



Research Paper

Marketing Strategy for Agrotourism Development in Lampung Province Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The enormous potential for the development of agrotourism in Indonesia has not been explored efficiently due to nonoptimal marketing. Therefore, this research formulated the marketing strategy for the agrotourism sector in Lampung Province Indonesia. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents based on the criteria of experts with experience, knowledge, or authority in agrotourism. This led to the selection of 12 people in the Department of Agriculture and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, tourism operators consisting of the Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI), the Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA), and farmers/agritourism partners. Upon the analysis using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), the results showed that authentic experience should be prioritized with agrotourism actors or partners playing a big role in the marketing process. Furthermore, the addition of attractions with actors or partners is expected to play a key role in offering authentic experiences to tourists as a prioritized alternative strategy. These findings, therefore, showed the need for coordination and collaboration, intensifying marketing communications as well as the provision of tour packages to increase agrotourism marketing in the study area.



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Introduction

Agrotourism utilizes the attractiveness of agriculture which is indicated by the beautiful

scenery to increase people's knowledge, preserve the environment, and promote agricultural products (Oktaviani & Suryana, 2016). It has the potential to be developed in Indonesia due since based on the data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 35.923 inhabitants are recorded to be working in the agricultural sector in August 2017 (Central Statistics Agency, 2021). In Indonesia, the development of agrotourism involves two ministries which are the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The cooperation is stated in the Joint Decree of the Ministers of Agriculture as well as Tourism, Post, and Telecommunications No. 204/KPTS/HK.050/4/1989 and KM.47/PW.004/MPPT-89 concerning the Coordination of Agrotourism Development. However, it was discovered that the collaboration efforts had not been sustained. The Indonesian Government Regulation Number 110 of 2015 concerning Agro Horticultural Tourism Business also states that Agrotourism can be organized by the Central Government, Regional Government, and the business actors consisting of farmers, related organizations, and companies but the main efforts are generally inputted by the farmers or groups providing accommodation, attractions through participation in agricultural activities, and food processing from products in agrotourism (Aikaterini et al., 2001; Malkanthi & Routry, 2011).

Agrotourism plays an important role for farmers in maintaining sustainability and providing additional income as well as having an impact on regional development, creating jobs, and reducing unemployment and urbanization (Astuti, 2014; Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008; Utama, 2011). Meanwhile, the absence of non-optimal marketing efforts makes agritourism unpopular and neglected by most people. This means there is a need to intensify marketing efforts towards ensuring the cultivation of superior products to become an identity to improve the image of the region and even the country as observed with *montong* durian and mango in Thailand, *musang* king durian in Malaysia, and kiwi fruit in New Zealand.

Marketing is very important in developing and maintaining the sustainability of agrotourism businesses and creating markets for farmers to sell their products (Chonkwan, Promkhambut, Hayao, & Rambo, 2016). Agrotourism marketing requires support from the government and tourism actors (Roslina, Nurmalina, Najib, & Asnawi, 2022). It, however, involves different parties including the farmers as the actors, the government as a provider of infrastructure and other facilities, accommodation companies, transportation companies, as well as communities around the area. There is, therefore, the need for synergy between stakeholders to ensure an efficient marketing process. This is necessary due to the fact that well-established coordination between actors and the Association of Travel Companies, Hotel and Restaurant Associations, as well as the central and local governments has the ability to increase the effectiveness of the marketing activities. Meanwhile, the lack of promotion and coordination in development and marketing processes makes agrotourism unpopular with the public (Utama, 2011).

Agrotourism is developed in most areas of Indonesia, one of which is the Lampung

Province. The Provincial Government has started its intensive development in 2018 through plantations, agriculture, and animal husbandry. This means there is a need to study the agrotourism marketing strategies to assist the province in becoming the leading agrotourism community in the country.

There is limited research on agrotourism marketing. Previous studies have observed its development in Jember (Wijayanti, Hubeis, & Muksin, 2015), products (Suwanmaneepong, Fakkhong, & Kullachai, 2018), direct strategies for farmers' income (Uematsu & Mishra, 2011), apple fruit agrotourism marketing strategy (Héroux, 2015), and agrotourism as a rural development strategy in Korea through the promotion of urban and rural exchange programs (Seong-woo & Sou-yeon, 2006).

Previous studies embark on efforts on agrotourism marketing are inseparable from the role of the government (Edgell, Allen, Smith, & Swanson, 2008) in providing infrastructure and facilities as well as formulating policies (Zhao & Timothy, 2015), planning, funding, promoting, and regulating the destinations (Kubickova & Campbell, 2015). 2018), developing tourist destinations (Ruhanen, 2013), as well as establishing the environment for businesses to operate, taking an active role in promotion and marketing, and setting the educational requirements of tourism human resources (Baum & Szivas, 2008). Some studies were also found on stakeholder collaboration but they mostly focus on tourism, rural tourism, and recreation (Kubickova & Campbell, 2018). Meanwhile, studies on the role of government and marketing strategies are still limited with the one found discovered to have discussed the role of the government in developing marketing strategies using top-down and bottom-up approaches (Kubickova & Campbell, 2018). The research was generally conducted by one of the parties with an interest in agrotourism. Therefore, this present study formulated a marketing strategy for the parties involved in the development of agrotourism including the government as a policymaker and infrastructure provider, tourism operators consisting of the Association of Hotels and Restaurants (henceforth PHRI) as accommodation providers, the Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (henceforth ASITA) as transportation providers, and farmers as the actors.

Method

This research was conducted in Lampung Province Indonesia in March 2021 with data collected through in-depth interviews and questionnaires to 12 experts selected as respondents using purposive sampling based on the criteria of having experience, knowledge, and authority related to agrotourism. These respondents were from government agencies such as the Agriculture and Tourism and Creative Economy ministries, PHRI, ASITA, Farmers/Agrotourism actors, and academics.

Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was used for data analysis. It is considered a systematic procedure to solve problems that involves using rationality to divide the problems into small parts and conducting pairwise comparison assessments to determine

priorities in each hierarchy (Saaty, 1986). The hierarchy allows for separate assessments by comparing elements in one section to make the right decision (Saaty, 1990). The AHP is, therefore, needed to create an appropriate rating scale to improve decision-making efficiency (Pipatprapa, Huang, & Huang, 2016). The ratings at each level were measured based on a paired comparison scale using a scale of 1-9 where a scale of 1 indicates equal importance, 3 means moderate importance, 5 shows it is more important, 7 indicates it very important, 9 means it absolutely more important, and 2, 4, 6, and 8 were used when in doubt between 2 adjacent ratings. The relationship between the elements of each hierarchy describes the relative influence of those in the hierarchy at a higher level (Marimin & Maghfiroh, 2010).

The AHP data were processed using the Expert Choice 11 software with the hierarchical design produced based on the opinions of tourists after which the experts were consulted to develop the design. It was further developed into a questionnaire aiming at determining the marketing strategies to be prioritized in Lampung Province as shown in Figure 1.

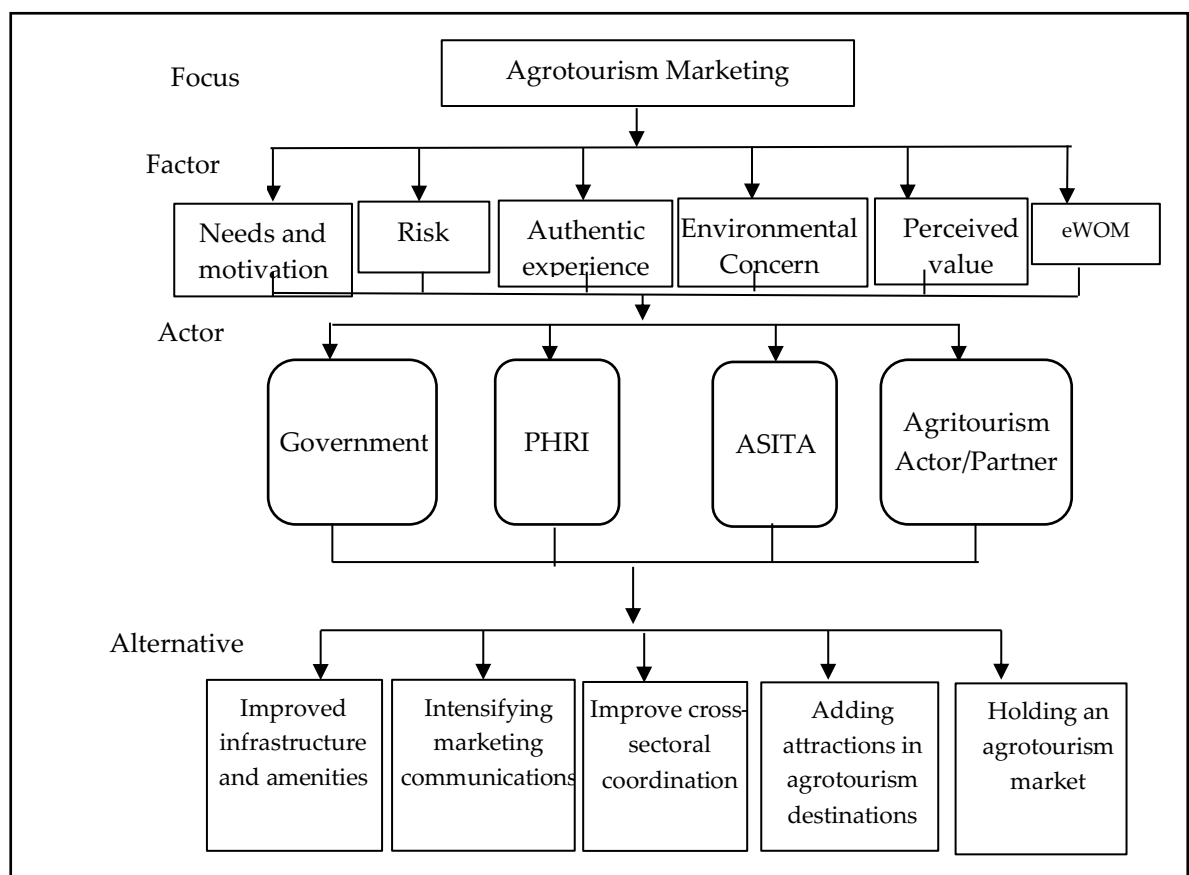


Figure 1. The design of Agrotourism Marketing Strategy in Lampung Province

The overall model is the synthesis result of the experts' opinions on each hierarchy using pairwise comparisons. The opinions of the 12 experts were ascertained for consistency after which they were combined by calculating the geometric mean and

integrated using Expert Choice 11 software.

Results

Contributing Factors in the Agrotourism Marketing Strategy

The focus of this research is the development of an agrotourism marketing strategy in Lampung Province. The factors used in AHP are those with the ability to influence the marketing process such as the needs and motivation, perceived risk, authentic experience, environmental concern, perceived value, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM).

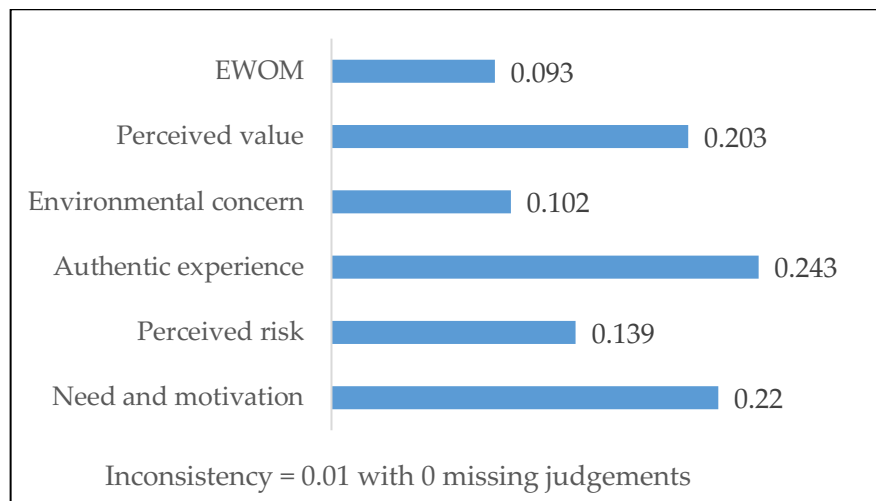


Figure 2. Factors in Agrotourism Marketing Strategy

Figure 2 shows the main priority among the six factors analyzed is the authentic experience which is related to the experience gained by the tourists. It turns out that the order of priority is an authentic experience, need and motivation, perceived value, perceived risk, environmental concern, and eWOM.

Actor's Contribution to Agrotourism Marketing

The actors participating in agrotourism marketing in Lampung Province consist of the government through the Department of Agriculture and Tourism and Creative Economy, PHRI, ASITA, and Farmers/Agrotourism actors. They were compared based on the previously identified factors and the results are presented in Figure 3.

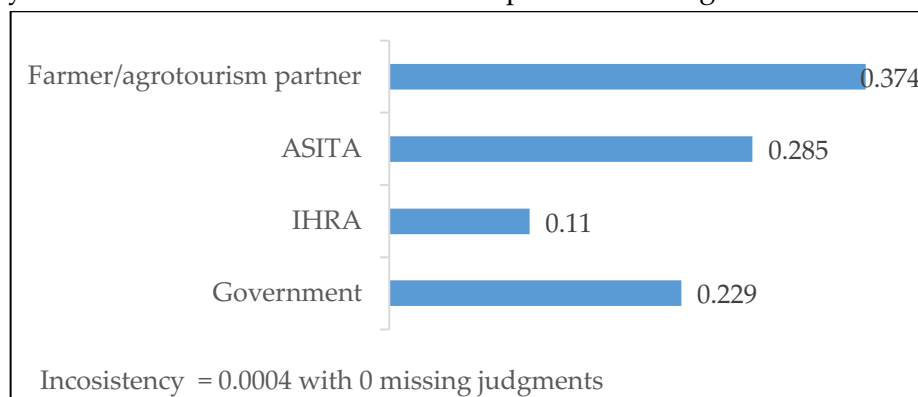


Figure 3. Priority of Actors based on Needs and Motivation

Figure 3 indicates that the actors participating the most in fulfilling the needs and motivations of tourists visiting agrotourism were Actors/Partners, ASITA, Government, and PHRI in that order.

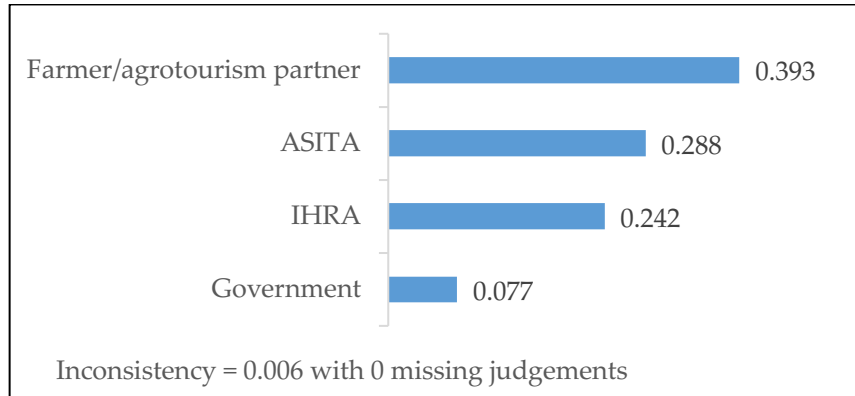


Figure 4. Priority of Actors based on Perceived Risk

In terms of the perceived risk factors, the actors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as shown in Figure 4 are agrotourism actors/partners while the others include the ASITA, PHRI, and the government.

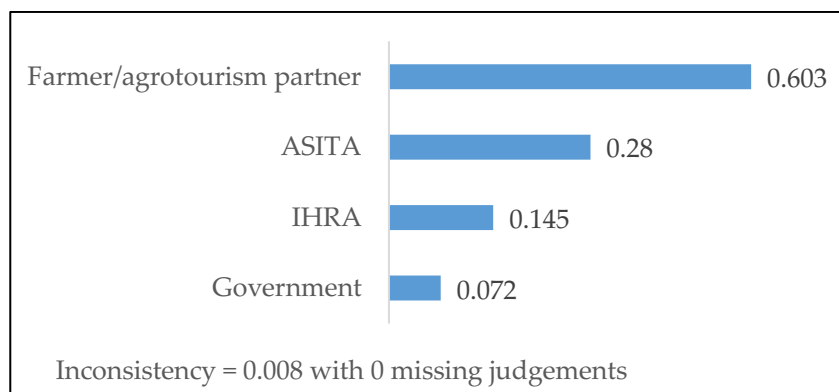


Figure 5. Priority of Actors based on Authentic Experience

Actor who is most prioritized in providing authentic experiences is Agrotourism Actors/Partners as shown in Figure 5.

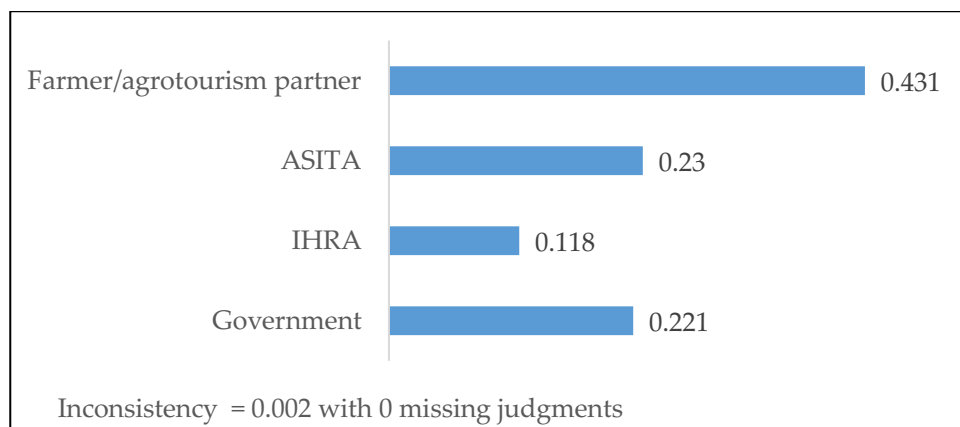


Figure 6. Priority of Actors based on Environmental Concern

As shown in Figure 6, the actors prioritized on the environmental concern factor are agrotourism actors/partners while the other responsible stakeholders include the ASITA, Government, and PHRI.

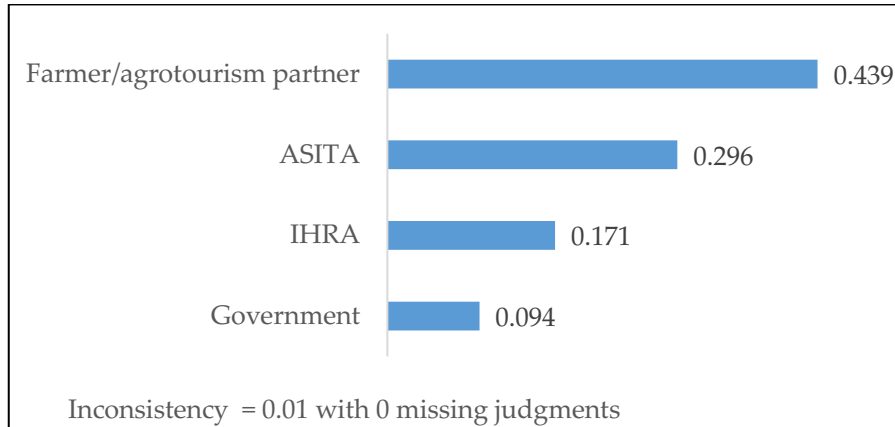


Figure 7. Priority of Actors based on Perceived Value

Figure 7 describes the actor responsible and prioritized in providing perceived value is the farmer/agritourism partner while the others are ASITA, PHRI, and the Government respectively.

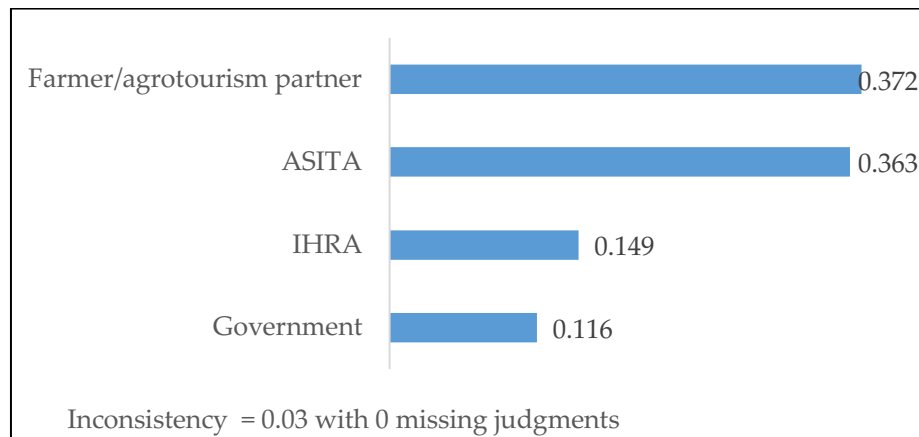


Figure 8. Priority of Actors based on eWOM

The most prioritized stakeholder based on the eWOM is o the agrotourism actor/partner as indicated in Figure 8 while the others include the ASITA, PHRI, and the Government.

Alternative Contribution of Agrotourism Marketing Strategy

The main alternative agrotourism marketing strategy prioritized in Lampung Province based on expert opinions is the addition of attractions involving the direct participation of tourists and the provision of opportunities to explore, learn, and experience as indicated in Figure 9.

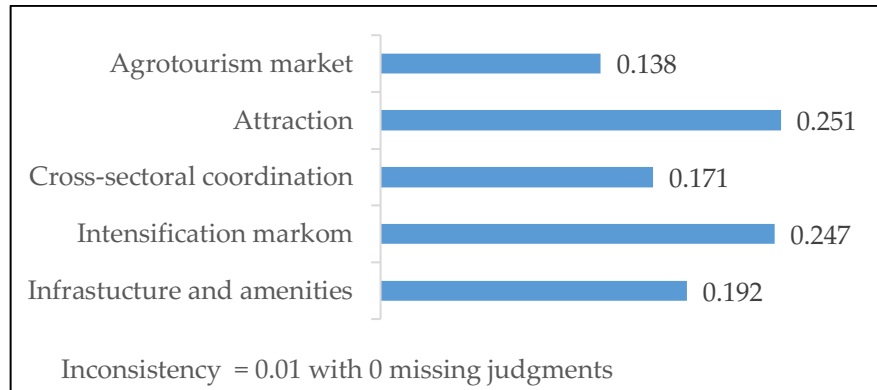


Figure 9. Priority of alternative agrotourism marketing strategies

The second priority is the intensification of marketing communications which play an important role in promoting the products. The third priority is the improvement of infrastructure and amenities. Infrastructure is one of the determinants of competitiveness. The fourth priority is the cross-sectoral coordination involving the Ministries of Tourism and the Creative Economy as well as Agriculture.

Table 1. Priority of Marketing Strategy in Each Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Priority	Value
Focus	Authentic perception	0.243
Actor	Agrotourism actors/partners	0.419
Alternative	Attractions	0.251

Table 1 shows the comparison value based on the experts' opinion has a consistency ratio value of less than 10%. This means that their opinions were consistent. It summarizes the synthesis of strategic priorities from each hierarchical level.

Figure 10 depicts the results of the agrotourism marketing strategy analysis with AHP. The main factor to be prioritized by the local governments is the provision of infrastructure and amenities as well as increasing the cross-sectoral coordination for agrotourism development.

The tourism operator consists of PHRI, ASITA, and agrotourism actors/partners. Currently, there is no visible contribution of PHRI in Lampung Province since the association is new and in the development stage but it has the ability to provide amenities such as hotels, restaurants, retail, and others. It can also provide guidance to the community by providing training for homestay owners to ensure they fulfill the minimum service standards. This means they are majorly expected to intensify marketing communications to support agrotourism development. ASITA is responsible for the provision of transportation with a pleasant experience for tourists. It contributes to the introduction of agrotourism to tourists as well as offering them related tour packages and this means this stakeholder also has to intensify marketing communications towards contributing to agrotourism development. The agrotourism actors/partners are central figures in marketing and

development due to their significant role in providing the experience to be felt by the tourists through the attractions offered. There is a possibility of variations in these experiences such as the offering of attractions showing the stages of activities involved in agriculture without having to involve the tourists in the physical aspect or allowing them to participate in the physical activities on the farm and feel the direct authentic experience.

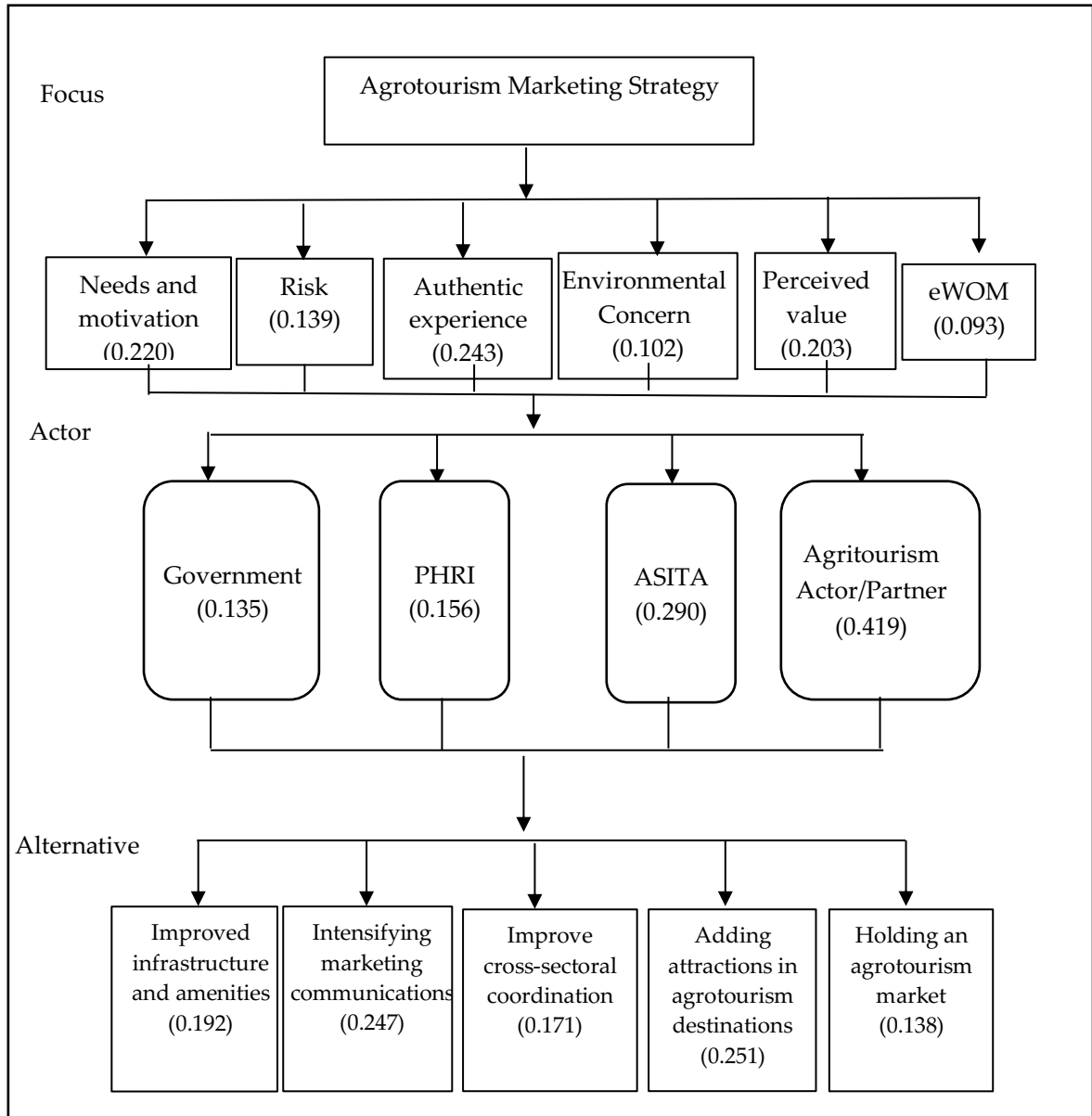


Figure 10. Results of the Agrotourism Marketing Strategy Analysis with AHP

Discussion

The authentic experience, which is related to the experience acquired by travelers, is the most important of the six factors studied. According to MacCannell (1973), authenticity is divided into two continuums which include the front and back regions. In agrotourism, the front region is the authenticity displayed and obtainable by the tourists through the process of seeing agricultural activities without participating physically while the back region is the

perceived authenticity obtainable by participating directly in these activities (Phillip et al., 2010). Authentic experience has been defined to be related to the experience gained by tourists in agrotourism and the actors have the ability to provide this by allowing the tourists to participate directly in their activities (Phillip et al., 2010). This is necessary because tourists tend to like authentic and different experiences while on their trips (Kim et al., 2015). Further elaboration deals with the needs and motivation, perceived risk, environmental concern, perceived value, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM).

In terms of the needs and motivation factor, the actors participating the most in fulfilling the needs and motivations of tourists visiting agrotourism is the actors/partners. This is in line with the findings of Srikatanyoo and Campiranon (2010) that farmers/agrotourism actors play a role in fulfilling the needs and motivations and this means they need to seek relevant and appropriate information. Moreover, motivation is related to the intrinsic factors encouraging an individual to conduct something different from the usual routine while needs are external factors related to the attributes of their preferred destination (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

For the perceived risk, the most affected actor by the Covid-19 pandemic is agrotourism actor/partner. According to Chang et al. (2020), the pandemic had a major impact on all industries including international travel, tourism demand, and hospitality. Some of the risks identified are physical, financial, psychological, social, time, health, natural disasters, and terrorism (Bae and Chang, 2020; Sánchez-Cañizares et al., 2020). The health risks make the tourists worried, uncomfortable, and hesitant to travel (Suhartanto, Kartikasari, Najib, & Leo, 2021) and this further stops them from traveling to certain destinations (Sánchez-Cañizares et al., 2021).

Agrotourism actors/partners are prioritized in terms of environmental concern. According to Wheeler et al. (2018), farmers play a significant role in maintaining, caring for, and respecting the local environment. The authors also showed that responsible environmental management is an inseparable part of good agriculture.

The farmer/agritourism partner is the actor who is responsible for and emphasized in providing perceived value. The perceived value is a comparison between the benefits obtained and the costs incurred to buy products or services (Suhartanto, Dean, Chen, & Kusdiby, 2020) and it is generated from ASITA through the quality of tour packages offered, quality of the staff, price, the functional value of the agency, as well as the emotional and social values (Scaglione and Mendola, 2017). It is important to note that the tourists usually evaluate the tour packages they purchased from these travel agencies (Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodríguez, & Moliner, 2006).

The agrotourism actor/partner is also the most priority stakeholder based on the eWOM. Sidali et al., (2012) stated that farmers have the ability to promote agrotourism by using online travel platforms which provide addresses, product descriptions, and online reviews by tourists visiting the area. It is important to note that eWOM is a resource used in understanding tourist opinions and is also considered important in developing the

destination and designing marketing strategies (Chittiprolu, Palani, & Kumar, 2020; Di Pietro, Di Virgilio, & Pantano, 2012).

The main alternative agrotourism marketing strategy prioritized in Lampung Province based on expert opinions is the addition of attractions involving the direct participation of tourists (Suhartanto et al., 2020) and the provision of opportunities to explore, learn, and experience (Barbieri, Stevenson, & Knollenberg, 2019). This means it is possible for the farmers/agritourism partners to create authentic and unforgettable attractions for tourists from the unique attributes and resources existing in their environment (Suhartanto, Brien, Primiana, Wibisono, & Nyoman, 2019). The attractions can be displayed in a closed space such as the collection of agricultural tools and visualization of agricultural management or open space through an agricultural landscape, land management, post-harvest technology or a combination of both (Utama, 2011).

The second priority is the intensification of marketing communications which play an important role in promoting the products. This means the farmers/partners need to communicate their products using several communication methods and non-traditional marketing strategies (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008). Miller et al. (2012) already showed that farmers/agrotourism partners used more word-of-mouth (WOM), websites, print, radio, television advertisements, and local media to promote their products. Meanwhile, technological development has provided several innovative media to be used in this industry such as social media, augmented reality, interactive video, and eWOM (Gorlevskaya, 2016).

The third priority is the improvement of infrastructure and amenities. Infrastructure is one of the determinants of competitiveness and Kubickova (2017) showed countries with good infrastructure tend to be more competitive than others. The development of these facilities is majorly the responsibility of the government starting from the planning to the implementation stages considering the fact that the infrastructure completely handed over to the private sector usually leads to uneven development (Devine & Devine, 2011; Kubickova, 2017b). Therefore, the government needs to develop infrastructure and promote tourism in cities, regions, and countries to stimulate economic growth (Ruhanen, 2013).

The fourth priority is the cross-sectoral coordination involving the Ministries of Tourism and the Creative Economy as well as Agriculture. According to Seong-woo and Sou-yeon (2006), coordination is needed for the development due to the differences in principles and program implementation in these ministries. The fifth strategic priority is the agrotourism market and this is associated with the aim of tourists to buy fresh and quality fruits. Astuti (2014) stated that agrotourism has the potential to increase people's income through the sale of farming products and this further ensures sustainability. Moreover, the analysis showed the comparison value based on the experts' opinions has a consistency ratio value of less than 10% and this means their opinions were consistent.

Agrotourism marketing involves interested actors and those observed to be playing

important roles in the marketing and development of sustainable tourism including the central government which serves as the facilitator or regulator, the local government as the dynamizer, the private sector, and the community as tourism operators (Astuti, 2014). The government is responsible for the investment and improvement of infrastructure and amenities such as transportation networks and telecommunications (Qin et al., 2011).

Every agency contributes to the development of the agrotourism marketing strategy prioritized in Lampung Province. Hence, there is the need for coordination and collaboration between agencies by putting aside their sectoral egos and this can be initiated from the planning activities to pooling resources including finances, information, technology, labor, and others.

Conclusion

The strategic priority in agrotourism marketing is based on the opinions of experts with experience, knowledge, and authority. The results showed the main alternative strategy prioritized in marketing agrotourism is to create attractions with the ability to provide authentic experiences. This means the attraction is a factor to be focused on by the stakeholders with the agrotourism actors/partners expected to present attractive, creative, unique attractions in order to improve tourist experiences and provide them the opportunities to participate directly in agricultural activities. Some of the other strategies include intensifying marketing communications, improving infrastructure and amenities, improving cross-sectoral coordination, and establishing agrotourism markets.

The main stakeholder observed to be playing important role in marketing is the agrotourism actors/partners due to their ability to offer useful tour packages and provide experiences to tourists. The attractions and services provided, however, can create either positive or negative eWOM. Meanwhile, the other stakeholders with active responsibility in improving agrotourism marketing include ASITA, PHRI, and the Government which is required to implement strategic priorities to sustain and provide competitive agrotourism in Lampung Province.

Authors' Declaration

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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