

MODEL OF STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY OF RICE FIELD AGRO-TOURISM IN THE PASAR MELINTANG VILLAGE

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords :

Agro-tourism;
SWOT analysis;
Agro-tourism;
Marketing strategy

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ABSTRACT

The development of agro-tourism is one alternative that can encourage regional economic potential. Pasar Melintang Village has the largest rice field in Lubuk Pakam, Deli Serdang. Village rice fields have the potential to be developed into agro-tourism so that they become a new alternative tourist destination in Deli Serdang. This research aims to formulate agro-tourism strategies and economic strengthening models in agro-tourism development. This research is a qualitative descriptive study, using SWOT analysis to formulate a marketing strategy for rice field agrotourism in Pasar Melintang Village. Partners in this study were 21 people from Mulia farmer groups, community leaders, and related institutions. The result of this research is the need for a diversification strategy of tourism products and participatory management in tourism development models

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism in Indonesia is currently experiencing a significant increase, progress in the tourism sector makes tourism a key factor in export income, job creation, business development, and infrastructure so that tourism development becomes one of the government's flagship programs (Yusnita, 2019). empower, protect and enforce regulations, not only to direct development but also to pioneer or encourage supporting sectors in realizing tourism development, which has the function of coordinating, and marketing, including promotion, price regulation for certain components, setting up distribution systems, or providing information.

At this time, tourism development has not become a priority for the Deli Serdang Regency Government. With an area of 2,497.72 km² (BPS, 2021), it has a lot of natural potential that have not been maximally managed. This can be seen from the many nature-based tourism areas in Deli Serdang Regency that are not widely exposed. Pasar Melintang Village is one of the villages in the Lubuk Pakam sub-district, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province. The majority of the population's livelihood is farming or agriculture (agro) with a very simple land management system. The Melintang Market has great potential to develop agro-tourism because of its available natural conditions. This condition is expected to increase farmers' income while conserving available land resources. Reporting to BPS data from the Lubuk Pakam sub-district alone, the farmers' rice fields can produce 11,483.73 tons in 2020, so this condition can describe the fertile conditions of the rice fields and the economic potential that can be developed apart from rice production.

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Agrotourism is a combination of agricultural activities and tourism activities. Tourist activity is an activity to walk out of the scope and scope of work while enjoying the scenery or other things that are not related to the work of tourists. Agricultural activities in this case are agriculture in the broadest sense, are all activities in human survival related to harvesting) to sophisticated agricultural models (tissue culture). These agricultural activities include dry land agriculture, rice fields, secondary crops, plantations, forestry, yards, dry fields, 353ating, and so on. In agro-tourism activities, tourists are invited to take walks to enjoy and appreciate agricultural activities and the uniqueness and beauty of their built nature so that the power of appreciation and awareness to love culture and preserve nature is increasing (Ajri et al., 2019; Nurisyah, 2001; Pamulardi, 2006); Yusnita, 2019).

According to Suyastiri (Suyastiri, 2012), the implementation of the concept of agro-tourism will be able to improve the welfare of farmers, preserve the natural environment and inhibit the intention of farmers to change land functions. Agrotourism is one of the businesses in the agricultural sector with an emphasis on selling services to consumers. The form of these services can be in the form of beauty, comfort, tranquility, and education. The development of an agro-tourism business requires excellent management between, namely the availability of tourism facilities and infrastructure, objects for sale, promotions, and services

Through the development of agro-tourism that emphasizes local culture in utilizing land, farmers' income can increase along with efforts to preserve land resources, as well as maintain local culture and technology (*indigenous knowledge*) which are generally by the conditions of their natural environment. Based on this, to explore the potential of environmentally friendly agro-tourism in Pasar Melintang, what needs attention is that there has been no effort by the Deli Serdang Regency Government in creating environmentally friendly tourism objects and attractions through the development of agro cultivation in Pasar Melintang Village, then there is no agro-tourism model. environmentally friendly that can be developed in Pasar Melintang Village.

The right development and marketing of agro-tourism will in turn create jobs because this business can absorb labor. The benefits that can be obtained from agro-tourism are conserving natural resources, preserving local technology, and increasing the income of farmers or communities around tourist sites (Subowo, 2002). The Pasar Melintang village rice field tourism has not received the attention of the wider community even though it has an attraction so the village rice field tour is only enjoyed by residents. Based on this background, the purpose of this research is to formulate an eco-friendly agro-tourism marketing model in Pasar Melintang Village.

This research is based on research conducted by Masrin & Akmalia, (2019); Yuliati & Suwandono, (2016) that in determining a tourism site development strategy must consider aspects of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats/obstacles faced. In this study, several elements in the SWOT analysis are relevant to previous research, namely: poor infrastructure, lack of tourism awareness groups, traditional marketing, competitors with similar tourism products, and funding. The novelty of this research is 1) the object of research, this research examines the potential of rice field agro-tourism which has not been studied by many other researchers, 2) the formulation of a model for the development of rice-field agro-tourism, 3) this research was carried out when the covid 19 pandemic was still ongoing in Indonesia so that there were distinctive differences in the situation. 353ating economy faced by society in general.

2. METHOD

The instrument for developing a marketing strategy for rice field agrotourism in Pasar Melintang village uses a SWOT analysis. The collected data were analyzed using *External Factor Analysis*

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(EFAS) and *Internal Factor Analysis* (IFAS) matrices. The internal matrix (IFAS) describes respondents' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses currently being faced in the marketing of rice field agrotourism in Pasar Melintang Village, while the External matrix (EFAS) describes the respondents' perceptions of the opportunities and threats of developing rice field agrotourism in Pasar Melintang Village. The table of data analysis results with the two matrices is presented narratively (Ary Widiastini, 2015). SWOT analysis is an analysis in qualitative research that identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. By identifying these four factors, it is hoped that SWOT analysis users can reduce weaknesses and maximize strengths as well as enlarge opportunities and minimize threats (Yuliati & Suwando, 2016)

3. RELUST AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Respondent Profile

The total respondents of this study were twenty-one people consisting of sixteen farmers, one village head, and five people who were community leaders.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents in Pasar Melintang Village

Profile	Information	Amount	Percentage
Education	High School	20	95.23
	Diploma	1	4.76
	-	-	-
Age	17 – 25 years	1	4.76
	26 – 34 years old	1	4.76
	35 – 43 years old	5	23.80
	44 – 52 years old	12	57.14
	More than 52 years	2	9.54
Work	Student	-	-
	businessmanPrivate	3	14.28
	employee	1	4.76
	Farmer	16	47.61
	civil servant	1	4.76

Source: primary data processed, 2022

Based on the table data, based on the education aspect, 95.23 % of respondents have a high school education and the equivalent while the rest are diploma graduates. The aged majority of respondents in the range of 44 - 52 years reached 57,14 %. Meanwhile, from the aspect of work 47.61 % are farmers and 14.28% are traders. The respondents of this study were farmers, village heads, and five community leaders as part of the community in the Lubuk Pakam District who met the criteria to be respondents.

3.2 Tourism Village Development Strategy Analysis

The analytical technique used is the SWOT analysis, which is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the factors that are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that may occur in achieving a goal. The SWOT analysis of agro-tourism development in the Pasar transverse village area is as follows:

Table 2. SWOT Analysis for Agrotourism Development in Pasar Melintang Village

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic location close to Lubuk Pakam 2. The village has the largest rice field in Lubuk Pakam 3. The livelihoods of rural communities are farmers who facilitate the development of rice field tourism 4. The village land is fertile, so it has the potential for rice field tourism. 5. The community enthusiastically participates in developing tourism (eg opening a business around the site, joining a tourism driving group, etc.) 6. The attitude of the village community who cares and is friendly 7. Melintang market village has village officials and community groups who have good cooperation 8. The security situation in the village is quite good 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access/transportation facilities (public transportation) to the village are inadequate 2. The infrastructure/condition of roads leading to the village is damaged and has potholes. 3. The government's commitment is doubtful in supporting the development of the Pasar Melintang rice fields into agro-tourism 4. There is no initiator or mover to develop rice field tourism in earnest 5. The lack of information from the website and social media regarding the news of Pasar Melintang Village 6. The village does not have sufficient funding capacity in developing tourism 7. Farmers complain about poor irrigation channels that interfere with agricultural activities in the fields 8. The village does not have a tourism awareness group (pokdarwis) formed by the community
OPPORTUNITY	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The economy of the people of Deli Serdang Regency and its surroundings is starting to improve along with the end of the COVID-19 pandemic 2. Many travel agents such as travel agencies will be able to promote village rice field tourism 3. There are not many rice-field-based agro-tourism in North Sumatra, so village rice-field tourism is quite promising 4. Deli Serdang has many natural attractions such as beaches, waterfalls, and recreational parks which are well known, so it is hoped that visitors can stop by to visit the rice fields of Pasar Melintang village. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no investors who are willing to build village rice fields yet 2. There is a possibility of misuse of tourism development funds 3. The increase in food and fuel prices affects the purchasing power of visitors/tourists 4. There is a rice field tour in Pematang Johar, Deli Serdang which was first famous in the community

The position matrix for the development of rice field agro-tourism in Pasar Melintang Village is in quadrant III. In quadrant III to develop rice field tourism in Pasar Melintang Village, the relevant agencies must be able to take advantage of and manage the long-term opportunities they have by diversifying. According to Fred R, (2006) a diversification strategy is to add new products or services whether they are relevant or not too old products or services. The diversification strategy is carried out to anticipate the magnitude of the threats/obstacles in the development of rice field tourism in Pasar Melintang Village. This strategy consists of three types

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of strategy options, namely: concentric diversification strategy, conglomerate diversification strategy, and horizontal diversification strategy. The strategy when described is as follows:

1. Encouraging active collaboration between village community elements and the Deli Serdang Regency government in developing a marketing model for rice field agrotourism in Pasar Melintang Village
2. Adding agro-tourism products such as freshwater fish cultivation and fishing ponds near rice fields, adding tourism products that are not related to rice field agro-tourism such as photo booths, Deli Serdang souvenir corner in the rice field tourism area, children's playgrounds outside the rice fields, cheap markets rice, corn, and secondary crops that come from rice fields and are sold outside the tourist area
3. Maximizing the beauty and characteristics of agricultural education in the rice fields of Pasar Melintang Village
4. Develop an affordable price strategy for the community
5. Submitting a budget proposal for marketing rice field tourism in Pasar Melintang Village

4 Model for Strengthening the Economy of Rice Field Agrotourism in Pasar Melintang Village

The rice field tourism model as referred to in this study is a design concept of a tourist village that relies on local potential in the form of a stretch of village rice fields that will be managed so that it has a unique attraction for tourists.

Considerations for the development of village rice field agrotourism for rural communities are as follows:

1) Open new job opportunities

The existence of rice field agrotourism in Pasar Melintang Village will encourage new economic growth, both in the formal and informal sectors. The community will take advantage of the economic opportunities that exist along with the hectic location of agro-tourism. In the formal sector, for example, tourist sites will encourage the establishment of restaurants, inns, supermarkets, and shopping centers. The existence of a growing business will absorb labor in the village area so that many residents will have businesses and income from the existence of tourist sites. Meanwhile, from the informal sector, the existence of tourist sites will encourage people to become MSME actors in tourist areas such as souvenir sellers, culinary snacks, shops, and so on.

2) Introducing the village area as a tourist location

With the new agro-tourism in Pasar Melintang village, it will raise the name of the village so that it is known among tourists. As the area becomes more popular, the government can introduce Deli Serdang specialty products such as flower cakes, palm sugar, Karo oil, red ginger bandrek, cassava dodol, banana chips, and so on. With the development of agrotourism in Pasar Transverse Village, Deli Serdang will become one of the agro-tourism cities in North Sumatra.

3) Increase agricultural production

Based on several observations at the location of rice field agrotourism in Pematang Johar village that already exists in Deli Serdang, there are positive impacts such as increased production yields, such as commodities of plantation products, fisheries, livestock, food crops, and horticulture. In addition, tourist sites often get attention from universities, such as community service activities and research that can be directed to the advancement of village rice tourism such as cultivation training, agricultural innovation, marketing management, and so on.

To maximize the positive impact of developing rice field agro-tourism in Pasar Melintang village, the development model in this study is as follows:

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From the above model, the development of the Pasar Transverse village requires good collaboration and cooperation between three stakeholders, namely the Deli Serdang Regency Government, the Village institution, namely the Pasar Melintang Village office, and village community groups such as farmer groups. Participatory management is needed to consider and accommodate stakeholder interests so that the goals of agro-tourism development are achieved properly: community welfare increases and contributes to the PAD of Deli Serdang district. In building village rice fields, an independent auditor is needed to ensure that tourism activities run well, are transparent and there are no irregularities in financial management. The development of rural rice field agro-tourism empowers farmers and MSME groups where farmers as the main drivers of rice field tourism will receive training to manage tourism, cultivation, innovation, and so on. The MSME group is involved to revive the tourist area, its existence is needed especially to provide visitors' needs such as food, drinks, and souvenirs. Farmers and SMEs are also the driving force in diversifying tourism products. As has been recommended in the SWOT analysis that a diversification strategy is recommended, one of them is by adding agro-tourism products such as freshwater fish farming and fishing ponds near rice fields, adding tourism products that are not related to rice field agro-tourism such as photo booths, souvenir corners typical of Deli Serdang in rice field tourism area, children's playground outside the rice field area, the cheap market for rice, corn, and secondary crops that come from rice fields and are sold outside the tourist area

4. CONCLUSION

In the study of the development of rice field agrotourism in Pasar Village, Transversely, the main strategy recommended is a diversification strategy, namely by adding tourism products, both relevant and unrelated, to attract consumers or tourists. The alternative strategy uses a strength threat strategy (ST), which consists of five strategies, namely Encouraging active collaboration between village community elements and the Deli Serdang Regency government in developing a model for developing rice field agrotourism in Pasar Melintang Village Adding agro-tourism products such as freshwater fish cultivation and fishing ponds near rice fields, adding tourism products that are not related to rice field agro-tourism such as photo booths, Deli Serdang souvenir corner in the rice field tourism area, children's playgrounds outside the rice fields, cheap markets rice, corn, and secondary crops that come from rice fields and are sold outside the tourist area Maximizing the beauty and characteristics of agricultural education in the rice fields of Pasar Melintang Village Develop an affordable price strategy for the community Submitting a budget proposal for the development of rice field tourism in Pasar Melintang Village The agrotourism development model is participatory management involving the Deli Serdang Regency government, community groups in the village, and the Pasar Melintang Village office, with the main drivers being farmers and MSME actors. The driver plays an important role in carrying out the village rice field tourism development strategy Strengthening the community's economy in agro-tourism areas should start by actively involving regional stakeholders, thereby reducing dependence on local governments, and tourism areas can be more developed. Local governments can encourage local communities to develop agro-cultivation as a form of product diversification, thus encouraging people to be more active in conducting business innovations The local government is committed to building infrastructure and transportation so that tourist areas are easily accessible.

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