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### A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY IN TOBA REGION

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#### **Abstract**

The research aims to propose a strategic analysis of sustainable tourism development in Toba area. Toba, as pilot areas in developing an economy based on tourism in Indonesia, consists of the diverse human and natural resources. The empowerment of these assets requires a prudent approach to develop reciprocal contribution to local community welfare. It sheds light on the approach of constructive tourism. Tourism, as an amalgamation of stakeholders, contributes and offers a resolution to achieve the goal. As this backdrop, the research involved 150 respondents and small and medium enterprise in Toba area. Coupled with the study objective, SWOT analysis promotes strategic findings to delineate several assortments of feasibility programs including the outcomes, mechanisms of business production and distribution, and marketing guidelines. The study denoted the effectiveness and efficiency of sustainable tourism development in particular area eventually.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism, inevitably, encapsulated multidimensional and multifaceted enormous activities. In this vein, tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual permanent places of residence for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes (Dabour, 2003). In this respect, tourism caters remarkable and influential harbinger of adverse social transformation. It attributes to egalitarianism in a social context. In this case, the embodiment of an assurance in community equality should embrace the respect for the economic sector, political will, and social prominence. Coupled with the

proliferation of competition in the era of ASEAN Economic Community, an area requires an adaptation to global economic and regional integration. In this respect, tourism inaugurates endogenous and exogenous elements to peruse dominant domain in a particular area. Doubtless, tourism centers on the social involvement and pivots the sustainable consideration. In this sense, tourism has characterized the activities that promote regional development as it contributes to social and economic welfare by enabling the development of communities (Briones-Juarez, Padilla, & Badillo, 2013). With this in mind, the local community demanded a well-prepared program continually. In this spectrum, sustainability has generated tourist layout changes since their concept involves the development of activities suitable for environments of protection (cultural, social and ecological environment), these dimensions make sustainable tourism development a complex construct because each element relates recursively with the other elements (Dabour, 2003). At a closer look, these elements interfused and contributed to the development of community through tourism simultaneously. Bearing this in mind, sustainable development emerged as a key issue in the development agenda for the tourism industry in many developing countries (Rezarta, 2014). In this token, concern about the further development of tourism and at the same time further disruption of the environment (both ecological and socio-cultural) has resulted in the global and inclusive concept of sustainability (Durovic & Lovrentjev, 2014). At a closer look, tourism development consists of both positive and negative impacts on destinations. It ushers the society to driving force of economic turbulence. It reflects that the local community requires the liminal capacity of the population to cope with the challenges. That said, sustainable tourism development attempts to find a balance between these impacts to create an improved quality of life for the host community and the destination (Yazdi, 2012). In conjunction with the sustainability, business mindset bolsters the production and distribution of its service and products. Not surprisingly, marketing guidelines have expanded the concept of tourism and sustainability for the community. Therefore, sustainable tourism development conveys the optimal use of social, natural, cultural and financial resources for national development on an equitable and self-sustaining basis to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life through partnerships among local government, private sector and communities (Rasa, 2014), especially the community in Toba.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Sustainable Tourism and the Indicators**

Tourism comprises of advantages and disadvantages in a region. This suggests that development of tourism captivates the initiatives to support indigenous people in promoting and invigorating tourism sustainability threshold. On that basis, tourism renders a job creation and feasible acquisition through the rigorous arrangement. According to Tanguay, 768 different indicators of sustainable tourism induced in the literature (Tanguay, 2011). WTO, furthermore, has defined sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities (WTO, 1996). In this point, WTO

provides set of core indicators of value to managers and planners of tourism destinations as following: site protection, stress, use intensity, social impact, development control, waste management, planning process, critical ecosystems, consumer satisfaction, local satisfaction, and tourism contribution to the local economy (UNWTO, 2005). Moreover, Ali and Nasim contended that the sustainable tourism emphasizes three prominent features i.e. quality, continuity, and balance. In this point, quality underscores sustainable tourism provides a quality experience for visitors while improving the quality of life of the host community and protecting the quality of the environment. Following that, the continuity accentuates sustainable tourism that ensures the continuity of the natural resources and the culture of the host community with satisfying experiences for visitors. Equally important, the balance highlights that the sustainable tourism balances the needs of the tourism industry, supporters of the environment, and the local community. Consequently, sustainable tourism reinforces mutual goals and cooperation among visitors, the host community, and the destinations (Mamhoori & Nasim, 2015).

On the other hand, sustainable tourism is one of the approaches to the development of the tourism sector, which should assist the decision-maker in tourism to best balance its positive and negative effects on current and future population (Nations, 2001). Based on general starting points of sustainable development in 1992, World Wildlife Fund and Tourism proposed the creation of the set of principles for sustainable tourism (UNSD, 2016). In this spectrum, it outlines resources sustainably, reducing over-consumption and waste, maintaining diversity, integrating tourism into planning, supporting local economies, involving local communities, consulting stakeholders and the public, training staff, marketing tourism responsibly, and undertaking research. As this backdrop, considerable scholars pinpoint the importance of sustainability measurement by usage of indicators. For instance, Oyola claimed that it is “a common practice to use an indicator system for designing and implementing tourism models” with focus on sustainability (Lozana-Oyola, Blancas, & González, 2012). Hence, the numbers of studies describe indicators and its usefulness as a measurement and planning tool of tourism sustainability since it is an open system with possible adoptions of different frameworks (Zuzana & Zuzana, 2015).

### **Stakeholders**

According to Freeman, a stakeholder is ‘any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives’ (Freeman, 1984). Importantly, the effort to integrate tourism in rural structures reposes bottom-up processes, networking and multi-sector synergies (Fadeeva, 2005; Saxena & Ilbery, 2008). Doubtless, it stems from a holistic theorization of development, implying the development of all economic sectors, the mobilization of local potentialities, a focus on SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and entrepreneurship, strong local/regional governance, innovations tailored to local/regional specificities and a sustainability vision (Tödtling, Lehner, & Kaufmann, 2009). In terms of sustainable tourism development, Swarbrooke divided stakeholders into five main categories: governments, tourists, host communities, tourism business

and other sectors (Swarbrooke, 2001). In this respect, it evinces a salient necessity and comparison among all stakeholders who partake in the area. Not surprisingly, when it comes to sustainable tourism development outcomes, governments remain particularly concerned with issues relating to tourism infrastructure, such as transportation and accommodation (Hardy & Beeton, 2001). Alternately, host communities are often more concerned with local issues, such as the effects of tourism on their community, their quality of life and the need for sustainability (Getz & Timur, 2005). As Panyik, Costa, and Rátz (2011) assert, even if not all stakeholders are equally involved in the decision-making process, it is necessary that all interests are identified, understood and considered accordingly.

Arguably, collaboration and networking embrace stimulating factors such as the diversity of relevant actors and their varied interests and priorities, the lack of time, resources, knowledge/expertise and training, and local attachment, a mentality of low engagement in wider destination development processes, and the avoidance of pursuing commercial objectives by particularly small-scale businesses (Bramwell, 2011; Haven-Tang & Jones, 2012). Therefore, the capacity for the holistic consideration of the factors involved in tourism development is a crucial element for development planning, particularly with reference to sustainability (Panyik et al., 2011).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The research undertaken in Toba area involved local stakeholders' participation in tourism development. In a specific context, the research incorporated three parts. The first is literature study consisting of a collection of preliminary data related to geography, demographic, economic, social-cultural and natural resources in the study area Samosir, Toba. Secondly, the survey is the primary method of data collection by providing questions to the individual respondents, usually conducted by distributing questionnaires or interviews. In conjunction with these activities, the survey is a method to gather information from groups representing a population in Samosir Regency, Toba. For this reason, the category of respondents consisted of traditional/community leaders, economic actors, businessperson, trader, domestic tourists, and international tourists. The last part is Focused Group Discussion (FGD). In this corridor, FGD represents qualitative research method to obtain comprehensive understanding information based on particular people and discuss a specific topic of interest. The goal is to obtain feedback or information about issues that are local and specific. Per this outcome, the study validated and refined the results of survey questionnaire/interviews.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Inclusive development based on tourism refers to the dimension of economic benefit, livelihood impacts, participation, and partnership. In this viewpoint, the expectation of formation for an inclusive economy of a pilot area can develop a competitive and sustainable destination. The study shed lights on the fundamentals of social-economic growth. In this context, it becomes points of growth that will proliferate economic growth in surrounding areas. Following this, the involvement of local community participation, particularly low-income communities, and the local tourism

value chain activities contribute significantly that establish in close cooperation with local tourism businesses. In this direction, it aims to comprehend the needs of the product or service that can be provided by the local community.

In a bigger setting, potential tourism resources owned by Toba area and long-term benefits will lead inclusive tourism development as a role model to several tourist destinations in Indonesia. In common parlance, Lake Toba is one of the famous tourist destinations in Indonesia. Geographically, Lake Toba is in the province of North Sumatra in the midst of Samosir Island. In this area, Samosir District has an area of 2069.05 km<sup>2</sup> consisting of land and lake. To be precise, Samosir regency consists of nine districts, where six districts on the island of Samosir, and three districts in the outer circumference area of Lake Toba at the back of the Bukit Barisan Mountains. The nine districts consist of the area of Sianjur Mulamula, Harian, Siotio, Onan Runggu, Nainggolan, Palipi, Ronggur Nihuta, Pangururan, and Simanindo. According to Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 121,924 population inhabits Samosir district with a density of 84.19 per km<sup>2</sup>. Based on findings of the feasibility of mapping and analysis of potential resources, there are several business development opportunities that can be developed in an inclusive economy pilot area in the tourism sector. Results of feasibility analysis of SMEs in Samosir Regency-Toba pointed out that there are 28 potential businesses to be further developed. The SME mapping caters to the following Grouping Matrix Enterprises (Table 1).

Table 1. *Grouping Matrix Enterprise*

<b>Transport</b>	<b>House</b>
The survey data concluded that business of transportation is not feasible to proceed on incubation stage due to unavailable financial data.	The feasible lodging business to be developed and proceeded into the incubation stage consisted of 4 people.
<b>Food</b>	<b>Souvenir</b>
The feasible restaurant business to be developed and proceeded into the incubation stage consisted of 6 people.	The feasible souvenir business to be developed and proceeded into the incubation stage consisted of 14 people.

The Grouping Matrix Enterprise analysis is reposed in four benefits. It then outlined the contribution to tourism viability in Toba as exhibited in table 2. Data collection activities to the respondents, as depicted in figure 1, consist of: (1) Business communities (type A); (2) Domestic and Foreign Travelers (type B); (3) Indigenous People / Communities (type C); and (4) the Local Government (District / District) (type D). While respondent's business/economy (type A) is divided into four categories: (1) economic actors trade (type A1); economic actor's restaurants and food (type A2); economic actor's services (type A3); and economic actors class manufacturing SMEs (Type A4). The total benefits reflect the importance of corresponding aspects that contribute to local development, especially for business production and distribution.

Table 2. *Total of Benefits*

<b>Total of Benefit</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>House</b>	Providing accommodation (hotel, resort) for tourists both domestic and international tourists. Hotel service and the rooms are strongly recommended to comply with minimum standard fixtures in the room; benchmark to branded hotels like Ibis Hotel, including places of worship (such as prayer room).
<b>Food</b>	Providing certified Halal Food as a significant strategy to attract Muslim tourists both domestic (Indonesia) and international (from the Middle East, Malaysia). So, travelers are convenient in finding halal food when traveling to Samosir Island / Lake Toba.
<b>Transport</b>	Providing transport services by air, land, and water from Kualanamu Airport to Parapat (or elsewhere on the shores of Lake Toba) in the form of minibus and transport service crossing to Samosir Island (ferry or boat capacity of more than 30 people), as well as transport service during a tour on the island.
<b>Souvenir</b>	Providing souvenir for tourists (typical food of Samosir cake, handicraft, or clothing).

An analysis of the internal environment in Toba consists of an internal analysis of the strengths and weaknesses aspects. Based on the observation, survey, and analysis of the relatively low influx of tourists, both domestic and international countries to Toba-Samosir compared to the decade of the 1990s, the reality indicated the relative dominant weakness factors than strength. To increase the tourist's onset, Toba required strategic planning so that vulnerability factors can be modified or reversed into a strength factor in table 3. Table 3 emphasizes three strength analysis and six-weakness analysis. The analysis supports the stakeholders in planning for marketing guidelines.

Table 3. *Strength and Weakness Analysis*

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
1. There are many tourist attraction sites in Lake Toba and Samosir.	1. Lack of Halal culinary
2. Nature: panorama and mild temperature.	2. Lack of Clean Environment
3. Brand Lake Toba has renowned protractedly and exist.	Remote airport (Toba Samosir ↔ Kualanamu)
	3. Unskilled Human resources in Toba/Samosir
	4. Limited Ferry to transport the vehicles
	5. Unintegrated management of tourism sites with supporting facilities (transportation, hotels, culinary, souvenirs)
	6. Prohibition of coverage for events / religious rituals

In addition to internal analysis, an analysis of the external environment also provides an overview of the opportunities and challenges facing the tourism in Toba in table 4. Table 4 pinpoints four opportunities in Toba area and three threats analysis at the same time.

Table 4. *Opportunities and Threats Analysis*

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
1. Potential organized supporting components of tourism with tourist attraction sites.	1. The challenges of managing resembling tourist sites in Indonesia, such as Lake Batur, Mount Bromo, Bali.
2. The potential for the development of tourist trips packages at Lake Toba and surroundings.	2. The challenge of managing common tourist sites in ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.
3. The high potential for international tourist influx to Indonesia.	3. The challenge of managing similar tourist sites in countries such as Europe, China, USA, and Australia.
4. The growth of the middle-class segment in Indonesia.	

Based on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) possessed and Tourism Toba-Samosir currently encountered, it proposed a variety of more specific business strategies using TOWS Matrix approach in the short term. As the literature asserts, the essence of the TOWS Matrix is to conform between external factors (Opportunities & Threats) and internal (Strengths and Weaknesses) that requires prudent deliberation. Based on the field study analysis, the proffer strategies contain S-O strategy, W-O strategy, S-T strategy, and W-T strategy as exhibited in table 5 and 6.

Table 5.

*S-T and W-T Strategies*

<b>Strength-Threat (S-T) Strategies</b>	<b>Weakness-Threat (W-T) Strategies</b>
<b>W</b>	
ST-1. Increase marketing online promotion activities, particularly Tour of Toba to the public in major cities in Indonesia.	WT-1. Conducting management assistance to the supporting SMEs unit and managers of tourist sites.
ST-2. Increase marketing Online promotion activities for Tour of Toba Program to communities in major cities in Foreign countries (ASEAN, Europe).	WT-2. Improving the system of Customer Service and Customer Relationship Management.
ST-3. Open Representative Office Marketing Program Tour of Toba in several potential major cities.	WT-3. Upgrading standards and competence of both quantity and quality of human resources

In the implementation strategies, Toba demanded policies to support such as marketing, production, management & human resource, and finance. In this direction, the brand raised in the research is "Tour of Toba"; a word that is straightforward to pronounce and to remember, enabling people to mention or perform a quest. In this sense, building a brand is using narratives to convey the message in a fun way, communicative and effective. Undoubtedly, the procedures undertaken involved the image solicited how to communicate the image to the public, sample image of a contented family enjoying the open space atmosphere, a sample image of a delighted family on excursion, a sample image of holiday in Lake Toba by means of transportation, a sample image of nature-based holiday of Efrata Waterfall in Harian District. In the framework of a marketing campaign to attract both domestic and foreign travelers, the community needs to do promotional efforts as follows: promotional programs, marketing cooperation with commercial entities and local governments, the target audience, time promotions, and targeted response. In the same line of thought, Marketing Execution Plan embodied the Off-Line Marketing and Digital Marketing Program.

Table 6. *Strength and Weakness Analysis*

<b>Strength-Opportunity (S-O) Strategies</b>	<b>Weakness-Opportunity (W-O) Strategies</b>
SO-1. Developing concept of Joint Marketing and Travel packages in collaboration with different Indonesian Tour and Travel Institution.	WO-1. A joint operation between the various viable business units of SMEs with the site managers, Tour and Travel agencies in Various cities.
SO-2. Travel site managers perform different Cooperation with SME Supporting Unit (including food cluster, residence, transport, and souvenir) that deserves to be developed.	WO-2. Various business units of SMEs obtain Investment Capital loans and Capital from the financial institution and Non-Bank (for example, financial institutions formed by the Chamber of Commerce)
SO-3. Developing concept of Joint Marketing and Travel packages in collaboration with different overseas Tour and Travel Institutions (ASEAN, China, Europe)	WO-3. Holding various operations management training, customer service, training of hygiene or sanitation, and financial management training for SMEs.
	WO-4. Cooperation with Samosir Regency, relevant authorities, community leaders and halal certification institutions.
	WO-5. Providing convenient and safe transportation facilities from the airport - Samosir Island - airport (shuttle bus, boat/ferry)



## CONCLUSIONS

Tourism highlights an amalgamation of stakeholders and sequences of activities in contributing to social development. In this point of entry, the expectation is to resume its rapid growth in the future because of improved living standards, rising incomes, and amounts of free time, the falling real cost of travel, and improved transportation around the world (Yazdi, 2012). Importantly, tourism considers the sustainability and adequate livelihood in order to protect the natural resources for our future generation (Khayankan, 2016). Taking the cues from sustainable tourism, the necessity to build Community Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTEs) capacity in terms of tourism product development, linkages with the tourism market and further enhances community collective awareness of tourism opportunities in their locality (Chiutsi & Mudzengi, 2012). Bearing this in mind, local-level participation is essential for achieving the global goal of sustainable tourism development (Salazar, 2012). Undoubtedly, local communities' expectations concerning tourism development in the research area rely on diverse natural and cultural resources. Equally important, the resilience and adaptability of the local community in dealing with challenges in tourism should accommodate the local and regional, investigate the phenomenon, invent products, innovate the needs, and maintain the service quality. In consonance with earlier discussion, local communities' expectations concerning tourism development in the research area rely on diverse natural and cultural resources. In this research, SWOT analysis appraised the potential business of community-based tourism in Toba. Hence, measurement and management of all types of tourism impact remain important (Buckley, 2012).

Achievement of the objectives of the research pertaining the development of Samosir Regency-Toba is based on the incipient tourism sector and in accordance with the output stages of planning that includes feasibility studies, business plans, mechanisms of production-distribution business as well as marketing/commercialization effort which compatible with common expectations of all stakeholders at the stage. Taking the cues from the previous discussion, the stakeholders are acquiescent and the tangible assets can be optimized to increase local prosperity and sustainable tourism. In this vein, sustainability is as important in tourism as in any other sector of the human economy, and equally difficult to achieve (Casagrandi & Rinaldi, 2002). Consequently, it required a strategic integration analysis with sustainable development strategy by identifying and involving relevant key stakeholder's participation and resources to sustain the development and overcome the impacts of tourism.

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