



Research Article

Analysis of Mekarbuana Tourism Marketing Strategies To Increase Tourist Visit Interest

(Case Study of Mekarbuana Tourism Management in Karawang)

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Abstract: Tourism is a type of business in the service sector. As a business, it requires the formulation of an appropriate marketing strategy to ensure its sustainability. The purpose of this study was to determine the marketing strategy of Mekarbuana Tourism to increase visitor interest. The study was conducted with Mekarbuana Tourism managers, using descriptive qualitative research through a SWOT analysis. The results showed that Mekarbuana Tourism's marketing strategy needs to be developed using a diversification strategy through various programs and policies such as digital promotion, training, and mentoring for managers in developing tourism products, and developing educational tourism. The findings suggest that digital marketing plays a significant role in reaching a broader audience and improving the region's visibility. Cooperation between institutions, including tourism awareness groups, village officials, and local governments, is necessary to ensure the strategy's successful implementation. Mekarbuana Tourism managers need a joint commitment from all stakeholders to support their efforts in increasing visitor interest, ensuring a sustainable tourism development path.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy; Mekarbuana Tourism; SWOT; Tourism Management; Visitor interest.

1. Introduction

The tourism industry continues to grow rapidly across various regions, not only through natural attractions but also through the emergence of numerous man-made tourist destinations. This growth reflects the increasing role of tourism as a strategic business sector that involves both private enterprises and government institutions in regional economic development. According to Law No. 9 of 1990 and Law No. 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, tourism is an integral part of national development that must be carried out systematically, planned, integrated, sustainable, and responsible, while upholding the religious and cultural values that live within society. In this context, Mekarbuana Village in Karawang Regency is expected to serve as a tourism village that contributes to equitable economic development and community welfare.

In accordance with Article 12 paragraph (1) of Law No. 10 of 2009, the designation of strategic tourism areas must consider several aspects, including: (1) the potential of natural and cultural resources to become tourist attractions; (2) market potential; (3) strategic location in maintaining national unity and territorial integrity; (4) environmental protection and carrying capacity; (5) preservation and utilization of cultural assets; (6) community readiness and support; and (7) regional uniqueness. Nature-based tourism activities within forest areas must therefore be managed in a way that preserves the natural landscape, protects biodiversity, and aligns with the local socio-cultural environment. In addition, such activities should generate economic benefits for the community, businesses, and government, while ensuring visitor satisfaction, safety, and comfort (Chen & Cheung, 2025). The management of nature tourism

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must also consider the optimal use of environmental services and the ecological carrying capacity of each ecosystem (Baydeniz et al., 2024).

Regional efforts to promote tourism development are reflected in the Karawang Regency Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2016 on the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan and Regional Regulation No. 18 of 2016 on Tourism Management. These regulations aim to encourage the development of local tourism potential across the region. In line with provincial tourism policies, the West Java Government provides local flexibility for districts and cities to develop tourism based on their respective potentials. The West Java Tourism Village Regulation focuses on mapping and developing village tourism potential, empowering local communities, fostering sustainable village tourism, preserving culture and customs, establishing communication forums among tourism villages, and ensuring effective supervision and guidance for district and city governments.

Currently, West Java has 346 pioneering or embryonic tourism villages, 76 developing villages, 10 advanced villages, and 2 independent villages. In Karawang Regency specifically, there are 16 pioneering or embryonic tourism villages and one independent village, namely Mekarbuana. The regency possesses diverse tourism potential, including natural attractions (mountains and beaches), historical sites, culinary tourism, educational tourism, religious destinations, and man-made tourist attractions (Karawang Regency Tourism and Culture Office, 2020). Tourism development plays a strategic role in promoting regional progress, empowering communities, and alleviating poverty, as each region can develop tourism based on its unique natural resources, cultural diversity, and social structures. Karawang, particularly the Loji area, holds considerable potential in this regard.

Mekarbuana Village, located in Tegalwaru District in southern Karawang Regency, exemplifies this potential. It offers remarkable natural attractions such as the Mount Sanggabuana Nature Park standing at 1,074 meters above sea level waterfalls, coffee plantations, and various man-made tourism sites. The village aspires to become an Entrepreneurial, Independent, Fair, and Prosperous (EMAS) community, driven by sustainable tourism development. However, despite its vast potential, tourism management in Mekarbuana Village remains suboptimal. Issues include inadequate maintenance of infrastructure and road access, limited visitor facilities, and insufficient marketing strategies. Moreover, the lack of managerial understanding of tourism services has resulted in visitor complaints related to hospitality, comfort, and service quality. These challenges indicate the need for improved planning, capacity building, and integrated tourism management to fully realize Mekarbuana's potential as a leading tourism destination in Karawang.



Figure1. Mekarbuana Nature Tourism Image.

Mekarbuana currently lacks a clear and integrated tourism development strategy. Its tourism management does not fully adhere to the 5A principles of the tourism service industry attractions, accessibility, amenities, accommodation, and activities particularly in terms of attractions, amenities, and accommodations. The absence of a comprehensive strategic plan has contributed to the year-over-year decline in visitor numbers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly reduced tourism revenue.

Efforts have been made by the management to revitalize Mekarbuana's tourist attractions; however, these initiatives have not yet produced significant positive outcomes. One of the main obstacles lies in the limited accessibility of information for both domestic and international tourists. This issue stems from the absence of consistent marketing and promotional efforts, as the management still relies heavily on word-of-mouth communication and previous visitors. A previous study by Nur (2021) indicated that Mekarbuana Tourism had adopted an ecotourism concept, yet the lack of marketing expertise and strategic planning remains evident, underscoring the need for further research on tourism marketing and development strategies tailored to this destination.

Another persistent challenge is the inadequacy of tourism services, accommodations, and supporting facilities to meet growing visitor expectations. The limited availability and poor quality of supporting infrastructure hinder efforts to attract a broader visitor base. Although Mekarbuana has gained some recognition among travelers particularly those from neighboring cities outside Karawang it has not yet succeeded in capturing national attention. Visitor data from 2020 to 2022 reveal a sharp decline in tourist arrivals during the pandemic period, when travel restrictions and temporary closures imposed by local authorities further disrupted tourism activities in the area.

Table 1. Mekarbuana Tourism Visitor Report

No	Month	2020		2021		2022	
		Nature Tourism	Artificial Tourism	Nature Tourism	Artificial Tourism	Nature Tourism	Artificial Tourism
1	January	216	89	178	0	125	78
2	February	178	76	245	67	234	108
3	March	73	13	76	45	543	98
4	April	0	0	89	123	345	123
5	May	0	0	0	0	234	98
6	June	0	0	0	0	123	87
7	July	0	0	0	0	234	145
8	August	0	0	0	0	123	234
9	September	0	0	0	0	123	129
10	October	0	0	234	0	235	127
11	November	0	0	156	89	105	234
12	December	0	0	120	87	236	215
TOTAL		467	178	1098	411	2660	1676

The lack of promotion and the absence of a well-formulated marketing strategy have made Mekarbuana Tourism relatively unknown to a wider audience. As stated by the head of Pokdarwis (Tourism Awareness Group), Mr. Fery, during the initial observation, most visitors currently come only from the local area or neighboring cities outside Karawang. Mekarbuana Tourism, managed jointly by the Buana Mekar Village-Owned Enterprise (Bumdes) and Pokdarwis, faces a shortage of qualified human resources in tourism management. Consequently, its marketing and promotional efforts rely primarily on word-of-mouth communication from previous visitors. Given these challenges, a structured and comprehensive tourism development strategy is urgently needed. The distinctive potential and unique characteristics of Mekarbuana as a tourist village can be utilized as promotional assets to attract broader market interest.

Formulating a proper marketing strategy is essential to ensure that a tourism business is recognized, competitive, and sustainable. Determining such a strategy requires systematic internal and external analyses, one of which can be conducted through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) framework. This approach enables business owners to identify key strategic priorities and design effective marketing actions. Research on the Bromo Tengger destination, for example, revealed that low competitiveness compared to rival attractions required a defensive market strategy focusing on product differentiation and cultural tourism development (Azizah, 2021). The SWOT analysis in that case highlighted the importance of developing annual tourism programs and introducing cultural attractions to enhance destination appeal.

The process of marketing strategy formulation generally involves several stages. According to Inzana et al. (2021), these include conducting a situational analysis (such as SWOT), setting clear objectives, planning the overall strategy, determining tactical policies, and executing implementation plans. A similar approach was applied in the PASAPA Peak tourist attraction, where SWOT analysis identified the “Back to Nature” trend as an external opportunity, prompting the adoption of a turnaround strategy to improve tourism marketing (Triangga et al., 2020). In essence, SWOT analysis offers a logical and systematic framework to maximize strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats. Based on

these insights, Mekarbuana Tourism needs to formulate an appropriate marketing strategy to enhance destination management effectiveness and attract more visitors in a sustainable manner.

2. Literature Review

Tourism

According to Law Number 9 of 1990 concerning Tourism, tourism is defined as all matters related to travel activities, including the management of tourist objects, attractions, and other related businesses in the tourism sector (Directorate General of Tourism, 2009). Tourism encompasses a series of travel activities carried out by individuals, families, or groups from their place of residence to other destinations for the purpose of visiting, recreation, or leisure not for work or earning income at the destination. Such visits are temporary in nature, as travelers eventually return to their place of origin.

Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy refers to the process of determining the form of offerings directed toward a particular market segment. This strategy is implemented through the design of a marketing mix, which serves as the core of the overall marketing system (Kotler, 2017). In essence, strategy represents a continuous and forward-looking effort that reflects an understanding of what customers expect and desire in the future. According to Rangkuti (2016), strategy encompasses the company's long-term goals and the effective utilization and allocation of resources to achieve those objectives.

Rangkuti (2016) further classifies strategy into three levels. First, the corporate-level strategy, which determines the types of businesses to be developed, maintained, or discontinued. Second, the business-unit-level strategy, which focuses on specific business lines to achieve competitive advantage. Third, the functional-level strategy, which is operational in nature and directly related to management functions such as human resources, finance, and marketing. These levels collectively form an integrated framework to ensure that strategic objectives are effectively implemented across all organizational functions.

SWOT Analysis

According to Freddy Rangkuti (2016), SWOT analysis is a systematic approach used to identify various internal and external factors that can inform the formulation of a strategic plan. The analysis is based on logical reasoning aimed at maximizing strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats. In this framework, internal factors include elements within the organization's control such as resources, capabilities, and internal processes while external factors refer to forces or conditions beyond its direct influence, such as market trends, competition, and policy environments.

In organizational decision-making, SWOT analysis assists strategists in maximizing strengths and capitalizing on opportunities, while simultaneously minimizing weaknesses and mitigating threats. This comprehensive approach provides a balanced perspective for setting goals, determining objectives, and designing strategies that are adaptive to environmental dynamics. The SWOT technique is particularly useful for determining marketing strategy objectives prior to establishing broader organizational goals, as it allows for a detailed understanding of internal capabilities and external challenges. Therefore, strategic planning must always be grounded in a thorough analysis of the company's current strategic factors strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to ensure the formulation of an effective and sustainable strategy.

3. Proposed Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on the formulation and planning of a marketing strategy for Mekarbuana Tourism. The descriptive method is used to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research focus, as well as to generate detailed explanations regarding the conditions and phenomena observed (Sugiyono, 2020). The research was conducted at Mekarbuana Tourism, with data obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, while secondary data were derived from reports, publications, and other relevant materials related to tourism management in Mekarbuana Village.

In the data analysis process, a SWOT analysis was applied to identify internal and external factors influencing the tourism business environment. This analysis served as the basis for

compiling and formulating instruments to design an appropriate marketing strategy for Mekarbuana Tourism. Consequently, the SWOT framework functions not only as an analytical tool but also as an integral part of the overall data processing technique used in this study.

The key informants in this research consisted of stakeholders directly involved in the management and development of Mekarbuana Tourism. They included the Mekarbuana tourism manager, representatives of the Buana Mekar Village-Owned Enterprise (Bumdes), the village head of Mekarbuana, the head of the Karawang Regency Tourism Office, the head of the Tourism Destination Division, members of the Mekarbuana Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), and several local community leaders who actively participate in the development of the tourism area.

4. Results and Discussion

Overview of Mekarbuana Tourism

Mekarbuana Village is located in Tegalwaru District, Karawang Regency, West Java, and possesses considerable tourism potential within a protected area specifically designated for ecotourism. The region's natural and cultural resources form the basis of its tourism identity, emphasizing environmental sustainability and the preservation of both natural and man-made assets, as well as local historical and cultural heritage. These values position Mekarbuana as a key component of Karawang's natural tourism landscape.

Spatial planning plays a crucial role in the development of this area. In accordance with Law No. 26 of 2007 on Spatial Planning, regional spatial planning represents the structured organization of spatial use as part of broader regional development. The spatial plan of Karawang Regency seeks to achieve optimal, efficient, and sustainable utilization of spatial resources in harmony with national and provincial plans, with the ultimate goal of enhancing quality of life and regional prosperity. Tegalwaru District, located in the southern mountainous region of Karawang, has been designated a protected area that functions as a water catchment zone. It encompasses protected forests, natural conservation zones, cultural heritage sites, and geological protected areas, all of which are critical to maintaining ecological balance.

The potential of Mekarbuana as a tourism village is further strengthened by its designation as a "Golden Village," officially recognized by the Karawang Regency Government through Regional Regulation No. 18 of 2016. Although Karawang is widely recognized as an industrial city, Mekarbuana Village serves as a contrasting yet complementary icon of ecotourism within the region. With its expansive protected forests and Mount Sanggabuana as its central landmark, Mekarbuana offers distinctive forms of nature-based tourism that combine scenic beauty, local wisdom, and environmental awareness. The area features several natural attractions such as Mount Sanggabuana, Curug Cigentis, Curug Bandung, Curug Peuteuy, and educational coffee plantations that integrate agricultural learning with ecotourism experiences. Religious and cultural traditions such as ngaruwat and maparaji ceremonies also enhance the uniqueness of Mount Sanggabuana, making it a prominent site for spiritual and cultural tourism.

Administratively, Mekarbuana Tourism is owned by the Purwakarta Forestry Corporation (Perum Perhutani) but managed in partnership with the Buana Mekar Village-Owned Enterprise (Bumdes), under the coordination of the Karawang Regency Government. This partnership model allows local management through Bumdes while ensuring compliance with regional and village regulations. Bumdes is responsible for operational management, including ticketing and on-site implementation, and collaborates with Karang Taruna youth groups and the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis). Karang Taruna primarily handles ticket sales such as Curug Cigentis (IDR 25,000) and Mount Sanggabuana and Curug Bandung (IDR 10,000) with daily revenues deposited to Bumdes under a revenue-sharing agreement with Perhutani. Meanwhile, Pokdarwis plays an active role in supporting micro, small, and community-based enterprises (MSMEs), managing food stalls, parking, cleanliness, visitor safety, and other facilities essential to maintaining service quality across Mekarbuana's tourism areas.

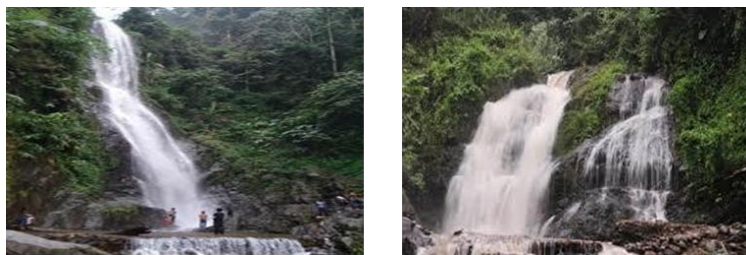


Figure 2. Cigentis Waterfall and Bandung Waterfall Tour, Mekarbuana Village.

Mekarbuana Tourism Marketing Strategy

Considering the field conditions, a SWOT analysis was employed to formulate the marketing strategy concept for Mekarbuana Tourism, identifying internal and external factors as well as its strategic position. Similar studies by Prayoga (2018) and Kurniawati (2020) also confirmed that SWOT analysis effectively supports the development of marketing strategies in tourism contexts. The analysis involved four main stages: (1) determining internal and external factor summaries (IFAS and EFAS) based on literature reviews and insights from key informants; (2) assigning weights to each factor according to its importance; (3) rating the magnitude of influence of each factor; and (4) calculating total scores by multiplying weights and ratings. These results provided a comprehensive foundation for positioning Mekarbuana Tourism's marketing direction.

To provide a deeper contextual understanding, the SWOT framework was supported by the 7Ps marketing mix product, price, place (distribution), promotion, physical evidence, people, and process. Each element offered insight into both internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats influencing Mekarbuana Tourism.

Internal Factors (Strengths and Weaknesses)

Mekarbuana's primary strengths lie in its tourism products, pricing, and community-based management. The area offers diverse natural attractions, including Curug Cigentis, Curug Bandung, Mount Sanggabuana, coffee plantations, and cultural events such as Ngarumat Jagad Mekarbuana and fruit festivals. These attractions are complemented by educational coffee tours and local culinary experiences, supported by the development of local souvenir brands such as KoSa (Sanggabuana Coffee). Ticket prices and packages remain relatively affordable, with nature tour packages ranging from IDR 250,000 to 300,000 and coffee education tours from IDR 150,000 to 250,000, ensuring accessibility to various visitor segments. The management structure through Bumdes, Pokdarwis, and Karang Taruna illustrates strong local participation and community empowerment in tourism operations. Physical facilities such as parking areas, prayer rooms, toilets, and homestays further support visitor comfort.

However, several internal weaknesses remain evident. Tourism product diversification is still limited, and supporting attractions such as photo spots, souvenir shops, and innovative activities are underdeveloped. Pricing strategies are sometimes inconsistent with the facilities provided, particularly at natural sites with minimal infrastructure. Accessibility to coffee plantations and educational areas is also challenging due to inadequate road connections. Moreover, promotion remains largely conventional, relying on word-of-mouth rather than digital platforms, while the quality of promotional content is low. Limited human resources and multitasking among staff members indicate a lack of professional tourism management. In addition, tourism processes are not yet standardized, and MSME coordination remains inconsistent.

External Factors (Opportunities and Threats)

Externally, Mekarbuana Tourism benefits from several opportunities. The growing public interest in nature-based, religious, and cultural tourism provides an encouraging market outlook. The region's clean environment, scenic landscape, and accessible rural road networks enhance its competitiveness. Expanding digital promotion and organizing tourism events could significantly strengthen visibility. Collaboration with MSMEs and community groups offers potential for expanding amenities such as toilets, parking areas, places of worship, and souvenir centers. Furthermore, the empowerment of women's groups (PKK) and youth organizations could enrich the tourism workforce and encourage innovation.

Nevertheless, several threats challenge the sustainability of Mekarbuana Tourism. The presence of competing destinations offering similar or more developed natural attractions often supported by stronger branding and promotional strategies poses a competitive disadvantage. Many rival sites provide more diverse tourism packages and better infrastructure at

lower prices. Moreover, external threats also stem from limited government support in improving road access and digital literacy among local managers. Weak coordination, lack of innovation, and limited understanding of tourism principles could further hinder Mekarbuana's ability to compete at a broader, especially national, scale.

Overall, the SWOT and 7Ps analysis highlights that Mekarbuana Tourism holds substantial potential based on its natural assets and community involvement. However, the village must enhance tourism product innovation, strengthen promotional activities especially digital marketing and improve human resource competencies. These steps will be essential in transforming Mekarbuana from a regionally recognized destination into a nationally competitive and sustainable tourism village.

Determining Weights and Scores for Each IFAS and EFAS Analysis

At this stage, the process of weighting, rating, and scoring for each internal and external strategic factor was carried out to evaluate the position of Mekarbuana Tourism. The Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) table summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism area based on the marketing mix framework (7P). The External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS) table presents the opportunities and threats from the external environment that influence Mekarbuana Tourism's strategic position.

Table 2. Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS)

Internal Strategic Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Strengths			
Product – Natural and cultural attractions, coffee and fruit educational tourism	0.20	4	0.80
Price – Affordable and available package pricing	0.05	4	0.20
Place – Accessible natural attractions and coffee plantation area	0.03	4	0.12
Promotion – Conventional and social media promotion	0.10	4	0.40
Physical Evidence – Parking, MCK, prayer facilities, accommodations	0.10	3	0.30
People – Pokdarwis, Bumdes, MSMEs involvement	0.02	3	0.06
Process – Cultural and traditional attractions (ngarumat jagad, fruit festival)	0.10	3	0.30
Total Strengths	0.60		2.18
Weaknesses			
Product – Limited supporting tourism products and package variations	0.10	2	0.20
Price – Relatively higher package prices	0.02	2	0.04
Place – Difficult access to coffee plantation and production area	0.02	2	0.04
Promotion – Minimal digital content and infrequent promotion	0.10	2	0.20
Physical Evidence – Limited facilities and poor road access	0.10	1	0.10
People – Lack of skilled tourism human resources	0.03	1	0.03
Process – Inconsistent management and tourism activity standards	0.03	1	0.03
Total Weaknesses	0.40		0.64
Total Strengths and Weaknesses	1.00		

Table 3. External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS).

External Strategic Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Opportunities			
Product – Diverse and attractive cultural and natural tourism packages	0.10	4	0.40
Price – Competitive pricing with similar destinations	0.03	2	0.06
Place – Natural environment and good access roads	0.10	4	0.40
Promotion – Digital media utilization and event organization	0.10	3	0.30
Physical Evidence – Added facilities supported by MSMEs	0.04	2	0.08
People – Tourism training and youth empowerment	0.10	3	0.30
Process – Collaborative management in tourism activity design	0.03	3	0.09
Total Opportunities	0.50		1.63
Threats			
Product – High competition with similar destinations	0.20	4	0.80
Price – Competitors offer cheaper packages	0.05	3	0.15
Place – Poor destination arrangement and management	0.10	3	0.30
Promotion – Competitors' superior branding and creativity	0.10	4	0.40
Physical Evidence – Limited government support, better rival facilities	0.02	2	0.04
People – Limited HR skills in digital and tourism management	0.02	1	0.02
Process – Few tourism activities and attractions	0.01	1	0.01
Total Threats	0.50		1.72
Total Opportunities and Threats	1.00		

Source: Processed by Researchers (2024)

Based on the IFAS and EFAS results, the total score for strengths (2.18) is greater than weaknesses (0.64), while opportunities (1.63) are slightly lower than threats (1.72). These results indicate that although Mekarbuana Tourism has significant internal potential, external threats and competition from similar destinations remain strong and need to be addressed through a well-targeted marketing strategy.

Determining the SWOT Diagram

Based on the results of the IFAS and EFAS calculations, the next stage is to determine the position of Mekarbuana Tourism within the SWOT diagram. This step is important to understand the overall strategic standing of the organization and to formulate the most appropriate marketing strategy in accordance with its internal and external conditions. The grand strategy matrix serves as the foundation for determining Mekarbuana Tourism's strategic quadrant.

To determine its position, the coordinate points were calculated by comparing the total strengths and weaknesses (for the X-axis) and the total opportunities and threats (for the Y-axis). The results are presented in the following table:

Table 4. IFAS and EFAS Calculation Results

IFAS	Score	EFAS	Score
Total Strengths	2.18	Total Opportunities	1.63
Total Weaknesses	0.64	Total Threats	1.72
X Coordinate (Strengths – Weaknesses)	1.54	Y Coordinate (Opportunities – Threats)	–0.09

Source: Processed by Researchers (2024)

The results show that the X-coordinate is 1.54 and the Y-coordinate is –0.09, placing Mekarbuana Tourism in Quadrant II of the grand strategy matrix. This quadrant indicates that although Mekarbuana Tourism faces various external threats, it still possesses strong in-

ternal capabilities. According to Rangkuti (2016), organizations in Quadrant II are recommended to adopt a diversification strategy, which emphasizes the creation of new products or services by leveraging existing strengths. The diversification approach enables the organization to minimize external threats while simultaneously generating new opportunities through product, service, and facility innovation.

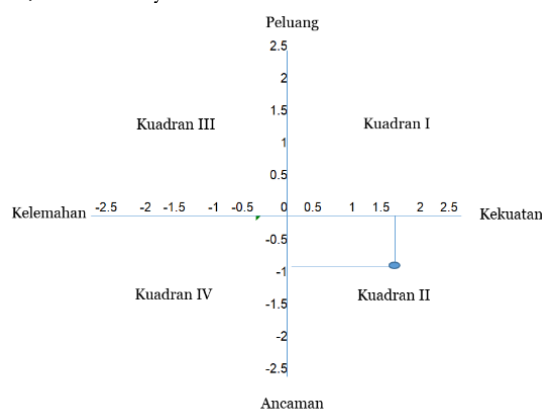


Figure 3. Grand Strategy Matrix Image (Mekarbuana Tourism Position).

In the case of Mekarbuana Tourism, diversification may take the form of developing new tourism packages, strengthening service quality, and innovating promotional activities to enhance competitiveness and sustainability.

Determining the SWOT Analysis Matrix

The SWOT analysis helps identify internal strengths and weaknesses alongside external opportunities and threats that influence the success of Mekarbuana Tourism's marketing strategy. This analysis is crucial for determining the appropriate marketing direction and optimizing efforts to achieve the main goal namely, increasing visitor numbers. Based on the SWOT framework, the analysis was conducted to formulate four alternative strategies: SO (Strengths–Opportunities), WO (Weaknesses–Opportunities), ST (Strengths–Threats), and WT (Weaknesses–Threats) strategies, which are summarized in the following table:

Table 5. SWOT Matrix of Mekarbuana Tourism

Internal Factors	
Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
1. Natural destinations, cultural traditions, culinary and educational tourism (0.8)	1. Limited variety of supporting tourism products (0.2)
2. Affordable prices and available tour packages (0.2)	2. Relatively higher tour package prices (0.04)
3. Expansive coffee plantations with educational facilities (0.12)	3. Difficult access to coffee plantations and production sites (0.04)
4. Conventional and social media promotion (0.4)	4. Inconsistent and minimal digital promotion (0.2)
5. Parking, MCK, prayer facilities, and lodging (0.3)	5. Inadequate supporting facilities (0.1)
6. Active Pokdarwis, Bumdes, MSMEs (0.06)	6. Lack of skilled human resources (0.03)
7. Tourism events such as <i>ngarumat jagad</i> and fruit festivals (0.3)	7. Absence of standardized tourism management procedures (0.03)

Internal Factors			
External Factors	Opportunities (O)	SO Strategies	WO Strategies
	1. Product diversification and rising interest in cultural tourism (0.4)		W1, O1 → Creating complementary tourism products.
	2. Competitive pricing opportunities (0.06)	S1, S3, S5, S7, O1, O3, O5, O7 →	W2, O2 → Lowering prices to improve competitiveness.
	3. Clean natural environment and supportive access (0.4)	Maintaining natural attractions, developing sustainable tourism activities, improving accessibility, and enhancing collaboration.	W3, O3 → Improving access roads through local collaboration.
	4. Use of digital media and tourism events (0.3)	S2, O2 → Setting competitive entry prices and expanding tour packages.	W4, O4 → Enhancing digital promotion continuity.
	5. MSME facility support (0.08)	S4, O4 → Utilizing digital platforms for consistent promotion.	W5, O5 → Expanding visitor amenities and services.
	6. Tourism training and community empowerment (0.3)	S6, O6 → Conducting tourism management and service training.	
	7. Collaborative management in tourism design (0.09)		
	Threats (T)	ST Strategies	WT Strategies
	1. High competition from similar destinations (0.8)		W1, T1 → Creating unique complementary tourism products.
	2. Cheaper competitor pricing (0.15)	S1, T1 → Developing unique tourism products with superior services.	W2, T2 → Offering more diverse and affordable tour packages.
	3. Poorly organized destinations (0.3)	S2, T2 → Setting more competitive ticket pricing.	W3, T3 → Improving access roads and destination layouts.
	4. Competitors' stronger branding (0.4)	S4, T4 → Creating strong digital branding and creative promotional content.	W6, T6 → Conducting intensive training and collaborating with tourism agencies.
	5. Limited government support (0.04)	S7, T7 → Designing varied and engaging digital tourism events.	
	6. Lack of skilled workforce (0.02)		
	7. Few supporting attractions (0.01)		

Source: Processed by Researchers (2024)

Based on the SWOT matrix and the grand strategy analysis, Mekarbuana Tourism's strategic position in Quadrant II supports the implementation of a diversification strategy, particularly through the ST (Strength–Threat) approach. This strategy emphasizes leveraging internal strengths to confront external threats while expanding the product and service base.

The diversification strategy can be operationalized through various tourism development programs, such as: (a) Strengthening destination branding based on nature, culture, and local wisdom. (b) Developing educational tourism (e.g., coffee, agriculture, and nature conservation). (c) Creating thematic and sustainable tour packages (eco-tourism, cultural tourism, village experiences). (d) Improving infrastructure and accessibility, including road quality, digital

maps, and signage. (e) Building supporting facilities (parking, restrooms, gazebos, souvenir centers, Wi-Fi, and information centers). (f) Promoting digital-based reservation and marketing systems. (g) Establishing homestays and community-based accommodations. (h) Enhancing human resource capacity through hospitality and digital marketing training. (i) Strengthening institutional collaboration between the village, tourism office, and MSMEs.

To ensure program success, cross-sectoral support from government agencies is crucial. The PUPR office plays a key role in improving infrastructure and accessibility, while the agricultural office supports spatial and environmental management policies, and the tourism office facilitates training, promotion, and community empowerment programs. Through integrated policy and stakeholder collaboration, Mekarbuana Tourism can achieve sustainable growth and national recognition as a model of community-based tourism in Karawang Regency.

5. Comparison

Compared to previous studies on tourism marketing strategies that employ SWOT analysis in rural or village-based tourism contexts, this research offers a more integrative and context-sensitive approach by linking SWOT-based strategy formulation with the Delta Model perspective. Prior studies, such as those conducted by Rangkuti (2016) and Kotler et al. (2019), emphasize SWOT as a descriptive and diagnostic tool to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in tourism management. However, these studies often stop at the analytical stage, providing limited guidance for translating SWOT results into actionable strategic frameworks King et al.2023; Debnath et al., 2022).

In contrast, this study advances the state-of-the-art by connecting SWOT analysis with strategic implementation through diversification and digitalization strategies specifically tailored to community-based tourism (Lazuardina et al., 2025). While previous research on similar destinations such as eco-tourism in West Java or agro-tourism in Bali (Hadi & Nurhadi, 2021; Wibowo et al., 2022) focuses primarily on product development and promotion, this study incorporates managerial capacity building, inter-institutional collaboration, and digital branding as central pillars of sustainable marketing strategy.

Furthermore, the integration of the Delta Model in this study provides a more dynamic understanding of how customer bonding, local value creation, and institutional partnerships can strengthen long-term competitiveness (Chiu et al., 2023). This distinguishes Mekarbuana's case from traditional tourism marketing frameworks that rely heavily on the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion). The combination of SWOT findings with the Delta Model perspective therefore represents a methodological and practical contribution to the literature on strategic management in rural tourism (Ha et al., 2022).

In summary, the novelty of this research lies in its application of SWOT not only as a diagnostic tool but also as a basis for strategic transformation linking internal village resources, digital marketing potential, and government support mechanisms to formulate a holistic and actionable diversification strategy for Mekarbuana Tourism.

6. Conclusions

The research findings indicate that Mekarbuana Tourism managers need to formulate and implement an appropriate marketing strategy to strengthen the village's tourism competitiveness. The marketing strategy can be developed through the formulation of development programs derived from the SWOT analysis results. This strategic formulation should be comprehensive and integrated to optimize opportunities, reduce or eliminate threats, and enhance the internal strengths of Mekarbuana Tourism. The findings of the SWOT analysis show that Mekarbuana Tourism is positioned in Quadrant II, which signifies that despite facing several external threats, it still possesses strong internal resources and capabilities. Therefore, the most suitable strategic direction is diversification developing new products, services, and experiences that leverage the existing strengths and local uniqueness of Mekarbuana Village.

However, the process of creating and implementing these strategies requires a clear, focused, and systematic formulation. In practice, several challenges have been identified through interviews, particularly the limited number of human resources. The management team and operational personnel of Mekarbuana Tourism are relatively small in number and have limited managerial understanding of tourism management. Moreover, the ability to conceptualize, plan, and organize tourism activities based on the 5A principles (Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, Ancillary, and Activity) remains underdeveloped. These constraints hinder the realization of a more professional and sustainable tourism management system.

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