



AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE ROLE OF LOCAL CREATIVITY-BASED COFFEE TOURISM IN INCREASING COMMUNITY INCOME IN SIDIKALANG DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of coffee tourism based on local creativity in increasing community income in Sidikalang District. Sidikalang coffee, as a flagship commodity, has great potential as a tourist attraction, but has not yet been fully utilized. This study employs a qualitative method with an exploratory approach through interviews, observations, and documentation involving coffee farmers, MSME operators, government officials, and the community. Data analysis utilizes the SWOT framework to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results indicate the presence of local creativity in coffee processing, presentation, and derivative products that can be developed into educational tourism and the creative economy, thereby contributing to increased community income. However, development remains constrained by limitations in promotion, facilities, and management. Therefore, a collaborative strategy between the community, business actors, and the government is needed to support the development of sustainable coffee tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sidikalang coffee has long been a key ingredient in Sidikalang, one of Indonesia's highest-quality coffee producers. Its reputation extends not only regionally but also nationally as a strong and distinctive Arabica coffee with a distinctive flavor (Battour et al., 2022). Sidikalang coffee not only has economic value as an agricultural commodity but also holds significant potential for development as a coffee-based thematic tourist attraction (Alzboun et al., 2023). This potential can be seen in various aspects, such as the presence of traditional coffee farmers, unique coffee processing methods, and the growth of coffee micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and local coffee shops offering a unique coffee drinking experience (Suhartanto et al., 2025). To illustrate this potential, Table 1 is presented below.

Table 1. Revenue Contribution from Robusta Coffee in Sidikalang

Year	Types of Coffee	Income
2021	Robusta	19,448,000
2022	Robusta	20,736,000
2023	Robusta	20,955,000
2024	Robusta	22,002,750

The table shows that Sidikalang has strong initial capital to develop coffee tourism, both in terms of production, business actors, and supporting infrastructure. However, this potential has not been fully utilized optimally. Despite Sidikalang's significant coffee potential, preliminary research has found that tourism activities utilizing coffee as a primary attraction are still very limited. Many potential locations have not yet been developed into educational or experience-based tourism packages. Tourism activities are more often spontaneous, with visitors simply enjoying coffee in coffee shops without engaging in educational activities such as (Leong et al., 2024):

- Coffee plantation tour,
- Roasting demonstration,
- Brewing workshop,
- Coffee storytelling, or
- Making coffee-based derivative products.

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This situation demonstrates a gap between Sidikalang's vast coffee potential and its utilization as a planned and educational tourist attraction. Although coffee has become a regional identity, its management has not yet been directed towards the development of structured, experience-based tourism. This emphasizes that coffee tourism development cannot simply rely on coffee products; it also requires creative packaging that integrates landscape, culture, and community activities. Therefore, Sidikalang's visual and geographical conditions are crucial to examine as a basis for developing local creativity in coffee tourism. This limitation can be seen in Figure

The image shows that Sidikalang, visually and geographically, has a strong coffee landscape and culture, but it has not yet been developed into a structured tourist attraction (Asrial et al., 2021). Local creativity is a crucial foundation for developing the creative economy, including coffee-based tourism (Triyanti et al., 2020). This creativity can manifest itself in the following forms:

- a. The narrative of the origin of coffee,
- b. The art of brewing,
- c. Derivative product innovation,
- d. Educational packages about cultivation,

However, based on various observations and preliminary interviews, the local creativity of the Sidikalang community in the context of coffee tourism has not been systematically organized. Some community members have interesting ideas, but lack the platform, support, or adequate mentoring to develop their creativity into economically valuable tourism products (Nurhalimah Harahap & Atika Hanan Julia Harahap, 2024). This phenomenon highlights the gap between potential and realization, which is the root of the problem in developing Sidikalang coffee tourism.

The Dairi Regency Government has actually promoted the tourism sector as part of its regional economic strategy. However, this policy has focused more on general aspects of tourism (such as community infrastructure and promotional events), and has not addressed the development of local creativity within the coffee tourism value chain (Bakalo et al., 2025).

In other words, although coffee is a regional icon, there is no sustainable model for developing coffee tourism based on local creativity. Previous research on Sidikalang coffee has focused more on (Elmia et al., 2023):

- a. Quality of coffee products,
- b. Coffee marketing,
- c. The role of coffee MSMEs,
- d. Or economic analysis of coffee farmers.

There has been no research that directly:

- a. Exploring the local creativity of the Sidikalang community,
- b. Linking it to the development of coffee tourism,
- c. As well as analyzing the potential, constraints, and development strategies.

This gap is the basis for the urgency of this research.

Based on the phenomena and untapped potential, this research is important to conduct to:

- a. Identifying forms of local creativity that have developed.
- b. Exploring community barriers in creating coffee tourism products.
- c. Analyzing the potential of coffee tourism as a regional creative economy.
- d. Formulating a coffee tourism development strategy based on local creativity.

This research is expected to provide empirical and practical contributions, both for creative economy actors, coffee SMEs, and local governments.

2. Literature Review

Local Creativity

According to Amabile (MARIMUTHU et al., 2021) creativity is influenced by individual skills, the creative process, and community motivation. Local creativity is the ability of a community to generate ideas, works, and innovations that draw on local culture, experience, and knowledge. Within a community context, local creativity emerges through cultural practices, traditional skills, and the ability to create value-added products.

According to Mihaly C, creativity is the result of the interaction between individuals, cultural domains, and a supportive social environment (IGN. Supartha Djelantik et al., 2022). He formulated a creativity system model that states that creativity does not only occur in a person's head, but is the result of the interaction of three main components: the individual (personal), domain (cultural), and field (social environment). In the Sidikalang community, local creativity is reflected in coffee processing skills, roasting techniques, coffee historical narratives, and innovations in derivative products that have the potential to be developed as tourist attractions.

Community-Based Creative Economy

According to UNCTAD (Ursa & Arunkumar, 2023) the creative economy is an economic activity that prioritizes creativity, ideas, and innovation as its primary resources. In a community context, the creative economy encourages community participation in creating economic value through local potential. Through community involvement, the creative economy serves as a means of empowerment that can increase the capacity, skills, and economic independence of communities. This approach positions local communities as key actors in the production, packaging, and marketing of creative products rooted in local identity and wisdom (Hernanda et al., 2018).

Sidikalang coffee, as a leading commodity, offers significant potential for development into a creative culinary subsector through processed products, distinctive packaging, coffee education, and tourist attractions. Coffee development is not limited to the sale of raw coffee or beverages, but can be expanded through innovation in processed products, regionally distinctive packaging designs, coffee education programs, and the creation of experiential tourist attractions (Astuti, 2019). The integration of coffee, local creativity, and tourism activities allows for the formation of a creative culinary subsector with high economic value. Therefore, developing a Sidikalang coffee-based creative economy has the potential to be a sustainable strategy for increasing community income while strengthening the region's local identity.

Coffee Tourism

Coffee tourism is a form of thematic tourism that combines agricultural experiences, education, culture, and coffee consumption. Key elements of coffee tourism include coffee plantation tours, coffee processing demonstrations, cupping classes, and storytelling about the history of coffee (Setiyorini et al., 2023). Coffee tourism has proven successful in several global coffee-producing countries, such as Costa Rica, Vietnam, and Colombia, where coffee is a key attraction. The development of coffee tourism in these countries not only contributes to increased tourist visits but also has a direct impact on increasing the income of local communities, particularly farmers and small businesses. In addition to strengthening the regional economy, coffee tourism also plays a role in preserving coffee culture and sustaining agricultural practices (Kurniawati et al., 2022). This success demonstrates the significant potential of coffee tourism as a strategy for developing community-based tourism and the creative economy in coffee-producing regions (Setiawati et al., 2023).

Community Based Tourism

Suansri stated that CBT emphasizes community empowerment, sustainability, equitable distribution of benefits, and cultural preservation. Community-based tourism (CBT) is a tourism concept that gives local communities a central role in the planning, management, and utilization of tourism products (Beeh, 2017). In the context of Sidikalang coffee tourism, these CBT principles offer significant potential for optimal implementation. The involvement of coffee farmers as primary producers, coffee MSMEs as product processors and marketers, and local communities as tourism service providers can strengthen the inclusive coffee tourism value chain (Sulaiman et al., 2022). Through active community participation, Sidikalang coffee tourism not only has the potential to improve local economic well-being but also encourages the sustainability of coffee businesses and strengthens the preservation of local culture and wisdom inherent in coffee farming traditions (Harun et al., 2018).

Experiential Tourism

Pine & Gilmore (Dangi, 2018) argue that experiential tourism emphasizes tourists' direct experiences through activities that involve sensory, emotional, and educational aspects (Nugraha & Hidayah, 2022). In coffee tourism, these experiences can include picking coffee, watching roasting, tasting various coffee varieties, and even hearing the history of Sidikalang coffee. This concept demands high levels of creativity from local communities in designing unique experiences. In the context of coffee tourism, these experiences

can be realized through various activities such as picking coffee directly from the plantation, witnessing the roasting process, sampling various coffee varieties, and hearing stories about the history and culture of Sidikalang coffee. These activities enable tourists to understand coffee not only as a consumer product but also as an integral part of the identity and life of the local community. Applying the experiential tourism concept to coffee tourism demands a high level of creativity from the community in designing unique, authentic, and sustainable experiences. Thus, local creativity is key to creating a coffee tourism attraction that can provide added value for visitors while increasing economic benefits for the local community (Simanjuntak, 2021).

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a strategic analysis tool used to map internal and external factors within a program or phenomenon. SWOT consists of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. In this study, a SWOT analysis was used to understand the development of Sidikalang coffee tourism in terms of strengths such as coffee quality and community creativity, as well as weaknesses such as limited tourism facilities and marketing (Shelly Christiani Saputri et al., 2022).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses an exploratory qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to explore in-depth the phenomenon of local creativity among the Sidikalang community in the context of coffee tourism development. Qualitative research allows researchers to understand the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of the community holistically (Rocca & Zielinski, 2022). The research was conducted in Sidikalang District, Dairi Regency, North Sumatra Province, which is known as a center for coffee development and tourism based on local creativity. This location was chosen purposively because it has the potential for coffee tourism, creative MSMEs, and community involvement that can provide data related to the focus of the research. The first location point is at the Dairi Regency Tourism and Sports Office (Dispura), which is one of the locations that is the beginning and will later provide direction to researchers regarding local creativity-based coffee tourism in Sidikalang District. Dispura is precisely located on Jl. Jalan General Hospital, Batang Beruh, Sidikalang District, Dairi Regency, North Sumatra 22218.

The second location point is in one of the IKM centers located in Sidikalang, which is a place that is the center of coffee bean processing in Dairi Regency, Sidikalang District. This center is precisely located in Bintang Barung Barung, Bintang Hulu, Sidikalang District, Dairi Regency, North Sumatra 22281. The subjects in this study are coffee tourism activities based on local creativity and the economic activities of the community involved in organizing coffee tourism in Sidikalang. The subjects include the creative process, the form of creative products, the mechanism of coffee tourism and the economic contribution to the community (Harianto et al., 2020).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, selecting informants based on their knowledge and involvement in coffee activities and coffee tourism. Snowball sampling was used to add informants based on initial recommendations. The number of informants was flexible, not predetermined, and could be changed (added or reduced) throughout the research based on data saturation requirements. Informant criteria:

- a. Coffee farmers,
- b. Government parties (Head of tourism office and head of IKM center),
- c. Coffee shop manager, and
- d. Local community.

The number of informants is flexible and is determined based on data saturation. Exploratory qualitative research requires in-depth data, so the techniques used are: In-depth Interview, Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore the experiences, creativity, obstacles, and views of informants regarding Sidikalang coffee tourism (Devianto et al., 2019). Participatory Observation, Observations were conducted on coffee production activities, roasting processes, services in coffee shops, interactions between MSMEs and tourists, and the physical condition of coffee tourism locations. Documentation, Documentation in the form of photos, field notes, social media uploads, and archives of activities relevant to coffee tourism during the research process (Vongvisitsin et al., 2024).

The data analysis in this study used the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was carried

out continuously from data collection until the research was completed (Hatipoglu et al., 2016). In the data reduction stage, the researcher sorted, simplified, and grouped data relevant to the research focus. Next, the reduced data was presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding and interpretation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Research Location

This research was conducted in Sidikalang District, the capital of Dairi Regency, North Sumatra Province. This district is known as one of Indonesia's leading Arabica coffee production centers. Geographically, this area is located at an altitude of approximately 1,000–1,500 meters above sea level (masl), with relatively cool air temperatures and fertile volcanic soil. These agro-climatic characteristics strongly support the cultivation of high-quality coffee. Besides being a coffee production area, Sidikalang is also developing as a region with potential for coffee-based tourism. Coffee farming, processing, and serving have become integral parts of the community's socio-economic life. Coffee serves not only as an agricultural commodity but also as a local economic identity, involving farmers, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), traders, and tourism businesses (Han & Yang, 2025).

In the context of this research, location description is important to understand how the potential of coffee as a local commodity can be developed into tourism based on community creativity and how it impacts community income.

History of Sidikalang Coffee

The history of coffee in Sidikalang District is closely linked to the development of coffee plantations in North Sumatra since the Dutch colonial era in the 19th century. Coffee was introduced as an export commodity with high economic value. The Dairi highlands, including Sidikalang, later became one of the areas for Arabica coffee cultivation due to its favorable geographical conditions. Over time, coffee cultivation has ceased to be dominated by large plantations, evolving into a community-based farming system. Most coffee plantations are managed by families, passed down through generations. Knowledge of cultivation, harvesting, and post-harvest practices is traditionally passed down, shaping the socio-economic character of communities heavily dependent on coffee. Over time, Sidikalang coffee has become known for its distinctive flavor characteristics, including a strong aroma, balanced acidity, and a thick body. These characteristics enhance Sidikalang coffee's competitiveness in both national and international markets. (Nurhidayati, 2022).

A transformation then occurred when coffee was no longer marketed solely as a raw material but began to be processed into value-added products such as packaged ground coffee, roasted beans, and even local coffee shops. This shift marked the beginning of the concept of coffee tourism based on local creativity, which integrates production, education, and tourism experiences into a single economic activity.

Thematic Findings

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, the researchers identified several key themes that align with the research focus. These thematic findings illustrate how local community creativity plays a role in the development of coffee tourism in Sidikalang District and its contribution to increasing community income.

Community Creativity in Coffee Production, Presentation, Education, and Narrative Activities

Research findings indicate that the Sidikalang community exhibits diverse forms of creativity in coffee activities, including production, presentation, education, and coffee narratives. In terms of production, the community's creativity is evident in innovations in coffee processing, both traditional and modern. The community not only sells raw coffee beans but also processes them into value-added products such as ground coffee. Furthermore, the community's creativity in coffee production and processing is inextricably linked to the empirical experience of local actors. Knowledge of cultivation techniques, post-harvest processes, and coffee processing is passed down through generations and continues to evolve to meet market needs. This demonstrates that local creativity is not simply spontaneous but also the result of ongoing social learning within the community. As one informant noted: "For coffee processing, here we still use traditional methods, and if there are some who use modern methods, it is only a few and not completely. Because in accordance with what was taught by our parents from generation to generation, until now we still use the traditional production process, namely the method taught by our parents from the past." (IK -

001, Coffee Farmer). On the other hand, in the aspects of education, narrative and storytelling, the Sidikalang community has strong potential in building a tourism identity based on coffee culture. However, research results show that the use of narratives is still not structured as part of the tourism product. In fact, local narratives can be an added value that distinguishes Sidikalang coffee tourism from other areas (Sosa et al., 2021).

Thus, it can be concluded that community creativity in coffee production, presentation, education, and narrative has developed naturally as part of the socio-economic life of the Sidikalang community. However, for this creativity to have a greater impact, systematic support from various parties is needed, particularly in terms of management, training, and the development of integrated tourism concepts.

Utilizing Local Creativity as Tourism Potential

Based on the results of interviews and field observations, coffee tourism in Sidikalang District can be developed through the involvement of various parties, namely farmers, SMEs, the government, and the surrounding community, as stated by a key informant who stated: "Based on the potential of the coffee commodity it has, Sidikalang has the opportunity to develop coffee tourism as an attraction for tourists as well as becoming a new center supported by the government. This development requires cooperation between the government and the local community, who can later act as coffee tour guides" (IK-004, Government). This statement is also supported by the community as conveyed by one of the coffee farmers who stated:

"If you want to build a coffee tourism center, you need government support for better and more structured management. The government can help by providing funding, supporting facilities, and training for the community, especially farmers, who can then act as guides and tour service providers." (IK-001, Coffee Farmer).

This role is evident in the production, processing, and provision of tourism services based on coffee, a commodity that serves as a local identity. Coffee farmers serve not only as raw material producers but also as participants in the development of educational coffee plantation tourism. Some coffee plantations are considered to have the potential to become learning sites about traditional coffee cultivation, harvesting, and processing. The knowledge of cultivation, passed down from generation to generation, is a unique attraction in the educational tourism concept, as tourists can gain firsthand experience of the coffee production process from upstream to downstream (Wolor et al., 2024).

From the local government's perspective, there are efforts to plan the development of tourist villages and coffee-based small and medium-sized industrial centers. This statement was expressed by a key informant who stated:

"Currently, the DISPORA is planning to develop a tourist village through a Small and Medium Industry (IKM) center program and the construction of a coffee plantation in one of the villages in Sidikalang. This center is known as the IKM Dusun Barung-barung Center, which aims to become a center for processing, processing, and marketing Dairi specialty coffee so that it can compete globally, while also facilitating the processing of Arabica and Robusta coffee harvests from the Sidikalang community." (IK-004, Government).

The government is opening up opportunities for collaboration with the private sector and encouraging the strengthening of the coffee sector as a regional leading potential. This was conveyed in an interview conducted by the researcher, where the informant stated: "We are currently open to collaborating with a coffee company in Bogor. Previously, this collaboration was proposed to parties in East Java, but no response was received. Then, the Youth and Sports Agency (Dispora) took action to try with the one in Bogor" (IK-004, Government) (Van Bets et al., 2017).

Although coordination between parties is not yet fully integrated, policy support demonstrates a commitment to coffee tourism development as part of local economic development. The growing local creativity is evident in innovative coffee menus, more attractive product packaging, and shop concepts that emphasize traditional nuances and regional identity. Furthermore, Dairi Regent Eddy Keleng Ate Berutu launched Sidikalang Capsule Coffee in front of large companies including PT. Toba Pulp Lestari, PT. Mayora, PT. Inalum, PT. Indofood, and several other large private companies. Sidikalang Capsule Coffee was launched at Dairi's Cultural Night Dinner, held at the Toba Ball Room, Labersa Hotel, on Saturday, February 25, 2023.



Figure 1. Sidikalang capsule coffee

Sidikalang Coffee Tourism Development Strategy

Based on research findings obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation, developing Sidikalang coffee tourism requires a planned and integrated strategy to optimize the potential of local community creativity. This strategy focuses not only on developing coffee products but also on packaging tourism activities that provide engaging experiences for tourists and increase economic value for the community. In this context, coffee tourism development must integrate production, education, culture, and service aspects into a unified whole.

The first strategy that can be implemented is the development of experiential coffee educational tourism. Coffee tourism in Sidikalang has significant potential for development through hands-on activities such as coffee plantation tours, coffee picking, processing, and brewing. Involving tourists in these activities will provide a more immersive experience than simply enjoying coffee as a consumer product. This also aligns with research findings showing that some residents already possess knowledge and skills in the coffee production process, which can be used as educational tourism materials.

The second strategy is strengthening collaboration between communities, MSMEs, and local governments. Interviews revealed that coffee tourism development still faces challenges in coordination and unintegrated management. Therefore, synergy between stakeholders is needed to create a more structured tourism management system. The government can play a role in providing facilities, training, and promotion, while communities and businesses play the primary role of implementing coffee tourism activities (Maryani & Indrianty, 2024).

The third strategy is to improve human resource (HR) capacity through training and mentoring. Communities need to be equipped with skills in tourism services, business management, and product marketing to be competitive in the tourism sector. This is crucial, considering that coffee tourism requires not only production capabilities but also the ability to provide quality experiences and services to tourists.

The fourth strategy is strengthening the promotion and branding of Sidikalang coffee tourism. Based on research findings, coffee tourism promotion is still suboptimal, resulting in its potential being under-recognized. Utilizing social media and digital platforms can be an effective means of introducing Sidikalang coffee tourism to a wider audience, both nationally and internationally. Furthermore, branding that emphasizes the local identity and uniqueness of Sidikalang coffee needs to be consistently developed.

Finally, the fifth strategy is the development of tourism-supporting facilities and infrastructure. The availability of facilities such as road access, representative tourist attractions, and other supporting infrastructure is crucial for enhancing tourist comfort. Without adequate support, coffee tourism will struggle to develop optimally. Therefore, the local government needs to focus on improving infrastructure to support coffee-based tourism activities in Sidikalang.

Therefore, the Sidikalang coffee tourism development strategy must be comprehensive, involving various parties and leveraging the potential of local creativity within the community. This integrated approach is expected to establish Sidikalang coffee tourism as a leading tourist destination that is not only economically attractive but also long-term sustainable.

The Impact of Coffee Tourism on Community Income

Based on interviews with informants, coffee tourism has had an economic impact felt by the community, although it hasn't been fully optimized. This statement was made directly by the informant:

"With this coffee tourism, local income has increased due to the influx of tourists to the Sidikalang area, and service providers will also feel the impact" (IK-002, Coffee Shop Owner). For coffee shop owners, the increased demand for coffee from both local and out-of-town consumers presents an opportunity for additional income. In addition to selling raw coffee beans, the Sidikalang community also acts as producers, selling ground coffee and coffee drinks. The development of coffee tourism based on local creativity has also contributed to increasing the market value of Sidikalang coffee. Coffee is no longer viewed solely as an agricultural commodity, but as a cultural product and tourism experience with regional identity. This added value allows the community to earn higher profits than selling coffee as raw materials. Furthermore, direct community involvement in tourism activities fosters a sense of ownership of the region's potential, thus promoting local economic sustainability. One key informant expressed this: "If this center is developed, the identity of Sidikalang coffee will spread widely and become more widely known. This way, coffee can become a cultural product and a regional identity for Sidikalang," (IK-004, Community).

However, the role of coffee tourism in increasing community income in Sidikalang District still faces various challenges, including limited tourism promotion, suboptimal supporting facilities, and the need to increase human resource capacity in community-based tourism management. This statement is supported by the informant's statement, namely: "Regarding facilities, there are no directions to the center location. Tourism services are still not optimal because it is still in the planning stage and there is still minimal knowledge regarding coffee tourism." (IK-004, Community).

Therefore, collaboration between local governments, businesses, and the community is crucial in optimizing coffee tourism development as a strategy to improve community well-being. Overall, coffee tourism based on local creativity serves as an alternative economic development tool that can increase income through added value creation, expanding employment opportunities, and strengthening the creative economy based on local potential (Jolliffe, 2025).

SWOT Analysis

Identification of Internal Factors

Strengths

Based on interviews, Sidikalang's coffee tourism strength lies in its quality, with its strong flavor, thick body, and distinctive aroma, recognized throughout the region. The region's fertile soil and high altitude significantly support the production of high-quality Arabica coffee. Coffee cultivation knowledge is passed down through generations, particularly in seed selection and traditional processing techniques. This demonstrates the social capital and local wisdom that underpin the development of educational coffee plantation tourism.

Coffee also holds symbolic value, contributing to community identity and pride. Government support through plans for tourist villages and coffee-based small and medium-sized industry centers also strengthens internal potential. Thus, the primary strength lies in commodity quality, cultural identity, local experience, and policy support (Vu et al., 2022).

Weaknesses

Despite its enormous potential, there are a number of internal weaknesses. Farmers still face limited capital, rudimentary processing equipment, and expensive access to fertilizer. Some farmers lack understanding of modern roasting techniques and educational tourism service standards. In terms of tourist facilities, limited parking, public restrooms, and directional signs hinder visitor comfort. Coffee tourism promotion remains limited to personal social media and has not been professionally integrated with regional promotions (Hakim et al., 2022).

Coordination between the government, farmers, and communities has not been optimal and has not been integrated into a single integrated management system (Vu et al., 2023). This indicates managerial and institutional weaknesses.

Identification of External Factors

Opportunities

The main opportunity stems from the growing trend of special interest coffee tourism among the younger generation. Coffee shops have become social spaces and destinations for regional culinary

specialties. Demand for coffee is increasing from outside the region and from modern coffee shops. The government is opening opportunities for tourism village programs and collaborations with the private sector, including coffee companies from outside the region (Nasib et al., 2023).

Furthermore, there are opportunities for developing derivative businesses, such as coffee souvenirs, which were launched in 2023. This product is a Sidikalang coffee capsule, a small, disposable container (usually Nespresso-compatible) containing pure ground coffee, designed for maximum freshness with a shelf life of up to 18 months (Maspul, 2023). The criteria include originating in Sidikalang (North Sumatra), a strong, full-bodied aroma, a long aftertaste, and a dominant chocolate/spicy flavor.

Utilizing digital promotions through social media in a more professional manner also presents a great opportunity to increase tourism appeal (Yuwafi et al., 2023).

Threats

The main threat comes from unpredictable weather changes, which reduce crop yields. Fluctuating coffee prices significantly impact farmers' incomes. Competition between coffee shops is fierce, including from other regions with superior promotional capabilities. If management is not sustainable, social conflict and jealousy within the community can arise (PRAMONO & Timba, 2025). Environmental risks from overexploitation also pose a long-term threat. If coffee tourism is not properly managed, it could negatively impact the community economically.

SO, WO, ST, WT strategies

Based on the results of the interviews that have been conducted, the SWOT analysis of coffee tourism based on local creativity in Sidikalang District is as follows:

Table 2. SO, WO, ST, WT strategies

	<i>Strengths (Strengths).</i>	<i>Weaknesses .</i>
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sidikalang coffee reputation. b. Unique local creativity. c. Supportive natural environment. d. High community participation. e. Operating costs are relatively low. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Accessibility and infrastructure are less than optimal. b. Tourist facilities are not yet complete. c. HR skills are still diverse. d. Weak promotion and branding. e. Lack of collaboration between actors.
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making Sidikalang Coffee's identity the main branding of the product. 2. Developing unique menu variants based on local wisdom. 3. Developing the concept of coffee tourism or a coffee drinking experience with a natural feel. 4. Involving the community in community-based promotions. 5. Set competitive prices to expand the market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leveraging coffee consumption trends and social media to overcome promotional limitations by conducting story-based digital marketing about Kopi Sidikalang's reputation. 2. Using local community support to expand promotions without requiring large costs. 3. Developing product innovations based on local creativity to attract new market
Opportunities .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Special interest tourism trends. b. Government support for the creative economy. c. Increasing demand for local coffee. d. Social media as a free promotional tool. e. Opportunities for collaboration with the coffee community. 	

		segments despite limited capital.
Threats .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making Sidikalang Coffee's reputation a key advantage in facing competition from similar coffee businesses. 2. Taking advantage of relatively low operating costs to set competitive prices in the face of price competition. 3. Developing a natural environment-based business concept to differentiate yourself from competitors. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing operational cost efficiency to face competition amidst limited capital. 2. Strengthening cooperation with local communities to maintain business stability in conditions of tight competition. 3. Limit business expansion until capital and market conditions are more stable.

SO Implementation (Utilizing strengths and opportunities)

The implementation of SO can be in the form of:

- a. Implementing knowledge related to coffee cultivation in local content learning in elementary to high school.
- b. Creating processed coffee products with new variants such as coffee flavors mixed to create new flavors but still using Sidikalang's signature coffee and creative coffee-based products such as coffee soap or coffee-scented air fresheners using Sidikalang coffee as Sidikalang's signature product.
- c. Creating a coffee plantation tour by providing experience and knowledge about coffee cultivation and processing that has been passed down from generation to generation.
- d. Forming a coffee community that aims to develop and expand knowledge about coffee.
- e. Adjust product prices according to quality and size, provide several price options, and collaborate with several MSMEs to make distribution and marketing costs more efficient.

Implementation of WO (Overcoming weaknesses by exploiting opportunities)

The implementation of WO can be in the form of (Wijaya et al., 2022):

- a. Providing training to the community on coffee processing, tourism services, and product marketing.
- b. Using social media as the main promotional platform but using promotional models that are trending in society to attract attention.
- c. Re-developing coffee products with the latest innovations such as ground coffee and capsule coffee.

ST (Leveraging strengths to face threats)

The application of ST can be in the form of:

- a. Maintaining the quality of coffee beans and the coffee bean processing process to maintain the distinctive taste of Sidikalang coffee.
- b. Inviting the public to utilize digital technology such as social media or marketplaces to sell coffee products.
- c. Developing coffee tourism that provides knowledge related to the cultivation of Sidikalang's unique coffee that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Implementation of WT (Minimizing weaknesses and avoiding threats)

The application of WT can be:

- a. Reduce excessive expenses such as too much labor while business income is still minimal.
- b. Collaborate with other tourism actors to promote and expand coffee tourism to minimize operational costs.
- c. Develop your coffee business gradually according to your available capital.

Discussion

Coffee Tourism Exploration

Based on the research conducted, an exploration of coffee tourism in Sidikalang District shows that coffee is no longer viewed solely as an agricultural commodity, but is beginning to develop as part of an experiential tourism activity. This exploration is evident in the community's involvement in various coffee-related activities, from production and processing to serving to consumers. These activities form the basis for developing coffee tourism that focuses on direct tourist experiences. Coffee tourism exploration in Sidikalang is also marked by a shift in coffee's function from a mere consumer product to a tourist attraction. Tourists come not only to enjoy coffee but also to potentially participate in the coffee-making process, such as observing the roasting process, learning about coffee varieties, and understanding proper brewing techniques. This demonstrates the educational value of coffee that can be developed into a knowledge-based and experiential tourism destination. Research findings indicate that local communities play a crucial role in this exploration process. Coffee farmers, MSMEs, and coffee shop owners are beginning to contribute by creating activities that can attract tourists. As a key informant explained: Based on the potential of the coffee commodity it has, Sidikalang has the opportunity to develop coffee tourism as an attraction for tourists as well as becoming a new center supported by the government." (IK-004, Government) (Vu et al., 2025).

This statement demonstrates that coffee tourism exploration stems not only from community initiatives but also from government support, which views coffee as a strategic potential for regional tourism development. Furthermore, the community recognizes that coffee tourism development requires more structured management, as expressed by an informant: "If you want to build a coffee tourism center, you need government support for better and more structured management." (IK-001, Coffee Farmer). However, research results indicate that coffee tourism exploration in Sidikalang is still in its early stages and not yet fully organized. Existing activities are sporadic and not yet integrated into integrated tourism packages. For example, activities such as coffee plantation tours, coffee processing education, and coffee storytelling are still limited and not yet part of a systematic tourism program. On the other hand, the presence of the Coffee Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Center in Sidikalang serves as a form of exploration that demonstrates the direction of creative industry-based tourism development. This center serves not only as a production site but also has the potential to become an educational tourism destination, showcasing the coffee processing process directly to visitors. This demonstrates the potential for coffee tourism exploration by integrating the production and tourism sectors (Syarifuddin, 2022).

Thus, coffee tourism exploration in Sidikalang can be understood as the initial step in developing coffee into a tourist attraction based on local creativity (Ahmad & Abu Talib, 2015). While it has demonstrated various potential activities, this exploration still requires strengthening in terms of management, packaging, and support from various parties to develop into a more structured and sustainable tourist destination (Gumono et al., 2022).

Coffee Exploration Strategy as Tourism

Despite its significant potential, developing coffee tourism in Sidikalang District still requires an appropriate strategy to provide optimal economic benefits to the community. Based on the SWOT analysis conducted in this study, coffee tourism development strategies can be formulated using several key approaches (Tresiana & Duadji, 2022).

Strategy for developing experience-based coffee educational tourism (Experiential Tourism)

In this strategy, coffee is positioned not only as a consumer product but also as a tourism experience that directly engages tourists. Some activities that can be developed include:

- a. Coffee plantation tours provide tourists with the opportunity to see firsthand the coffee cultivation process (Burton et al., 2025).
- b. The activity of picking coffee beans directly on the coffee plantations owned by farmers.
- c. Demonstration of the coffee roasting process to show the stages of coffee processing.
- d. Cupping activities or tasting various Sidikalang coffee variants to introduce the characteristics of coffee flavors to tourists.
- e. Providing education about the history and culture of coffee that developed in the Sidikalang community.

Through this direct experience, tourists not only enjoy coffee as a beverage, but also understand the production process and coffee culture that is part of the lives of local people.

2. Strategy for strengthening local community creativity

The development of coffee tourism also requires active community involvement through increasing creativity in developing coffee tourism products, including:

- a. Development of innovative coffee products such as packaged ground coffee, roasted beans, and ready-to-brew coffee products.
- b. Improving the quality of product design and packaging to make it more attractive and competitive in the tourism market.
- c. Developing a unique and regional coffee serving concept in various local coffee shops.
- d. Creation of coffee-based derivative products such as coffee-based foods and coffee-based drinks.
- e. Development of souvenir products typical of Sidikalang coffee and crafts that reflect the region's identity as a coffee producer.

This innovation can increase economic added value for the community while strengthening Sidikalang's local identity as a coffee-producing area (Bakalo et al., 2025).

Strategy to strengthen coffee tourism promotion through digital media

Coffee tourism promotion also needs to leverage advances in digital technology to reach a wider market. Some steps that can be taken include:

- a. Utilizing social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok as a means of promoting coffee tourism.
- b. Creating digital content that showcases the beauty of coffee plantations and coffee tourism activities in Sidikalang.
- c. Presentation of stories about the history and uniqueness of Sidikalang coffee to increase tourist attraction.
- d. Documentation of the experiences of visiting tourists as a form of testimonial-based promotion.
- e. Use of more professional digital marketing strategies to expand the reach of tourism promotions.

Through effective digital promotion, Sidikalang coffee tourism can be known to a wider audience, both domestic and international tourists (Harahap & Kartika, 2020).

Strategy for Strengthening Collaboration between Government, Business Actors, and the Community

Developing coffee tourism requires good cooperation between the various parties involved, including:

- a. Local governments play a role in providing supporting infrastructure such as road access, tourism facilities, and regulations that support tourism development.
- b. The government can also organize various training and community empowerment programs in the fields of tourism and coffee processing.
- c. Coffee entrepreneurs and coffee shop owners play a role in creating an engaging coffee tourism experience for visitors.
- d. Local communities play a role as the main managers of tourism activities, such as coffee plantation tour guides and coffee-based small business managers.
- e. Cooperation between these parties is important to ensure that coffee tourism development is directed and sustainable.

The final strategy is the development of integrated coffee tourism packages (González-Rozada et al., 2022). These packages can combine various activities, such as coffee plantation visits, coffee processing at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), coffee tastings at local coffee shops, and the purchase of Sidikalang coffee souvenirs. Integrated tour packages provide tourists with a more comprehensive experience, enhancing Sidikalang's appeal as a coffee tourism destination (Purba, 2024).

By implementing these strategies, coffee tourism in Sidikalang District has the potential to develop into a creative economic sector that can increase community income while strengthening the region's identity as a producer of quality coffee.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on results study about role coffee- based tourism creativity local to income community in the sub-district Sidikalang , can concluded that :

- a. Development strategy coffee business is carried out through utilization Sidikalang Coffee reputation , creativity local , as well as determination competitive prices .
- b. Supporting factors business covering quality products and participation society , whereas factor inhibitor covering limited capital and high competition business similar .
- c. Based on SWOT analysis , business be in a good position competitive However need innovation sustainable For maintain sustainability business .

Suggestion

Based on results research that has been done , some suggestions that can be given that is :

1. tourism office recommended For develop a promotional program integrated and strengthen the branding of Sidikalang Coffee as destination coffee- based tourism education and creativity local .
2. The Dairi Regency Regional Government needs to increase support to development coffee tourism through repair access road going to location tourism , provision facility supporters tourism , as well as implementation training management digital business and marketing .
4. Manager tourism and coffee communities need form or strengthen institutional together use increase coordination , standardization services and management more tourism integrated and sustainable .
5. Owner business need increase promotion digital -based for expand market reach . Need done innovation product in a way periodically use face competition coffee business is growing increase .
6. Local community expected Keep going increase participation active in activity coffee tourism for benefits economy can felt in a way more evenly .
7. Recommended for researchers furthermore For study aspect satisfaction customer in a way quantitative use complete study This .

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