

The Strategy for Developing the Potential of Tourism in the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the strategy for developing the potential of tourism in the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest. In this study, the author uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the SWOT analysis method. Data collection in this study was carried out using field study observation techniques, namely documentation, observation, and direct interviews with the managers of the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest. Based on the results of the study, the strategy for developing potential tourist attractions in the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest is the development of tourist attractions, which focuses on developing tourist attractions by providing interesting activities and activities to attract tourist interest, improving facilities for tourist comfort, and utilizing information technology, communication, and social media to build a brand, provide information, and maximally promote the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest destination so that it is known more widely among both local, national, and international tourists.

Keywords: Development Strategy, The Potential of Tourist Attraction, Mata Kucing Tourism Forest

1 Introduction

Tourism represents one form of natural resource utilization that can provide a significant economic benefit to a region. Managing natural resources into attractive tourist destinations for visitors from within and outside the country generates high economic value and fosters a sense of national pride. This will, in turn, result in the formation of a society that exhibits a greater sense of national pride [1]. In Indonesia, the tourism sector plays a pivotal role in ensuring economic sustainability. With appropriate management, tourism development has the potential to enhance welfare through substantial advancements in transportation, accommodation, and communication, while also generating numerous employment opportunities [2]. Tourism can be considered a type of industry that has the potential to accelerate economic growth and create employment opportunities.

Furthermore, it can lead to an increase in income, living standards and the development of other productive sectors. Furthermore, tourism facilitates the growth of traditional industries, such as the production of souvenirs and handicrafts. Likewise, lodging and transportation are regarded as economic industries. Tourism objects and attractions encompass all entities that possess intrinsic qualities of uniqueness, aesthetic appeal, and intrinsic value, whether derived from natural, cultural, or human-made sources. These entities represent the destinations or targets of tourist visits [3].

Indonesia is renowned for its breathtaking natural splendour. In developing countries such as Indonesia, which possess a plethora of natural resources and a rich cultural heritage, the tourism industry serves as a vital source of foreign exchange [4]. The Indonesian tourism sector is undergoing significant growth and development. A significant number of countries around the globe view tourism as a crucial element in their national development strategies. A review of the literature on tourism reveals that the tourism sector can provide benefits to the country concerned. Nature tourism is a form of tourism that exploits the potential of natural resources and environmental governance. Nature tourism encompasses activities and attractions related to recreation and tourism that capitalise on the potential of natural resources and ecosystems, encompassing both original (natural) and man-made combinations. Given that travel is a necessity for all individuals, engaging in travel-related activities can enhance one's creative abilities, alleviate job-related monotony, facilitate relaxation, encourage shopping, facilitate business, and provide opportunities to gain insight into the historical and cultural heritage of specific ethnic groups, as well as to pursue interests related to health and spirituality [5].

Concerning the field of tourism, there is a further potential to be considered in the context of tours, namely the potential of tourism objects derived from natural, cultural and artificial sources. The combination of these three factors has the potential to enhance the appeal of tourist destinations [6]. A strategy is a potential course of action that calls for decisions by top management and the deployment of significant company resources. Furthermore, strategy represents an endeavour to attain a competitive advantage, to achieve organisational goals and to ensure long-term survival. It also encompasses the pursuit of broad, long-term insights to inform future decision-making.

Development can be understood as a process of enhancing the quality of a given condition, with the objective of achieving a superior state to that of the previous situation. The term "nature tourism development" encompasses the utilisation of space through a series of development activities specifically designed for the purpose of nature tourism. This includes, but is not limited to, land use management. The development of tourism objects has a significant impact on the continuity of the community's needs in relation to tourism. The establishment of clear goals and objectives is the primary determinant of the success of tourism development. The objective is to enhance the tourism potential of a specific region, while the goal is to identify and develop potential new attractions [7]. The development of existing tourism objects can facilitate the fulfilment of economic needs within the community. Consequently, areas with the potential to be developed as tourist attractions can be utilised for this purpose, thereby facilitating economic growth in the surrounding community. One method of implementing a sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism development model is the establishment of ecotourism programmes, which are frequently referred to as nature tourism.

This concept essentially combines an environmental conservation approach with the development of tourism [8].

Tourism acts as a public service provider for recreation [9]. The number of visitors who come can be seen as the presence of sustenance for tourism managers. However, since its outbreak in late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the global landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on businesses in the tourism sector, where concerns continue to grow as signs of an end to the outbreak remain unclear [10]. The pandemic has been accompanied by an unprecedented public health crisis, with impacts on many aspects of human life, including economic, social and psychological. Preventive measures such as travel restrictions, lockdowns and social distancing have been implemented around the world to control the spread of the virus. Nevertheless, the impact of the pandemic is being felt far and wide. In the economic context, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a severe global recession. Many companies and industries experienced a sharp decline in activity due to disrupted supply chains, plant closures and reduced consumer demand. Millions of people lost their jobs and sectors such as tourism, hospitality and aviation were severely affected. The pandemic also had a significant social impact. Social restrictions and self-isolation have created a sense of insecurity and increased mental anxiety in society. In addition, the pandemic exposed and exacerbated existing social and economic disparities, particularly worsening the conditions of vulnerable groups such as migrant workers, informal workers and the poor, who became more vulnerable to its negative effects.

The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry has been significant, resulting in a notable decline in tourist numbers, the closure of numerous tourist attractions, substantial economic losses for tourism businesses, and job losses across the sector. Furthermore, the pandemic has precipitated shifts in tourist behaviour, with a heightened preference for open and secure destinations and a greater reliance on technology for safer and remote travel experiences. The global pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry in Batam City. The implementation of border closures and travel restrictions, coupled with the prevailing fear of virus transmission, has resulted in a notable decline in the number of tourists visiting the city. The decline in tourist numbers has resulted in a significant reduction in revenue for tourist attractions, hotels, restaurants and other tourism-related industries, as well as job losses. Furthermore, the restriction policy has also led to the postponement or cancellation of events and festivals that are usually a tourist attraction. The recovery of Batam City's tourism industry will require a carefully considered strategy and collaboration between the government and industry stakeholders.

Batam is an island located within the Riau Islands, situated close to both Singapore and Malaysia. As an archipelago, Batam boasts a plethora of natural beauty, which has the potential to attract tourists. Mata Kucing Tourism Forest represents one of the principal tourist destinations in Batam City. Located on Diponegoro Street, Kibing Village, Batu Aji District, Batam, Riau Islands, Indonesia. The Mata Kucing Tourism Forest boasts a plethora of attractions, including a mini zoo, an outbound area, a playground, and a swimming pool fed by natural springs. The Mata Kucing Tourism Forest is managed by a private company, PT Karya Graha Sinar Abadi. Since the emergence of COVID-19 virus, the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest has witnessed a significant decline in visitor numbers. This has resulted in a reduction in revenue for the maintenance and preservation

of the forest, as well as the potential for disturbances to the ecosystem due to a lack of supervision and attention. Consequently, the Mata Kucing Forest has been subjected to a decline in maintenance standards. The government withdrew the animals from the mini zoo due to a lack of care and health issues affecting the tourists. At present, the primary attraction at Mata Kucing Tourism Forest is a swimming pool that is fed by a natural spring.

2 Previous Research

Previous research on the development of nature-based tourism can provide valuable insights for devising strategies to enhance Mata Kucing Tourism Forest. Among these studies are:

Table 1. Previous Research

No.	Author (Year)	Title
1	[11]	Design of Instagrammable Spots at Mata Kucing Tourism Forest for Developing Marketing Strategies as a Tourist Destination in Batam City in the Millennial Era
2	[12]	Planning of Mangrove Tourism in Kelembak Village, Batam City
3	[6]	Development Strategy for Bale-Bale Beach Tourist Attraction in Kampung Tua Bakau Serip, Nongsa District, Batam City
4	[13]	Utilization of Mangrove Forest as a Mangrove Ecotourism Destination in Kampung Tua Bakau Serip, Sambau Subdistrict, Nongsa District, Batam City
5	[5]	SWOT Strategy for Enhancing the Potential of Melayu Beach Tourism Destination in Batam City
6	[14]	SWOT Analysis Application for the Growth of Ciptaland Beach Tourism Destination in Batam City

The six studies mentioned above share a common focus on the development of natural tourism in Batam. This research concentrates on the potential of natural tourism, formulates strategies for the development of tourist attractions, and conducts a SWOT analysis to strengthen the proposed strategies.

Hypothesis

In this case, the researcher formulates the hypothesis as follows:

H₀: There is no strategy for developing the potential tourist attractions in the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest.

H₁: There is a strategy for developing the potential tourist attractions in the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest.

3 Research Methods

This research employs a SWOT analysis with a qualitative descriptive approach (Tapparan et al., n.d.). Which is designed to describe, explain, and elucidate the potential development strategy of tourist attractions in Mata Kucing Forest in Batam City. A SWOT analysis evaluates two principal elements: the organisation's internal factors, including its strengths and weaknesses, and the external factors, including the opportunities and threats facing it. These internal factors pertain to aspects within an organisation or individual that can facilitate or impede the attainment of objectives. External factors, on the other hand, encompass conditions or shifts outside the organisational milieu that can engender new prospects or pose challenges that necessitate attention [14]. The instrument employed in this research is the researcher himself, utilising primary data sources, namely through in-depth interviews with informants deemed to possess sufficient knowledge in accordance with the scope of this research. The informant is the manager of the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest object. A SWOT analysis is a method of identifying various aspects to develop a company strategy that is based on logical reasoning. This enables the percentage of strengths and opportunities to be increased while the percentage of weaknesses and threats is reduced [15].

Table 2. SWOT Matrix Diagram

		INTERNAL	
		STRENGTHS (S)	WEAKNESS (W)
EKSTERNAL	Opportunities (O)	SO Strategy SO	WO Strategy
	Determine the external opportunity factors	Create a strategy that uses strengths to utilise opportunities	Create strategies that minimise weaknesses to take advantage of opportunities
	Threats (T)	ST Strategy	WT Strategy
External threat factors	Create a strategy that uses strengths to overcome threats	Create strategies that minimise weaknesses avoid threats	

Source: [5]

The sampling of the existing population in this study employed a purposive sampling technique, also known as a purposeful sample. This involved the selection of a population of subjects, comprising one manager, one tourist, and one businessperson, from the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest. The research employs a qualitative data collection technique, whereby data is gathered through field study observation and interviews with informants at tourist attractions. Following this, the data is analysed by comparing, equating or distinguishing the results with relevant theories or research, with the aim of achieving the most comprehensive results. Qualitative research is an approach to enquiry that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena by interpreting the context, experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the phenomenon. This research is concerned with the meaning, social construction, and complexity of the phenomenon under study (Ansori Muslim et al., 2021). Qualitative research employs a variety of techniques for data collection.

Firstly, interviews constitute direct interactions between researchers and research participants, with the objective of gaining an in-depth understanding of the experiences, views and perspectives of individuals related to the phenomenon under study. Interviews may be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, with the latter two types not adhering to a predetermined framework. Secondly, observation entails the direct observation of participants, and the contexts involved in the research phenomenon. Observation can occur in both naturalistic settings and in environments that have been specifically designed for research purposes, thereby enabling researchers to observe social interactions, behaviours, and relevant contexts [12]. Thirdly, documentation entails the collection of data from documents, archives, or other written materials pertinent to the research phenomenon. Documents may take the form of records, reports, letters, books, or other official documents. They can provide information about the historical context, policies, events, and developments relevant to the phenomenon under study

The data analysis technique employed in this research is a SWOT analysis and a SWOT matrix. This SWOT analysis assumes that an effective strategy will optimise strengths and exploit opportunities, while simultaneously developing weaknesses and minimising threats (Strategi et al., n.d.). Strategies developed based on SWOT matrix analysis techniques include:

1. **S-O Strategy** (*Strength-Opportunity Strategy*) is a strategic analysis that optimises and utilises the strengths of the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest, thereby capitalising on the opportunities present in the external environment.
2. **W-O strategy** (*Weakness Opportunity Strategy*) is an analytical approach that identifies potential avenues for enhancing the internal environment's weaknesses by capitalising on external environmental opportunities.
3. **S-T Strategy** (*Strength-Threat Strategy*) is an analytical approach that seeks to optimise the utilisation of inherent strengths to effectively navigate and overcome external threats.
4. **W-T Strategy** (*Weakness-Threat Strategy*) is a strategy analysis based on efforts to minimise weaknesses and avoid potential threats that may arise.

4 Results and Discussions

The Mata Kucing Tourism Forest, managed by PT Graha Sinar Abadi, is designated as a protected forest area. This area covers approximately 200 hectares and is located on Diponegoro Street, Kibing Village, Batu Aji District, Batam, Riau Islands, about 10 minutes from the Sekupang International Ferry Terminal. The land's status as a protected forest is one reason why the management must be cautious in developing facilities in the area. The management is required to adhere to the forest protection regulations set by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Although this tourism area is operated as a business venture, it cannot be managed without regard for its protected status.

Table 3. SWOT Analysis of Mata Kucing Tourism Forest

EFAS	IFAS	Strengths	Weakness
		Mata Kucing Tourism Forest is a conservation forest area that has various types of rare and high-value trees, such as Gaharu, Bintangor, Meranti, Pelawan, and many more.	Suboptimal promotion on social media, many damaged facilities and infrastructure, and unclear licences from the government make investors hesitant.
	Opportunities	SO Strategy	WO Strategy
	The potential of Mata Kucing Tourism Forest needs to be developed in order to attract tourists to visit, so that it can become a destination for recreation and educational tourism for the community, families, students, and become a destination of choice for domestic and foreign tourists.	Optimise the efficiency of the development of Mata Kucing Tourism Forest to increase revenue and profit from tourism management, and strengthen cooperation with investors to invest in Mata Kucing Tourism Forest.	Expanding promotion through social media and improving facilities and infrastructure in Mata Kucing Tourism Forest.

Threats	ST Strategy	WT Strategy
There are other attractions that are growing and supported by a more optimal promotion strategy.	Maintain the beauty and preserve the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest, maintain existing facilities at the tourist attraction, and increase the construction of new facilities that can increase comfort for visitors.	Using social media platforms as a tool to promote and develop Mata Kucing Tourism Forest, as well as paying more attention to the development of the tourist attraction area, both through construction and efforts to maintain existing facilities.

From the results of the SWOT analysis that has been carried out, strategies for developing Mata Kucing Tourism Forest can be formulated as follows:

SO strategy (*Strengths-Opportunities*)

The strategy that can be implemented by leveraging internal strengths and external opportunities is to enhance the development of Mata Kucing Tourism Forest through social media, aligning with the trends and developments observed in competing attractions. Furthermore, enhanced collaboration with investors could prove an effective strategy for addressing the challenge of constructing new facilities and enhancing existing ones in Mata Kucing Tourism Forest, including food stalls, accommodation, and other amenities. This could enhance visitor safety and comfort.

ST Strategy (*Strengths-Threats*)

By enhancing existing facilities to attract tourists, demonstrating a profound dedication to its distinctive and appealing attributes, and enhancing hygiene and accountability in the management of the enterprise, Mata Kucing Tourism Forest is well-positioned to flourish. The success of this destination will be contingent upon a commitment to hard work and creative thinking.

WO Strategy (*Weakness-Opportunities*)

The strategy for Mata Kucing Tourism Forest Management is to maximise the use of existing opportunities and reduce the impact of weaknesses by expanding promotion through social media platforms, as well as improving facilities and infrastructure.

WT Strategy (*Weakness-Threats*)

Considering the weaknesses and threats, the recommended strategy for Mata Kucing Tourism Forest Management is to utilise promotional media for the development of tourist attractions and to prioritise the construction and upkeep of existing facilities in the region.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results and discussion of the SWOT analysis that has been carried out, it is found that the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest manager has strong strengths in the aspects of nature, plants, and an attractive environment for visitors. In addition, the manager also can improve the quality of existing facilities and infrastructure and increase cooperation with investors in building better facilities for visitors. On the other hand, the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest manager also faces various challenges and obstacles, including the rise of similar business competition, lack of resources to achieve adequate service quality, and limited access to finance to support business development. Therefore, managers must be able to implement various SO (Strength-Opportunity), ST (Strength-Threat), WO (Weakness-Opportunity), and WT (Weakness-Threat) strategies to successfully empower Mata Kucing Tourism Forest as a successful tourist destination. One of the SO strategies that can be implemented is by utilising social media to increase promotion and invite more visitors to Mata Kucing Tourism Forest. In addition, the ST strategy can be carried out by continuing to update existing facilities and infrastructure for visitors so that Mata Kucing Tourism Forest remains attractive and competitive compared to other similar tourist destinations. In terms of the WO strategy, the manager can increase cooperation with investors to build new facilities that are not only an attraction for visitors, but also have long-term benefits for business development. Meanwhile, for the WT strategy, managers must continue to strive to create creativity and innovation in facing various challenges and obstacles faced. Despite having the right strategy, the success of Mata Kucing Tourism Forest management does not depend solely on external factors. Commitment, hard work and creative thinking from managers are essential in ensuring sustainable management and success. By making these efforts, it is hoped that Mata Kucing Tourism Forest can become a successful tourist destination and provide economic benefits to the local community.

Based on the strategies that have been formulated, Mata Kucing Tourism Forest can continue to develop and increase attractiveness for tourists. Managers must continue to be committed to improving the quality of facilities in the tourist area. Utilisation of social media should also be prioritised to increase promotion and expand reach. In addition, cooperation with investors also needs to be improved to support the development and improvement of facilities. Managers must also always prioritise cleanliness and safety for visitors. As a suggestion, the Mata Kucing Tourism Forest Manager can expand the variety of activities that can be done by tourists, such as providing special packages for families or groups. They can also open access for visitors who want to learn about the history and biodiversity of the area. By continuing to innovate and improve quality, Mata Kucing Tourism Forest has the potential to become one of the leading tourist destinations in the region.

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