



Research Article

Development Strategy for Waai Tree House Tourist Attractions, Central Maluku Regency

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Abstract: The global tourism industry is experiencing significant growth with a contribution of USD 11.1 trillion to the world's GDP by 2024. Maluku Province has extraordinary natural tourism potential, one of which is the Waai Tree House in Central Maluku Regency which offers a *glamorous camping* (glamping) concept with the natural beauty of the mountains. Despite having natural advantages, this tourist attraction faces problems of damaged access roads, lack of supporting facilities, and not optimal promotional strategies. This research aims to identify strategic factors through SWOT analysis and formulate effective development strategies to increase the competitiveness of Waai Tree House tourism in a sustainable manner. The research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with managers and visitors, visual documentation, and literature studies. The data is analyzed using SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, then formulated into four development strategies. The results show the main strengths in the form of natural beauty, unique glamping concepts, and personal service, while the critical weaknesses are damaged road infrastructure and limited facilities. Opportunities include digital promotion and collaboration with governments, while threats include limited accessibility and competition for new destinations. The strategy formulation resulted in four approaches: SO (intensive digital promotion), WO (priority infrastructure improvement), ST (service differentiation), and WT (consistent facility updates) strategy. The implementation of the WO strategy is a top priority with a gradual roadmap of 6-24 months. This research contributes to a contextual strategic framework for the development of glamping tourism in the remote archipelago of Eastern Indonesia.

Keywords: Digital Promotion; Glamping Concept; Sustainable Tourism; SWOT Analysis; Tourism Infrastructure

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1. Introduction

The global tourism industry is experiencing significant growth as the main driver of the economies of various countries. By 2024, the travel and tourism sector is projected to contribute USD 11.1 trillion to global Gross Domestic Product or equivalent to 10% of the world's total GDP, while creating more than 348 million jobs (Winingsih, 2022). In Indonesia, the tourism sector's contribution to national GDP reached 4.3% or IDR 842.3 trillion in 2022, demonstrating its strategic role in national economic development (Paul & Hermanto, 2022). The government continues to optimize this potential through various initiatives such as the "Proud to Travel in Indonesia" campaign and infrastructure development in leading destinations. However, tourism development in archipelagic areas such as Maluku still faces complex challenges related to adequate accessibility, infrastructure, and promotion.

Maluku Province has extraordinary natural wealth that has the potential to be developed into a nature- and cultural-based tourist destination. One of the potential destinations is the Waai Tree House in Central Maluku Regency which offers a unique tourism concept based on *Glamorous Camping* or *Glamping* with the natural beauty of the mountains. Concept *Glamping* is an evolution of modern tourism that combines an authentic camping experience with the

comfort of premium amenities, answering the needs of contemporary travelers who want closeness to nature without sacrificing comfort (Puspita, 2023b). Despite having natural advantages, this tourist attraction still faces various problems such as damaged access road conditions, lack of supporting facilities, and suboptimal promotional strategies.

Literature review shows that the development of tourist attractions requires a comprehensive strategic approach. The importance of a systematically designed development strategy to increase the capacity and competitive position of tourist destinations. (Rahma, 2021) Defining the development of tourist attractions as a structured effort to improve and beautify destinations through improving facilities, infrastructure, and community participation. SWOT analysis has proven to be effective as a strategic tool to identify internal and external factors in formulating sustainable tourism development strategies (Rifanjanji et al., 2023). Tourism based on local wisdom provides *Framework* important in understanding the dynamics of the development of natural tourism destinations in Indonesia.

However, there is a significant *research gap* related to the strategy for the development of *glamping* tourism in the eastern Indonesian archipelago. Previous research has focused more on beach tourism destinations or cultural tourism in western Indonesia, while in-depth studies on the development of nature-based tourism with the concept of *glamping* in Maluku are still limited. The novelty of this research lies in a comprehensive exploration of the potential and challenges of glamping tourism development in remote areas with unique geographical characteristics, as well as the formulation of contextual strategies that take into account the specific local conditions of Central Maluku.

Based on this phenomenon, the formulation of the research problem is: (1) What are the conditions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the Waai Tree House tourist attraction? (2) What is the right development strategy to increase the attractiveness and sustainability of the Waai Tree House tourist attraction? This research aims to identify strategic factors through SWOT analysis and formulate effective development strategies to increase the competitiveness of Waai Tree House tourism in a sustainable manner. The benefits of the research include academic contributions in the form of literature enrichment of nature-based tourism development strategies, practical benefits for managers in prioritizing facility development and promotion, as well as policy recommendations for local governments in planning the development of tourism supporting infrastructure in Central Maluku Regency.

2. Literature Review

Tourism Strategy and Development Management

In the face of the competitive dynamics of the contemporary era, organizations need strategic knowledge and concepts that support sustainable development and transformation to achieve optimal competitiveness. Strengthening strategic, structural, and work process aspects is the key to significantly increasing organizational effectiveness, especially in the tourism sector which continues to grow rapidly (Eman & Jocom, 2018). The tourism context requires a strategic management approach that provides a systematic framework to solve various competitive problems between destinations, thereby encouraging managers to develop creative and strategic thinking in decision-making. Strategy terminology derived from the Greek "*Strategists*" contains the meaning of the art of leading applied in the context of modern management. Conceptualization of strategy in management is defined as the art and knowledge of formulating, implementing, and evaluating decisions across organizational functions to achieve predetermined goals (BKSJDPR RI, 2023). The implementation of effective strategic management provides a wide range of organizational benefits, including setting clear long-term goals, adaptability to changing environments, increasing operational effectiveness, identifying competitive advantages, and minimizing overlapping activities within the organization.

Tourist Attraction Development Strategy

Sustainable tourism development adheres to the fundamental principle of long-term thinking by paying attention to the needs of the current generation without sacrificing the interests of future generations. The management of tourist destinations must prioritize the preservation of local culture, environmental preservation, and social responsibility to minimize the negative impacts that may arise (Ekaristi et al., 2023). The development of tourist attractions requires the provision of infrastructure and facilities that create mutually beneficial relationships between tourists and local communities, so successful development requires flexible and comprehensive strategic planning to adapt to changes in internal and external

conditions. The conceptualization of the development of tourist attractions refers to systematic efforts to improve and beautify destinations to make them more attractive to tourists through management that pays attention to facilities, infrastructure, supporting facilities, and the active participation of the surrounding community (Calvin Antonio E. Cornelis, 2019). The development process must maintain the nation's cultural values and personality while making wise use of the potential of natural beauty. Utilization is not interpreted as destructive exploitation, but rather the management and preservation of the potential to become a sustainable tourist attraction.

The driving factors for the development of tourist attractions include three main attractions that are able to attract tourists. First, natural capital is a driving factor for a person to travel because of the beauty, tranquility, and authenticity of the natural environment. Second, cultural capital and potential in a broad sense which includes arts, crafts, customs, and habits that live in the local community to extend the time of tourist visits. Third, human capital and potential that can be used as tourist attractions in the form of unique customs and local life while maintaining human dignity (Rafsanjani & Pambayun, 2018).

SWOT Analysis in Tourism Development

SWOT analysis is a strategic evaluation method to identify the internal and external conditions of the organization in formulating development strategies. This method helps management formulate missions, objectives, strategies, and policies by taking into account factors *Strengths* (strength), *Weaknesses* (weakness), *Opportunities* (opportunities), and *Threats* (threats) comprehensively (Hutagaol et al., 2024). The application of SWOT analysis aims to maximize the utilization of strengths and opportunities while minimizing the impact of weaknesses and threats faced by the organization. In the context of tourist attraction development, SWOT analysis facilitates the identification of strategic factors that affect the competitiveness of destinations. Internal strengths include competitive advantages such as natural beauty, cultural uniqueness, or the quality of facilities that destinations have. Internal weakness refers to limitations that hinder performance such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of innovation, or limited promotion. External opportunities include favorable conditions that can be leveraged such as positive market trends, government policy support, or changes in tourist preferences. External threats include factors that inhibit development such as destination competition, regulatory changes, or extreme weather conditions. The implementation of SWOT analysis in tourism development research has proven to be effective in providing strategic recommendations in accordance with the potential and real conditions of tourist destinations. Strategy formulation based on SWOT analysis allows managers to make the right strategic decisions to increase the attractiveness, number of visits, and operational sustainability of tourist destinations in the long term.

3. Proposed Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the development strategy of the Waai Tree House tourist attraction. The qualitative approach was chosen because it was able to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being researched through narrative descriptions and holistic interpretations of the actual conditions of tourist destinations. The location of the research was determined at the Waai Tree House Tourist Object, Waai Village, Salahutu District, Central Maluku Regency, Maluku Province, with a focus on the study on the development strategy of nature-based tourist destinations. Data collection was carried out through four triangulation methods. First, participatory observation is carried out to observe the physical condition of the location, available facilities, tourist activities, and the environment around the destination. Second, in-depth interviews (*in-depth interview*) was carried out with two categories of informants: the manager of the Waai Tree House (Salamony family) and visitors who had visited at least twice. Selection of informants using techniques *purposive sampling* with consideration of relevant knowledge and experience to the research object (Puspita, 2023a). Third, visual documentation in the form of photos and videos was collected as empirical evidence of field conditions. Fourth, literature studies are conducted to collect secondary data from scientific articles, books, journals, and previous research reports that are relevant to the research topic.

The collected data is analyzed using the SWOT (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*) analysis method to identify internal and external strategic factors that affect the development of tourist destinations. The analysis process is carried out through the following systematic stages. In the first stage, data reduction is carried out by grouping the results of interviews and observations into four SWOT categories. In the second stage, data presentation is

carried out by compiling a SWOT matrix that displays strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in a structured manner. In the third stage, strategy formulation is carried out by developing four types of strategies: the SO (*Strengths-Opportunities*) strategy that uses strengths to seize opportunities, the WO (*Weaknesses-Opportunities*) strategy that minimizes weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities, the ST (*Strengths-Threats*) strategy that uses strength to overcome threats, and the WT (*Weaknesses-Threats*) strategy that minimizes weakness to avoid threats (Suseno, 2021). The validity of the data is guaranteed through the source triangulation technique by comparing information from managers, visitors, and field observation results. The credibility of the research is strengthened through *member checking* by confirming the results of interviews with informants and *peer debriefing* by discussing findings with research supervisors. Reliability is maintained through complete documentation of the research process and consistency in the use of data collection instruments.

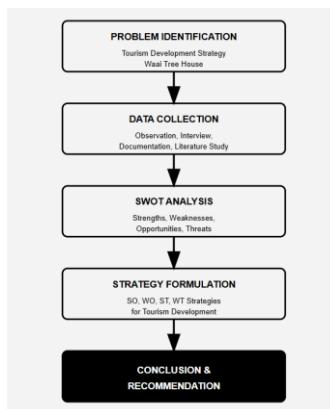


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram.
Source : Researcher's Processed Results 2025.

4. Results and Discussion

Identification of Internal and External Factors of Waai Tree House Tourist Attractions

Internal Factors: Strengths and Weaknesses

Based on the results of field observations and in-depth interviews with the manager and visitors of the Waai Tree House, various internal factors were identified that affect the attractiveness of this tourist destination. From the aspect of strength (*Strengths*), this tourist attraction has a significant advantage in the beauty of the natural scenery that presents a simultaneous panorama of the sea and mountains. The location in the highlands provides a cool and serene atmosphere that contrasts sharply with the hustle and bustle of the city, making it an ideal destination for activities *Healing* and *Staycation*. Visitors consistently state that the authentic natural atmosphere is the main attraction that distinguishes the Waai Tree House from the conventional beach tourist destinations that dominate the Maluku region (Reuters, 2024). Facilities *Glamping* provided to a competitive advantage in itself by offering a comfortable camping experience through the provision of *Spring Bed*, complete cookware, and campfire rituals every night. Concept *Glamorous Camping* this manages to attract the millennial and Generation Z tourist segments who want closeness to nature without sacrificing modern comforts. The personalized and warm service because it is managed directly by the Salamony family creates a more intimate and memorable travel experience for visitors, an advantage that is difficult for large-scale tourism management to replicate.

However, there are some drawbacks (*Weaknesses*) that need serious attention. Road access to damaged, potholes, and uphill locations is the dominant complaint of almost all survey respondents. The condition of the road infrastructure along 2 kilometers of the main road that has not been optimally paved causes travel inconvenience, especially during the rainy season when the road becomes slippery and dangerous. The lack of supporting facilities such as toilets which are limited in number and are quite far from the area *Glamping*, the lack of adequate lighting in the outdoor area of the tent at night, as well as the limited size of stalls that are unable to serve large numbers of visitors are operational weaknesses that reduce the level of tourist satisfaction (Winingsih, 2022). The condition of photo spots that are starting to become obsolete and do not receive regular updates is also an important concern,

considering that the young tourist segment pays great attention to visual aesthetic aspects for social media documentation purposes. Visit data shows a downward trend of tourists who come specifically to take pictures, while visitors *Glamping* has increased, indicating the need to revitalize photo spots to maintain the visual appeal of the destination.

External Factors: Opportunities and Threats

External factor analysis identifies a variety of opportunities (*opportunities*) strategic that can be used to accelerate development. The digital era opens up vast opportunities for promotion through social media at a relatively affordable cost but wide reach. Collaboration with *Influencers* local and *Content Creator* can improve *Brand Awareness* destinations exponentially. Visitors suggest the addition of rides *outbound* for adults and children's play facilities such as slides, swings, and low-rope bridges that can extend the duration of the visit and improve *Spending Per Tourist* (Afepah et al., 2023). The potential for cooperation with local governments and the private sector for the development of supporting infrastructure is wide open, considering the government's commitment to regional tourism development. Addition of units *Glamping* And villas can accommodate the ever-increasing demand, especially during the holiday season when capacity is often exceeded. The provision of professional documentation services and integrated tour packages with surrounding destinations can create *value added* which increases the competitiveness of destinations.

However, there are significant *threats* that need to be anticipated. The location is relatively far from the center of Ambon City (31 kilometers) with inadequate road access has the potential to reduce the interest of tourists who prioritize ease of access. Extreme weather, especially heavy rains that often occur in mountainous areas, can damage *glamping facilities* and worsen road conditions. Competition with new tourist attractions that continue to emerge in the surrounding area with more modern facilities threatens market share. Environmental issues such as waste management and cleanliness that are not optimally maintained can lower the image of the destination and cause resistance from visitors who are increasingly environmentally conscious.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis Matrix of Waai Tree House

Internal/External Factors	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Opportunities (O)	SO Strategy: Promotion of natural beauty through social media and <i>influencer collaboration</i> ; Development of creative photo spots and nature-based educational rides; Travel documentation services as an added value	WO Strategy: Proposal for cooperation in road infrastructure improvement with the government/private sector; Improvement of toilet facilities, lighting, and addition of <i>glamping units</i> ; Regular revitalization of photo spots
Threats (T)	ST Strategy: Differentiation through personal service and family atmosphere; Offering an authentic <i>glamping</i> experience as a competitive advantage; Maintain affordable prices with excellent quality	WT Strategy: Consistent updates of facilities and photo spots; Environmental cleanliness and safety management; Provision of shuttle transportation services to overcome difficult access

Source: Primary data processed (2025).

Formulation of the Waai Tree House Tourist Attraction Development Strategy

Aggressive Strategy (SO Strategy)

The SO strategy leverages internal strengths to optimize available external opportunities. The first strategy is to intensify digital promotion by showcasing the advantages of spectacular natural scenery, a calming atmosphere, and facilities *Glamping* quality as the main content of social media campaigns. Strategic collaboration with *Travel Blogger*, travel photographers, and *Content Creator Locals* can expand market reach by leveraging the power of *word-of-mouth* digital that has been proven to be effective in influencing millennial people's visiting decisions (Suseno, 2021).

The development of more creative and aesthetic photo spots by utilizing existing natural elements such as large trees, cliffs, and ocean views can create *Instagram-worthy* moments that encourage tourists to share their experiences organically on social media. The addition of educational rides such as endemic plant conservation areas, interactive *treehouses*, and *nature trails* with educational information boards can increase educational value while maintaining the visual appeal of the destination.



Figure 3. Waai Tree House *Glamping* Facilities.

Source : Personal Documentation 2025.

The implementation of professional tour documentation services can be an *additional revenue stream* while ensuring visitors get high-quality memories. Documentation packages can include *pre-wedding photography*, family portraits, or *content creation* for social media by utilizing natural beauty as *a captivating natural backdrop*.

Turn Around Strategy (WO Strategy)

The WO strategy focuses on minimizing weaknesses by taking advantage of existing opportunities. The main priority is the submission of a comprehensive cooperation proposal to the Central Maluku Regency Tourism Office and the Public Works Office for the improvement of access road infrastructure. Cooperation with the private sector through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes can accelerate the realization of the construction of decent paved roads. Infrastructure improvements not only improve the convenience of access but also open up opportunities for a significant increase in the number of visits (Kustianingsih, 2022). Improving the quality and quantity of supporting facilities is the second priority. Addition of toilet units with eco-friendly design closer to the area *Glamping*, the installation of solar panel lighting systems for the outdoor area of the tent, as well as the expansion of stalls with more varied menus can substantially increase visitor satisfaction. Addition of units *Glamping* And villas require a measurable investment by considering the carrying capacity of the environment so as not to damage the beauty of nature which is the main attraction.

The revitalization of photo spots is carried out periodically by applying seasonal themes or following visual trends that are popular among young tourists. Engaging local designers and artists to create art installations that are unique yet remain in harmony with the natural environment can create a strong visual differentiation.

Diversification Strategy (ST Strategy)

The ST strategy uses power to overcome external threats. Differentiation through strengthening personal service and a family atmosphere is the main strategy to differentiate Rumah Pohon Waai from competitors who offer similar facilities. Hospitality training for

management family members can improve the quality of service without taking away the personal warmth that is a unique characteristic of this destination.



Figure 4. Natural View of the Waai Tree House.
Source : Personal Documentation 2025.

Maintaining affordable glamping *rental prices* while continuing to improve the quality of facilities and services can be an effective market penetration strategy to reach the middle economic segment that is the main target market. Price transparency and clear communication about the facilities obtained can build customer trust and loyalty.

Defensive Strategy (WT Strategy)

The WT strategy aims to minimize weakness to avoid threats. Periodic updates to all facilities, photo spots, and supporting infrastructure require a planned maintenance system with a special budget allocation. Implementation of strict standard operating procedures (SOPs) for hygiene and safety by involving the surrounding community as *Guardian*. The environment can create a safe and comfortable atmosphere that supports operational sustainability. Provision of transportation services *Shuttle*. From a certain point on the main road to tourist sites can be an alternative solution to overcome the problem of road access that takes a long time for permanent repair. Cooperation with local transportation service providers or investment in specialized vehicles can improve accessibility while creating jobs for the surrounding community, in line with the principles of sustainable tourism that empower local communities (Yohamintin, 2023).

The implementation of the four strategies that have been formulated requires a phased approach taking into account the level of urgency, availability of resources, and expected impact. Based on an in-depth analysis of the actual condition of the Waai Tree House, the *Turn Around* (WO) is a top priority that must be executed in the short term considering that the weakness of road access infrastructure is a fundamental obstacle that directly affects the level of tourist visits. Road improvements not only improve access convenience but also open up wider opportunities for the optimal implementation of other strategies (Afrianti, 2017). The first phase of implementation focuses on improving basic infrastructure in a span of 6-12 months. Intensive coordination with the Public Works Office of Central Maluku Regency for the paving of a 2-kilometer road from the main road to tourist sites is a priority agenda. In parallel with road repairs, the improvement of supporting facilities such as the addition of two permanent toilet units with the system *septic tank* eco-friendly, solar light installation along the path to the *Glamping*, and the expansion of stalls with a capacity to serve 50-75 simultaneous visitors can be carried out in stages according to budget availability.

The second phase in the 12-18 month span focuses on the implementation of the SO strategy (*Strengths-Opportunities*) through the intensification of digital promotion and diversification of tourist attractions. The formation of a creative content team consisting of young managers of the Salamony family can consistently produce high-quality visual content for the targeted Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook platforms *Engagement Rate* At least 5% and growth *Followers* 20% per quarter. Collaborate with a minimum of five *Travel Influencer* local Maluku who have *Followers* 10,000-50,000 can produce *Organic Reach* at a relatively affordable cost through the scheme *barter* in the form of facilities *Glamping* Free as a Content Creator Fee (Puspita, 2023b). Photo spot revitalization is carried out with an approach *Posted on Instagram* which follows contemporary visual trends while still maintaining harmony with the natural environment. Creation of five new photo spots with different themes such as *The Hanging Garden, Sky Mirror, Bamboo Tunnel, Sunset Deck*, and *Bird Nest* can create an interesting

visual variation for tourists to spend longer on site. Each spot is designed with *Golden Hour Lighting* to produce optimal quality photos without the need for *Editing* excessive.

The third phase in the 18-24 month period implements the ST strategy (*Strengths-Threats*) and WT (*Weaknesses-Threats*) simultaneously to build long-term competitive durability. Ride development *outbound* such as *Flying Fox* 150 meters long, low rope bridge with a height of 2 meters that is safe for children, *Climbing the Wall* small-scale, and strips *Trekking* A 500-meter-long educational facility with 10 endemic flora and fauna information stations in Maluku can enrich the tourist experience while educating visitors about the importance of nature conservation (Hutagaol et al., 2024). Establishment of a standardized operational management system through the preparation of *Standard Operating Procedure* (SOP) for every aspect of service starting from reservations, *Check-in*, housekeeping, to *Check-out* ensuring consistency in service quality even though it is managed in a family manner. Periodic hospitality training every 3 months by inviting hospitality industry practitioners can improve the competence of human resources managers without losing the personal warmth that is a typical character of the destination. System implementation *Feedback* digital QR codes connected to Google Reviews and online booking platforms allow managers to get real-time feedback for continuous improvement. The implementation of the development strategy formulated requires a long-term commitment from all stakeholders by considering economic, social, and environmental sustainability aspects. The development approach must be participatory by involving local communities as strategic partners, not just development objects. Periodic monitoring and evaluation are necessary to ensure that the strategies implemented are in accordance with market dynamics and changing tourist preferences that continue to evolve.

5. Comparison

This research makes a significant contribution to the development of tourism strategies *Glamping* based on nature in the Eastern Indonesian archipelago. Compared to Puspita (2023) research on Indrayanti Beach which focuses on conventional beach tourism, this study explores the concept of *Glamping* as a differentiation of tourism products that have not been widely studied in the Maluku region. While the study (Paul & Hermanto, 2022) emphasizing local wisdom in the context of Central Java, this study adapts the SWOT approach by considering the unique geographical challenges of the archipelago such as limited accessibility and challenging infrastructure. The novelty of the research lies in the formulation of contextual strategies that integrate the natural advantages of the mountains with the concept of *Glamorous Camping* moderna combination that is rarely found in eastern Indonesian tourism literature. In contrast to (Winingsih, 2022) which examines Lampung's lowland tourism, this study identifies specific strategies to overcome extreme topographic barriers through multi-stakeholder cooperation schemes and transportation service innovations *Shuttle*. The practical contribution of this study goes beyond conventional theoretical studies by providing a measurable (6-24 months) phased implementation roadmap, including quantitative targets such as improvement *Engagement Rate* social media 5% and growth *Followers* 20% per quarter. A participatory approach that involves local communities as a *Guardian* The environment also reinforces aspects of sustainability that are often overlooked in similar tourism development studies.

6. Conclusions

This study succeeded in identifying strategic factors for the development of the Waai Tree House tourist attraction through a comprehensive SWOT analysis. Key findings show that the beauty of natural scenery, unique *glamping* concepts, and personalized service are the main competitive forces, while damaged road infrastructure and lack of supporting facilities are critical weaknesses that hinder the growth of tourist visits. The formulation of the four development strategies SO, WO, ST, and WT provides a measurable gradual implementation roadmap. The WO (Turn Around) strategy is a top priority with a focus on improving road infrastructure and improving facilities in the first 6-12 months, followed by intensification of digital promotion and diversification of tourist attractions in the next stage. These findings support the argument that sustainable tourism development requires a holistic approach that integrates physical improvement, operational management, and local community empowerment. The contribution of the research lies in the provision of a contextual strategic framework for the development of *glamping tourism* in the remote archipelago of Eastern Indonesia. The limitations of the study include limited informant coverage and the lack of quantitative

analysis of the level of tourist satisfaction. Further research is recommended to examine the economic impact on local communities, analyze environmental carrying capacity, and the effectiveness of the implementation of strategies formulated through longitudinal studies.

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