

# Competitive Advantage Model of Rural Tourism Studies During Covid-19 Pandemic Era

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# Competitive Advantage Model of Rural Tourism Studies During Covid-19 Pandemic Era

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**Abstract:** The tourism development is running rapidly in line with the increase in people's income which shifts from the lower class to the middle class which has a positive impact on the tourism development, both natural tourism, maritime tourism, as well as rural tourism which has become a trend of tourist visits so as to improve the community's welfare. Although the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic era, the tourism sector has decreased, but in line with government policies that have opened the tourism sector with strict of health protocol so that tourism able to operate again with strict of health protocol requirements. Development of rural tourism based on local culture and a sustainable environment by involving stakeholders, namely local communities, government and the private sector who can participate in increasing tourism, especially in rural areas. The population in this study is all parties of Small and Medium Enterprises or communities in rural tourism in Lerep Village and Kandangan Village, Semarang District. Those sample are amount 54 people and sampling techniques, namely purposive sampling and analysis techniques by using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Partial Least Square or PLS. This study aims to build tourism activity during covid 19 conditions by using the Theory of Competitive Advantage and Resource Based View (RBV), this study applies 2 Hypotheses, namely Hypothesis 1 explains a positive and significant influence of Local Community involvement on Sustainable Rural Tourism, and Hypothesis 2 explains a positive and significant influence between Sustainable Rural Tourism on Competitive Advantage.

**Keywords:** Tourism Development, Local Sustainability, SMEs Community, Sustainable Rural Tourism, Competitive Advantage

## 1. Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic era has hit the whole world which has a broad impact on the global economy, this is because the Covid-19 pandemic is related to restricted interaction between people, considering that the transmission of Covid 19 is increasingly massive in order all sectors have an impact, especially the economic sector. One of the factors that has a broad impact such as the tourism, hospitality, transportation sectors therefore they have a broad impact on the economic sector as a whole. There are 23 types of tourism portfolios in Indonesia, namely 1) Natural tourism amount 35%, 2) Cultural Tourism amount 65% and 3) Manmade tourism amount 10%, according to (Hieu and Yen, 2019) showed that cultural tourism ranks first compared to other types of tourism. This type of cultural tourism is a tourist village that has a unique culture in each region in Indonesia to become a great potential that can be developed by the community and the government as well as the private sector.

The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Industries announced that in 2021 there are 5 tourist villages that have received awards to be the best villages on an international scale, namely 1) Pemuteran Villages, Bali, 2) Nglanggeran Village, Yogyakarta, 3) Panglipuran Village, Bali, 4)

Pentingsari Village, Yogyakarta and Taman Sari Village, Banyuwangi. This encourages other tourist villages being able to increase cultural wealth therefore it can become a tourist destination both for domestic and for foreign tourists. The development of tourism villages able to improve the welfare of the community as well as to create job opportunities for the community in local villages. This will be able to improve economic welfare and Local Native Income or PAD. The Government policy related to the motto program "Tourism villages can be developed with one village, one product homestay and tourism village" (Purnomo et al., 2020).

Data on tourist visits in Semarang District from the period 2016 to 2020, also decreased in Central Java, especially in Semarang District, based on tourism developments shown from 2016 to 2020 showing the number of visits that were fluctuating. In the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, it turns out that tourism visitation has decreased drastically, this is due to the fact that there is a Government Regulation on Time Restrictions for activities for the community, which affects tourism visitation.

## **2. Literature Review**

This research is in accordance with the guidelines for the Diponegoro University Development Master Plan Research Guidelines, namely the expansion of superior products and the addition of industrial value to the service industry in the tourism industry in Semarang District. Tourist destinations is at Lerep tourist village and Kandangan tourism village, Semarang District, Central Java are expected to become leading tourist villages at the national level therefore they can compete both in the national and international markets, especially increasing the number of visitors for tourist villages so as to improve community welfare as well as increase Regional Original Income (PAD).

This research uses Source-Based View theory or RBV theory that explains from the internal aspects of the company related to the resources owned by the company (Hanfan, 2017b). The theory of strategy management is related to the Analysis of Strength Weakness Opportunity and Threat (SWOT), which is to analyze the internal environment in terms of strengths and weaknesses that will assist the company being able to take advantage of existing opportunities and be able to avoid threats that may arise, as well as analyze the company's capabilities that will affect the final product which includes skills, capacities and dynamic resources. According to (Grant, 1991) explained that every company has the resources and capabilities of the company. Furthermore, it has an important role Resource Based View states that resources are determinants of competitive advantage and companies can enjoy superior strengths that are owned compared to competitors so that the company able to get significant advantages over competitors (Hanfan, 2017a).

Furthermore, according to (Mahoney and Pandian, 1992) stated that Resource Based View or RBV is directed to analysis based on expert opinions in economics about the resource framework that will produce capabilities or skills, namely the skills that exist in each individual, as well as conducting analysis related to the uniqueness of the resources owned both physical and intangible assets that will support the competitive advantage of an individual itself. company. The principle of Resource Based View relates to the theory of competitive advantage that can generate economically or returns, in addition to focusing on companies to obtain and maintain excellence. After the company has the resources to be able to compete with other companies. Another thing that is no less important is the characteristics of resources that have advantages that can be obtained by means of which these resources have a unique value, are difficult to imitate and difficult for substitute goods (Ployhart, 2021).

Furthermore, according to (Ivanova, 2015) stated that rural tourism is a new concept that has unique and environmentally friendly products therefore it can be an alternative to new tourism activities for the development of world tourism. Another opinion from the Company explained that visits to a tourist destination tourists have the opportunity to enjoy the facilities and attractions that exist in the countryside as well as will get a positive experience in addition it

will be able to influence the net visitation. This condition improves that rural tourism has a fairly developed opportunity. The involvement both of local or communities has an important role in rural tourism in line with the opinion from (Lane and Kastenholz, 2015) mentioned that communication between local communities and tourists is an experience component in rural tourism. Local communities have a role as cultural intermediaries and tourists able to exploit their experiences. Furthermore, (Falak, Chiun and Wee, 2014) mentioned that rural tourism prioritizes tourist satisfaction so that it has less concerned about the role of local communities. The findings of other research results, which are different from (Evgrafova, Ismailova and Kalinichev, 2020) stated that some pens and prioritizing local resources in rural areas should encourage rural tourism activities to develop with strong support and guidance from the government. NGOs in development are the relationship between NGOs and the state, NGOs act as parallel activities, namely as opposition and represent weak members of society to organize moreover it will have influence in the implementation of decisions and resource's allocation. This has an important role for the community supported by NGOs so that they are able to encourage the government to make the right decision-making process for the tourism sustainability.

The competitiveness of tourism destinations is not easy to explain, considering that the competitiveness of tourist destinations is very complex and is influenced by several factors, namely social, economic and cultural factors (Dogru, Suess and Sirakaya-Turk, 2021). Furthermore, (Salinas Fernández, Guaita Martínez and Martín Martín, 2022) explained that the competitiveness of superior tourism destinations, if the tourism destinations are able to increase, the classification of competitiveness of tourism destinations includes 1) Increasing tourist expenditure, 2) the tourist destinations attractiveness for tourists, 3) being able to provide a good experience for tourists, 4) Environmental Preservation and 5) being able to improve the welfare of local people, although the attractiveness of tourism destinations is influenced by an economy's theory based on market mechanisms of the tourism component that might be successfully maintain the attractiveness of tourism destinations.

Tourism is an activity that able to provide economic benefits to stakeholders or related officer, one of which is the local community for the benefit of tourism development. The results of the research conducted by (Kia, 2021), have been detected by the involvement of local communities in ecotourism management in Indonesia, which are still limited to the level of utilization, especially the limited availability of ecotourism information such as local communities and the lack of coordination with stakeholders. According to the research result from (Wardana et al., 2021) explained that there is a strong correlation between the involvement of local communities and sustainable tourism villages. Bases on this explanation, hypothesis 1 was compiled, namely: H1: There is an influence of Local Community Involvement on Sustainable Rural Tourism

Tourism in the field of ecotourism, has developed more widely, namely the focus of tourism that become a trending such as tourism villages that attract the attention of the community therefore the role of sustainable tourism villages will be able to increase the development of tourism objects in Indonesia. Tourism villages have uniqueness or advantages that able to be a competitiveness both for domestic tourists and foreign tourists. According to (Dogru, Suess and Sirakaya-Turk, 2021) mentioned that Tourism competitiveness destinations if these destinations able to increase the number of tourist visitation. Bases on this explanation, Hypothesis 2 is compiled, namely:

H2: There is an Influence of Sustainable Rural Tourism on the Competitiveness of Rural Tourism.

### 3. Research Method

This research applies a quantitative approach by using the survey method. The population of this study is all SMEs in Lerep Tourism Village and Kalongan Tourism Village in Semarang District. The population in this study is all stakeholders of SMEs industry in tourism villages in Lerep Tourism Village and Kandangan Village, Semarang District. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, which is a sampling amount 54 respondents of tourism industry actors with certain criterion, namely: 1) Tourism industry players, namely SMEs community 2 tourism

villages of Lerep and Kalongan Villages; 2) Long time involved in the tourism industry for at least 2 years; 3) Domicile at the location of the Tourist Village object; 4) willing to be interviewed. The measurement scale by using Likert 5 Scale is Strongly agreed (5), Agreed (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Disagreed (1). The analysis technique applied is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Partial Least Square (PLS) Version 3 software with application.

## 4. Result and Discussion

In this chapter, the authors will discuss the results of the questionnaire that has been distributed to all respondents. The distribution of this questionnaire is aimed at SMEs owners who trade in tourist attractions spread across Semarang District such as Lerep Village, and Sawahan Market (Kalongan Village). The data is processed by using SmartPLS 3.2.9 software. The data processed are amount 54 respondents.

### Validity Examination

The first examination in data processing is through a validity test that functions to test the reliability of question items. This questionnaire instrument can be said to be valid if the question item used able to measure something that is essential. Through SmartPLS validity testing by using convergent validity and discriminant validity.

### Convergent Validity

Convergent validity examination is used to determine whether or not a question item is valid that can be known through the outer loading instrument and AVE (Average Variance Extracted) score. Outer loading serves to illustrate how big the correlation between the indicator and the latent variable. The validity test by using the outer loading score has several conditions, namely:  
a. Outer loading score > 0.70 can be said to be valid.  
b. Outer loading score < 0.70 can be said to be invalid

**Table 1:** Outer Loading Results

Variables	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Local Community Involvement (X1)	0,823
Sustainable Rural Tourism (X2)	0,682
Competitive Advantage (Y)	0,617

**Source:** Primary Data Managed, 2022

Table 1 above shows the results of Average Variance Extracted on three variables, namely Local Community Involvement with a score of 0.823, Sustainable Rural Tourism with a score of 0.682 and Competitive Advantage with a score of 0.617. These three variables show values greater than 0.5 therefore they are mentioned to be valid and can be used to measure what they should be properly.

### Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity analysis is seen by comparing AVE score of each construct with the correlation of other constructs. If the AVE root of each construct is more than the correlation between the construct and the other construct then it can be declared valid. Table 2 below shows the output results of AVE root correlation between constructs.

The Table 2 above shows that AVE root of each construct exceeds the correlation among variables. One of the examples is that the Local Community Involvement variable got a score of 0.906, which is higher than the correlation of Sustainable Rural Tourism to Local Community Involvement, which is amount 0.327. Then the variable score of Sustainable Rural Tourism against Sustainable Rural Tourism is also higher with a value of 0.826 compared to the



Competitive Advantage towards Sustainable Rural Tourism with a value of 0.507. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variables of Local Community Involvement, Sustainable Rural Tourism, and Competitive Advantage have AVE root values > their correlation coefficient which indicates that the discriminant validity obtained is high.

**Table 2:** Fornell-Larcker Criterion Discriminant Validity Classifications

	<i>Local Community Involvement (X1)</i>	<i>Sustainable Rural Tourism (X2)</i>	<i>Competitive Advantage (Y)</i>
<i>Local Community Involvement (X1)</i>	0,907		
<i>Sustainable Rural Tourism (X2)</i>	0,321	0,826	
<i>Competitive Advantage (Y)</i>	0,208	0,507	0,785

**Source:** Data Managed, 2022

Discriminant validity can also be known through the results of cross loading between question items and their variables. The intended cross loading value has to be greater than the other values or the standard value of each construct is greater than 0.7. The following are the results of cross loading in this study:

**Table 3:** THE RESULTS OF FORNELL-LARCKER CRITERION DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

	<i>Local Community Involvement</i>	<i>Sustainable Rural Tourism</i>	<i>Competitive Advantage</i>
<b>X1.1</b>	<b>0,922</b>	0,232	0,232
<b>X1.2</b>	<b>0,906</b>	0,250	0,269
<b>X1.3</b>	<b>0,942</b>	0,261	0,182
<b>X1.4</b>	<b>0,912</b>	0,345	0,137
<b>X1.5</b>	<b>0,930</b>	0,324	0,171
<b>X1.6</b>	<b>0,825</b>	0,324	0,144
<b>X2.1</b>	0,314	<b>0,707</b>	0,494
<b>X2.2</b>	0,226	<b>0,703</b>	0,355
<b>X2.3</b>	0,328	<b>0,778</b>	0,319
<b>X2.4</b>	0,211	<b>0,864</b>	0,428
<b>X2.5</b>	0,296	<b>0,932</b>	0,428
<b>X2.6</b>	0,183	<b>0,834</b>	0,413
<b>X2.7</b>	0,274	<b>0,935</b>	0,464
<b>X2.8</b>	0,274	<b>0,817</b>	0,398
<b>X3.1</b>	0,099	0,324	<b>0,834</b>
<b>X3.2</b>	0,174	0,467	<b>0,744</b>
<b>X3.3</b>	0,208	0,334	<b>0,726</b>
<b>X3.4</b>	0,163	0,426	<b>0,832</b>

**Source:** Primary Data Managed, 2022

Discriminant validity is good when the score exceeds 0.7. Based on table above shows that 2.4, the cross-loading value of the Local Community Involvement variable is 0.910; 0.891; 0.937; 0.922; 0.935; 0.837, while the Variable of Sustainable Rural Tourism is 0.706; 0.703; 0.778; 0.864; 0.932; 0.853; 0.935; 0.818, the Competitive Advantage variable is 0.834; 0.745; 0.723; 0.833. Each variable has scored more than 0.7 therefore the question items of these three variables are valid and functioned.

### **Reliabilities Examination**

Reliability examination are carried out to observe the consistency and confidence level of question items. Questionnaires that are considered trustworthy and reliable mean that the instrument can be trusted as a good data collection tool. Through SmartPLS, reliability examination can be seen with two events, namely Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. It is known that after testing reliability, the variables Local Community Involvement, Sustainable Rural Tourism and Competitive Advantage received a score of more than 0.7 therefore it can be concluded that the instrument is real and reliable as a data collection tool. The results of this reliability examination are shown in the table below:

**Table 4:** RELIABILITIES EXAMINATION RESULTS

	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Local Community Involvement	0,965	0,823
Sustainable Rural Tourism	0,944	0,682
Competitive Advantage	0,865	0,617

**Source:** Primary Data Managed, 2022

According to the Table 4 above shows the results of the Reliability examination of Local Community Involvement of amount 0.965, Sustainable Rural Tourism of amount 0.944 and Competitive Advantage of amount 0.865 where this value is greater than 0.7. Cronbach's Alpha Local Community Involvement value is amount 0.956, Sustainable Rural Tourism is amount 0.931 and Competitive Advantage is amount 0.794, all of which are worth more than 0.7. These three variables are declared reliable as research instruments and can be done for further examination.

Bases on the recapitulation table of the Local Community Involvement variables, a score of 4.30 was obtained. This variable has 6 question items where 2 items have a score above the average total score of the variable itself. The question item with the highest score is X1.6 obtained a score of amounts 3.40 with my question being involved in activities related to development strategies so as not to deviate. The results stated that 50% voted strongly in approve and 44% voted in agree. This shows that respondents are involved in the development strategy in the tourist attraction where in the development process of tourist attraction the respondent is given the opportunity to provide advice and input. The development of tourist attractions does not turn off trading activities, when the construction takes place traders are given a place to conduct trading activity. Another 4% state that they are neutral and 2% disagreed because respondents felt that the strategy formed by the village party do not deviate in order the village party do not need advice and input from the community.

The second highest score question item was X1.4 getting a score of amounts 4.30 with the question being involved in activities that support rural tourism. Amount 41% of respondents voted strongly approve and 53% voted in agree. Respondents felt that they had been included in activities to support rural tourism in both planning, implementation, as well as evaluation. Respondents felt involved in the planning convention where discussing their respective roles such as traders, motorcycle taxis, counter guards, and other roles that are rotated in every implementation of rural tourism, those activities are expected to provide justice for all

communities to take a role in rural tourism. After the implementation is completed, there is an evaluation convention that is attended by the community therefore the next implementation is much better. Amount 4% vote to be neutral and 2% vote to disagree because they felt that the activity had the same concept so that in the division roles, the village party could run alone.

The next item is X1.5 with a score of amounts 4.30 with the item I am involved in resource management activities that support rural tourism. Amount 42% of respondents vote to strongly agree and 48% vote to agree, this is because respondents felt involved in resource management in order to support tourism. Respondents able to give some suggestions and include them in the management resources to be more organized during its implementation such as the division of roles and existing stands. Amount 7% votes neutral and another 2% votes disapproving because respondents felt they are not involved in resource management because the village party could manage resources fairly. There are 3 question items that have a score below the mean.

Question item X1.3 with a score of amounts 4.28, namely I was involved by the village party in managing businesses related to tourism. Amount 45% votes to strongly agree and 42% votes to agree, this is because respondents felt that they are involved in business management where respondents gave advice and included a role in the implementation of tourism and the products to be sold therefore the food products sold were more diverse. In rural tourism, there is a business management plan where there is the same food sold for each stand which is a characteristic of the local area, namely various fried foods such as fried Citul, spinach chips and others, therefore they need for provide the price for its product in order traders will not offer cheaper or expensive prices. On the other hand, another 11% votes to be neutral and another 2% votes to be disagree, this condition because some respondents felt that they are not involved because the management of this business are only for merchants who sold the same product.

Furthermore X1.1 with a score of amounts 4.26 with the question I have been involved in identifying problems related to tourism. The results show that 44% votes strongly agree and 41% votes to be agree. These Problems will be easy to identify if they involve the running party. Rural tourism is the party that runs itself, namely the community and the village. Respondents as the indigenous people of the area felt involved in the identification of the problem, this is because the community saw and felt firsthand the problem occurred. This community involvement able to make it easier for the village to identify problems therefore they can be overcome immediately.

On the other hand, another 13% feel that the problems that occur in the field are not a big problem therefore they can be overcome by the community. The last question item is X1.2 score of amounts 4.24 with the question I was involved by the village in formulating problems related to tourism. Amount 42% of respondents votes strongly agree and 43% votes to be agree. Respondents felt that they had been involved in the formulation of this problem due to the problem formulation that involve community directly solving that the problem was resolved appropriately and quickly. However, 13% votes to be neutral and another 2% votes to be disagree because respondents felt that the problems experienced by society are not a big thing therefore, they could be overcome by the community itself.

This research contributes literature that focuses on the influence of Local Community Involvement and Sustainable Rural Tourism on Competitive Advantage on Rural Tourism Communities in Central Java. The data calculation came from 54 respondents who had businesses and produced several findings. The first finding is that Local Community Involvement has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Rural Tourism so that hypothesis 1 (H1) can be accepted.

According to (Fun et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2019) mentioned that Local Community Involvement are local communities involved in identifying problems, involved in problem formulation, tourism



business management, non-governmental organizations and local resources and have strategies that support rural tourism. The communities involved in rural tourism influence the sustainability of tourism which provides welfare for the community. Local Community Involvement contributes 10% of the influence to the Competitive Advantage. The T-Statistics score obtained is amount 3.093 > 1.96 and the P values obtained is amounts 0.002 < 0.05 therefore this correlation has a positive and significant effect. This research proves that Local Community Involvement has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Rural Tourism.

The second finding leads to the correlation of Sustainable Rural Tourism that has a positive and significant effect on Competitive Advantage, therefore Hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted. According to (Fun et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2019) stated that Sustainable Rural Tourism is a sustainable rural tourism that able to improve the quality of life, awareness, love for local culture to increase employment and living standards as well as boost the environment itself. Therefore, rural tourism able to sustainably improve the quality of its people as well as giving an effect on the competitive advantage where the characteristics that can be formed as rural tourism progresses. The sustainability of tourism will slowly form a distinctive feature in addition it is expected that the village government will carry out tourism regularly. Sustainable Rural Tourism has a 26% impact on Competitive Advantage. The T-Statistics score obtained are 4.182 > 1.96 and the P value of 0.000 < 0.05 therefore the correlation could be concluded to have a significant effect. This research proves that Sustainable Rural Tourism has a positive and significant effect on Competitive Advantage.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestion

1. Bases on the recapitulation results of the Local Community Involvement variable, it shows that X1.4, X1.5 and X1.6 show an above-average value score of amounts 4.30 while X1.1, X1.2 and X1.3 show a score value less than the average score.
2. The Recapitulation results of the Sustainable Rural Tourism Variables X2.1, X2.3, X2.4 and X2.8 have above-average scores of amounts 4.58. While X2.2, X2.6 and X2.7 have score less than the average.
3. The Recapitulation Results of Competitive Advantage Variable q.2, Y1.3 and Y1.4 have a score above the average of 4.37. While Y1.1. has a score of less than the average of amount 4.30.
4. Local Community Involvement has a positive and significant effect on Sustainable Rural Tourism. Community involvement in rural tourism management able to encourage the tourism sustainability that has a positive effect for the community.
5. Sustainable Rural Tourism has a positive and significant effect on Competitive Advantage. The sustainability of rural tourism will slowly form advantages therefore it able to increase tourism competitiveness by highlighting the advantages potential.

### Suggestions

1. The community always needs to be involved in the management of rural tourism therefore sustainability able to be established to have a positive effect on community empowerment.
2. Rural tourism needs to increase the intensity of implementation not only on market days but also every Sunday, so that the positive effect able to be felt preferable by the community.
3. Tourism needs to be carried out sustainably in order to form distinctive characteristics that will later become competitiveness with other tourism.
4. Further research is needed on independent variables that affect Competitive Advantage outside of this study.

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