



Business Development Strategies in the Tourism Industry in Langkat Regency

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Abstract: Langkat Regency has great tourism potential, but it has not been utilized optimally. This study aims to identify and analyze effective business development strategies for the tourism industry in Langkat Regency. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews with tourism business people, local governments, and local communities. The results of the study show that potential business development strategies include the development of unique and attractive tourism products, improving the quality of tourism infrastructure and facilities, effective tourism marketing and promotion, developing competent tourism human resources (HR), partnerships between the government, business people, and the community, and sustainable tourism development. The implication of this study is the need for synergy between various related parties to implement the business development strategies that have been identified so that the tourism industry in Langkat Regency can grow rapidly and make a significant contribution to the regional economy.

Keywords: Tourism, Business Development, Strategy, Langkat Regency, Tourism Industry

Introduction

The tourism sector in Indonesia has an important role as one of the sources of foreign exchange receipts from foreign tourist visits, and can encourage national economic growth, especially in reducing the number of unemployed and increasing the productivity of a country. Tourism development has the ultimate goal of increasing people's income which can ultimately improve community welfare and economic growth. The development of tourism also encourages and accelerates economic growth (Yakup, 2019). Indonesia is rich in biological resources which are an opportunity as a tourist attraction. Tourist attractions with natural, cultural, and historical patterns can be said to be ecotourism. The definition of ecotourism is a form of tourism that is responsible for the preservation of natural areas, as well as providing economic benefits and maintaining cultural integrity for the local community. On the basis of this understanding, the form of ecotourism is basically a form of conservation movement carried out by the world's population (Sari and Hidayat-sardini, 2022).

The tourism sector is one of the largest contributors to the country's foreign exchange and also provides a golden opportunity for investors to invest their capital (Wijaya, 2018). The tourism sector must be packaged attractively, in order to attract the attention of

foreign tourists and Indonesian tourists to visit existing tourist attractions. The increasingly fierce competition makes the tourism industry must be able to manage its resources to the maximum extent (Oktavianus et al. 2019).

One strategy that can be used to win the competition is to create a competitive advantage. According to Narver & Slater (1990), competitive advantage can be obtained if the company is able to provide more value to customers. According to Porter in Udaya et al, (2013) competitive advantage can come from various company activities carried out such as designing, producing, marketing, and supporting its products. To achieve this, an innovation strategy is very important to encourage the tourism industry to actively develop its tourism so that it is able to maintain consumer loyalty.

A tourist village is a rural area that not only offers a nature-based tourism concept, but can also offer social and cultural tourism that reflects rural life, customs, daily life, building architecture and spatial planning typical of the village or its uniqueness, as well as interesting economic activities that can enhance various aspects of tourism. This concept integrates local communities into the process of planning, developing, and managing tourist destinations. Tourism Villages strive to increase community income, preserve culture and traditions, and protect the environment by involving the community (Pribadi et al., 2021).

Tourism is one of the economic sectors that has a significant contribution to regional income and job creation. Langkat Regency has great tourism potential, both natural tourism, cultural tourism, and historical tourism. Some of the famous tourist destinations in Langkat Regency include Bukit Lawang, Tangkahan, and Telaga Wampu Waterfall. However, this tourism potential has not been utilized optimally.

The tourism industry in Langkat Regency faces various challenges, such as limited infrastructure, lack of effective promotion, and the quality of human resources that need to be improved. Therefore, a comprehensive business development strategy is needed to overcome these challenges and develop the tourism industry in Langkat Regency. The Langkat Regency Government through the Sustainable Tourism Village (Dewi Kejut) program in 2021. This was decided by the Decree of the Head of the Tourism and Culture Office of Langkat Regency Number 430-1128/K/DisparbudLKT/2021. To welcome him, the local community formed a Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis).

If the tourism industry does not strive to develop tourism continuously, then in a short period of time similar tourism will emerge with various qualities and prices. So that the role of innovation becomes more important to win market competition. According to Ellitan and Lina (2009), innovation is a change that includes creativity to produce new products, services, ideas, and processes that are developed inside and outside the organization. According to Sukmadi (2016), innovation means creating new ideas, products, information technology, and practices that are not yet known by many people that are used to encourage major changes in aspects of community life and the environment.

The role of the government is urgently needed in supporting tourism programs, tourism business owners must be able to synergize with each other in creating innovative

tourism in order to be competitive. Tourism will be able to have competitiveness, if they are able to create and apply the latest innovations in the tourism industry.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a data collection method through in-depth interviews with tourism business players, local governments, and local communities. This study uses a qualitative approach that aims to understand symptoms that do not require quantification.

According to Sugiyono (2018), qualitative research methods are research methods based on philosophy that are used to research on scientific conditions (experiments) where the researcher as an instrument, data collection technique and in qualitative analysis puts more emphasis on meaning. The selection of informants was carried out purposively with criteria relevant to this study. The collected data will be analyzed in a qualitative descriptive manner to identify themes that are relevant to business development strategies in the tourism industry in Langkat Regency.

Result and Discussion

The results of this study reveal several key strategies that can be applied to develop the tourism business in Langkat Regency. First, the development of unique and attractive tourism products is a top priority. Langkat Regency has natural and cultural wealth that has the potential to be processed into distinctive tourist attractions, such as adventure tourism in tropical forests, ecological tourism in conservation areas, cultural tourism that introduces local traditions, and appetizing culinary tourism.

The diversification of tourism products will attract tourists with various preferences. Second, improving the quality of tourism infrastructure and facilities is an important foundation. Accessibility to tourist destinations needs to be improved, including roads, transportation, and means of communication. In addition, supporting facilities such as accommodation, restaurants, toilets, and tourist information centers also need to meet good quality standards. The investment in this infrastructure and facilities will provide a comfortable and enjoyable experience for tourists.

Third, effective tourism marketing and promotion play an important role in introducing the tourism potential of Langkat Regency to a wide audience. An integrated marketing strategy, both through conventional and digital media, needs to be designed to reach the appropriate target market.

Attractive and informative promotions will arouse the curiosity of tourists and encourage them to visit Langkat Regency. Fourth, the development of competent tourism human resources (HR) is the key to success. Relevant training and education need to be provided to tourism business people, tour guides, and local communities to have professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes in serving tourists. Quality human resources will create a positive image of tourism in Langkat Regency.

Fifth, partnerships between the government, business people, and the community are an inevitable synergy. Local governments play the role of facilitators and regulators, while tourism business people have a role in providing tourism products and services. Local communities also need to be involved as part of the tourism ecosystem, so that they

can experience the economic and social benefits of tourism development. Finally, sustainable tourism development is an important foundation. This aspect of sustainability includes environmental protection, cultural preservation, and economic empowerment of local communities. Responsible tourism development will ensure that the tourism industry can grow sustainably and have a positive impact on future generations.

Based on the data obtained by the author, a strategy was formulated using the SWOT (Strengths, Opportunities, Weakness, Threats) analysis approach method. A SWOT analysis of the tourism industry in Langkat Regency shows that the main strengths lie in the extraordinary natural wealth, including tropical rainforests, protected wildlife, and stunning waterfalls. In addition, the diversity of local cultures and traditions is also an attraction in itself.

Weaknesses that need to be overcome include inadequate infrastructure, especially accessibility to tourist destinations, as well as the quality of tourism services and human resources that need to be improved. On the other hand, there are great opportunities to develop sustainable tourism that focuses on ecotourism and cultural tourism.

Global tourism trends that lead to authentic and environmentally friendly experiences can be leveraged to attract foreign and domestic tourists. However, the tourism industry in Langkat Regency also faces threats such as competition from other tourist destinations, climate change that can affect natural conditions, and potential environmental damage due to mass tourism.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis Table for the Tourism Industry in Langkat Regency

Factor	Description
Strengths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural wealth: tropical rainforests, wildlife, waterfalls. 2. Diversity of local cultures and traditions.
Weaknesses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infrastructure is inadequate, especially accessibility. 2. The quality of tourism services and human resources needs to be improved.
Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable tourism development (ecotourism and cultural tourism). 2. Global tourism trends: authentic and environmentally friendly experiences.
Threats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competition from other tourist destinations. 2. Climate change. 3. Potential environmental damage due to mass tourism.

The tourism business development strategy in Langkat Regency can be focused on utilizing strengths, overcoming weaknesses, seizing opportunities, and mitigating threats.

Conclusion

The development of the tourism industry in Langkat Regency requires a holistic and sustainable strategy. The strategy must take advantage of existing strengths, such as natural and cultural wealth, and address weaknesses, such as infrastructure and human resource quality. Existing opportunities, such as ecotourism and cultural tourism trends, need to be well captured, and threats, such as competition and climate change, must be anticipated.

The development of unique and attractive tourism products, the improvement of infrastructure and facilities, effective marketing, the development of competent human resources, solid partnerships, and the application of sustainable tourism principles are the keys to the success of the development of the tourism industry in Langkat Regency. With the implementation of the right strategy, Langkat Regency can become a competitive and sustainable leading tourist destination.

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