Rural Tourism Recovery Strategy
for Strengthening the Village Economy

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Abstracts. Tourism sector is one of the leading national sectors that has multiplier effect on other sectors that may encourage the national and regional economic development. Tourist village is used as an alternative strategy in village development. Central Java is one province with a large number of tourist villages. Several areas in Central Java are developing tourist villages, one of which is Jepara Regency that is developing cluster-based tourist villages. Jepara Regency has three clusters of tourist villages with each characteristic and potential. This research aims at formulating a development strategy of tourist village cluster as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists. It uses a mixed approach using primary data, the determination of research sample using the key-person method with purposive sampling technique. It uses a SWOT analysis technique. The analysis has found that determining the development strategy of tourist village clusters in Jepara Regency as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists resulted in the Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategy in three clusters of tourist villages. It is implicated in increasing tourist village attractions by utilizing the potential of tourist villages that have not been managed yet; building public facilities and tourism facilities that support tourist villages; optimizing human resources; conducting branding, advertising, and selling through social media, print media, and cooperation with private sectors by holding routine activities, festivals, and tour packages; and maximizing TIC as a tourist information center and DESWARA as a tourist village coordinator in Jepara Regency.

Keywords: strategy · cluster · tourist village · tourism · length of stay

1 Introduction

Tourism sector is one of the leading national sectors that has multiplier effect on other sectors that may encourage the national and regional economic development. It plays a role as being a source of foreign exchange earners, creating jobs, increasing regional and state income, developing business and infrastructure, and introducing the nation's culture. The tourism sector contributes to the national economy growth through the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the foreign exchange earnings, the foreign tourist visits, and the domestic tourist trips. The achievement of target and consistency of the national tourism sector contribution to the country's economy growth makes the

national tourism sector the leading sector that contributes the largest foreign exchange to the national economy.

The developing national tourism sector is rural and urban tourism. Rural tourism emphasizes on the attractions of rural tourism and rural community life, which consists of rural tourism and tourist village. Tourist village is an area that has potential and uniqueness as the tourist attractions including the unique life experience in rural areas and the traditions of rural communities with all their potentials (Agnes Wirdayanti et al., 2021). Tourist village plays an important role in reducing the burden of urbanization, providing job opportunities, reducing unemployment, and improving people's welfare. It is used as an alternative strategy in village development. Indonesia has thousands of tourist villages with various potential tourism attractions.

Based on the Village Potential Statistics in 2018, Indonesia has 1,734 tourist villages on various islands. Java and Bali have the most tourist villages, amounted 857 tourist villages. Then Sumatra has 355 tourist villages, followed by Nusa Tenggara with 189 tourist villages, Sulawesi with 119 tourist villages, Kalimantan with 117 tourist villages, Papua with 74 tourist villages, and Maluku with 23 tourist villages. Central Java Province is one of the provinces in Java-Bali that has the most tourist villages. Based on the data obtained from the Youth, Sports and Tourism Office of Central Java Province in 2020, Central Java Province has 551 tourist villages. The following data presents the number of tourist villages in Central Java Province during the period of 2016 - 2020:

Figure 1 shows that the number of tourist villages in Central Java has increased from year to year, in which there was a significant increase from 2019 to 2020 with 198 tourist villages, from originally 353 tourist villages in 2019 to be 551 tourist villages in 2020. One of the regencies in Central Java that has attracted public's attention for its many potential tourist attractions is Jepara Regency, which is located at the northern tip of Java that has various regional reliefs in the form of highlands, lowlands, and small islands. Therefore, Jepara Regency has extraordinary natural tourism, cultural tourism, creative crafts, and other tourism that attract the tourists to visit and enjoy its tourist attractions. Based on the data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) of Jepara Regency, it has about 40 tourist attractions in the form of natural, historical, cultural, and artificial
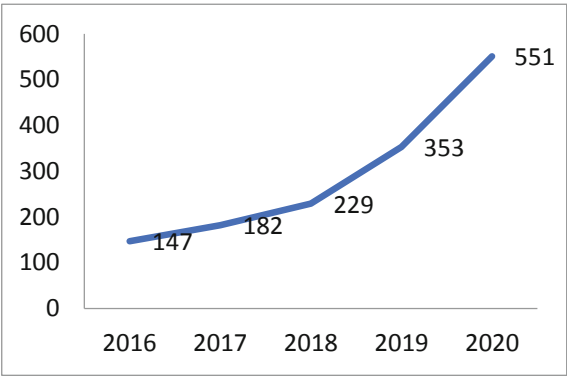

Fig. 1. The Number of Tourist Villages in Central Java Source: Department of Youth, Sports and Tourism of Central Java Province

tourism. The Decree of the Regent of Jepara Number 556/329 of 2020 states that Jepara Regency has 24 tourist villages including Bondo village, Mulyoharjo village, Plajan village, Tempur village, Petekeyan village, Troso village, Karimunjawa village, and other tourist villages. The tourist village has its own potential and characteristics to be developed, such as Tempur village that offers the natural charm of hillside countryside, Mulyoharjo village that offers carving and sculpture, Troso village that offers Troso weaving craft, and Karimunjawa village that offers the beautiful charm of the underwater world and culture, and also the tourism charm owned by other tourist villages.

Based on the data from Department of Tourism and Culture of Jepara Regency, the visits of foreign and domestic tourists have relatively increased every year, but there was a significant decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic with government's policy regarding the closure of tourist attraction objects. The following data presents the reports of tourist visits in tourist villages in Jepara Regency during the period of 2016 - 2020:

Figure 2 shows that the number of tourist visits to tourist villages in Jepara Regency in 2016–2020 has increased every year, except a decrease in tourist visits in 2020. The highest number of tourist visits was in Plajan village, then Mulyoharjo village, followed by Troso village, and other tourist villages. Management and development of tourist villages is conducted by the tourism awareness groups (*pokdarwis*) consisting of local village communities. The promotion and marketing of tourist village attractions are conducted by several parties, including the village government, local government, village community groups, and other interested parties. Therefore, the tourist visit to tourist villages relatively increase every year. The tourist visit to tourist villages decreased from the previous year during the COVID-19 pandemic, but it was still high enough so that the tourist villages could survive in the COVID-19 pandemic.
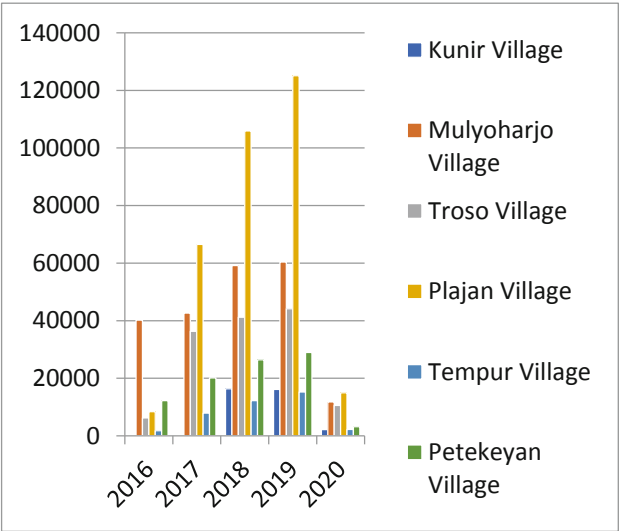

Fig. 2. Tourist Visits in Tourist Villages in Jepara Regency in 2016–2020 Source: Department of Tourism and Culture of Jepara Regency, data processed

Tourist villages in Jepara Regency have quite a high success rate with the increasing number of tourist visits every year. This is supported by the geographical location of various regions, the locations of several tourist villages in one area or those that tend to be close to each other, or the various tourism potentials of each tourist village. Therefore, Jepara Regency has three tourist village clusters. The first cluster has six tourist villages, the second cluster has eight tourist villages, and the third cluster has ten tourist villages. Each tourist village cluster has its own characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages. Based on this explanation, Jepara Regency has 24 tourist villages with various tourist attractions, tourist village locations that tend to be close to each other, and the stable increasing number of tourist visits, so that Jepara Regency has three tourist village clusters with each characteristic of tourist villages. Therefore, it is important to conduct a research on the development strategy of tourist village cluster as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists. The research aims at formulating the development strategy of tourist village cluster as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists.

2   Research Method

This research uses a mixed approach by using primary data. The primary data are obtained from local communities, tourist village managers, and agencies or institutions related to the research. The population of this research are 24 tourist villages in Jepara Regency, with the key-person method research sample using purposive sampling technique. The key-persons used in this research include Department of Tourism and Culture of Jepara Regency, the management of tourist villages, and the local community in tourist villages.

This research uses SWOT analysis technique. SWOT analysis describes an analysis related to the internal environment of business in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and also explores the external environment of business in terms of opportunities and threats. It is used to classify the organizational environmental conditions into internal and external factors, which then are determined by the organizational strategy. It is conducted by comparing internal factors with external factors. The internal factors will be analyzed using the Internal Strategic Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) matrix, while the external factors will be analyzed using the External Strategic Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS) matrix. After compiling the IFAS and EFAS matrices, it is followed by conducting the SWOT matrix analysis to formulate strategies that can be used.

3   Results and Discussion

The determination of the tourist village cluster development strategy as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists is conducted using a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis is influenced by internal factors in the form of strengths and weaknesses and external factors in the form of opportunities and threats. This research uses 40 variable items with 10 variable items in each factor.

In formulating the development strategy of tourist village cluster as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists using SWOT analysis, the results of the SWOT matrix are in quadrant I using the Strength-Opportunities (SO) strategy. These results are in line with previous research conducted by Pradikta (2013), Pambudi et. al., (2014),

Mujanah et al., (2015), Hanif & Fafurida (2018), Susanty et al., (2017), and Arintoko et al., (2020), which have conducted development strategies using SWOT analysis and have obtained the results of the development strategy using the Strength-Opportunities (SO) strategy.

The strategy implementation conducted in the development strategy of tourist village cluster as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists includes increasing tourist village attractions by utilizing village potential that has not been managed yet and increasing amenity (infrastructure, public facilities, tourist facilities) of tourist villages. The implementation of the development strategy is in line with the research results conducted by Pradikta (2013), which utilizes the strengths and opportunities possessed by developing attractions, improving infrastructure, and repairing roads. However, this research only focuses on one tourist attraction, Gunung Rowo Indah Reservoir, while this research uses a development strategy for clusters of tourist villages in Jepara Regency that have many and various tourist attractions.

A research conducted by Mujanah et al., (2015) related to the strategy of developing hinterland tourism villages in Mount Bromo results in the Strength-Opportunities (SO) strategy that is implemented by expanding the market through promotion, providing various attractions by developing agro-tourism-based potential, building economic activities with communities, and empowering communities. The development strategy is in line with the development strategy conducted in this research, but is different from the basis of the tourism offered. The research conducted by Mujanah focuses on the basis of agro-tourism tourism and is located in the highlands, while in this research there are various tourist attractions located in various areas including highlands, lowlands, and islands.

A research conducted by Arintoko et al., (2020) related to community-based development strategies in the Borobudur tourist village area results in Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategy by strengthening institutions facilitated by local governments, continuing to protect road infrastructure development, establishing stakeholder collaboration, developing tour packages, and improvement of human resources. The development strategy is in line with the development strategy conducted in this research, but it uses a different cluster basis from the research conducted by Arintoko that uses a community basis.

The strategy implementation in the development strategy of tourist village cluster as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists is also conducted by increasing branding, advertising, and selling through print media, social media, and collaboration with the private sector by holding routine activities, festivals, and tour packages; and maximizing TIC as a tourist information center and the DESWARA Organization as the coordinator of tourist villages in Jepara Regency. This development strategy is in line with the research results conducted by Susanty et al., (2017) in Borobudur-Dieng cluster development strategy, which promotes promotion through social media, maximizing TIC, procurement of tour package trips, and cooperation with travel agencies in the promotion of tour packages. Tour packages are conducted because Borobudur and Dieng are in different areas and tourist attractions, but these differences are combined through ecotourism-based tour packages. This is also conducted in the tourist village cluster having a variety of tourist attractions and different locations.

Another research is conducted by Pambudi et al., (2014) in the development strategy of natural tourism in Gunung Pancar Nature Tourism Park that recommends a product development strategy by developing attractiveness, optimizing stakeholder cooperation, increasing citizen participation and the role of associations in tourism development. The tourism development strategy is in line with the development strategy conducted in this research by maximizing the role of tourism actor associations through the DESWARA Organization as a tourist village coordinator in Jepara Regency, and optimizing stakeholder cooperation through collaboration with the private sector in the procurement of activities and tour packages.

A research conducted by Hanif & Fafurida (2018) in the development strategy of small and medium eggplant processed food industries results in a strategy in quadrant II, the Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategy, through the establishment of associations of industry players and improving product quality. This is in line with the strategy used in developing a tourist village cluster in Jepara Regency that maximizes DESWARA Organization as a forum/tourist village association in Jepara Regency and increases tourist village attractions by utilizing the potential of tourist villages. A research in the industrial sector is also conducted by Anam & Setyawan, (2019) in a cluster-based regional superior product development strategy at the center of the rattan industrial area in Jepara Regency, which uses the Strength-Threat (ST) strategy through product innovation, maintaining quality and price, and expanding cooperation network. This strategy is used because it has strength in the form of abundant skilled resources, but there are limited rattan raw materials that seem to be replaced by synthetic rattan in demand by consumers. However, this strategy can be adopted in the development strategy of a tourist village cluster in Jepara Regency by maintaining the quality of tourist attractions and cooperating with the private sector. Another research in the industrial sector conducted by Raharjo (2012) in small and medium industry clusters results in a cluster development strategy through the provision of coaching facilities, human resource development, and marketing assistance through promotions and exhibitions. This strategy can be adopted in the development strategy of tourist village cluster as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists in the form of development of human resources through coaching and training conducted for tourist village managers and local communities in tourist villages, marketing assistance conducted via print media, social media, and collaboration with the private sector in the procurement of activities, festivals, and tour packages.

4 Conclusion

From the analysis on how to answer the research objectives, this research has found that the development strategy of tourist village cluster resulted in the Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategy in three tourist village clusters. The development strategy of tourist village cluster as an effort to increase the length of stay of tourists can be applied as follows:

1. Tourist Village Cluster 1, increasing tourist village attractions by utilizing the tourist village potential that has not been managed yet; maintaining and improving the condition of public facilities and tourism facilities that support tourism villages; optimizing human resources, both managers and the community through training

and coaching; improving branding, advertising, and selling through social media, print media, and cooperation with the private sector by holding routine activities, festivals, and tour packages; maximizing TIC as a tourist information center and DESWARA as a tourist village coordinator in Jepara Regency.

2. Tourist Village Cluster 2, maintaining and increasing tourist village attractions by utilizing the potential of tourist villages that have not been managed yet; improving the condition of public facilities and building tourist facilities that support tourist villages; optimizing human resources, both managers and the community through training and coaching; improving branding, advertising, and selling through social media, print media, and cooperation with the private sector by holding routine activities, festivals, and tour packages; maximizing TIC as a tourist information center and DESWARA as a tourist village coordinator in Jepara Regency.

3. Tourist Village Cluster 3, increasing tourist village attractions by utilizing the tourism village potential that has not been managed yet; building public facilities and tourism facilities that support tourist villages; optimizing human resources, both managers and the community through training and coaching; improving branding, advertising, and selling through social media, print media, and collaboration with the private sector by holding routine activities, festivals, and tour packages; maximizing TIC as a tourist information center and DESWARA as a tourist village coordinator in Jepara Regency.

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