

Promoting geo-tourism at UNESCO global geo-park Belitong through geo-product development in small medium enterprise

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to understand: how small and medium enterprises (SMEs) develop geo-product to promote geo-tourism and identify the supporting also inhibitory factors. The method used exploratory survey method, quantitative and qualitative method also where data is obtained through survey questionnaire, interview and FGD to SMEs and stakeholder. The research findings: geo-products are interpretations of attractions (geodiversity, culture-diversity and biodiversity) in geo-tourism activities, the supporting factor in geo-product development are loan procedure, leadership and marketing skills. The inhibitory factors are: employees' lack of skill, limited market access, and financial reporting skill. The stakeholders played a role in supporting geo-product development, such as providing training program and implement geo-tourism events to showcase geo-product. Private companies support SMEs through by enhancing product quality and civil society organization has contribution in capacity building. The research contributes to the knowledge development on geo-product, and its role in promotion of geo-tourism activities in the UNESCO Global Geo-park Belitong.

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1. Introduction

UNESCO Global Geo-park are territories of environmental conservation and community empowerment as part of revitalization of rural areas. Geo-park are places where a balance between environment conservation activities is conducted and livelihood opportunities are pursued through Geo-tourism, an alternative form of tourism. The development of rural areas and their community's capacity is built through Geo-tourism activity in Geo-park area, which involves local organization such as SMEs. Management of SMEs has many implications for economic development [1]. Geo-tourism and Geo-park authorities stimulate local community participation by creating product related to new Geo-heritage called Geo-products. The tourism sector is an important economic generator, which contributes in terms of building businesses, improving living standards and promoting rural development [2]. Geo-tourism, is the tourism which has relations to geological site and feature, to be viewed as a relatively new phenomenon [3]. Dowling & Newsome (2006) found

that communication is key in Geo-tourism, where geo-heritage explains about the landforms and processes [4]. In developing Geo-tourism Geo-parks ignite local livelihood generating income by developing geo-park products such as stone replicas, Geo-park souvenirs, Geo-park labeled agricultural products and art performances local [5].

Local communities are involved in marketing and innovation strategy, developing Geo-product that promote knowledge to public about geology and local economy [5]. They host these activities so they may cherish Geo-heritage and cultural activities in the area alongside Geo-tourism activities. Geo-product is a part of local economic development in a Geo-park, where local SMEs play an important role. Local communities in rural areas are involved in Geo-tourism by supplying Geo-products as souvenirs, or provide other product and services for the Geo-tourism. SMEs are also an index in measuring economic development, so that the formation and management of good SMEs will have a positive impact on the nation's economic development [1].

UNESCO Global Geo-park Belitong is a relatively new Geo-tourism destination, since it was established in 2017 as a Geo-park and promotion of the area is inevitable. The interpretation of geodiversity, biodiversity and culture diversity are conducted not only by the Geo-park management and geoguides at the designated geosites or Geo-tourism attraction, but also by SMEs who developed Geo-products. The Geo-tourism activities in the area provide opportunities for local SMEs to develop souvenir, lodging services, transportation, restaurants, tours and other product or services related to these activities. Not all SMEs are able to develop Geo-product as stipulated by the Geo-park Management guideline, and research on this topic are very limited in the Geo-park Indonesia. The study aims to explore geo-product development to promote Geo-tourism by SMEs at UNESCO Global Geo-park Belitong and also to find the supporting and inhibitory factors in developing Geo-product.

2. Theoretical Framework

Geo-parks around the world promote local economy by producing new products, such as geo-products. It can be in the form of services conducted by local SMEs in Geo-tourism field, such as culinary/food services or even geo-tours services and also be local handicraft as local souvenirs for tourist [5]. In addition, tourism products can be in the form of natural and cultural resources, facilities, infrastructure, accommodation and restaurants [6]. Geo-products are promotional activities carried out by individuals outside their familiar environment and services or processes that facilitate tourism. Geo-products can also include physical objects, services, places, organizations, or ideas that are open to the market and affect client satisfaction [6]. The activities that involves the local SMEs, such as in Psiloritis Geo-park, which welcomes local artists and craftsmen [7]. According to Frey, et.al (2006) geo-products must contain educational content in environmental education, geological guidance and research also sustainable development [8]. Putra, Kepramareni, & Suryandari (2019), stated that SMEs needs a special support and protection from the government regulations and empowerment program to develop and grow business [9]. A study by Khalique (2011) found that community empowerment program by the government help to support the growth of economic activities in the area [10]. Local participation is an important aspect in tourism development, to achieve sustainable tourism development, local communities must play an active role in the transformation process [11].

SMEs which are believed to be the main ingredients for the development of the industrial sector of the local economy [12]. Several types of activities have been identified to encourage local community participation in Geo-tourism, namely, geo-tours, Geo-products, geo-museums, geo-sports, geo-restaurants, and geo-bakeries [13]. Important factors that are responsible for the rapid development of SMEs in rural areas such as product uniqueness, infrastructure development, strong and integrated policy support from the government and well-developed marketing strategies [14]. It is not easy for Geo-park SMEs in small island to develop Geo-products which have a unique characteristic and contain educational content on the environment. They experience many problems internally and externally. Community empowerment program conducted by the government help to support the growth of economic activities in the area.

Geo-tourism is a system that comprises the geological elements of 'form and process' and the components of tourism such as attractions, accommodations, tours, activities, interpretation as well as planning and management [15]. Geo-tourism depends for its success upon identifying and

promoting its physical geo-sites. The first step is examining the specific attributes that make a Geo-park unique and attractive to tourists. Inventories of existing cultural/ natural attractions and activities that the Geo-park contains must be prepared, including tangible and intangible properties. Since a Geo-park interpretation system is dynamically interlinked through each communication stage, cooperation between different departments with individuals plays an important role in keeping the system in a Geo-park running well. The interpretation of Geo-heritage in a Geo-park is in the dynamic communication system. Geo-heritage interpretation is more effective when merged with local cultures, where handicrafts and souvenirs are a useful tool in promoting a tourist destination's image. The physical presence of souvenirs helps locate, define and freeze in time a fleeting, transitory experience, and bring back into ordinary experience of tourists [16].

Local participation is an important aspect in tourism development. Therefore, to achieve sustainable tourism development, local communities must play an active role in the transformation process [11]. The participation of local communities, stakeholders and interest groups in tourism is very important in the decision-making process and in achieving the sustainable benefits offered by Geo-parks. There are factors which support and inhibit SMEs from developing their business. Factors such as input-supply, technology, human resources, infrastructure, capital (funding), and business management capabilities can be identified as supporting factors.

Geo-product are part of Geo-tourism development which can further contribute to local economic growth, increase support for the community, and protect and promote Geo-heritage sites. In addition, the Geo-park aims to increase local community's awareness of the importance of geology. Therefore, several types of activities have been identified to encourage local community participation in Geo-tourism, namely, geo-tours, Geo-products, geo-museums, geo-sports, geo-restaurants, and geo-bakeries [13]. Important factors that are responsible for the rapid development of SMEs in rural areas such as product uniqueness, infrastructure development, strong and integrated policy support from the government and well-developed marketing strategies [14].

Geo-product promotes Geo-tourism through their interpretation of the heritage in the Geo-park. SMEs developed services and product for Geo-tourism activities, thus supporting the industry. The previous research above about Geo-products are mostly conducted at European Geo-parks, while in Asia were most UNESCO Global Geo-parks are located there are very few research on Geo-products, especially on small islands Geo-park where the Geo-products are unique and distinct in the area. The study research questions are: what is the development process of geo-product conducted by SMEs at Belitong, what are the supporting and inhibitory factors in developing geo-product that promotes Geo-tourism. The research will explore the process of which SMEs has implement to interpret the geodiversity, biodiversity and culture diversity to develop Geo-products. Belitong Island is chosen as a study area because there are a few researches conducted on SMEs in small islands, and currently Belitong is a national priority in tourism and economic development.

3. Method

The explanatory research used combined quantitative and qualitative method with descriptive analysis. The data collection techniques conducted used primary data collected through questionnaire, FGD and interview to SMEs, local government in Belitong island and community group. This research has identified 500 SMEs which join the Galeri Belitong community and a sample size of 50 SMEs was chosen by purposive sampling technique. Data from survey was processed into tables, interview and FGD data was transcribed and analysed using descriptive and content analysis. The research has its limitation due to limited research time frame and number of respondents; the result is limited to the data captured within the time frame.

4. Results and Discussion

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4.1. Authors and Affiliations

Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) produce Geo-product in the UNESCO Global Geo-park (UGGp) Belitong. Most Geo-product are services such as tour, accommodation and food and beverage, which support the island Geo-tourism activities. Souvenirs are also Geo-product usually bought by tourists who visited the island on their excursion. The research found that most Geo-product developed by SMEs are food and beverages (70%), such as spices (muntok white pepper), shrimp paste, coffee, fish chips, lemon drink known as *Jeruk Kunci* and cassava chips.

In developing the Geo-product, SMEs comply with the following UGGp Belitong regulations on Geo-products: are made from local products in the Geo-park area, communicate as a symbol of local geological heritage, commercially viable and has an education purpose, has connection with traditional products and geoscience, also made from environmentally friendly materials and sustainable.

Upon creating the Geo-product, the SMEs took to account the local and regional cultural identity. Geo-product is a media to communicate to tourists about UGGp Belitong's geodiversity, biodiversity and culture diversity. During Geo-product development, the process started with creating ideas by searching for new ideas. The Geo-product must answer to what kind of product or services tourists need when visiting Belitong Island Geo-park. There are several characteristics found in Geo-product created by local SMEs for a Geo-park: 1) it must respond to the market wants and need, 2) it is created in connection with local geological, cultural context 3) developed through good practices undertaken by considering environment sustainability 4) marketable.

In this research, SMEs, have 14 items or steps that they do to develop their Geo-product. SMEs start from finding new ideas/creation to utilizing knowledge, skills, experience, collaboration and innovation also registering their product brand. In table 1 respondents answered the questions with yes or no answers regarding these parameters.

Table 1. Developing Geo-product to Promote Geo-tourism (n =50)

Item	%	
	Yes	No
No		
1 Finding new ideas/creation	100%	0%
2 Copying existing ideas	71%	29%
3 Searching ideas through social media and mass media	100%	0%
4 Searching ideas from local traditional knowledge/culture	43%	57%
5 Utilizing knowledge, skills (including technological skills) and experience to create (improve) new products, processes, and / or systems, which provide significant economic value (significant)	100%	0%
6 Developing collaboration between SMEs, large companies, universities and public research institutions in increasing business	29%	71%
7 Always looking for new ways of designing products, production processes and marketing companies	100%	0%
8 Copying other companies in terms of products, production and marketing but make changes	71%	29%
9 Creating new product designs that have never been offered by competitors	71%	29%
10 Innovating in various forms	43%	57%
11 Existing products appear with their own characteristics	100%	0%
12 The product is long favored customers	100%	0%

13 Experienced workers	71%	29%
14 Product design is registered and has patent rights	43%	57%

Searching for new ideas are mostly conducted by SMEs through referencing the mass media and social media, as well as utilizing their knowledge, skills and experience to develop their product. Knowledge strategically provides opportunities for SMEs to help their innovation practices [17]. They attempt to create a product which has a value for the customer. The SMEs continually experiment in order to find for a new way in designing the product, carrying out production and marketing through intermediary channels or directly by social media. SMEs are planning new product development activities and assessing the contribution of existing activities to sustaining their livelihoods [18].

The SMEs ensure to produce their own unique characteristic for geo-products, while producing their customer's long favored products. This is similar to what other research found about favored product [19]. SMEs are an important source of innovation and have the capacity to make radical innovations [17]. This research also identifies the supporting and inhibitory factor encountered by SMEs in the Geo-product development. The supporting factor were identified and 5 factors was found. The respondents in table 2, can only choose one answer to the question: what is the supporting factor of developing Geo-product.

Table 2. Supporting Factor for Geo-product Development (n=50)

Items	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
1. Infrastructure facilities (roads, telecommunication, electricity, etc.)	5%
2. Loan procedure	32%
3. Technological usage and information	5%
4. Organizational management: leadership	27%
5. Knowledge in marketing	32%

The supporting factors for SMEs are: infrastructure facilities, loan procedures, technological usage and information, organizational management, and knowledge in marketing. SME entrepreneurs in UGGp Belitong received support from their stakeholder in terms of marketing and loan process. Assistance in providing loans and advice in dealing with financial institutions is also important for the development of SMEs in order to increase socio-economic growth [20].

The stakeholders are: government and large private and national corporations, also local NGOs actively supports the SMEs. The government as policy makers help SMEs to gain an access to business capital, while corporations through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provides programs to increase knowledge on product development and loan access for SMEs. Local communities, government and the private sector must work together in preserving the environment while ensuring the sustainability and economic development of small businesses in the area [21]. There is a process in which partnerships between local governments, community-based groups and the private sector are built to manage existing resources to create jobs and boost the economy in well-defined areas [22].

Geo-park development encourages local economic growth by providing job opportunities, promoting local products, improving community welfare, and contributing to improving local facilities and infrastructure [21]. Ediagbonya (2013) recommends that the Government provide loan facilities that can be accessed by entrepreneurs [23]. This is very crucial because not all loan facilities issued by the Government can be accessed. Organizational management factors, such as leadership, have a significant role in directing every organizational decision. Leadership is seen as collaborative action to bring about the development of local SMEs [24]. The other supporting factor is knowledge in marketing which was obtained through training or coaching held by the government or the private sector and national corporation on CSR program. The activity increases the knowledge of SMEs in UGGp Belitong on management and product quality.

Skills development and financing enable capacity building of SMEs and lead to business growth, increased personal income from owners and their families and revitalization of communities through job creation [25]. SMEs ensure the effective and efficient utilization of available human and material resources. In this context, human resources refer to the workforce. That is, individuals who are willing and able to work; Meanwhile, material resources are non-human factors needed in the production process. Hence, growing SMEs will use these resources and thus avoid waste and underuse. All of this will in turn lead to the nation's economic development [14]. In the mapping of the inhibitory factor there are 4 categories that were identified, which are: input-supply, marketing, technology and organizational management. The respondent in table 3 can only choose one answer per questions, as there are a total of four questions.

Table 3. Inhibitory factors for geo-product development (n=50)

1.The inhibitory factor in input-supply	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
a. Lack of capital	29%
b. Lack of skilled employee	43%
c. Limited place of business / land / warehouse area	29%
2.The inhibitory factor in marketing	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
a. Lack of information about the market	14%
b. Weak network	14%
c. Lack of market access	43%
d. Other marketing obstacle	29%
3. The inhibitory factor in technology	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
a. Lack of knowledge on digital technology	71%
b. Lack of equipment or machinery	14%
c. Other technological problem	14%
4.The inhibitory factor in organizational management	Percentage of Respondents (100%)
Procedure for establishing a company permit	29%
Financial reporting	71%

Data on the table 3 shows that the inhibitory factors of SMEs developing Geo-products in terms of input-supply is the workers lack of skill. This relates to business competencies that are not possessed by employees in SMEs. Most employee are self-taught or learning by doing process. Employees' lack of skill will hamper future business development. Thus, employee's skill needs to be trained from the beginning they enter the company. For this reason, the manager of SMEs actively provides guidance to workers, either by participating in training, seminars or workshops. In addition, the obstacles are the high cost of keeping the high skilled human resources. This makes employers reluctant to hire skilled human resources in their company. They prefer to hire unskilled human resources and train them. In terms of input-supply, businesses do not have an obstacle in the availability of raw materials, because Geo-products are mostly sourced from local material. It is a general fact that the development and performance of SMEs is related to the available resources [26].

In terms of marketing, inhibitory factors are dominated by a lack of market access for SMEs. Market access in this study is due to limited business network, limited product distribution areas, unclear segmentation and target markets. In this case there are a few entrepreneurs that market their products through internet and social media marketing. SMEs must keep in being innovative in order to meet customers' needs and wants, also a company must know their customer's expectation [27]. The inhibitory factor in product development is dominated by lack of knowledge related to usage of technology. This means SMEs has a lack of skill to operate technology, such as digital tools to simplify business processes. This certainly has an impact on business operations, such as: limited production, limited scope of marketplace, difficulty of networking, the, procurement and etc. In addition, another obstacle is related to equipment based on advanced digital technology, this is also influenced by the lack of knowledge about the technology. Some SMEs also have less enthusiasm in using technological equipment, which will improve their business processes.

The inhibitory factor of SMEs is also management activities where financial reporting is a barriers. Almost all entrepreneurs do not understand how to do a business financial data collection, Entrepreneurs stated that their main obstacle in terms of organizational management is managing finance and writing financial report. They mixed their business finances with their personal finances. They have barrier in promoting and delivering their promises to customers, this is due to their low management skill. This is related to company activities that include decision making, developing strategy and finding market opportunity, this is part of the entrepreneurial orientation [28].

In developing the Geo-product, SMEs try to always develop a new product to keep up with customer changing needs and demand. During the covid19 pandemic, SMEs develop cloth mask and market the traditional herbal tea drink as healthy drink. Creativity of SMEs is important in developing their product according to SMEs. Cahyani, et.al. (2018) found that creativity and innovativeness of entrepreneurs is key of a successful business. Geo-product developed is intended to support Geo-tourism activities, in which the Geo-product meet tourist's needs and demands [29].

The finding of this research is similar with what other Geo-park experience in developing Geo-product, such as Ly Son Geo-park in Vietnam, which has geo-souvenir and Geo-product which are local products such as geo-handicraft, geo-ornament, and local foods [30]. In the process of developing Geo-products within its scope, SMEs focus on the development process of physical products and less incorporating new technology, and has yet address the issue of value chain. The traditional process of operations management, human resources, marketing and finance is done, with some form of online marketing. Respondents spent less attention to product design, as well as the ownership of intellectual property (patents, trade secrets, etc.) for their geo-products. The existence of collaboration with various parties occurred in Naturtejo Geo-park, where goldsmith created a handmade jewelry called "Trilobite" [31].

According to Putra et.al. (2019) the government support is a key factor for SMEs to provide promotion, incentive and necessary infrastructure needed [9]. SMEs are supported by the government to participate in events and have access to promotional events. Skills development and financing enable capacity building of SMEs and lead to business growth, increased personal income from owners and their families and revitalization of communities through job creation [22]. In UGGp Belitong, they have integrated the Geo-products into Geo-tourism activities by conducting factory or shop visits for tourists, sample tasting, presentation, workshop, festival, fair, market shows and trade exhibitions. The activities conducted by SMEs in UNESCO Global Geo-park Belitong to develop and market their Geo-product are similar with Naturejo Geo-park, in which they have showcased their product and became a brand which promote their local identity [32]. Business development services such as entrepreneurship training, management and planning are needed to improve SMEs [30]. Hence, development of local SMEs will use local resources (natural and human resources). All of this will in turn lead to the nation's economic development [14].

5. Conclusion

Geo-products are products or services with ties to local culture, geodiversity and promote geo-tourism activities in the Geo-park. SMEs in Belitong develop Geo-product by creating ideas, production, marketing the product in the Geo-park and beyond, while actively creating new products to meet the customer future needs. The supporting factors for Geo-product are: existing resources in Belitong area, as source of raw materials and human resources. The inhibitory factors are: lack in

access to technology, lack of market access and technological barriers. Many SMEs in UNESCO Global Geo-park Belitong are not aware the importance of communicating their product brand with the Geo-park Brand. Stakeholders, such as local government have conducted training program, also private companies with Geo-park management and local community group have also created interventions to increase the diversity and quality of Geo-products. It will take the collaborative efforts of Geo-park management, local government, community group and CSR of private companies to increase SMEs' capabilities specially to promote Geo-tourism through increasing training on business communication, financial management, digital technology and marketing skills.

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