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## Consumer Perceptions to the Agro-tourism of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria

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### Abstract

#### **Keywords:**

*Agro-tourism;  
Consumer  
perceptions;  
Service;  
Facilities; and  
Attractiveness*

The consumer perceptions are interesting to be inspected because the perceptions of each consumer will vary even though they are in the same place and situation. This research aimed to determine consumer perceptions to the agro-tourism of red dragon fruit Palopat Maria in terms of service, facilities and attractiveness. The research method used was the case study method. The sampling method that used was accidental sampling with 30 respondents who came to Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism. Furthermore, the data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results showed that consumers gave a perception score of 4.13 for services, 3.19 for facilities, and 4.33 for attractiveness, it means that consumers gave good perceptions for services and facilities, also very good perceptions for the attractiveness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism. The agro-tourism parties need to improve services such as employee uniforms and improve facilities such as providing directions to the agro-tourism location.

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### INTRODUCTION

The agricultural tourism or often referred to agro-tourism is a form of tourism activity by utilizing agro-business (agribusiness) as a tourist attraction, which aims to increase knowledge, experience, recreation and business relations in agriculture. In addition, through the development of agro-tourism that emphasizes local culture

in utilizing land, it was expected that it can increase farmers' income by conserving land resources, as well as maintaining local culture and technology (indigenous knowledge) which are generally in accordance with their natural environmental conditions (Deptan 2005 and Windia et al., 2011).

One of the provinces that developed agro-tourism in its area is North Sumatra Province. In North Sumatra Province, there are several agro-tourism including strawberry gardens and passion fruit cultivation that located in Berastagi, coffee agro-tourism in Sidikalang and paloh naga agro-tourism in Deli Serdang Regency. In addition, in Padangsidempuan city, there is a well-known agro-tourism which called Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism. The Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism was established in 2013, it started when Mr. Timbul Siregar was elected as one of the farmer representatives from South Tapanuli Regency to attend dragon fruit cultivation training which held at the Jambi Provincial Agriculture Office.

The concept of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism is by utilizing agricultural commodities, that is red dragon fruit. Cultivation of red dragon fruit in Padangsidempuan City is still known to be very rare, so this is what underlies the establishment of this agro-tourism. Apart from the fact that the cultivation of red dragon fruit is still something rare or new in the area, this caused many visitors become interested to visit.

The consumer perceptions were different to a product, especially for Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism. Consumers' perceptions can be identified by measuring the level of relative value usefulness of an attribute which contained in the product. Based on (Sungkawa et al., 2015) product attribute is one of the product characteristics which had a function as an evaluative attribute in making a decision depending on the type of product and its purpose. Furthermore, according to (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007) in (Ahmadi et al., 2010) positive consumer perceptions to the product will encourage repeat purchase behavior.

Therefore, consumer perceptions to the services, facilities, and attractiveness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism are interesting to be discussed because the perceptions of each consumer are different even though they are in the same place and situations. This study aimed to analyze the perceptions that given by consumers for services, facilities, and attractiveness, after visiting the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research was conducted in Palopat Maria Village, Padangsidempuan Hutaimbaru Sub-district, Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatra Province. The location was chosen because it is one of the tourism locations that had products in the form of cultivation and processed red dragon fruit. The research was conducted from July to October 2019. The data collection was conducted using the interview method, where a list of questions was written in a questionnaire.

The research method that used is the case study method. The sampling method that used is accidental sampling with 30 respondents who came to Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.

The data analysis method that used to answer the research objectives regarding consumer perceptions to the services, facilities, and attractiveness of the Red Dragon

Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism is descriptive statistical analysis. The data measurement scale that used in this research is the ordinal scale, where ordinal scale is measured using the Likert scale. The Likert scale in this research is that, if the respondent chooses to strongly agree, then they are given 5 score, agree to be given 4 score, neutral is given 3 score, disagree is given 2 score, and strongly disagrees to be given 1 score. The formula for the score is:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{n_i \cdot s_i}{N_i}$$

Information:

$n_i$  = number of respondents that stated (person) in column  $i$  ( $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, 5$ )

$s_i$  = the- $i$  statement score ( $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, 5$ )

$N_i$  = number of respondents (person) in the- $i$  row ( $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, 5$ )

**Table 1. Score Categories**

Score	Confidence Level
4,21-5	Strongly good
3,41-4,2	Good
2,61-3,4	Quite good
1,81-2,6	Not good
1-1,8	Bad

Source: Azani et al., 2019

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A perception can be generated through vision until it forms a response that occurred within the individual so that the individual was aware of everything in his environment through his sense organs. According to (Slameto, 2010), perception is the process of entering messages and information into the human brain during contact with their environment. The perception assessment in this research includes services, facilities and attractions.

### The Assessment of Consumer Perception to the Services in Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism

The service is one of the basic object on which consumers feel satisfied. In this research, there are 5 indicators that used to assess consumer perception to the services they are *tangibles* (physical appearance), *reliability*, *responsiveness*, *assurance*, and *empathy*.

#### a. *Tangible* (physical appearance)

*Tangible* (physical appearance) is the ability of a location to show its existence, it can be in the form of equipment, buildings, and other physical forms that can be used as a real evidence of the service quality value that provided by the Agro-tourism management. The results of the respondents' perception toward the physical appearance can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1. Respondents' perception toward the *Tangible* (physical appearance) in Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism**

No	Statement	Frequency (person)					Score
		SS	S	N	TS	STS	
1	The place cleanliness and neatness offered a comfort to the Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism's visitors	12	11	7	0	0	4,17
2	The buildings at Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism are good and interesting	11	17	2	0	0	4,3
3	The staff of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism are fresh, nice and attractive	1	20	9	0	0	3,73
Average							4,07

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2019

Table Information;

SS = strongly agree

S = agree

N = neutral

TS = disagree

STS = deny

Based on the table 2, 40% of the consumers strongly agreed that the cleanliness and neatness of the place offered a comfort to the visitors of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism, 36,7% agreed, and 23,3% was neutral. Based on the observations in the field, showed that the location of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism is indeed clean and neat, this was because the agro-tourism crew always paid attention to the sanitation of the tourist attractions so that most visitors felt comfortable to be there. The cleanliness and neatness became one of the most important things in doing business.

The consumers perception to the statement that the buildings in the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism is good and attractive was 56,7% agreed, meanwhile the rest stated strongly agree and neutral. According to the respondents, the buildings of red dragon fruit agro-tourism do have its own characteristics than other tourist attractions. The agro-tourism crew designed the buildings with the theme of Mandailing tribe, which is one of the tribes in Padangsidempuan city therefore this building became the attractiveness of the tourist attraction.

In addition, the consumers perception to the statement that the staff of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism are fresh, clean and attractive is 66,7% agreed, 3,3% strongly agreed, and 30% are neutral. This was because the staffs in the agro-tourism are independent in terms of look and the agro-tourism management also did not provide specific clothes to their staff.

Based on the data of consumers perception measurement to the physical appearance, it was conducted the average value of all variables was 4,07. So that, it can be said that costumers gave a good perception to the physical appearance of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism. According to Ramadhan (2013) stated that

the the completeness of facilities and attractive staff appearance is one of the important things to the visitors to perceive.

b. Reliability

Reliability is the business ability to provide fast, accurate and satisfying services. The results of the respondents' perception to the reliability were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Respondents' perception toward the reliability in Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism**

No	Statement	Frequency (person)					Score
		SS	S	N	TS	STS	
1	The staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism were fast in serving the visitors	9	19	2	0	9	4,23
2	The staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism will provide information to the costumers about the estimated time to complete visitor orders	8	14	8	0	0	4
Average						4,12	

Source: Processed primary data, 2019

Table Information;

SS = strongly agree

S = agree

N = neutral

TS = disagree

STS = deny

Based on the respondents' perception that provided in table 2, it can be seen the consumers perception to the reliability of the staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism were fast in serving the visitors showed 63,3% agreed, meanwhile the rest stated strongly agree and neutral. The service was supported by the available right and fast service procedure when costumers visiting Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism. Several reasons that delivered by the costumers related to fast service that received by the costumers when arriving in the tourist attraction, the staff of agro-tourism immediately provided the menu to the costumers. In addition, of 46,6% costumers agreed that the staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism provided information to the consumers about the estimated time to complete the visitors' order. For example, if the costumer of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism did order grilled goldfish, the staff of agro-tourism will provide information to the costumer that to complete the order, the customer need to wait for 30 minutes. Based on the measurement of respondents' perception table to the reliability, conducted the average value of all variables was 4,12, which means the customers gave good perception to the reliability in Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.

c. Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the service provided to the customers in a quick and responsive manner. The perception result to the responsiveness indicators are presented in the Table 4.

**Table 4. Respondents' Perception to the Responsiveness in Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.**

No	Statement	Frequency (person)					Score
		SS	S	N	TS	STS	
1	The staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism always provided a fast and right services	14	12	4	0	0	4,33
2	The delivery of information from the staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism was done clearly	9	19	2	0	0	4,23
Average							4,28

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2019

The perception result in Table 4 showed the customers that strongly agreed of the staffs in Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism always provided fast and right service, with percentage of 46,7%. This was in accordance with the condition in the field, in which the staff always fast in serving the customers that visiting the agro-tourism. Another indicator that used for measuring responsiveness is the delivery of information was clearly. The consumers' perception showed that 63,3% agreed, while the rest were strongly agreed and neutral that the staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism delivered the information clearly about the things customers wanted to know. Based on the data of consumers' perception to the responsiveness, can be conducted the average value of all variables was 4,28. Thus, in can be said that customers gave very good perception to the responsiveness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.

d. Assurance

Assurance is one of the business ability in providing knowledge, politeness and trustworthiness. The perception results of assurance were presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. The respondents' perception to the assurance in the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism**

No	Statement	Frequency (person)					Score
		SS	S	N	TS	STS	
1	The politeness of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism staffs in providing service and skill in providing information were quite good	6	20	4	0	0	4,07
2	The ability in providing safety and instill trust were good	9	17	4	0	0	4,17
Average							4,12

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2019

One of the indicators used in measuring consumers' perception to the assurance is the politeness of the staffs in providing service and skill in providing informations was quite good. The perception results in the Table 5 showed 66,7% were agreed, while the rest were strongly agreed and neutral that the staffs' politeness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism in providing service and ability in providing information were quite good. This was supported by the staff that friendly in giving service. The friendliness showed through the face expression that shown by the staff in responding the customers' requests.

Another indicator to measure the consumers' perception to the assurance is the ability to provide safety and ability to instill trust was good. The consumers' perception showed 56,7% was agreed, while the rest were strongly agreed and neutral that the ability of the staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism in providing safety and ability in instill trust were good.

Based on the data of consumers' perception measurement to the assurance, can be conducted that the average value of all variables was 4,12. Thus, it can be said that customers gave a good perception to the assurance in Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.

d. Empathy

Empathy is the concern and attention to the customers that given by a business. The perception results to the empathy were presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. The respondents' perception to the empathy at the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism**

No	Statement	Frequency (person)					Score
		SS	S	N	TS	STS	
1	The staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism established relation easily and had a good communication with the visitors	10	15	5	0	0	4,17
2	The staffs always gave a private attention and understand the visitors' needs	6	18	6	0	0	4
Average							4,08

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2019

Based on Table 6, the indicators used in measuring consumers' perception to the empathy consisted of 2 indicators, which were (1) the staffs established relation easily and well communicated with the visitors, (2) the staffs always gave private attention and understand the visitors' needs. The result in Table 5 showed that consumers' perception to the empathy of the staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism established relation easily and well communicated with the visitors was 50% agreed, while the rest were strongly agreed and neutral. The result in Table 6 also showed that consumers' perception to the empathy of the staffs of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism always gave private attention and understand the visitors' needs were 60% agreed while the rest were strongly agreed and neutral.

Based on the data of consumers' perception to the empathy, can be conducted the average value of all the variables was 4,08. Thus, it can be said that consumers gave a good perception to the empathy in the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.

From the five indicators used to measure the consumers' perception to the service in Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism, conducted the average value from all the variables of 4,13. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumers gave a good perception to the service in that agro-tourism.

### **The Assesment of the Consumers' Perception to the Facility of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism**

Tourist facility is the facilities that provided by the tourist attraction to satisfy the visitors' needs, both for visiting only or temporary stay, so that they can enjoy and participate in the activities that held by the tourist attractions (Kamaru et al., 2017). The perception to the facility in the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism is presented in the Table 7.

**Table 7. The Consumers' Perception to the Facility of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism**

No	Statement	Frequency (person)					Score
		SS	S	N	TS	STS	
1	The spatial planning and building designed in the Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism were well organized and impressive for the visitors	8	21	1	0	0	4,23
2	The space placement aspect, the addition of playground, and fish pond at the Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism were very attractive for the visitors	14	16	0	0	0	4,47
3	The availability of worship place; toilet; parking lots, place for taking meals, good internet area which the safety always concerned by the Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism	16	13	1	0	0	4,5
4	The location of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism was easy to reach by public transportation	0	9	16	5	0	3,13
5	The location of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism was easy to find	0	10	17	3	0	3,23
Average							3,91

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2019



Based on Table 7, consumers' perception to the facility is measured by 5 indicators, which were (1) the spatial planning and building designed in the Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism were well organized and impressive for the visitors, (2) the space placement aspect, the addition of playground, and fish pond at the Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism were very attractive for the visitors, (3) the availability of worship place; toilet; parking lots, place for taking meals, good internet area which the safety always concerned by the Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism, (4) the location of Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism was easy to reach by public transportation, and (5) the location was easy to find. The consumers' perception showed 70% agreed, while the rest were strongly agree and neutral that the spatial planning and building designed in the Red Dragon Fruit Agro-tourism were well organized and impressive for the visitors. This was in accordance with the spatial planning in the red dragon fruit agro-tourism. The arrangement was done by placing the dragon fruit garden in the middle of the building, so that it was well organized and attractive to the visitors. Some respondents also stated that the building design of red dragon fruit agro-tourism carried the theme of traditional house building of Mandailing tribe. According to Arjana (2016), the attractiveness can be in the form of diversity of natural wealth, culture, and man-made, so that the tourist attraction has its own uniqueness.

The consumers' perception to the other facilities was 53,3% agreed and 46,7% strongly agreed that the space placement aspect, the addition of playground, and fish pond at the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism were very attractive for the visitors. Most respondents considered that by adding the playground can increase interest to visit because one of the respondents' purposes was to bring their kids to play, by adding the playground facility, the visitors can relax and enjoy when stay at the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism. In addition, the addition of fish pond facility was also increasing the consumers' satisfaction because they can feed the fish directly. This can be seen from the management of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism gave the facility by providing the food fish which can be feed directly by the visitors to the fish. According to (Susetyarini & Masjhoer, 2018), that the tourist satisfaction was one of the success benchmarks of a tourist attractions.

The consumers' perception to the availability of worship place; toilet; parking lots, place for taking meals, good internet area which the safety always concerned by the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism showed 53,3% strongly agreed, while the rest agreed and neutral. The availability of worship place; toilet; parking lots, place for taking meals, internet area in the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism was very adequate. This can be seen by the availability of place for meals which has various menu that provided by the agro-tourism management. The parking lot was also very wide.

In addition, 53,3% were neutral, 30% agreed, and 16,7% disagree that the location of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism was easy to reach by public transportation. This was because the the location of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism was still far from the main road. Furthermore, public transportation that passed the agro-tourism location only available in the morning and evening, therefore mostly the visitors used their own transportation rather than public transportation.

Another consumers' perception to the facility was 56,7% neutral, 33,3% agreed, and 10% disagreed that the location of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-

tourism was easy to find. This was because the location of dragon fruit agro-tourism was not on the side of main road, so it was more difficult to find.

Based on the data of consumers' perception to the facility measurement, can be conducted the average value of all variables was 3,91. Thus, it can be said that consumers gave a good perception to the facility of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism. According to Sulistiyana et al., (2015) that the tourism facility was used as one of tourist assessment terms to the facility that provided by the tourist attraction.

### **The Consumers' Perception Assesment to the Attractiveness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism**

Furthermore, consumers perception to the attractiveness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism was measured by 4 indicators, which were (1) the compatibility of the product price and product quality was quite suitable, (2) the comparison of the dragon fruit price in the tourist attraction and other sellers was quite competitive, (3) dragon fruit was the main attraction of this agro-tourism, and (4) besides the dragon fruit as the main object, the beauty of the dragon fruit place became the attraction for the visitors. The consumers' perception result to the attractiveness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism was presented in Table 8.

**Table 8. The Consumers' Perception to the Attractiveness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism**

No	Statement	Frequency (person)					Score
		SS	S	N	TS	STS	
1	The compatibility of the product price and product quality was quite suitable	16	12	2	0	0	4,47
2	The comparison of the dragon fruit price in the tourist attraction and other sellers was quite competitive	0	18	10	2	0	3,53
3	Dragon fruit was the main attraction of this agro-tourism	23	7	0	0	0	4,77
4	Besides the dragon fruit as the main object, the beauty of the dragon fruit place became the attraction for the visitors	17	13	0	0	0	4,57
Average							4,33

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2019

Based on the Table 8, consumers' perception showed 53,3% strongly agreed that the compatibility of the product price and product quality of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism was quite suitable, while the rest were agreed and neutral. Based on the field observation, the products that have been produced by Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism were appropriate between the quality and price. Products that have been produced were fresh dragon fruit, dragon fruit juice, dragon fruit ice cream, dragon fruit traditional taffy, which made from natural extract of red dragon fruit. The quality and price that were offered were also suitable to the

consumers' needs. This indicated that the compatibility of the product price and quality can attract the visitors' attention, so that the management of the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism in determining price was better to pay attention to the consumers' purchasing ability. This was in accordance with (Tjiptono, 2015) the cheaper something was, the greater the value was. Besides, according to (Soleha et al., 2020) that the lower the travel costs incurred by the visitors, the higher the visitors interest to travel to the tourist attraction. Also added by Prasetio (2012) and Sugianto (2013) stated that there was significance partial influence between the price and consumers' satisfaction.

The consumers' perception to the price comparison of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism and the price of market red dragon fruit was quite competitive, it was 60,0% agreed, while the rest were neutral and disagree. Based on the field observation, the selling price at the agro-tourism was more expensive rather than in the market so the selling price cannot compete with the market. The selling price at the agro-tourism was Rp. 50.000/Kg, while selling price in the market was only Rp. 20.000 – Rp.25.000. This because the dragon fruit that sold by the agro-tourism was organic red dragon fruit, so the price was more expensive rather than in the market.

The consumers' perception to the another attractiveness with indicator that red dragon fruit was the main attraction showed 76,7% strongly agreed and the rest were agreed. The consumers' perception to the another attractiveness with indicator that besides the dragon fruit as the main object, the beauty of the dragon fruit place became the attraction for the visitors showed 56,7% strongly agreed, while the rest agreed. The main purpose of the establishment of this business was also created the agro-tourism with red dragon fruit as the icon to be the main attractiveness, because this was the only one red dragon agro-tourism in Padangsidempuan city, so that many tourists interested to visit.

Based on the data of consumers' perception to the attractiveness measurement, it conducted the average value from all variables was 4,33. Thus, it can be said that the consumers gave a very good perception to the attractiveness of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.

## **CONCLUSION**

The consumers gave a good perception to the service and facility, also gave a very good perception to the attractiveness of the Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It was recommended to the management of Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism to provide uniform to the staff, so it can differentiate between the staffs who work there and the visitors. Besides, the agro-tourism should put signs as the direction to the agro-tourism location, to make it easier for the visitors. For further researchers, it is necessary to do more research about Red Dragon Fruit Palopat Maria Agro-tourism by adding some variables, such as accessibility, promotion and instagramable.

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