

Swot Analysis of Tourism Development in Pematang Serai Village, Langkat Regency: Towards an Alternative Tourist Destination in North Sumatra

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze tourism development strategies in Pematang Serai Village as an alternative tourist destination in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra, using a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) approach. The independent variables in this study include Natural Potential, Community Involvement, and Infrastructure Support, while the dependent variable is Tourism Development. The number of respondents was 100 people, consisting of local residents, tourism actors, and visitors. The results of the study show that high natural potential, active community involvement, and growing infrastructure support are important factors in the development of alternative tourism. These findings contribute to the formulation of sustainable tourism development strategies in rural areas.

Keywords: SWOT, Tourism Development, Tourism Village, Alternative, Pematang Serai.



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INTRODUCTION

Pematang Serai Village, located in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, is a rural area endowed with rich natural resources, including lush forests, rivers, and scenic landscapes. This village holds significant potential for nature-based tourism development, particularly due to its authentic rural atmosphere and cultural richness. However, despite its promising natural assets, tourism development in Pematang Serai remains underutilized. Limited promotional activities, inadequate infrastructure, and minimal community engagement have led to a lack of tourist interest and minimal contributions to the village's socio-economic growth (Aulia & Marzuki, 2022).

Globally, rural tourism is increasingly recognized not only as a means of economic diversification but also as a mechanism for promoting environmental sustainability and preserving local traditions (Lane & Kastenholtz, 2015). In this regard, community-based tourism (CBT) has emerged as a strategic model that emphasizes local ownership, participatory planning, and the equitable distribution of tourism benefits (Liu et al., 2019; Scheyvens, 2019). Yet, the implementation of CBT in many developing regions faces various challenges, including lack of capacity, fragmented

coordination, and absence of clear strategic direction conditions also observed in Pematang Serai Village. (Damayanti & Sugiama, 2018)

While several studies have explored the role of community participation and local potential in rural tourism (e.g., Salazar, 2012; Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018), there remains a notable gap in the integration of strategic planning tools such as SWOT analysis within a quantitative empirical framework. Prior research has largely remained conceptual or descriptive, lacking robust analytical models that can empirically assess how key determinants like natural potential, community involvement, and infrastructure development affect tourism outcomes (Hanafiah et al., 2021; Panagiotou, 2020). This represents a critical gap in the literature, particularly in the context of underdeveloped rural tourism destinations in Indonesia.

Moreover, current debates on sustainable rural tourism underscore the importance of multi-dimensional assessments that link strategic environmental factors to measurable tourism impacts (Prayag & Ryan, 2017;Becken & Carmignani, 2020). However, few studies combine strategic frameworks such as SWOT with statistical modeling techniques, such as multiple linear regression, to inform actionable tourism development policies. This methodological integration is crucial for generating evidence-based strategies that are both contextually grounded and policy-relevant.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by investigating tourism development strategies in Pematang Serai Village through the combined use of SWOT analysis and multiple linear regression. This approach will facilitate a deeper understanding of both the qualitative strengths and weaknesses of the village, as well as the quantitative influence of core factors natural potential, community involvement, and infrastructure on tourism development (Creswell, 2018). The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the academic discourse on rural tourism strategy and provide practical recommendations for sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven tourism development at the village level. (Fadhilah & Ismail, 2020)

Literature Review

Tourism Development

Tourism development is a process that includes planning, implementation, and evaluation of strategies in building attractive, sustainable, and competitive tourist destinations (Gunn, 1994; Inskeep, 1991). According to Cooper et al. (2020), modern tourism development must consider the principles of sustainability, inclusivity, and competitiveness. Meanwhile, Becken & Hay (2020) emphasize the importance of integrating environmental conservation and diversification of tourism products in destination development. (Ferianto & Widodo, 2024)

Additionally, Liu et al. (2019) show that effective tourism development must involve community-based approaches and consider local cultural aspects as part of tourism attractions. Hall & Page (2020) also state that connectivity between regions and progressive public policy support are critical to the success of destination development. (Kurniawan & Yulianda, 2019)

Community Participation

Pretty (1995) classifies community participation into seven levels, ranging from manipulation to self-mobilization. (Su & Wall, 2020) In the tourism context, active involvement of the local community is crucial to create sustainability and social acceptance of tourism development. According to Tosun (2020), community participation is not only a social aspect but also an economic empowerment and cultural preservation strategy. (Hakim & Widodo, 2024)

Scheyvens (2019) asserts that community participation can increase a sense of ownership and responsibility for destination management. Cole (2017) adds that participatory approaches strengthen the legitimacy of tourism development policies and reduce social conflicts. A study by Khalid et al. (2023) also shows that involving the community in decision-making can improve the success of tourism projects in rural areas.

Tourism Infrastructure

Infrastructure is an important element supporting tourism activities, including transportation, accommodation, public utilities, and information systems. (Page, 2011) states that high-quality infrastructure will improve tourist comfort and experience. According to Prayag & Ryan (2017), adequate infrastructure directly influences tourist satisfaction and destination competitiveness.

Chin et al. (2019) explain that infrastructure development must adapt to tourists' needs and technological dynamics, such as digital reservation systems and green transportation (Kusuma & Prasetyo, 2019). In a study by Suhartanto et al. (2021), it was found that improvements in public facilities like public toilets, places of worship, and tourist information centers significantly contribute to strengthening destination image. Additionally, community-based infrastructure development strategies can enhance sustainability and cost efficiency (Wijaya et al., 2022).

SWOT

SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a strategic tool used to identify internal and external factors in formulating destination development strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2016). According to Gurel & Tat (2017), SWOT helps in understanding environmental dynamics and prioritizing actions based on current conditions.

Panagiotou (2020) developed a dynamic SWOT model that allows integration of quantitative data in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of tourism organizations. Hanafiah et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of using SWOT in combination with other approaches such as PESTEL and TOWS to design more effective and adaptive destination development strategies. (Rahman & Islam, 2021)

A recent study by Zulfikar et al. (2023) in Indonesia shows that using SWOT in rural tourism planning can identify economic and cultural opportunities that have not been maximally utilized. Furthermore, SWOT also helps mitigate risks from external threats such as climate change and pandemics. (Fitriani & Hasan, 2023)

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive and analytical methods. The quantitative approach was chosen because it can measure social phenomena through numerical data and systematic statistical analysis. The descriptive method aims to describe the actual situation or condition occurring in the field, while the analytical method is used to analyze the relationships among the variables studied. Adiyia et al. (2017) This research focuses on identifying and examining the influence of various factors on tourism development in the studied area.

In increasing the use of SWOT analysis, each SWOT element is Strengths measured from local advantages such as natural potential, local culture, and uniqueness of the destination. Weaknesses include limited facilities, accessibility, and tourism human resource capacity. Opportunities include market development opportunities, government support, and nature-based tourism trends (Nugroho et al., 2020). Threats include threats of competition between destinations, environmental damage, and dependence on certain seasons. These factors were obtained through open questionnaires, short interviews with key informants, and direct observations in the field.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument, the Validity Test was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment correlation, where each item was declared valid if it had a significance value <0.05 . and the Reliability Test using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a value > 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability. The test results showed that all items in the research instrument were valid and reliable for use in data collection.

The population in this study consists of village residents, tourism actors, and tourists in the research area (Rusdianto & Widodo, 2024). This population is considered directly relevant to local tourism development efforts. The research sample consisted of 100 respondents, selected using purposive sampling, a sampling technique based on specific criteria or objectives. The respondents chosen were individuals with direct involvement or experience in tourism activities, so the data obtained could represent the real conditions in the field.

The selection of purposive sampling was carried out with the consideration of obtaining information from respondents who actually have experience and direct involvement in tourism activities, such as local tourism business actors, community leaders, and active tourists (Butarbutar & Nugroho, 2022). To minimize bias, the diversity of respondents was ensured in terms of age, gender, type of involvement in tourism, and length of experience in the sector.

In this study, the variables used consist of:

Independent Variables

- Natural Potential (X1), which includes natural beauty, biodiversity, and local environmental attractions.
- Community Involvement (X2), reflecting active participation of residents in tourism activities, including roles in managing and promoting the destination. (Salazar, 2018)
- Infrastructure (X3), which includes the availability of tourism-supporting facilities and infrastructure such as road access, lodging, public facilities, and others.

Dependent Variable

- Tourism Development (Y), which measures the extent to which tourism develops in the research area, viewed from the increase in visitor numbers, community income, and destination sustainability.

To analyze the collected data, two analysis approaches were used:

- SWOT Analysis, used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the context of tourism development. This analysis provides a strategic overview of the internal and external conditions affecting the tourism sector in the area. (Hanif & Widodo, 2024)
- Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, used to determine the simultaneous and partial effects of the independent variables (X1, X2, X3) on the dependent variable (Y). This analysis was conducted with the assistance of SPSS statistical software to ensure the accuracy and validity of the quantitative data analysis results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Description

Table 1. Respondent Description

No	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
1	Local Residents	40	40%
2	Tourism Actor	30	30%
3	Tourist	30	30%

Source: Data Processing (2025)

Validity and Reliability Test Results

All questionnaire items are valid ($r > 0.3$) and reliable (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7).

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The analyzed tourism destination's main strengths lie in its still pristine natural beauty and authentic local cultural diversity. Attractive landscapes such as rice fields, flowing rivers, and fresh air serve as main attractions for tourists seeking tranquility and natural experiences. Additionally, the richness of local culture, including traditions, arts, and local cuisine, creates a unique differentiation compared to other destinations (Widodo, 2024a). This factor provides a competitive advantage in attracting tourists, especially those seeking experiential tourism and cultural authenticity. Therefore, this strength should be optimally utilized in tourism marketing strategies and sustainable tourism product development.

Weaknesses

Despite its significant tourism potential, the destination still faces several fundamental weaknesses. One of the biggest challenges is poor and difficult-to-navigate road infrastructure, especially during the rainy season. This condition directly affects tourist visitation interest and the logistics distribution that supports tourism activities. Another weakness is the lack of systematic and effective promotion efforts. Information about this destination is still minimal on digital platforms and social media, hindering appeal to tourists from outside the area and abroad (Desy Surya et al., 2022). To address this, collaboration is needed between local government, MSME actors, and local communities to improve accessibility and create more innovative, digitally-based tourism communication strategies.

Opportunities

A major opportunity to be leveraged is the growing trend of ecotourism among domestic and international tourists (Widodo et al., 2024b). Tourists today tend to choose destinations that are environmentally friendly, community-based, and offer authentic experiences (Widodo et al., 2024a). This aligns well with the characteristics of the destination, which is rich in nature and local culture. Additionally, support from the government through policies, village tourism development programs, and budget allocation from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy represents an important momentum for accelerating tourism sector development. This opportunity should be utilized through innovations in nature- and culture-based tourism products, local human resource training, and infrastructure improvements supporting sustainable tourism.

Threats

On the other hand, there are real threats that need to be anticipated. First, increasing competition among tourist destinations, especially from areas that are more advanced in promotion and infrastructure, may shift potential visitors to more developed destinations (Wahab, 2019). Second, global climate change could damage the main attractions, such as droughts, floods, or damage to local ecosystems that are part of natural tourism attractions. These impacts not only affect visitor numbers but also reduce the quality of the tourism experience. Therefore, adaptive strategies based on environmental risk mitigation and the development of competitive advantages that are hard to imitate by other destinations, such as strengthening cultural identity and community-based tourism, are necessary.

Regression Analysis Results

Regression model:

$$Y = 0.412X_1 + 0.379X_2 + 0.264X_3 + e$$

$R^2 = 0.738$ (73.8% of the variation in tourism development is explained by the three independent variables).

Based on the regression results, it can be explained that:

- The coefficient for X1 (Natural Potential) is 0.412, meaning every one-unit increase in natural potential will increase tourism development by 0.412, assuming other variables remain constant.
- The coefficient for X2 (Community Involvement) is 0.379, indicating community involvement also has a positive and significant effect on tourism development.
- The coefficient for X3 (Infrastructure Support) is 0.264, showing a positive influence of infrastructure support on tourism development, although its contribution is smaller than the other two variables.

The significance test results show that all three independent variables have significance values < 0.05 , namely:

Table 2. Significance Test

Variable	Beta Coefficient	Significance
Natural Potential (X1)	0.412	0.000
Community Involvement (X2)	0.379	0.000
Infrastructure (X3)	0.264	0.001

Source: Data Processing (2025)

These results indicate that all three variables significantly influence tourism development (Sari & Hidayat, 2021). Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.738 shows that 73.8% of the variation in tourism development can be explained by the three independent variables: natural potential, community involvement, and infrastructure support. The remaining 26.2% is explained by other factors outside the scope of this research model.

Development Strategies

Enhancing Digital Promotion with a Strengths–Opportunities (SO) Strategy

The Strengths–Opportunities (SO) strategy focuses on leveraging internal strengths to capitalize on external opportunities. In the case of Pematang Serai Village, one of its main strengths is its natural beauty and rich local culture (Widodo, 2024b). To optimize this potential, digital-based promotional strategies offer an effective solution. Utilizing social media, a village tourism website, promotional video content, and collaborations with influencers or travel bloggers can increase the village's visibility as an alternative tourism destination. This aligns with modern tourist behavior, which relies heavily on the internet for destination research. By strengthening its digital presence, the village can reach a broader market and increase visitor numbers.

Improving Accessibility with a Weaknesses–Opportunities (WO) Strategy

The Weaknesses–Opportunities (WO) strategy aims to use external opportunities to overcome internal weaknesses. One of the main challenges in Pematang Serai Village is its underdeveloped road infrastructure and limited public transportation. To address this, improving accessibility is crucial. The local government, private sector, and community can collaborate to build and upgrade road access to the tourism village. Additionally, introducing transport facilities such as tourist shuttles or bike lanes will enhance the tourist experience. Opportunities from central government support for tourism village development programs must be utilized effectively to improve connectivity and the village's overall appeal.

Diversifying Tourism Products with a Strengths–Threats (ST) Strategy

The Strengths–Threats (ST) strategy is aimed at using internal strengths to counteract external threats. One such threat is competition from other more developed tourism destinations in North Sumatra. Therefore, diversifying tourism products is essential. Pematang Serai Village can develop various attractions such as agro-tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, and homestay experiences (Tam, 2021). By expanding the range of tourism activities, the village can attract a broader market segment and reduce dependency on a single tourism type. This strategy also reinforces the village's identity as a unique destination offering experiences not found elsewhere.

Human Resource Training and Risk Management with a Weaknesses–Threats (WT) Strategy

The Weaknesses–Threats (WT) strategy aims to minimize weaknesses and avoid threats. A current weakness is the lack of human resource capacity in the tourism sector. Additionally, threats such as health crises, natural disasters, or global economic fluctuations can negatively impact tourism. Therefore, ongoing training in hospitality, destination management, and digital marketing is needed. Moreover, developing a risk management plan and emergency response system is essential to ensure tourist safety and comfort. With improved human resource capacity and risk mitigation strategies, Pematang Serai Village will be better prepared to face future challenges professionally and sustainably.

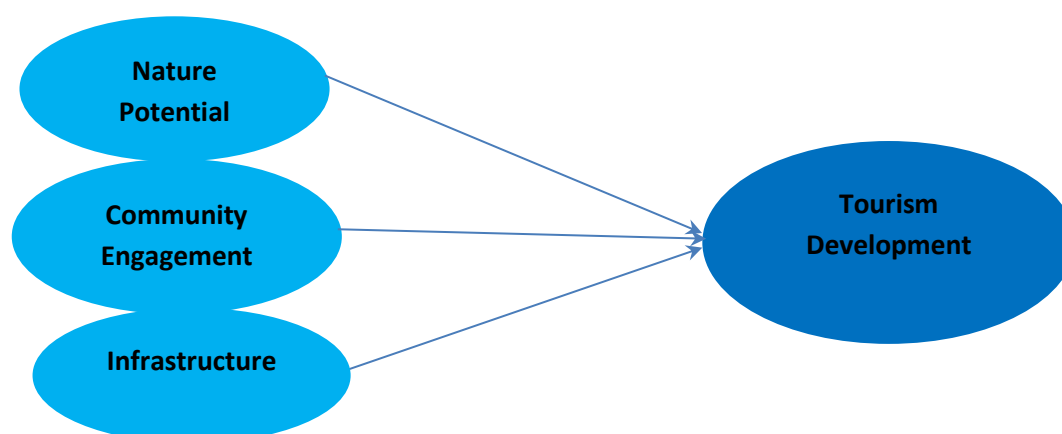


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Data Processing (2025)

The results of this study also indicate that they are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the importance of natural potential and community involvement in the success of tourism destination development. As stated by Suansri (2018), community-based and nature-based tourism has been shown to contribute significantly to local economic sustainability and cultural preservation. In addition, the regression results showing a positive influence of infrastructure on tourism development are in line with the findings of Hanafiah & Hemdi (2019), which emphasize that ease of access and supporting facilities are the main determinants in increasing destination attractiveness.

However, this study faced a number of challenges during the data collection process, especially related to the limitations of respondents who are technologically literate in filling out digital questionnaires, as well as geographical constraints in reaching several remote areas that are the objects of the study. In addition, the use of purposive sampling techniques has the potential to cause selection bias because it only involves parties who are considered relevant, which may not fully represent the entire population involved in the village tourism sector.

Another limitation lies in the quantitative approach used, which although it is able to explain the relationship between variables statistically, has not been able to fully capture social, cultural, and behavioral dynamics in depth. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a mixed methods or qualitative approach to obtain a more contextual and holistic understanding of the factors that influence the development of community and nature-based tourism destinations. (Sugiyono, 2017)

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that natural potential is the dominant factor supporting the development of the tourism destination, naturally attracting visitors. However, active involvement of the local community is also a key determinant in creating acceptance and sustainability in tourism management. This participation not only strengthens a sense of ownership but also enhances the social structure in managing the destination. On the other hand, limited infrastructure remains a significant challenge, despite its vital role in improving accessibility and tourist comfort. Therefore, developing and improving infrastructure is an urgent need to support the overall advancement of the tourism sector. (Zhang & Lei, 2023)

Following these conclusions, it is recommended that a strong synergy be established between the government, community, and tourism stakeholders in formulating and implementing sustainable tourism development strategies (Yoeti, 2017). The government is expected to provide pro-people policies and facilitate active public participation. Moreover, tourism destination promotion should be intensified through the strategic use of social media, considering its key role in reaching broader tourism markets, especially among younger generations. Finally, enhancing local human resource

capacity through training and mentoring is crucial so that the community can act not merely as spectators, but as the main actors in managing tourism based on local potential.

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