

STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING LOCAL POTENTIAL AND TOURISM IN SELEMAK VILLAGE THROUGH COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND PRODUCT INNOVATION

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: Selemak Tourism Village, Community Empowerment, Product Innovation, Local Potential, Tourism Development. Received: Juny 13, 2026 Approved: September 09, 2026 Published: September 30, 2026	Selemak Tourism Village is a village with natural, agricultural, livestock, and artificial tourism potential that embraces an educational theme like Prima Wisata Edukasi, which has great opportunities for development as a tourist village based on local potential. However, this village still faces challenges such as inactive tourism institutions, a lack of digital promotion, and limitations in local product innovation. This study aims to analyze the role of community empowerment, identify opportunities for product innovation, and design strategies for developing the tourism potential of Selemak Tourism Village. This research uses a qualitative approach by conducting direct observations, in-depth interviews with village government officials, business actors, and the community, along with documentation analysis and descriptive, SWOT, and value chain analyses. The results indicate that community empowerment plays a crucial role in developing local potential, particularly in Mikko Jamur ventures, goat milk production, and the management of educational tourism run together with BUMDes. However, the village still requires institutional strengthening, tourism management training, and capacity building for digital marketing.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of tourist villages is one of the community-based development tactics that has been increasingly promoted in recent years, given its ability to enhance economic welfare, strengthen cultural preservation, and create business opportunities for local residents. Selemak Village, located in the Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency, is a village with abundant natural and cultural potential, such as agricultural land, traditional crafts, community customs, and various MSME products that can be developed into tourist attractions. In addition, Selemak Village has an institutional advantage because its Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) was recognized as the best at the regency level in 2023, indicating that this village has good managerial capacity and community participation in managing local potential. However, this potential has not yet been fully utilized due to existing issues, such as low community awareness in maintaining tourist facilities, uneven community empowerment, and a lack of innovative local products that can attract a broader range of tourists.

Studies on the development of tourist villages have been conducted extensively. Mustakim & Hos (2025) highlights the significance of community empowerment as a key element in the success of tourist villages. (Nugroho & Triyono, 2024) emphasizes that innovative local products can enhance tourism appeal and broaden the market for creative economy products in the village. On the other hand, (Kurniawan et al., 2023) express that strengthening BUMDes and institutional cooperation are crucial elements in supporting the management of village potential. Although these studies offer important insights into the roles of communities, innovation, and institutions, many remain general and do not focus on the integration between community strengthening and product innovation, nor do they explore the context of villages that have institutional capacity but still face challenges in tourism development. Additionally, there is still a lack of research applying a comprehensive strategic approach in analyzing the interconnections between local potential, product innovation, and community participation within a single framework for tourist village development.

Based on the analysis, there is a significant research gap to address, namely the lack of studies that comprehensively combine community empowerment and product innovation as key strategies in the development of local tourism village potential (Nurmayanti et al., 2024), particularly in Selemak Village, which has distinct social and economic characteristics compared to other tourism villages. This research also addresses the lack of literature on how villages with good institutional performance still require empowerment and innovation strategies to ensure sustainable tourism management. Therefore, this study contributes novelty through the development of a local potential strategy model that simultaneously combines community empowerment and product innovation, resulting in recommendations that are not only theoretical but also practical and relevant to the needs of Selemak Village. This innovation provides additional benefits in the study of tourism village development as it offers a context-based approach that can be applied by other villages with similar characteristics.

In line with that background, this research aims to: (1) analyze the role of community empowerment in the development of local potential in Selemak Village; (2) identify forms of

local product innovations that can support village tourism development; and (3) formulate strategies for the integrative development of local potential and tourism through community empowerment and product innovation, which can be used as a basis for the formulation of sustainable village tourism development policies and programs.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method aimed at deeply exploring how regional potential, community empowerment, and product innovation grow and interact in the context of developing tourism in Selemak Village. The choice of qualitative method was made due to the need to analyze social phenomena and community dynamics in a more natural way, allowing researchers to understand the meanings, experiences, and realities present in the field more profoundly. This approach is considered the most suitable because the research emphasizes not only outcomes but also processes, social interactions, and local contexts that are difficult to describe through quantitative methods.

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation as primary methods. Field observations were carried out to directly observe the physical conditions of the village, natural and cultural potential, ongoing tourism activities, and local products generated by the community. By conducting these observations, the researcher was able to recognize patterns, situations, and various phenomena related to the research objectives. In addition to observations, in-depth interviews were also conducted using a semi-structured approach with informants who were considered to have knowledge and direct involvement in tourism development, such as village officials, BUMDes managers, Pokdarwis, MSME actors, and local residents. These interviews aimed to gather information regarding the empowerment process, types of product innovations, challenges in development, and community perspectives on local potential. Additional data was obtained through documentation, such as village profiles, BUMDes program reports, MSME data, tourism planning documents, and photographs of field activities that supported the findings from observations and interviews.

The data obtained is then analyzed using three main approaches: descriptive analysis, value chain analysis, and SWOT analysis. Descriptive analysis is used to directly explain field findings based on observation and interviews, providing an authentic picture of local potential, community empowerment processes, and existing product innovations in Selemak Village. Next, value chain analysis is applied to describe the value chain of local products and tourism activities, from the production stage, distribution, marketing, to the flow of tourism services. This analysis guides the researcher in identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and development opportunities within each chain that impact tourism attractiveness and the added value of local products. Subsequently, the analysis continues with the SWOT method to design village development strategies based on the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT analysis provides a solid foundation for formulating realistic, relevant strategies for developing local potential and tourism that align with the community's circumstances. All collected data is then integrated through a process of reduction, grouping, and integrating information from various sources. Data is selected to ensure relevance, and then grouped by themes such as regional potential, community empowerment, product

innovation, and challenges in tourism development. After the data organization process is completed, the researcher performs interpretation and meaning extraction to create a comprehensive understanding of the situation in Selemak Village. The results of the descriptive, value chain, and SWOT analyses are then combined to formulate conclusions and recommendations for strategies that can serve as a basis for sustainable tourism development in the village. Therefore, this research approach not only creates a realistic depiction of field conditions but also presents a comprehensive strategic analysis to support the development of local potential and tourism in Selemak Village through community empowerment and product innovation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profil Selemak Tourist Village

Selemak Tourist Village is a village located in the Hamparan Perak Subdistrict, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province. Geographically, this village is situated in a lowland area with an average elevation of about 0-10 meters above sea level and an average temperature of 28-36 degrees Celsius. Selemak Village consists of 4 sub-villages with an area of approximately $\pm 6.50 \text{ km}^2$, where the majority of the land is used for agriculture, plantations, and residential areas. The location of Selemak Tourist Village is very strategic as it is not far from the city center of Medan, with a travel time of about 40 minutes to 1 hour. Access to the village can be reached by land via reasonably good road conditions. Administratively, Selemak Village is bordered by: North: Hamparan Perak Village, South: Klumpang Kebun Village, East: Medan City, West: Klambir Village. The relatively flat geographical condition makes this village suitable for agricultural and livestock activities, while also supporting the development of education-based tourism and agrotourism.

In 2023, Selemak Village received an award as the best BUMDes at the regency level, which reflects the village's success in effectively managing its economic and tourism potentials. The village government, together with BUMDes, strives to maximize local potential through the development of businesses in the tourism sector, such as processing superior products into educational tourist attractions. Most of the people in Selemak Tourist Village work as factory laborers, farmers, fishermen, livestock breeders, traders, and employees of organizations in urban areas. The education level of the community is at an intermediate level, with the majority having completed basic, junior high, and senior high education. Most of the income of the people in Selemak Tourist Village is derived from agriculture and livestock, particularly in the cultivation of oyster mushrooms and goat farming. The processed products from these two sectors present creative economic opportunities that need to be developed through the tourism village program.

Research Results

The results of the observation indicate that community empowerment is a key factor in supporting the successful development of local potential in Selemak Village. The community participates in various activities such as processing agricultural products, managing educational tourism, and creating local products.

Although community participation has begun to increase, understanding of tourism potential still needs to be improved, particularly in aspects of facility management, visitor services, and environmental cleanliness. Additionally, the contribution of the village government is crucial through the provision of facilities, training, and the establishment of institutions like Pokdarwis. However, improvements in coordination between the community, village government, and outside parties are needed to achieve more efficient governance. Tourism promotion through social media has not been optimal, so information about tourist attractions has not been widely disseminated. In this case, students play an active role by supporting the creation of digital promotional content and designing social media-based marketing strategies.

The research results show that the community of Selemak Village plays an important role in developing local potential, especially in the management of the agriculture, livestock, and educational tourism sectors. With the assistance of the village government and institutions such as BUMDes, the community is involved in training, microbusiness management, and the operation of tourist sites. This empowerment is evident in:

1. Community participation in the Mikko Jamur business and goat milk processing.

One concrete example of community empowerment in Selemak Village is the participation of residents in the Mikko Jamur business and goat milk production. This participation is manifested through various activities and business units that have been operating, where these business units initially started by a community involved in the BUMDes program and farmer groups, then developed into productive businesses that absorb local labor. In the Mikko Jamur business unit, the community is involved in several production stages, such as: making baglogs (media for mushrooms), maintaining and caring for kumbo (mushroom growing places), and the harvesting, packaging, and selling of the harvest. Some residents are also given training to process the harvest into derivative products such as crispy mushrooms and fresh mushrooms ready for sale as distinctive village souvenirs. These activities not only increase income but also enhance knowledge and entrepreneurial skills for the community. In goat milk production, the community is involved in animal care, milking, as well as the processing and packaging of products. Community participation in these two business units reflects economic independence based on local potential, while also strengthening the tourism value chain, where local products can become elements of educational tourism attractions for visitors.

2. Community involvement as labor and managers of Prima Wisata Edukasi.

In the management of Prima Wisata Edukasi Selemak, the community plays a crucial role as labor, managers, and business partners. Most of the instructors for activities such as archery trainers, tour guides, attraction staff, and cleaning staff are local villagers who have received independent training. In addition, the community also participates in the management of facilities and tourism operations, such as ticketing, ATV rentals, managing the flying fox attraction, and visitor services. Community participation in the management of Prima Wisata Edukasi has contributed to an increased sense of ownership towards the destination and strengthened the collective awareness of the importance of maintaining the sustainability of village tourism.

3. Community cooperation in maintaining tourism facilities and promoting local products.

Participation is still limited to certain groups and has not been widespread due to the absence of a newly formed Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group). The community still requires ongoing support and training, especially in the fields of tourism management, digital marketing, and product packaging.

a. The Most Prominent Tourism Potential and Attractions

1. Agricultural and livestock potential (cultivation of oyster mushrooms and management of Etawa goat milk).

2. Educational potential through Prima Wisata Edukasi which teaches educational values through activities like horseback riding and archery, as well as recreation through various play attractions such as ATV, Flying Fox, playgrounds, swimming areas, etc.

The agricultural and livestock potential is one of the main strengths of Selemak Village, especially through the cultivation of oyster mushrooms (Mikko Jamur) and Etawa goats that have been managed by local community groups. This activity not only produces processed products like crispy mushrooms and Etawa goat milk but also has the potential to serve as an agro-tourism educational facility.

The main attraction of Selemak Village is the educational tourism concept packaged in Prima Wisata Edukasi. This place offers outdoor learning activities such as archery, horseback riding, and other exciting attractions. In addition, Mikko Jamur and Selemak Goat Milk products also become superior potentials that strengthen the village's image as a tourism destination based on education and agribusiness. The combination of nature tourism, education, and creative economy creates a uniqueness that distinguishes Selemak Village from other tourist villages in Deli Serdang District.

b. Problems and Obstacles in Tourism Management or Development.

Field observations indicate that tourism development in Selemak Village is still faced with several constraints, including an inactive Pokdarwis as the main driving force for tourism activities, limited digital promotion and publicity means to introduce tourism potential outside

the area, and insufficient supporting facilities such as information boards, access routes, and parking areas. The minimal business capital and limited marketing access for local MSME players, as well as the lack of effective collaboration between the community, village government, and private sector, further highlight these obstacles. These challenges indicate the importance of clear strategic planning so that the tourist village does not remain limited to temporary activities but evolves into a sustainable destination.

c. Public Perception of the Tourism Industry

The residents of Selemak Village have a positive view of tourism development because it is seen as a way to improve economic welfare and introduce the village's potential to a wider audience. The majority of residents express full support for educational tourism activities due to: creating new job opportunities for village youth, enhancing the marketing of local products, and boosting confidence in the village's identity. However, some community members also express concerns about the lack of oversight and sustainability of tourism programs, which often come to a halt after projects are completed.

Discussion of Research Results

SWOT Analysis Obtained

Strengths

- Possesses potential advantages such as Prima Wisata Edukasi, Mikko Jamur, and Goat Milk.
- Strong community support for tourism development.
- The natural village atmosphere is ideal for educational tourism.
- Participation of BUMDes in managing local businesses.

Weaknesses

- Pokda-rwis has not yet functioned actively and tourism institutions are not in a stable condition.
- Digital marketing and village branding are still not optimal.
- Accessibility and tourism infrastructure are still minimal.
- Insufficient training and ongoing product innovation.

Opportunities

- Support from higher education institutions and local government in developing educational tourism.
- Increasing trends in educational and family tourism.
- Significant potential market for local tourists and students.
- Local products have the potential to become distinctive regional souvenirs.

Threats

- Competition with other tourist villages around Deli Serdang.
- Lack of sustainability for post-project programs from students or external aid.
- Fluctuations in tourist visits due to weather and economic factors.
- Risk of declining environmental quality due to inadequate management.

Development Strategy Based on SWOT Analysis

Based on the identification of internal and external factors above, several main strategies have been formulated that can be applied to develop the Selemak Tourism Village, namely:

- a. SO Strategy (Strengths–Opportunities), leveraging natural potentials, superior products, and government support to expand cooperation with universities, educational institutions, and private partners in developing educational tourism packages and strengthening digital promotion.
- b. WO Strategy (Weaknesses–Opportunities), enhancing community capacity through digital marketing training, tourism management, and the establishment of tourism institutions such as Pokdarwis to optimize existing potentials and opportunities.
- c. ST Strategy (Strengths–Threats), utilizing the village's strengths such as local potential and government support to face external threats by improving tourism infrastructure and creating unique attractions to compete with other tourism villages.
- d. WT Strategy (Weaknesses–Threats), addressing internal weaknesses such as increasing community awareness and improving digital promotion to reduce the risk of declining tourist interest, as well as preparing mitigation plans for weather factors and environmental dependencies.

Overall, the SWOT analysis shows that Selemak Village has great potential to be developed as a sustainable educational tourism destination. The village's main advantage comes from its diverse local potential and institutional support, while its weaknesses can be addressed through improving human resource capacity and strengthening institutions. The most appropriate development strategy is one that focuses on collaboration and community empowerment, emphasizing the optimization of local potential, product innovation, and the digitization of promotion. Through the implementation of this strategy, Selemak Village is expected to grow into an independent, competitive, and sustainable leading tourism village.

Based on the value chain and SWOT analysis, the development strategy for Selemak Village is focused on three main points: strengthening the capacity of the community and local institutions, particularly through the revitalization of Pokdarwis and enhancing the role of BUMDes. Improving innovation and promotion of local products through packaging training, branding, and digital marketing, as well as developing educational tourism packages that integrate recreation, education, and local cuisine. This strategy is expected to position Selemak Village as a productive, educational tourism-oriented village that utilizes local potential.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research study show that the development of tourism in Selemak Village is greatly determined by the active role of the community, the strengthening of local potential, and product innovations that meet the needs of tourists. Community empowerment has proven to be an essential element in supporting the enhancement of local potential, where the community not only participates in the management of the destination but also in improving service quality, environmental preservation, as well as the production of local crafts and cuisine. Through training, mentoring, and capacity development, the community can manage tourism potential independently, thus making the research objective of analyzing the role of community empowerment clearly realized. In addition, the development of local products plays a crucial role in enhancing the tourist attraction in Selemak Village. Product innovations such as woven crafts, agricultural products, and traditional cuisine packaged more creatively have successfully increased market value and created a more impressive experience for visitors. These findings align with the research objective to recognize and create competitive local products. Furthermore, the strategy for developing local potential in Selemak Village must be conducted systematically and sustainably by enhancing community capacity, strengthening collaboration with the village government, Pokdarwis, MSMEs, and BUMDes, as well as advancing infrastructure and digital marketing. Overall, this study indicates that the development of local potential, community empowerment, and product innovation are the main foundations for Selemak Tourism Village to grow as a superior tourist destination rooted in the local wisdom and culture of its community.

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