal renovation and litter. Weaknesses in supporting facilities, cleanliness, restrooms, and infrastructure are frequently identified as major barriers at historic sites [32].

The well-being of residents (2.2) is low and is influenced by seasonal factors and the need for community education. The literature indicates that without clear community involvement and benefits, heritage tourism can impose social and environmental burdens and reduce quality of life. Conversely, when economic, social, and conservation benefits are realized, community satisfaction and support for tourism increase [31].

#### 4. Discussion

Findings regarding Berhala Island confirm that local historical sites hold great potential as learning laboratories across all educational levels. The presence of Datuk Panduko Berhala's tomb and Japanese relics not only enriches Jambi's historical heritage but also provides an empirical basis for the development of site-based curricula in line with Ministry of Education Regulation No. 22/2006 on the utilization of the surrounding environment as a learning resource. In this context, Berhala Island serves a dual function as an "outdoor classroom" and an educational tourist attraction, thereby offering a more meaningful learning experience compared to classroom based learning.

The implementation of outdoor learning methods on Berhala Island demonstrates a strong alignment with UNESCO's four-pillar framework of learning. Field activities that emphasize the analysis of primary and secondary sources, surveys, documentation, and thematic mapping indicate that history education can integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner. This reinforces the argument that history education should no longer be primarily focused on rote memorization but must be directed toward developing students' critical and reflective thinking skills, as well as their socio-cultural sensitivity. Direct engagement with the local community further underscores the contributions of the "Learning to Live Together" and "Learning to Be" pillars in shaping historical identity and fostering a commitment to the preservation of cultural heritage.

From a character education perspective, Berhala Island provides a rich context for the internalization of values such as patriotism, tolerance, cooperation, simplicity, and responsibility. These values emerge naturally through students' interactions with historical artifacts, the natural environment, and the local community. Thus, the outdoor learning program on this island supports the national character education agenda while addressing the challenge of the low relevance of history education to students' real lives. Empirical evidence that field-based learning can enhance motivation, information retention, and critical thinking skills reinforces Berhala Island's position as a potential "living museum" for the development of interdisciplinary learning (archaeology, anthropology, creative economy, and so on).

However, optimizing Berhala Island as a learning resource requires a structured and sustainable program design. The sequence of curriculum planning, inquiry-based implementation, and authentic assessment through portfolios, presentations, and reflections demonstrates that this pedagogical innovation can be replicated as a model for cultural heritage site-based learning at other universities. On the other hand, long-term success depends heavily on synergy between local government, universities, and the local community within the framework of community-based tourism. This partnership is essential to ensure the availability of eco-friendly infrastructure, the protection of the site's authenticity, and the economic empowerment of the community.

From a macro perspective, the utilization of Berhala Island aligns with the Indonesia 2045 vision and UNESCO's recommendations on heritage-based learning. The integration of this island as a "learning place" demonstrates how higher education can directly contribute to achieving sustainable development goals, particularly regarding cultural preservation and the strengthening of national identity. Nevertheless, a comprehensive long-term evaluation system—covering academic, social, and environmental indicators—is needed to assess the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Without a continuous evaluation mechanism, the risks of excessive commercialization and environmental degradation could undermine Berhala Island's function as a learning resource. Thus, this discussion underscores that Berhala Island has the potential to serve as an integrative model linking history education, cultural preservation, and sustainable development, provided it is supported by a well-developed pedagogical design and collaborative governance.

#### 5. Conclusion

Berhala Island is rich in historical and educational value. It is home to the tomb of Datuk Paduko Berhalo, which is linked to the origins of the Jambi Sultanate and the spread of Islam, as well as various Japanese relics such as cannons, kitchens, earthen and concrete bunkers, and other monuments from the Japanese colonial era that can serve as an "open-air museum."

This island has great potential as an outdoor learning laboratory for local history, from elementary school through college, in line with UNESCO's learning pillars and the Merdeka Belajar policy. Tourists' and residents' perceptions: historical appeal and educational potential are rated very highly (scores of approximately 4.5–4.8), but transportation access, facilities, cleanliness, and residents' well-being are rated low (around 2.0–2.8)

Key challenges: risky and time-consuming transportation access, limited facilities, inaccurate historical information on the ground, and economic and social benefits for residents that have not yet been fully realized

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