

STRATEGY FOR OPTIMIZING THE POTENTIAL OF GOMARA SWISS NATURAL TOURISM THROUGH SWOT ANALYSIS FOR THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN LABUHAN BATU UTARA REGENCY

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Abstract. This research aims to identify internal and external factors and formulate strategies for optimizing the potential of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism through a SWOT analysis for empowering the local community's economy in Labuhan Batu Utara Regency. A qualitative approach with a descriptive and analytical case study design is employed. Primary data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, FGDs, and SWOT questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained from literature studies and related documents. Data analysis was carried out using qualitative descriptive, IFAS, EFAS, and Rangkuti's (2018) SWOT method. The findings reveal that the development of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism has a positive impact on the local community's economy, such as increased income, the growth of micro-enterprises, and the absorption of local labor. The main strategies recommended include gradual growth through digital promotion and facility development, internal strengthening via community empowerment and local HR training, sustainable product development with a halal ecotourism concept, institutional and partnership reinforcement, and risk mitigation for environmental and socio-cultural sustainability. These strategies aim to foster controlled growth of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism while maximizing economic benefits for the local community and preserving the environment and local culture. Collaborative efforts from the government, private sector, and community are needed to implement these strategies effectively.

Keywords: Nature tourism, community empowerment, local economy, SWOT analysis, ecotourism, sustainable development

I. PENDAHULUAN

Tourism is one of the sectors that significantly contributes to the economy of a country or region. In addition to creating job opportunities and increasing the income of the local community, tourism also plays a role in promoting the culture and natural wealth of an area. (Paramati et al., 2018; Dayantriet al., 2024). However, tourism development must be carried out sustainably and consider economic, social, and environmental aspects to achieve sustainable development (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2020). Sustainable tourism development refers to efforts to meet the needs of tourists and tourist destinations today while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2018). The trend of sustainable tourism is showing significant development on a global scale. (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021).

This is driven by a substantial increase in demand from international tourists for tourism destinations that prioritize sustainability aspects, whether from an environmental, social, or cultural perspective. (UNWTO, 2020). This phenomenon indicates a shift in global tourist preferences that increasingly value sustainability principles in tourism activities. (Saarinen, 2022). In line with this shift in preferences, stakeholders in the tourism sector, including governments and industry players in various countries, are also showing an increased awareness of the urgency of developing sustainable tourism. (Bramwell et al., 2017). This effort is considered essential in preserving natural resources, conserving cultural heritage, and providing optimal benefits to local communities at tourist destinations. (Sharpley, 2020).

Within the national scope of Indonesia, the development of sustainable tourism has become one of the main priorities in the National Tourism Development Master Plan (RIPPARNAS)

2020-2024. (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif, 2020). One of the strategies outlined is to encourage the development of tourist villages and community-based tourist destinations that involve the active participation of local communities. (Nurjanah et al., 2022). Efforts to develop sustainable tourism in Indonesia are also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched by the United Nations (UN, 2015). One of the goals in the SDGs is to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, decent work, and sustainable tourism. (Suryanti et al., 2022). The development of the local tourism sector is also not detached from the overall macroeconomic conditions of Indonesia, as monetary instruments such as SBI and SBIS have a significant influence on the economy, which in turn can affect people's purchasing power and interest in tourism. (Harahap & Tambunan, 2021).

One of the natural tourist destinations with significant development potential is the Gomara Swiss tourist attraction located in Labuhan Batu Utara Regency, North Sumatra Province. This tourist attraction offers a captivating nature recreation experience for its visitors. With a location surrounded by dense forest areas and traversed by a river with clear water conditions, this place has become a dream destination for nature adventure enthusiasts. The main activities that are the main attractions are rafting and white-water rafting, which allow visitors to enjoy the challenge of conquering the swift river currents flowing between steep cliffs. For those who prefer a calm atmosphere, fishing in the relatively tranquil waters of the river can be an enjoyable recreational choice. In addition, the available flying fox facility offers an experience of gliding over the lush green forest with stunning natural scenery. The natural atmosphere offered by this tourist attraction is also very conducive for camping activities. However, the great potential of the Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism destination has not yet been fully optimized to enhance the local economy of the surrounding community. (Siregar et al., 2020).

The development of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism is still facing several challenges. One of them is the lack of supporting infrastructure such as adequate road access, accommodation facilities, and sufficient promotional means. (Nasution et al., 2023). In addition, local community involvement in the management and development of tourism is still limited, so the economic benefits have not yet been fully felt by the local community. (Ritonga et al., 2023; Yusrizal & Suparmin, 2018). Therefore, strategic efforts are needed to optimize the potential of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism and provide a positive impact on the local economy in Labuhan Batu Utara Regency. (Sugiyarto et al., 2022). Previous research has explored the importance of sustainable tourism development and its impact on society.

The study conducted by Bhuiyan et al. (2018) shows that sustainable tourism development can contribute to the economic empowerment of local communities through job creation, increased income, and the development of small and medium enterprises. However, the research also emphasizes the importance of local community involvement in the planning and development process of tourism. The involvement of the

local community can ensure that tourism development aligns with cultural values and the needs of the local population. (Gursoy et al., 2019). Optimizing the tourism potential in an area requires the right strategy. One of the methods that can be used is SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). SWOT analysis is an analytical tool widely used in strategic planning to identify internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) as well as external factors (opportunities and threats) that influence tourism development. (Ghamgin et al., 2020). By understanding this factor, appropriate strategies can be developed to optimize tourism potential and provide a positive impact on the local community's economy.

In the context of sustainable tourism development, SWOT analysis has proven effective in identifying factors that influence the success of tourism development. The research conducted by Maksum et al. (2020) explores community-based tourism development strategies in Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park using SWOT analysis. This study identifies internal and external factors influencing tourism development and formulates strategies that involve local community participation. The results show that strategies involving local communities and considering socio-cultural aspects can support sustainable tourism development.

The importance of sustainable tourism development has been increasingly highlighted after the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on the global tourism sector. According to the UNWTO report (2022), the tourism sector suffered losses of more than 1 trillion US dollars in 2020 due to travel restrictions and lockdowns. This shows that sustainable and resilient tourism is key to the recovery of this sector in the future. Recent research by Rastegar et al. (2023) reveals that tourist destinations that prioritize sustainability principles and involve local communities will be more capable of enduring and recovering from crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. In Indonesia, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the tourism sector. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia dropped drastically by 75% in 2020 compared to the previous year. (BPS, 2021). However, this crisis also encourages the government and stakeholders to focus more on the development of sustainable tourism, especially by involving local communities and utilizing the potential of tourist villages (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021). One of the efforts made is the Village Tourism Development Program, which aims to empower local communities in managing and developing sustainable tourist destinations. (Kementerian Pariwisata dan Ekonomi Kreatif, 2022).

Research on optimizing the potential of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism through SWOT analysis and local community involvement has become very relevant and important. By identifying the internal and external factors that influence tourism development in Gomara Swiss, and formulating strategies that involve the local community, this research can contribute to the efforts of recovery and sustainable tourism development in Indonesia. In addition, this research is also in line with global trends and national development priorities in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth through

tourism. Specifically, this research aims to: 1) Identify internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) as well as external factors (opportunities and threats) that influence the development of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism in North Labuhan Batu Regency. 2) Formulate strategies to optimize the potential of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism through SWOT analysis for the economic empowerment of the local community in North Labuhan Batu Regency.

II. METODE PENELITIAN

In its implementation, this research uses a qualitative research type with a descriptive method. Qualitative research is a type of research intended to describe and elaborate on phenomena, social activities, tourism, perceptions, or ways of thinking of an individual or group, which are then analyzed and presented in narrative form. Descriptive research, broadly and generally, is a series of research activities that will later produce a systematic, accurate, and factual depiction of an event that occurs. The location of this research is in Hutaraja Village, Sipirok District, South Tapanuli Regency, which has the Tor Simago-Mago tourist attraction. The data sources used in this research are primary and secondary data, with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and documentation. In this case, the researcher will interview the Head of Hutaraja Village, the Chairperson of Pokdarwis, the Village Tourism Manager, and several economic actors around the Tor Simago-Mago tourist attraction. In this case, the researcher will use the SWOT analysis technique (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to analyze the research results and then find the appropriate strategy for improving the economy of the community around the Tor Simago-Mago tourist attraction.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design that is descriptive and analytical in nature. Primary data collection was conducted through participatory observation at the Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism site, in-depth interviews with key informants such as local government officials, tourism managers, tourism business operators, and community leaders, as well as Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with local communities around the tourism destination, and SWOT questionnaires. Secondary data were obtained from literature studies, reports, documents, and statistical data related to tourism development in North Labuhan Batu Regency. The data will be analyzed qualitatively descriptively, followed by

III. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism is a natural tourist destination that offers natural beauty with views of green rivers. This location is situated in Simonis Village, Aek Natas District, North Labuhan Batu Regency. Gomara Swiss has diverse tourist attractions, such as rushing water flows, unique water colors, a cool atmosphere, a pristine location, forests that are well-preserved along the way to the site, as well as various

IFAS (Internal Factors Analysis Summary) and EFAS (External Factors Analysis Summary) analysis, as well as the SWOT method according to Rangkuti (2018). SWOT analysis is used to identify internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) in the development of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism. The results of the SWOT analysis are then integrated with the combination of analytical components to formulate a comprehensive optimization strategy aimed at empowering the local economy around the tourism destination sustainably.

In the context of sustainable tourism development, there are several values and principles that align with Islamic teachings. The Quran teaches the importance of preserving nature and conserving the resources created by Allah SWT.

In Surah Al-A'raf, verse 56, Allah SWT says:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"And do not cause corruption on the earth after its reformation, and invoke Him in fear and aspiration." Indeed, the mercy of Allah is very near to those who do good. (QS. Al-A'raf: 56). This verse emphasizes the importance of preserving nature and not causing damage to the earth. In the context of tourism, this means that tourism development must be carried out in a sustainable manner, preserving the natural environment, and avoiding excessive exploitation that can damage natural resources. In addition, the Quran also teaches the principles of justice and equity in the distribution of benefits and resources. In Surah An-Nahl, verse 90, Allah SWT says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"Indeed, Allah commands you to be just and to do good, to give to relatives, and Allah forbids immoral acts, wrongdoing, and oppression. He instructs you so that you may take heed." (QS. An-Nahl: 90)

This verse teaches the importance of realizing justice and equitable distribution of economic benefits from the tourism industry to the local community. This aligns with the principle of empowering the local economy through tourism, where the local community should be able to reap the economic benefits from the development of tourism in their area. Thus, sustainable tourism development based on Islamic values, such as preserving nature and ensuring justice in the distribution of economic benefits, is an effort in line with the teachings of the Quran and can provide long-term benefits for the environment, society, and economy.

tourist activities like rafting, camping, fishing, and flying fox. The uniqueness and natural beauty of this place make Gomara Swiss attractive to visitors for family vacations.



Figure 2. Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism

The Simonis Village Government has made development efforts by providing facilities such as restrooms, life jackets, suspension bridges, a large parking area, rafting boats, and more. The provision of tourism facilities and infrastructure aims to create tourist satisfaction during their leisure time. Facilities and infrastructure are the most important aspects for tourism managers to create value for visitors and achieve competitive advantage. The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure is a key element for the Simonis Village, particularly for the BUMDes managers, to attract both local and international tourists to visit and enjoy the natural tourist destination of Gomara Swiss, thereby increasing the level of visits (Aziz et al., 2023). In 2022, Gomara Swiss was chosen as the best tourist destination in North Labuhan Batu Regency through a survey by the local Tourism Office. To meet official requirements, Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism is managed by the Village-Owned Enterprise

(BUMDes Serumpun Simonis) which is legally registered. The development of Simonis Village as a tourist village is also supported by adequate infrastructure, such as a road network with good access and the availability of economical transportation modes for tourists. The Simonis Village government plans to raise public awareness in welcoming tourists warmly and making visitors feel at home, so they are encouraged to return to the best tourist destinations

in the village. (Lestari., 2023). Internal-External Factors Affecting the Development of Gomara Swiss Tourism The internal and external factors affecting the development of Gomara Swiss nature tourism are classified based on a SWOT analysis. Internal factors include strengths and weaknesses originating from the management of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism, while external factors encompass opportunities and threats from the external environment that can influence the development of this tourism. The analysis of internal and external factors was obtained through participatory observation at the Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism site and in-depth interviews with key informants, such as local government officials, tourism managers, community leaders, and the North Labuhan Batu Regency Tourism Office. Internal factors include strengths and weaknesses that originate from the management of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism itself. Identifying internal factors is very important to understand the actual conditions of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism, so that appropriate strategies can be formulated to maximize strengths and minimize weaknesses in an effort to optimize the potential of this tourism. Here are the results of the internal factor analysis consisting of the strengths and weaknesses of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism: Table 1. Internal Factors (Kekuatan dan Kelemahan)

| No. | (Strengths) | (Weaknesses) |
|-----|---|--|
| 1 | The natural beauty with green river views | Lack of effective promotion and marketing |
| 2 | A strategic and easily accessible location | Limited supporting facilities such as accommodations and restaurants |
| 3 | Various tourist attractions such as rafting, camping, fishing, and flying fox | Lack of trained human resources in the tourism sector |
| 4 | A cool and pristine atmosphere with well-preserved forests | Road access that still needs improvement |
| 5 | Full support from the Simonis Village government | Lack of local community involvement in tourism management |
| 6 | Management by a legal and structured BUMDes | Limited budget for development and maintenance |

Based on the results of interviews and observations, Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism has a main strength in the form of natural beauty with green river views, a strategic and easily accessible location, and a variety of tourist attractions offered such as rafting, camping, fishing, and flying fox. The cool and serene atmosphere with well-preserved forests, full support from the village government, and management by a legally structured BUMDes also constitute the internal strengths possessed. However, this tourism still has weaknesses such as the lack of effective promotion and marketing, limited supporting facilities, a shortage of trained human resources in the tourism sector, road access that needs improvement, lack of local community involvement, and limited budget for

development and maintenance. In addition to internal factors, the SWOT analysis also considers external factors consisting of opportunities and threats from the external environment that can affect the development of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism. Identifying external factors is important to understand the challenges and opportunities faced in optimizing the potential of this tourism. By understanding external factors, appropriate strategies can be formulated to take advantage of existing opportunities and address potential threats. Here are the results of the external factor analysis consisting of opportunities and threats for Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism:

Table 2. External Factors

| No. | (Opportunities) | (Threats) |
|-----|---|---|
| 1 | The trend of nature and ecotourism is becoming increasingly popular | Competition with other tourist destinations in the surrounding area |
| 2 | Government support in developing regional tourism | Potential environmental damage due to tourism activities |
| 3 | Opportunities for collaboration with investors and strategic partners | Instability of security and political conditions in the area |
| 4 | High demand from domestic and international tourists | Climate change and extreme weather that can disrupt operations |
| 5 | Opportunities to develop community-based tourism | Lack of public awareness regarding environmental preservation |
| 6 | Opportunities to increase the economic income of local communities | Risk of natural disasters such as floods and landslides |

Based on interviews with the Tourism Office and observations, the increasingly popular trend of nature tourism and ecotourism presents a major opportunity for the development of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism. The support of the government in developing regional tourism, opportunities for collaboration with investors and strategic partners, high demand from domestic and international tourists, as well as opportunities to develop community-based tourism and increase the economic income of local communities, are also favorable external factors. However, the threats faced include competition with other tourist destinations in the surrounding area, potential environmental damage, instability in security and political conditions, climate change and extreme weather, lack of public awareness regarding environmental preservation, as well as the risk of natural disasters such as floods and landslides.

Development Strategy for Gomara Swiss Tourism
Based on the internal and external factor analysis that has been conducted, the next step is to formulate the development strategy for Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism using the IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) and EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) matrices. The IFAS matrix is used

to identify and evaluate the internal strengths and weaknesses of this tourism site, while the EFAS matrix is used to analyze the external opportunities and threats faced. Weighting and scoring in the IFAS and EFAS matrices were conducted by involving input from relevant stakeholders, such as local government, tourism managers, community leaders, and the Tourism Office of Labuhan Batu Utara Regency. The results of the IFAS and EFAS matrix analysis were then integrated into the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) matrix to formulate a comprehensive and targeted development strategy for Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism. The IFAS matrix shows that Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism has quite strong internal strengths by combining natural beauty and environmental sustainability in tourism management. The total internal factor score (1.52) indicates that its internal strengths outweigh its weaknesses, especially in terms of good environmental management. However, the negative external factor score (-1.70) indicates a significant external influence, such as unfavorable natural conditions and external environment. To enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism, Gomara Swiss needs to strengthen its internal capabilities by focusing on positive factors such as water color and the abundance of water sources (1.42). Moreover, with a good IFAS score (1.52), Gomara Swiss can optimize its internal strengths and prepare strategies to improve environmental quality and business sustainability. Additionally, by considering positive external factors that affect water quality (1.85), the IFAS analysis can provide a more comprehensive picture of the physical and chemical characteristics that support the sustainability of tourism in the future.

The EFAS matrix shows that Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism has a significant external opportunity with a total score of 1.85. The increasingly popular trend of nature and ecotourism (0.35), government support in developing regional tourism (0.33), as well as opportunities to develop community-based tourism (0.33) and increase the economic income of local communities (0.31) have become the main opportunities that can be utilized. However, external threats are also quite significant with a total score of -1.80. Competition with other tourist destinations in the surrounding area (-0.32), the potential for environmental damage due to tourism activities (-0.31), climate change and extreme weather that can disrupt operations (-0.33), as well as the risk of natural disasters such as floods and landslides (-0.32) are the main threats that must be anticipated. With a higher opportunity score than threat score, Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism has good potential for development through the right strategy in leveraging opportunities and minimizing existing external threats. Based on the results of the IFAS-EFAS matrix analysis, the Strength Score = 1.52; Weakness Score = -1.70; Opportunity Score = 1.85; Threat Score = -1.80. Thus, the position of the development of Gomara Swiss nature tourism can be identified as follows.

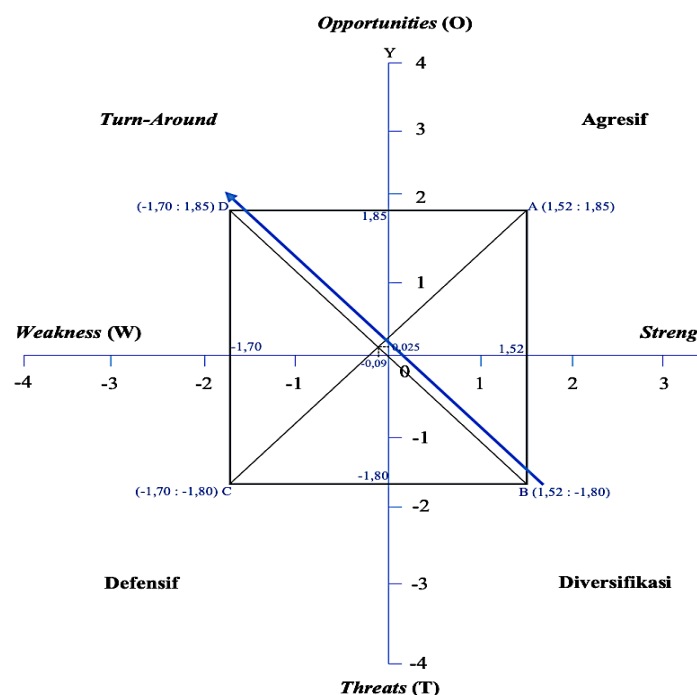


Figure 3. Position of the Development of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism

The position of the development of Gomara Swiss nature tourism in the SWOT diagram is represented by points formed by the intersection of the diagonal coordinate lines, namely: Point A (1.52 : 1.85); Point B (1.52 : -1.80); Point C (-1.70 : -1.80); Point D (-1.70 : 1.85). To determine the development position, calculations of the line equation can be performed by finding the intersection point between the diagonals formed by the coordinates above, namely point x. Based on the equation above, the coordinate value of the intersection point between the diagonals (point X) is (-0.09 : 0.025) or precisely located in Quadrant III. Quadrant III indicates a situation where the development of Gomara Swiss nature tourism faces weak internal conditions in terms of strengths and weaknesses, but still has external opportunities that can be utilized. The condition in Quadrant III is described as follows:

1. From the analysis of internal factors, it is known that the current development of Gomara Swiss nature tourism faces more weaknesses than strengths. This is reflected in the weakness score (-1.70) being greater than the strength score (1.52).

2. Meanwhile, from the external factor analysis, it has been identified that the development opportunities for Gomara Swiss are still quite significant, although the threats are also considerable. This is evident from the opportunity score (1.85) being slightly higher than the threat score (-1.80). Thus, the position in Quadrant III illustrates a weak internal condition but with external opportunities that can still be optimized. Therefore, the most appropriate strategy is to implement internal improvements (turn-around) while making the best use of external opportunities. This strategy is appropriate for

advancing the development of natural tourism in Gomara Swiss, Labuhan Batu Utara Regency. However, based on the above SWOT diagram, the position of developing Gomara Swiss nature tourism is very close to quadrant IV, which supports the implementation of a defensive (survival) strategy. Here are the W-O (Weakness-Opportunity) strategies that can be applied to make internal improvements and take advantage of external opportunities:

1. Utilizing information technology, digital marketing platforms (O4), and global interest in halal tourism (O1) to effectively promote destinations (W1), as well as collaborating with halal tourism investors (O5) to develop limited supporting facilities (W2) and improve road access (W4) with government support. (O2).

2. Collaborating with the tourism village community empowerment program (O6) to increase the minimal involvement of the local community (W5) and train the less skilled tourism human resources (W3), combined with accessibility and infrastructure from the government (O3) to improve road access. (W4).

3. Optimizing interest in halal tourism investment (O5) and government support (O2) to obtain funding to address limited budgets (W6) in the development of supporting facilities (W2), digital promotion (W1), and human resource training. (W3).

4. Utilizing information technology and digital marketing (O4) to promote effectively (W1), combined with community empowerment programs (O6) to involve the local community (W5) in the development of limited supporting facilities (W2) with an interest in halal tourism investment. (O5).

5. Optimizing government accessibility and infrastructure (O3) to improve road access (W4), combined with digital marketing (O4) for effective promotion (W1), as well as investment interest (O5) and community empowerment (O6) to address facility limitations (W2), undertrained human resources (W3), and limited budget. (W6).

These strategies include efforts to address internal weaknesses such as ineffective promotion and marketing, limited supporting facilities, poorly trained tourism human resources, road access that needs improvement, minimal local community involvement, and a limited budget for development. In addition, this strategy also leverages external opportunities such as the popular trends in nature tourism and ecotourism, government support, collaboration opportunities with investors, high tourist demand, community-based tourism development, and opportunities to increase the local community's economic income. Some of the strategies for developing nature tourism in Gomara Swiss that support the economic empowerment of the local community include utilizing community empowerment programs in tourist villages as a primary opportunity to enhance local community involvement, which has been minimal so far. This program can be integrated with the training and development of tourism human resources (HR) who are currently still lacking in skills. By involving and empowering the local community in the management of diverse natural tourism attractions, such as rafting, camping, fishing,

and flying fox, the community will gain skills and income from the tourism sector.

Optimization of the Natural Tourism Potential of Gomara Swiss for the Empowerment of the Local Economy in Labuhan Batu Utara Regency

This research reveals that the development of natural tourism in Gomara Swiss, Labuhan Batu Utara Regency, has had a significantly positive impact on the local economy. Field observations indicate an increase in income felt by the majority of the local community following the development of this tourism. Many new micro-enterprises managed by the local community are emerging, such as food stalls, outdoor equipment rentals, and handicraft sales. These businesses have become a profitable additional source of income for the community around the tourist area. An interview with Mr. Ahmad Syahputra, the Head of Simonis Village, Aek Natas District, North Labuhan Batu Regency, revealed that the Gomara Swiss nature tourism has absorbed around 150 local residents as tour guides, ticket officers, and workers in other

IV. KESIMPULAN

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the optimization of the potential of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism in North Labuhan Batu Regency is influenced by various internal and external factors. Internal factors include key strengths such as natural beauty, strategic location, various tourist attractions, as well as support from the village government and structured management of BUMDes. However, there are weaknesses such as the lack of effective promotion, limited supporting facilities, poorly trained tourism human resources, and minimal involvement of the local community. External factors include opportunities such as the popular trend of nature tourism, government support, and the potential for collaboration with investors, as well as threats like competition with other destinations and the risk of environmental damage. Based on the SWOT analysis, Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism is in Quadrant III, indicating a "Turn-Around" position. This position suggests that the tourist destination has significant opportunities but also faces several significant internal weaknesses. Meanwhile, the results of the Internal-External matrix analysis place Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism in cell number 5, indicating a position of "Growth and Stability." This position indicates that the tourist destination has sufficiently good internal and external conditions for growth and stability.

Considering both analysis results, the optimization strategy formulated for the economic empowerment of the local community is an optimization strategy focused on gradual growth by utilizing digital technology for effective promotion, collaboration with halal tourism investors for facility development, and leveraging government support for infrastructure improvement. Stability and internal strengthening are achieved through community empowerment programs, local human resource training, and

supporting facilities. Many residents who previously only worked as farmers have switched professions to become service providers in the tourism sector. Field observations also indicate active community involvement in the management and development of tourism through tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis). Interviews with Pokdarwis administrators revealed the existence of skill training programs for the community in the field of tourism, enabling them to participate optimally in tourism activities. Nevertheless, there are still challenges and obstacles that need to be addressed, such as the limited supporting facilities like accommodations, restaurants, and other infrastructure. In addition, the promotion and marketing of Gomara Swiss nature tourism are still not optimal, resulting in a limited number of visitors. The lack of awareness among some members of the community about the importance of preserving the environment is also a major concern. Greater efforts are needed from local governments, private sectors, and the community to address these challenges so that the development of Gomara Swiss nature tourism can provide even greater benefits to the local economy.

funding optimization. The development of sustainable tourism products is carried out with the concept of halal ecotourism that highlights the uniqueness of nature and local wisdom. Strengthening institutions and partnerships is pursued through the optimization of BUMDes, synergy with stakeholders, and strategic partnerships for market expansion. Risk mitigation and sustainability are implemented with safety protocols, ecotourism principles, and community involvement in conservation. These strategies aim to encourage the gradual and controlled growth of Gomara Swiss Nature Tourism, while maximizing economic benefits for the local community of North Labuhan Batu Regency and maintaining the environmental and socio-cultural sustainability of the area.

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