Strategy Formulation for Sustainable MSME and Creative Economy Development in Sokaraja Tourism Buffer Area

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Abstract

Sokaraja District plays a strategic role as a tourism buffer and transit zone for Banyumas Regency, Central Java Indonesia, anchored by strong Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) potential in local culinary arts and culture. However, its development is hindered by a lack of structured data, low MSME legal compliance, limited supporting infrastructure, and unintegrated regional assets, putting it at risk of remaining a mere pass-through corridor. This study aims to formulate an adaptive and sustainable strategy for developing the economic potential of MSMEs in Sokaraja District. Using a comprehensive, integrated qualitative approach backed by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), the study analyzed key factors through a SWOT matrix. The resulting strategy focuses on strengthening Sokaraja's branding as the Eastern Gateway to Banyumas Tourism, establishing thematic MSME clusters, developing showrooms and thematic markets, improving product quality and legal compliance, launching culture-based digital promotion, drafting village-level roadmaps, and building a cross-sectoral coordination forum.

Keywords: culinary arts; sustainable strategy; Sokaraja's branding; gateway

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of the regional economy is a continuous effort to improve the well-being of the community by utilizing local resources, managing economic potential, and solving development problems (Monica et al., 2019). Recently the national tourism landscape of Indonesia has changed toward special interest, cultural, and gastronomy tourism, where the travelers are actively seeking authentic experiential value. Based on Leiper's Tourism System Theory, peripheral transit corridors are important transit route regions and buffer zones (Leiper, 1979) that absorb economic spillovers and supplement primary tourist hubs (Kim et al., 2021). In the past, the movement of tourists in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, was primarily flocked to the natural tourism area of Baturraden in Banyumas Regency, Central Java. This spatial imbalance needs to be addressed by the regional Master Plan for Tourism Development of Banyumas Regency (RIPPARKAB Banyumas 2018–2033, (Kabupaten Banyumas, 2018) through the diversification of products and the spatial integration of the surrounding corridors into a solid economic value chain.

Sokaraja District is in a very strategic geographical position, on the main artery connecting Purwokerto, the administrative center of Banyumas, with the neighboring regencies of Purbalingga and Banjarnegara. Sokaraja's economic capacity is driven by gastronomy tourism, and local creative industries drive Sokaraja's economic capacity, unlike traditional destinations that rely on natural landscapes. Sokaraja's economic capacity is driven by gastronomy tourism and local creative industries, in contrast to traditional destinations that depend on natural landscapes (Sorcaru, 2019). Such key signature commodities as Soto Sokaraja, Getuk Goreng, and Batik Sokaraja/Banyumasan are main cultural identity markers and essential souvenirs for visitors traveling through Banyumas Regency. Despite its strategic

locational advantage and local cultural assets, Sokaraja faces several critical bottlenecks that constrain its capacity as a buffer zone for tourism.

Despite its strategic location and local cultural assets, several critical bottlenecks constrain Sokaraja's capacity as a buffer zone for tourism:

1. Lack of structured databases: The unavailability of systematically compiled information on local MSME potential leads to fragmented developmental efforts instead of integrated spatial planning.
2. Low legal compliance of MSMEs: The majority of local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operate informally without Business Identification Numbers (NIB), Tax IDs (NPWP), Halal Certifications, or Intellectual Property Rights (HKI). It is potential to limits access to formal banking, government support, and wider retail distribution (O'Connor et al., 2025).
3. Inadequate supporting infrastructure: narrow arterial access, no dedicated bus parking, centralized product showrooms, and thematic markets cause tour buses to go past Sokaraja without stopping.
4. Fragmented institutional governance: Regional government agencies (OPDs), including Tourism (Dinporabudpar), MSMEs/Industry, and Planning (Bappedalitbang), often work in sectoral silos without a coordinated forum or common regional narrative.

Without an inclusive strategic model, Sokaraja will only be a passive pass-through corridor where tourists pass through without high-value economic retention. To fill this gap, this study adopts a qualitative approach of comprehensive, integrated (focus group discussions across multi-stakeholders) and realistic planning approaches combined with SWOT matrix analysis (Bachtiar et al., 2024). The goal is to establish a sustainable adaptive strategy for MSME economic development in Sokaraja to optimize the role of the resilient tourism buffer zone in Banyumas Regency.

II. METHOD

2.1 Study Area and Qualitative Methodology.

This study was held in Sokaraja District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java. Sokaraja was purposefully chosen for its strategic geographical location as a principal arterial transit corridor and for its role as a tourism buffer zone in support of Banyumas Regency. The research used a qualitative methodological approach to the study of complex social and economic phenomena in their natural context, focusing on the interpretation of the views of institutional actors and local entrepreneurs (Lim, 2025)

2.2 Methodological Framework

1. The methodology operationalized a threefold analytical framework to develop an actionable developmental model:
2. Integrated Approach: Systematic evaluation of internal resource capabilities with external environmental dynamics to realize all spatial, institutional, and economic.
3. Integrated Approach: Multi-stakeholder priorities among regional planning bodies, line departments, local administrative units, and private MSME actors.
4. Realistic Approach: Conforming strategic planning models to the empirical ground conditions, spatial constraints, and existing administrative capabilities.

2.3 Data Collection Methods

Data were gathered using primary qualitative methods to guarantee rigorous data triangulation (Miles et al., 2014):

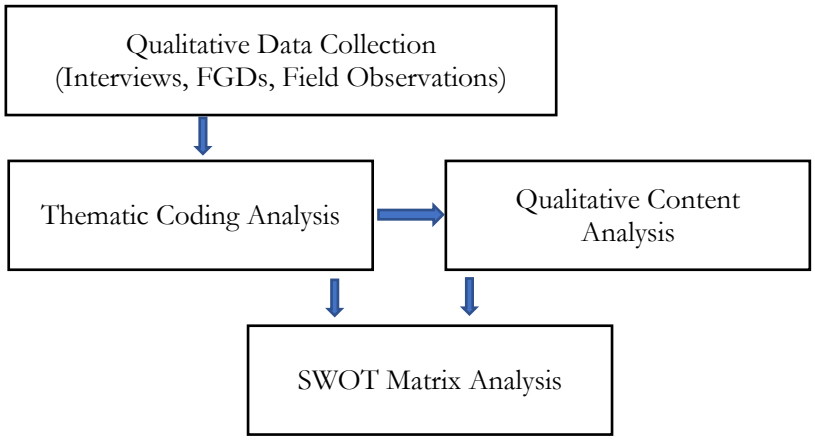
1. In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants from four main government institutions: (1) Regional Development

Planning, Research, and Development Agency of Banyumas Regency (Bappedalitbang); (2) Youth, Sports, Culture, and Tourism Office (Dinporabudpar); (3) Manpower, Cooperatives, and MSME Office; and (4) the Head of Sokaraja District (Camat Sokaraja).

2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): According to (Bachtiar et al., 2024), participatory FGDs were conducted to include multi-sectoral views. Participants included local MSME owners, district administrators, representatives from OPDs, and field experts. The FGD sessions were beneficial in validating preliminary empirical findings and identifying common policy priorities.
3. Field Observations: Direct spatial and physical observations were made in key MSME centers (sentra) in Sokaraja, including Getuk Goreng outlets, Soto Sokaraja culinary clusters, and traditional batik workshops, assessing road accessibility, spatial arrangement, and retail visibility.

2.4 Data Analysis and Strategy Formulation

Data processing and analysis followed a structured, multi-phase analytical pipeline:



The multiphase analysis can be explained as follows:

1. Thematic Coding Analysis: Transcripts from interviews and FGDs were analyzed inductively following Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006) . Key themes were extracted regarding regional positioning, MSME legality, spatial infrastructure, branding, and institutional governance.
2. Qualitative Content Analysis: Content analysis was performed to measure the weight, intensity, and structure of discussions across the participating agencies, capturing both consensus and institutional variations (Krippendorff, 2019).
3. SWOT Matrix Strategy Formulation: Empirical findings from the qualitative coding were synthesized into a SWOT Matrix (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) grounded in Weihrich's matrix model (Weihrich, 1982) . Internal factors (strengths of local gastronomy/culture vs. weaknesses in legal compliance and infrastructure) were cross-analyzed against external factors (regional tourism growth vs. risk of remaining a pass-through corridor). This matrix generated four distinct strategic operational categories:
    a. SO Strategies: Leveraging internal strengths to exploit external market opportunities.
    b. WO Strategies: Overcoming internal weaknesses by capturing external policy and tourism growth opportunities.
    c. ST Strategies: Utilizing internal strengths to mitigate external competition and spatial bottlenecks.

d. WT Strategies: Minimizing internal structural deficiencies while avoiding external economic risks.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Result

Sokaraja District is located strategically geographically as an arterial corridor that connects Purwokerto, the capital of Banyumas Regency, with neighboring regencies such as Purbalingga and Banjarnegara. Sokaraja Empirically is a transit corridor, a buffer zone for tourism that is integrated into the Spatial Master Plan (RTRW) and the Medium-Term Regional Development Plan (RPJMD) of Banyumas Regency. While the main flow of tourists in Banyumas has been historically directed toward the natural attractions of Baturraden, Sokaraja functions as an important economic filter node.

Unlike conventional tourism destinations that rely on natural landscapes, the strategic capacity of Sokaraja is based on micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) clusters based on local gastronomy and cultural arts. Local identity is represented by commodities such as Getuk Goreng, Soto Sokaraja, Batik Sokaraja, embroidery, and traditional arts. Sokaraja will be a regional "mini-hub" linking the eastern access routes with core destination zones. This will convert passive transit traffic into active economic retention.

Economically, through MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) operations based on the creative economy and tourism, Sokaraja District significantly contributes to Banyumas Regency's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). In Sokaraja, there are three notable business clusters:

1. Culinary Hub of *Getuk Goreng* (Fried Cassava Cake)

   There are about 45–60 company units in this industry, ranging from independent MSME brands like H. Said and Saleco to the trailblazing Getuk Goreng H. Tohirin, which has dozens of outlets. During typical weekdays, production needs 4–7 tons of cassava per day; during the high season (holiday times), this amount rises to 12–15 tons per day. During peak seasons, the monthly turnover in the Sokaraja corridor is projected to be between IDR 1.5 billion and IDR 3.0 billion.
2. *Soto* Sokaraja Culinary Hub (Peanut-Sauce Soto/Kupat Soto):

   There are 35 to 50 soto restaurants or booths in this cluster (including Soto Sutri, Soto H. Loso, Soto Lama, and others). In terms of location, these businesses are mostly found along Jalan Jenderal Soedirman and the other streets. The meal stands out for its distinctive peanut-based sauce and vibrant crackers, which are a big attraction for food tourists.
3. *Batik* Banyumasan, or Sokaraja Batik Village:

   The history of this region, which is mainly concentrated on the villages of Sokaraja Tengah (Kauman), Sokaraja Kulon, and Sokaraja Lor, begins in the 1830s, following the Diponegoro War. Batik business groups like the Aliansi Batik Banyumas (Banyumas Batik Alliance) and Sokaraja Bergaya, which employ about 120 artists with expertise in both hand-drawn (tulis) and stamped (cap) batik, currently promote the craft. Because of these distinctive qualities, Banyumas Regency has been named a "Indonesian Creative Regency" for 2023 by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, specifically in the Performing Arts/Creative Economy category.

The tourism industry in Sokaraja District is strong and has a lot of room to grow. Geographically, it holds a key position as a hub that connects Purwokerto, Banyumas District, Purbalingga Regency, Banjarnegara Regency, and the Baturraden tourism area. Because of this, Sokaraja District is an essential area for promoting human mobility, the distribution of goods, and the expansion of economic activity. Sokaraja District has the

potential to develop into a hub for services, business, dining options, and tourism-related activities in addition to serving as a transit hub. Additionally, the district has a chance to become a hub for regional economic development due to its advantageous position. Sokaraja District can be turned into a supporting area for Purwokerto and a gateway connecting the neighboring areas with proper road infrastructure and thoughtful spatial management.

The district's unique culinary customs, cultural goods, and handicrafts, all of which have been passed down through the generations, are the foundation of its robust and identifiable local character. Specialties like getuk goreng (fried cassava cakes) and Soto Sokaraja are more than just regional specialties; they are essential to the region's charm. Through eateries, gift stores, and small-scale food businesses, these culinary offerings support Sokaraja District's reputation as a center for culinary tourism in Banyumas Regency. Cultural goods like Banyumasan batik and other regional handicrafts support the district's unique identity in addition to its food scene. While local handicrafts demonstrate the community's inventiveness in utilizing ancient skills as a source of income, Banyumasan batik has patterns and qualities that reflect the cultural values of the Banyumas people. This potential shows that Sokaraja District offers more than simply a prime position; it has the social and cultural capital that can be used to promote tourism, the creative economy, and the development of the local brand.

As a long-standing business district and a center of regional culture, Sokaraja District is acknowledged for its historical value. Due to its advantageous location along an interregional connecting route, it has long served as a hub for local economic activity, a transit station, and a center for the trade of goods. Because of this position, Sokaraja has developed into a thriving, open neighborhood that is intricately linked to commerce, encompassing everything from traditional markets and food shops to service-oriented companies that meet the requirements of the local community. In addition to its commercial role, Sokaraja is a significant hub for regional culture. Its unique food choices, local customs, handicrafts, and strong ties to the Banyumasan culture, a society renowned for its robust, straightforward, and grounded nature, all represent its cultural identity. Sokaraja's appeal as a local economic center, a culinary attraction, and a cultural landmark is enhanced by these historical and cultural assets, which provide an essential basis for regional growth. This historical and cultural legacy can be cultivated to create value for the community while also being conserved with appropriate management.

Sokaraja District's growth as a "mini-hub" for tourism is further aided by a number of reasons, including the increasing popularity of experience-based travel, including gastronomic, cultural, and educational tourism. By leveraging these experience-based trends, Sokaraja contributes significantly to Banyumas Regency's tourism industry. MSMEs (micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises) have a lot of opportunities to grow their revenue, create jobs, and produce high-value creative products as a result of the shift in tourist preferences toward culinary experiences (like the Getuk Goreng souvenir centers), cultural exploration (like the Kampung Batik or Batik Village), and educational activities.

Additionally, the growth of MSMEs, cooperatives, the creative economy, and tourism is strongly supported by regional policies. By acting as a catalyst, these regulations allow Sokaraja District to fully realize the potential of its local knowledge, including the creation of Batik Banyumasan and its culinary delicacies, such as soto and getuk goreng. MSMEs and cooperatives in Sokaraja District have been able to increase their market share and enhance the quality of their products thanks to local government support in the form of business facilitation, capital access, and innovative promotion. Because of this synergy, Sokaraja District is becoming a stand-alone destination for culture and history tourism as well as a hub for local goods supporting Banyumas Regency's main tourist attractions. The development of an inclusive economic growth hub that increases job possibilities and improves community well-being is the positive effect.

However, the growth of tourism in Sokaraja has been found to have a number of flaws and difficulties. The region's tourism potential has not yet been completely incorporated into a coherent framework for regional development. Individual industries frequently grow independently, failing to create solid connections between commercial areas, financial services, MSME centers, culinary hotspots, cultural venues, and tourism routes. Because there is no overarching development direction to unite these disparate assets into a distinct, unified regional character, the economic value provided remains suboptimal.

The lack of specific showrooms, themed marketplaces, or areas for creative economy tourists are other flaws. Local handicrafts, Soto Sokaraja, Banyumasan batik, getuk goreng (fried cassava snack), and other MSME items are examples of signature local products that lack a centralized marketing and promotion area. As a result, these goods continue to be dispersed throughout various business locations, failing to provide visitors or customers from outside the area with an engaging visitor experience. The necessity for more organized and integrated economic places is highlighted by this circumstance. Examples of such spaces include showrooms for regional products, themed markets for food and craft items, and areas set aside for tourism related to the creative economy. These amenities would provide new tourist attractions while giving MSMEs a platform to market their goods and highlight Sokaraja District's unique identity. Sokaraja District might transform from a transit hub into a destination for tourists interested in local products, cuisine, culture, and the economy with representative advertising venues.

In terms of business sustainability, MSMEs continue to have low levels of legal compliance, particularly with regard to having a Business Identification Number (NIB), Taxpayer Identification Number (NPWP), halal certification, and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The low uptake of these credentials suggests that many MSME owners do not have the legal protections and administrative paperwork needed to run their businesses. This circumstance may restrict MSMEs' ability to operate, especially when they try to obtain official funding, take part in government assistance programs, enter contemporary markets, participate in public procurement, or broaden their marketing reach outside of their local areas. The competitiveness of MSME products may also be hampered by a lack of proper legal status. For example, local products without intellectual property (IP) protection run the risk of being copied or exploited by outside parties without sufficient legal safeguards, while food and beverage products without halal certification have a harder time reaching wider markets.

Sokaraja frequently faces the danger of turning into a tourist transit hub with little to no tourism-related economic activities. The Sokaraja District, a buffer zone and vital entry point for the Banyumas Regency, is in danger of being reduced to a mere road. Without staying longer or interacting with high-value attractions, tourists frequently pass through merely to buy souvenirs or on their way to important locations like Baturraden.

Additionally, interdepartmental and cross-sectoral coordination is still not at its best. Although it is extremely crucial to promote the Sokaraja District's economic potential as a tourism buffer for Banyumas Regency, such attempts are hampered by a lack of efficient coordination across different industries and government bodies. This shortcoming causes a number of problems, such as disjointed product development, a misalignment between the construction of public facilities (like tourist bus parking areas) and spatial planning, and a lack of cooperative initiatives to train local culinary businesses on digitalization and hygiene standards.

Local MSMEs (micro, small, and medium-sized businesses) have a lot of promise in a variety of industries, including batik, handicrafts, culinary arts, and other regional specialties. However, a lot of business owners find it difficult to consistently maintain high-quality products, whether it be in terms of raw materials, production cleanliness, durability, flavor, or look. Packaging is a significant challenge in addition to product quality. Packaging is an

essential part of a product's identification and marketing appeal in addition to providing protection. Consumers, particularly visitors, are significantly more likely to adopt products with attractive, educational, and hygienic packaging that satisfies market criteria. On the other hand, even when local items have superior quality and flavor, their packaging may make them seem less competitive. Many MSMEs still focus mostly on local markets or direct sales when it comes to marketing, which restricts their customer base. Professional product photography, internet promotions, social media, online markets, and branding tactics have not yet reached their full potential. Due to this circumstance, goods from MSMEs in Sokaraja District have not been able to successfully reach the tourist market.

In general, the development of tourism is hampered by changing consumer habits and growing competition in the online market. The development of Sokaraja District's economic potential, which supports Banyumas Regency's tourism industry, is severely hampered by these shifts in consumer behavior and the emergence of competition in the digital market. Consumers now prioritize quality, packaging, uniqueness, service speed, and the ease of obtaining items through digital platforms in addition to readily available and reasonably priced goods. This means that Sokaraja's MSMEs (micro, small, and medium-sized businesses), including those in the food, batik, handicraft, and other local product sectors, must adjust to constantly changing consumer demands. Additionally, the level of competition in the digital market has increased; local Sokaraja items now have to contend not just with companies in nearby areas but also with products from all over the nation, all of which are promoted through social media, online marketplaces, and meal delivery services. For MSMEs without experience in digital marketing, beautiful packaging design, good product photography, or strong branding initiatives, this circumstance poses a difficulty. Even if local products have high cultural value and distinctive qualities, they run the risk of losing their competitive edge if these companies don't keep up with these advances.

From the side of Multi-Stakeholder Thematic and Qualitative Content Analysis, data gathered from in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) across four primary administrative bodies, Bappedalitbang, Dinporabudpar, the Manpower, Cooperatives, and MSME Office, and the Head of Sokaraja District (Camat), were analyzed using thematic coding and qualitative content analysis. Six dominant operational themes emerged.

Table 1. Synthesized Multi-Stakeholder Thematic Matrix

Strategic Theme	**Core Narrative & Empirical Findings**	**Primary Instigating Agencies**
A. Strategic Position	Positioned along the main eastern arterial corridor; formally embedded in RTRW/RPJMD as a spatial buffer zone.	Bappedalitbang, Dinporabudpar
B. Local MSME Economy	Cultural identity anchored in *Soto Sokaraja*, *Getuk Goreng*, and *Batik Sokaraja*; strong potential for gastronomy and heritage tourism.	All participating agencies
C. MSME Legality	High informal operations; widespread lack of Business Identification Numbers (NIB), Tax IDs (NPWP), Halal certifications, and Intellectual Property (HKI).	MSME Office, Bappedalitbang
D. Physical Infrastructure	Complete absence of centralized product showrooms, souvenir display zones, thematic markets, and tourist bus parking spaces.	Camat Sokaraja, Dinporabudpar

Strategic Theme	Core Narrative & Empirical Findings	Primary Instigating Agencies
E. Branding & Identity	Lack of a cohesive destination narrative; consensus on adopting **"Eastern Gateway to Banyumas Tourism"** (*Gerbang Timur Wisata Banyumas*).	Dinporabudpar, Bappedalitbang
F. Inter-Agency Governance	Sectoral fragmentation where line departments operate in isolation; urgent need for a unified cross-sectoral coordination forum.	All participating agencies

The qualitative content analysis revealed high structural convergence regarding local economic potential, alongside distinct operational priorities across individual line agencies:

a. Dinporabudpar: Prioritizes destination branding, cultural storytelling, and integrating Sokaraja into broader regency tour itineraries.
b. Camat Sokaraja: Focuses on spatial land-use constraints, street accessibility, physical display galleries, and immediate community empowerment.
c. Manpower, Cooperatives & MSME Office: Emphasizes formal business registration (NIB), intellectual property acquisition (HKI), product quality standardization, and institutional cooperative building.
d. Bappedalitbang: Advocates integrated spatial planning, multi-sectoral financing frameworks, and alignment with regional development plans.

Furthermore, this analysis generates a synergy between internal capabilities and external strategic conditions through the SWOT matrix framework. The SWOT results yield four actionable strategy combinations:

Table 2. SWOT Matrix for Sokaraja Economic Development Strategy

	Strengths (S): a. Strategic position on primary eastern arterial corridor, b. Iconic gastronomy (Soto, Getuk) & Batik heritage, c. Strong institutional recognition in RTRW/ RPJMD	**Weaknesses (W):** a. Low MSME legal compliance (NIB, HKI, Halal), b. Absence of product showrooms and bus parking, c. Sectoral fragmentation among line agencies
Opportunities (O) a. Growth in special-interest & gastronomy tourism. b. Regional tourism integration under RIPPARKAB. c. Expansion of digital promotion platforms.	**SO Strategies (Strengths–Opportunities)** a. **Destination Branding:** Position Sokaraja as the "Eastern Gateway to Banyumas Tourism". b. **Thematic MSME Clusters:** Establish dedicated culinary and craft clusters for experiential tourism.	**WO Strategies (Weaknesses–Opportunities)** a. **Physical Showrooms:** Construct centralized showrooms and thematic markets. b. **Formalization Program:** Launch mass registration initiatives for NIB, NPWP, and HKI.
Threats (T) a. Traffic congestion leading to bypass behaviors.	**ST Strategies (Strengths–Threats)** a. **Culture-Based Promotion:** Deploy digital storytelling	**WT Strategies (Weaknesses–Threats)** a. **Cross-Sectoral Forum:** Form an inter-agency

b. Competition from surrounding regional centers. b. Economic leakage from rapid transit pass-through.	showcasing heritage crafts to arrest transit flow. b. 2. **Village-Level Roadmaps:** Draft localized development roadmaps for spatial integration.	coordination forum to break down policy silos. b. **Infrastructure Upgrades:** Improve parking and road access for tour buses.

To transition Sokaraja from a passive transit corridor into an active tourism mini-hub, the formulated strategies address four core operational pillars:

a. Spatial and Infrastructure Enhancement: Developing centralized product showrooms and dedicated thematic markets provides a physical anchor for local crafts. Addressing spatial bottlenecks, such as acquiring land for tour bus parking along arterial routes, enables tour operators to include Sokaraja as a scheduled stop, refers to (Kauppila et al., 2009)model.
b. MSME Formalization and Institutional Capacity: Accelerating business registration (NIB) and securing Intellectual Property Rights (HKI) for iconic commodities (Batik Sokaraja, Getuk) builds enterprise resilience. Formalization grants local business owners' access to institutional financing, government procurement, and wider commercial retail channels.
c. Digital Promotion and Narrative Branding: Establishing the unifying brand "Eastern Gateway to Banyumas Tourism" shifts marketing focus from product sales to cultural experience. Digital promotional platforms highlighting local culinary heritage create narrative value that encourages travel retention (Kusnedi et al., 2025) .
d. Integrated Governance and Policy Coordination: Establishing a dedicated cross-sectoral coordination forum ensures alignment among Bappedalitbang, Dinporabudpar, the MSME Office, and local district authorities. Developing village-level roadmaps ensures spatial equity and long-term sustainability across all administrative sub-districts.

B. Discussion

The results of this research make both empirical and theoretical contributions to the literature on regional economic development, tourism system dynamics, and micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) management by providing valuable information on the potential of peripheral transit spaces to be transformed into active economic drivers. Related to spatial transit nodes and tourism buffer zones, much of the conventional literature on regional tourism frameworks, such as Leiper's Tourism System Theory and subsequent works by Butler & Soisalon-Soininen (Leiper, 1979) , views transit route areas as passive geographic corridors, primarily serving to carry tourists to central destination points. In peripheral areas, this situation often leads to significant "economic leakage" and "pass-through syndrome," where only a small proportion of tourist expenditure remains in the local economy. The empirical evidence of Sokaraja proves the argument of (Vanhuele & Vanneste, 2025) that the buffer zone should be able to direct the flow of tourist traffic through spatial changes. Nevertheless, although previous research frequently promotes extensive physical destination development, our study illustrates that a peripheral transit node can effectively operate as a "mini-hub" by leveraging existing decentralized MSME ecosystems (gastronomy and crafts) alongside specific spatial modifications, including centralized bus parking and exhibition showrooms.

One important empirical finding of this study is that there are substantial inter-agency silos among local government units (OPDs). Bappedalitbang, Dinporabudpar, MSME Office and District Administration (Camat) had different operational priorities in the implementation of the operation. The trend is highly similar to the governance issues

observed by (Ansell & Gash, 2008) and (Emerson et al., 2012) in the collaborative governance literature. Public administration activities are fragmented and isolated, leading to dilution of development impact and creating structural gaps, for example, lack of bus parking space or low legal registration of MSMEs. Our study confirms the theoretical concept of integrated multi-stakeholder governance and shows its necessity to overcome institutional impediments in regional development planning by proposing a permanent, cross-sectoral coordination forum.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to formulate an adaptive and sustainable strategy for developing the economic potential of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Sokaraja District, positioning it effectively as a resilient tourism buffer zone for Banyumas Regency. The empirical findings reveal that despite Sokaraja's strategic geographic position as a primary arterial transit corridor and its rich heritage in local gastronomy (Soto Sokaraja, Getuk Goreng) and crafts (Batik Sokaraja), its economic potential remains underutilized. The district is at risk of remaining a passive pass-through corridor due to four critical structural bottlenecks: the absence of a structured MSME potential database, low legal compliance among local businesses, severe infrastructure deficits (specifically the lack of tourist bus parking, centralized showrooms, and thematic markets), and fragmented institutional governance across local government agencies (OPDs). To overcome these challenges and directly fulfill the research objective, this study formulated a multi-tiered strategic roadmap grounded in an integrated SWOT matrix analysis. First, to leverage strengths and market opportunities (SO Strategies), Sokaraja must establish its regional identity as the "Eastern Gateway to Banyumas Tourism" (Gerbang Timur Wisata Banyumas) and create thematic MSME clusters for culinary and heritage tourism. Second, to address internal weaknesses through external opportunities (WO Strategies), priority must be given to constructing centralized product showrooms and thematic markets, alongside executing mass registration programs to improve legal compliance (NIB, NPWP, Halal certification, and HKI). Third, to mitigate external competition and transit bypass (ST Strategies), the strategy mandates deploying culture-based digital promotion featuring authentic local storytelling and drafting village-level roadmaps (roadmap berbasis desa) for equitable spatial development. Fourth, to resolve structural risks (WT Strategies), the roadmap establishes a permanent cross-sectoral coordination forum among key agencies (Bappedalitbang, Dinporabudpar, MSME Office, and District Administration) and targets critical infrastructure upgrades for tour bus accessibility. Practically and theoretically, this research demonstrates how peripheral transit corridors can be transformed into functional "mini-hubs" within regional tourism systems. By shifting the paradigm from passive transit to active value retention, the proposed strategy provides a concrete framework for mitigating economic leakage and integrating informal creative enterprises into formal regional master plans (RIPPARKAB Banyumas 2018–2033). The multi-stakeholder collaborative model developed in this study serves as a replicable blueprint for other peripheral transit areas seeking to convert high-volume transit traffic into sustainable local economic development. Finally, while this study establishes a comprehensive qualitative strategy formulation, future research should focus on the empirical implementation and quantitative assessment of these recommendations. Future studies are encouraged to evaluate the spatial land-use feasibility for constructing bus parking and showroom facilities, measure the quantitative economic yield and retention rates generated by digital storytelling campaigns, and monitor the long-term operational performance of the cross-sectoral governance forum.

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