

The Role of Village Apparatus, Human Resources, and Women's Empowerment in Improving the Living Standards in Tourist Villages of Serdang Bedagai Regency

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to see how the active role of village officials, the quality of human resources (HR), and women's empowerment have an impact on improving the standard of living of the tourist village community in Serdang Bedagai Regency. Quantitative methods were used to collect data through questionnaires to 95 respondents. To analyze the data, the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling) model was used. The results showed that only the variable of the active role of village officials had a significant impact on improving the standard of living of the community, and the quality of human resources and women's empowerment did not have a significant impact. This research model can explain 94.1% of the variables that affect a better standard of living. The results show that village officials must be actively involved in supporting the growth of tourist villages and community welfare. Recommendations focus on increasing the role of village officials and strategies to improve empowerment and quality of HR.

Keywords: Role of Village Apparatus, Quality of Human Resources, Women's Empowerment, Tourism Village, Community Standard of Living .

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INTRODUCTION

Rural areas developed for tourism destinations by integrating local potential in the form of culture, tradition, nature, and the life of its people which is still pristine and authentic to provide a unique and educational experience for tourists are called tourist villages. In practice, tourist villages are not only places for recreation, but also function to encourage community empowerment, preserve local traditions, and improve the local economy through citizen participation in various tourism activities (Putra, 2024) . In Indonesia, which is known for its cultural richness, natural beauty, and ethnic diversity, the potential for developing tourist villages is enormous. The development of tourist villages is one form of accelerating integrated village development to encourage social transformation, cultural preservation, and improving the standard of living of rural communities. Until 2024, tourist villages in Indonesia are categorized into four levels of development, namely pioneering tourist villages of 4,757 villages, developing tourist villages of 995 villages, advanced tourist villages of 319 villages, and independent tourist villages of 35 villages. These data show that most tourist villages are still in the pioneering stage, which means they still

need assistance, capacity building, and infrastructure support in order to move up to a higher level and provide optimal contributions to village development and the national tourism sector. Later, the tourist village program will provide direct benefits to village communities through increased welfare, job creation, and strengthening social and cultural values (Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021) .

Serdang Bedagai Regency, located in North Sumatra Province, has great potential to develop the village-based tourism sector. This potential is supported by its natural, cultural, and culinary wealth, as well as the support of local government policies that actively encourage the development of tourist villages. Based on the Serdang Bedagai Regent Regulation Number 65 of 2018 concerning the Development of Tourist Villages and the Decree of the Serdang Bedagai Regent Number 89/18.26/2023, eight tourist villages and eleven pioneering tourist villages have been established throughout the district. Agrotourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism, culinary, water tourism, spiritual tourism, and local attractions are some of the types of tourism that are being developed. This shows that the local government wants to maintain cultural and environmental values, as well as improve community welfare. According to (Rudina et al., 2022) , the development of tourist villages does not only depend on potential or regulations, but the role of village officials, the availability of human resources, and the empowerment of community groups such as women are very important. Basically, a tourist village is a living social community, where development progress is greatly influenced by an active local community (Utami et al., 2019) For every development program, village officials must have the ability to act as facilitators, coordinators, and motivators. On the other hand, development goals can be hindered by low quality human resources and suboptimal involvement of women.

In community-based development, the success of tourism village management depends on the active participation of village officials. Village officials not only implement administrative policies, they also encourage community participation and create an inclusive development environment. Village officials can transform local potential into high-value tourism products with visionary leadership and good management skills (Zuhro et al., 2024) . Through active participation in community-based tourism programs, village officials in Serdang Bedagai Regency should play a strategic role in tourism village management. Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) and Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) were established to improve the village economy and maximize local potential. In addition, village officials must provide systematic assistance and guidance to support the sustainability of tourism village programs, village officials are also expected to play an important role in increasing community capacity (Ayuningtyas et al., 2023) . According to (Herdiana, 2019) active role is a form of participation that shows the direct involvement of a person or group of people in the decision-making process, implementation of activities, and evaluation, with the aim of achieving better and more sustainable results. The Active Role of Village Apparatus (Istiningdias et al., 2019) is the direct, conscious, and sustainable participation of village officials (village heads, village secretaries, hamlet heads, etc.) in planning, implementing, and evaluating development and public services at the village level. This shows their duties as the main drivers of village development, bridges between the community and the government, and people who help the community.

In the tourism industry, especially in tourist villages, the quality of human resources (HR) is an important factor in the success and sustainability of tourist village management. The quality of human resources consists of various components, one of which is education. Adequate education helps provide basic knowledge and skills to manage tourist villages, such as destination management, visitor services, and utilization of local natural and cultural resources (Sholihah Izaatus & Firdaus Zakaria, 2019). In addition, a professional attitude and the ability to communicate well are also important to improve the quality of services provided. According to (Poncokusumo et al., 2016) the quality of human resources shows how strong individuals have the ability to develop, innovate, and contribute to their workplace environment. In the context of tourist villages (Karini & Sukriadi, 2022) tourist villages are highly dependent on the ability of local communities to utilize tourism potential sustainably. Based on the pre-survey conducted, it is known that people in tourist villages in Serdang Bedagai Regency have different levels of education. According to the level of education of the population in tourist villages in Serdang Bedagai Regency, it shows that 35.7% have the last education at the Elementary School (SD) level, 26.5% at the Junior High School (SMP) level, 33.3% at the Senior High School (SMA) level, and 4.5% have an educational background at the diploma and strata level (D1 to S2). Therefore, it is very important to understand the distribution of this level of education when making empowerment policies that are in accordance with the demographics and education of the tourist village community.

In addition, one of the important components in community development and improving the standard of living of people, especially in rural areas, is women's empowerment. Women have an important role in improving the welfare of families and communities amidst increasingly dynamic social and economic changes. This becomes even more important when talking about the possibility of tourist villages, where women can be the driving force in the management and development of community-based tourism (Parmadi & Widodo, 2021). According to (Iqbal et al., 2023) Women's empowerment is a process in which women are given the opportunity and ability to participate in economic and social development and to make decisions about their personal and social lives. In the context of tourist villages (Mahendra, 2024) women's empowerment in tourist villages means giving women the opportunity to manage resources, gain knowledge and skills, and gain economic opportunities. However, in tourist villages, women's empowerment in the tourism sector still faces many structural and cultural challenges. Several tourist villages in Serdang Bedagai Regency have great potential for ecotourism, culture, and creative businesses. This potential can actually provide great opportunities for women to actively participate in local economic activities and tourism. Limited access to entrepreneurship education and training, inability to utilize digital technology, and lack of business capital are some of the challenges that are often faced. In addition, social norms that continue to assume that women can only participate in public activities or decision-making still prevent them from participating in public activities. The results of the pre-survey that has been conducted show that 44.5% of the population is of productive age (20-50 years) who are included in the working class, which shows great potential to support village economic activities. In addition, more than half of the productive age are women, who have the potential to be actively involved in the world of work. This strengthens the research conducted (Khadijah, 2022) that at the village level, women's

participation in tourism development is still lacking. Although there are many opportunities that can be utilized, such as participating in creative economic businesses, managing homestays, and promoting local culture, the methods used are not good enough and comprehensive. One of the main obstacles for women working in this sector is that they do not have access to training, information, and decision-making processes. Therefore, a more inclusive and gender-oriented strategy is needed to enable women to participate actively and equally in advancing community-based tourism.

According to (Syaifudin & Ma'ruf, 2022) the improvement of the standard of living of people in tourist villages is influenced by several main factors. First, the increase in income is directly influenced by community participation in the tourism sector. Second, local human resources are strengthened through tourism skills training and education. Third, tourism activities are supported by adequate infrastructure such as roads, public facilities, and digital connectivity. Fourth, good village tourism organizations, such as the role of Pokdarwis, encourage efficient and sustainable management. Fifth, tourist attractions depend on local potential. Finally, the sustainable development of tourist villages is assisted by the government and stakeholders through regulations, funds, and assistance. According to (Hadi Sumarto & Dwiantara, 2019) the improvement of the standard of living refers to the increase in material and social welfare enjoyed by a person or community including income, education, health, housing, and access to basic services. In the context of tourist villages (Setiadi & Pradana, 2022) the improvement of the standard of living refers to the utilization of local potential, community empowerment, and community-based tourism.

Although the tourism village of Serdang Bedagai Regency has a lot of potential, there are still some problems that need to be addressed. Therefore, this study aims to study how the active role of village officials, the quality of human resources, and women's empowerment have an impact on improving the standard of living of people in tourism villages of Serdang Bedagai Regency. It is hoped that this study will provide a clear picture of the factors that contribute to the progress of tourism villages and also provide recommendations for programs and policies that can improve the welfare of tourism village communities.

METHODOLOGY

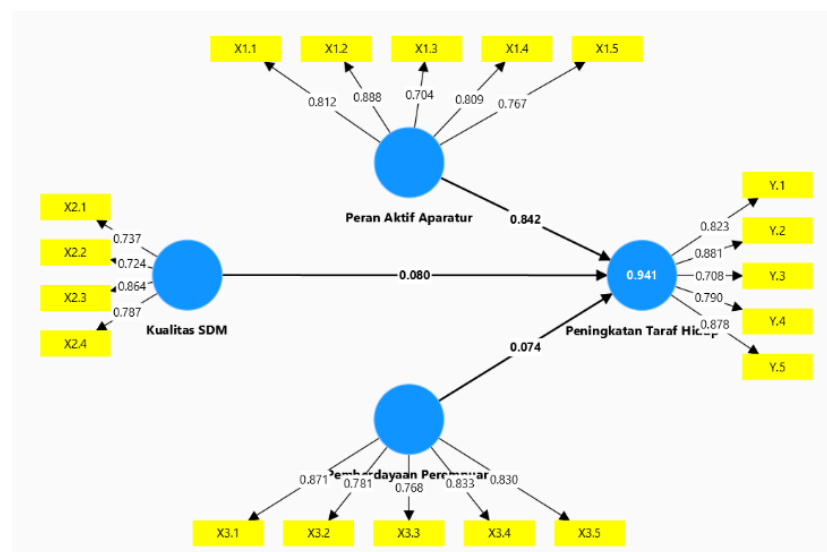
According to (Nasution, 2015) the research method is a scientific approach to collecting data for a specific purpose. This study uses a quantitative approach because it evaluates how the variables in the hypothesis relate to each other and are analyzed using statistics. This study is associative causal in nature which aims to determine how one variable affects another variable. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the active role of village officials (X1), the quality of human resources (X2), and women's empowerment (X3) on improving people's standard of living (Y). The data collection methods used in this study were interviews, questionnaires, and literature studies. According to (Nasution, 2015) the population is the entire object or subject of research that has certain characteristics and becomes the focus of researchers' attention to draw conclusions. The population in this study were productive age people aged between 20 and 50 years and people who were actively involved in the tourist villages of Serdang Bedagai Regency. This population is considered to participate in village development activities, especially in terms of tourism, economy,

and social. For sampling, this study used the *Random Sampling technique*, which is a random sampling technique from the population so that each individual in the population has an equal opportunity to be selected as a respondent. For data collection using samples with the *Slovin formula*. This study uses the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Model using SmartPLS Version 3.0 software. SEM was chosen because it is able to analyze complex models by utilizing reflective indicators to measure latent relationships between variables. The analysis method used is the *outer model test*, namely the validity test and reliability test, multiple linear regression analysis, determinant coefficient analysis, and the last test is the hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted on all communities actively involved in the tourist village as many as 95 respondents in the form of questionnaires distributed to the community and managers of the tourist village. From the results of collecting data on the characteristics of respondents with the number of men as many as 56 respondents and women as many as 39+ respondents. Characteristics of age 20-29 years as many as 43 respondents, age 30-39 years as many as 36 respondents, and age 40-50 years as many as 16 respondents. Characteristics of the last education of elementary school-high school as many as 68 respondents, and DI to S2 as many as 27 respondents. The data analysis model in this study uses smart pls 3.0 with the following results:

1. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis



Gambar 1
Model Struktural

Table 1
Path Coefficients

Path coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values					
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Kualitas SDM -> Peningkatan Taraf Hidup	0.080	0.082	0.086	0.933	0.351
Pemberdayaan Perempuan -> Peningkatan Taraf Hidup	0.074	0.077	0.070	1.055	0.291
Peran Aktif Aparatur -> Peningkatan Taraf Hidup	0.842	0.837	0.048	17.605	0.000

Source: Data Primary processed

Sumber: Data Primer diolah

Formula:

Equation 1

$$Y = X_1 b_1 + X_2 b_2 + X_3 b_3$$

$$Y = 0.842 \text{ Active Role of Village Apparatus} + 0.074 \text{ Women's Empowerment}$$

Information :

The Active Role of Village Apparatus has a significant effect on Improving the Standard of Living by 0.842 with a t-statistic of 17.605 > 1.96 or a p value of 0.000 < 0.05, which means that every Active Role of Village Apparatus will significantly improve the Standard of Living of the Community. The quality of human resources does not have a significant effect on Improving the Standard of Living by 0.080 with a t-statistic of 0.933 < 1.96 or a p value of 0.351 > 0.05, which means that the Quality of Human Resources does not significantly improve the Standard of Living of the Community. Women's Empowerment does not have a significant effect on Improving the Standard of Living by 0.074 with a t-statistic of 1.055 < 1.96 or a p value of 0.291 > 0.05, which means that Women's Empowerment does not significantly improve the Standard of Living of the Community.

R-square - Overview		
	R-square	R-square adjusted
Peningkatan Taraf Hidup	0.941	0.939

Source: Data Primary processed

2. Determinant Coefficient

Table 3
Correlation Value (R²)

From the results of testing the coefficient of determination (R²) simultaneously on the structural model, the variable of Increasing the Standard of Living (Y) is 0.941, which means that Y is influenced by the Active Role of Village Apparatus (X₁), Quality of Human Resources (X₂), and Women's Empowerment (X₃) by 94.1%, while the remaining 5.9% is the contribution of other variables not discussed in this study.

The Influence of the Role of Village Apparatus (X1) on Improving Community Living Standards (Y)

Based on the results of the analysis of hypothesis 1, it can be seen that the variable of the Active Role of Village Apparatus (X1) has a significant effect on improving the standard of living of the community (Y). This is in line with research showing that the active role of village apparatus is very important in improving the standard of living of the community.

The Influence of Human Resources Quality (X2) on Improving Community Standards of Living (Y)

Based on the results of the analysis of hypothesis 2, it can be seen that the variable of Human Resource Quality (X1) does not have a significant effect on improving people's standard of living (Y). This is in line with research (Sholihah Izaatus & Firdaus Zakaria, 2019) showing that Human Resource Quality does not have a significant effect on improving the standard of living.

The Influence of Women's Empowerment (X3) on Improving Community Living Standards (Y)

Based on the results of the analysis of hypothesis 3, it can be seen that the Women's Empowerment variable (X1) does not have a significant effect on Improving Community Living Standards (Y). This is in line with research (Mahendra, 2024) showing that women's empowerment does not have a significant effect on improving community living standards.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the three variables tested, only the Active Role of Village Apparatus has a significant influence on Improving the Standard of Living. Conversely, the variables of Human Resource Quality and Women's Empowerment do not have a significant influence. Overall, this model has very good predictive ability, indicating that the three variables can contribute 94.1% of the variation in improving the standard of living.

From the results of the study, there are several suggestions that researchers can provide, namely that the village government and related parties must continue to strengthen the role of village officials in developing tourist villages. Related parties must do this by providing leadership training, managing tourism, and encouraging community participation. In addition, the quality of human resources and women's empowerment still need to be improved through skills training, equal access to economic activities, and decision-making. It is hoped that these efforts can help improve the standard of living of village communities in a more just and sustainable manner.

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