

Strategies for Developing Natural Tourist Attractions to Increase Visitor Numbers (A Study of the Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction in Rejang Lebong District)

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the important things for a country. With tourism, a country, especially the local government where the tourist attraction is located, will obtain income from each tourist attraction. This study aims to determine the development strategy for the Suban Hot Spring tourist attraction using primary data and the SWOT method. The results of the study are in quadrant II of the diversification strategy with an intersection point (0.7: -0.1) where the situation can be utilized by utilizing strengths and reducing threats in order to increase the growth of the Suban Hot Spring Tourist Attraction. The ST strategy is used to utilize internal strengths to anticipate and control the impact of external factors. The ST strategy policies used are as follows: (i) government assistance management policies based on local independence, (ii) tourism development control policies to maintain natural beauty, (iii) policies to strengthen the role of local communities in cooperation, (iv) policies to control the influence of external culture, (v) policies to standardize prices and tourism services.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country with abundant natural resources including forests, land, and sea, has great potential for regional development, especially in tourism development. As an archipelagic country rich in natural beauty, tourism in Indonesia plays an important role as a source of state revenue while also driving economic change in local communities. Prasetya (2008) in his study stated that the development of the tourism industry has a major impact on a region's economy. The positive role of tourism in equalizing employment opportunities, increasing community income, regional income from the tax sector, and developing surrounding objects (Arif & Syam, 2017).

The development of the tourism industry takes into account political, economic, and socio-cultural factors. This is in line with Tourism Law Number 10 of 2009. Natural resources are used in tourism development to create attractions that attract domestic and international tourists. To provide the best value for the community, this natural potential must be utilized. In addition to natural beauty, tourists now want to interact with local communities. By generating demand for goods and services for investment and consumption, tourism expansion accelerates economic growth. To meet tourist needs, transportation, communication, hotels, lodging, handicrafts, services, and dining are needed, all of which require investment (Culture et al., 2025).

Bengkulu is a province located on the island of Sumatra. Bengkulu Province has 9 regencies and 1 city. Bengkulu's natural tourism offers beautiful beaches such as Panjang Beach and Tapak Balai Beach, charming waterfalls such as Napal Jungur Waterfall, and Batu Layang Waterfall, as well as natural uniqueness such as Lake Dendam Tak Sudah, Mount Patah, and the conservation of Rafflesia Arnoldii flowers in protected forests. In addition, there are also other destinations such as Enggano Island, Bukit Kaba, and Tikus Island with beautiful coral reefs. one of them is Rejang Lebong Regency. This regency has an area of 1,515.76 km² and a population of around 267,498 people (2016), Rejang Lebong is at an altitude of 600-700 meters above sea level. This area is rich in cultural, natural, and agricultural tourist attractions, such as the Suban Hot Springs, Lake Mas Harum Bastri, Bukit Kaba, Dio Bagite Zoo, and agro tourism. The Suban Hot Springs, located approximately 6 km from Curup City, is a prime destination, boasting natural beauty such as waterfalls and nine hot spring pools, as well as the Tri Sakti cultural heritage. The hot springs are believed to have healing properties for skin ailments and rheumatism. Preliminary studies indicate fluctuating visitor numbers for the Suban Hot Springs area between 2020 and 2023, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Average Annual Visits to the Suban Hot Springs Natural Tourism Object in 2020-2023

Year	Number of visitors	Growth	Income
2020	9,540	-	47,700,000
2021	7,692	-19.37%	38,460,000
2022	11,300	46.90%	56,500,000
2023	13,546	19.87%	67,730,000

Source: Rejang Lebong Tourism Office

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term tourism comes from the Sanskrit "pari" meaning whole or full, and "wisata" meaning journey. Etymologically, tourism means a complete journey from one place to another, stopping temporarily without the intention of settling, and then returning to the place of origin. Tourism is the activity of people moving from their usual place of residence to another location for recreation, business, or other purposes, without the intention of settling or working. This definition emphasizes physical movement and diverse purposes, and involves social, cultural, and economic aspects. In the modern era, tourism has developed into various types such as business, medical, religious, and others (Social, 2023). UNWTO (2013) states that tourism is the activity of traveling and staying for a maximum of one year outside the place of residence for various purposes other than work. In Indonesia, the official definition is regulated in Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism.

Types of tourism develop according to the potential and cultural heritage of a region, and can be grouped based on the destination and tourist attraction. According to Nugroho (2013), tourism includes cultural, health, sports, commercial, industrial, political, convention, social, agricultural, maritime/nautical, nature reserve, and pilgrimage tourism. Here are some of the main types: (i) Cultural Tourism: Travel to learn about the culture, customs, and arts of a region and to participate in cultural activities. (ii) Maritime/Naval Tourism: Water recreation activities such as fishing, diving, sailing, and water sports on beaches, lakes, or the sea. (iii) Nature Reserve Tourism: Visiting to conservation parks, forests, or protected areas to enjoy the natural beauty and observe rare flora and fauna. (iv) Agricultural Tourism (Agrotourism): Visits to agricultural and plantation projects to study and enjoy the atmosphere of gardens and fields (Kebudayaan et al., nd).

The important role of local communities as hosts and main actors in the development of tourism villages, who play an active role in planning, supervision, and implementation, is equal to the government and the private sector as stakeholders (Haryati et al., 2019).

Supporting Components for Tourism Object Development Supporting factors are things or conditions that can encourage or support a business, production, or activity, according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (2010). Tourism capital is sometimes referred to as tourism resources. A place or location can only become a tourist destination if the conditions are right. Anything that can be used as a tourist destination is called tourism capital or resources. Three types of capital that attract tourists include natural capital and potential, cultural capital and potential, and human capital and potential.

Factors Inhibiting the Growth of Tourist Attractions Inhibiting forces are undoubtedly closely related to the development of tourist attractions. According to Heri (2011), the development of tourist attractions is hampered by a number of factors, including: lack of community involvement in the tourism sector; low priority of tourism sector development by the district government; lack of cooperation with investors; the absence of an attractive promotional system; lack

of infrastructure and facilities at institutions and tourist attractions; and limited and inadequate maintenance of supporting facilities at tourist attractions.

METHODOLOGY

The research used a descriptive approach using primary data and a questionnaire as the primary data source. The population was sampled using purposive sampling, with the respondents shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Characteristics of SWOT Questionnaire Respondents

No	Respondents	Number of Respondents	Method
1.	Head of the Rejang Lebong Tourism and Culture Office	1 person	<i>Purposive Sampling</i>
2.	Manager of the Cawang Baru natural tourist attraction	1 person	<i>Purposive Sampling</i>
3.	Traders at natural tourist attractions (Suban Hot Springs)	5 people	<i>Purposive Sampling</i>
4.	Local community at the natural tourist attraction (Suban Hot Springs)	13 people	<i>Accidental sampling</i>
5.	Visitors to natural tourist attractions (Suban Hot Springs)	40 people	<i>Accidental sampling</i>
Amount		60 Respondents	

Operational definitions related to the Suban Hot Springs natural tourist attraction include:

- Natural Resources: Potential natural beauty with beautiful views and unique attractions such as lakes adjacent to the beach.
- Facilities and Infrastructure: Supporting facilities such as toilets, prayer rooms, rest areas, parking areas, as well as infrastructure such as water, electricity, internet, and roads.
- Promotion: Marketing activities for tourist attractions through social media (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube), newspapers and radio.
- Security: Safe and conducive conditions without criminal activity in tourist areas.
- Government Policy: Support through regulations, assistance, and official permits from the government.
- Socio-Cultural: The life and culture of the Cawang Baru village community which interacts with each other and influences local social values.
- Competitors: There are similar tourist attractions in the area, such as Gerojokan Sewu, Muna Tirta, and Tebing Suban.

The assessment classification for analyzing internal and external strategic factors uses the average value (Rangkuti, 2009). The average score interval range for the assessment is calculated as follows.

Given: The lowest answer value is 1 or 1.00

The highest answer value is 4 or 4.00

The interval scale is calculated using the formula:

$$Interval = \frac{\text{Nilai tertinggi} - \text{Nilai terendah}}{IFAS \text{ dan } EFAS}$$

$$= \frac{4 - 1}{3} = 1,00$$

From the interval distance, the interval scale range is then created as follows:

1. The average value is in the criteria of 1.00 – 2.00, meaning low (weak).
2. The average value is in the criteria of 2.01 – 3.00, meaning moderate (moderate)
3. The average value is in the criteria of 3.01 – 4.00, meaning high (strong)

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The conditions of the supporting and inhibiting factors that have been identified from the Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction are then used as a basis for formulating strategies through a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) in order to develop appropriate development planning strategies for the development of the Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction in order to increase the number of visitors. Before making a development plan for the Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction, researchers conducted a SWOT analysis to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Table 3. Matrix of Internal and External Factors of Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction

Internal Factors	External Factors
Strength ➤ Has a unique hot water phenomenon ➤ The location of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction is on the main road. ➤ Availability of food vendors ➤ The area can be accessed or traversed by land transportation (motorbikes, cars, buses and other land transportation) ➤ Maintaining the beauty ➤ Have a good photo spot ➤ The local people are friendly to visiting tourists. ➤ The prices set by the area traders are acceptable to tourists. ➤ The road conditions to the object are good	Opportunity ➤ Information about tourist attractions can be obtained easily, quickly and practically. ➤ The existence of the Suban hot spring tourist destination makes job prospects easier for the surrounding residents. ➤ Information about the Suban hot spring tourist attraction can be easily accessed via the internet. ➤ The Suban Hot Springs natural tourist attraction offers tourism products similar to other tourist destinations. ➤ Increasing the number of facilities and quality of services provided by competing tourist attractions

Weakness ➤ Cleanliness is maintained ➤ Clean and well-maintained swimming pool conditions ➤ Security and surveillance systems that provide convenience in various sectors ➤ Facilities (prayer room, public toilets) that meet the needs of tourists ➤ Availability of a network or telephone signal that supports it ➤ Availability of shopping places (souvenirs) around the Suban Hot Springs natural tourist attraction ➤ There are adequate rest or seating facilities for visitors. Availability of electricity to meet the needs of tourists	Threat ➤ The government provides assistance for the Suban hot spring tourist attraction ➤ There is cooperation between the government and the local community in developing the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction in order to achieve maximum village development. ➤ Socio-cultural support for the existence of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction by introducing its culture ➤ The existence of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction helps increase the income of the local community. Positive external culture can influence the community around the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction.
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Strength Factor

The following table shows the average reactions of visitors to the Suban Hot Springs Natural Tourist Attraction, which indicates the strength of the tourist attraction.:

Table 4. Mean Strength of Suban Hot Spring Tourist Attraction

No	Strength	Mean	Information
1	Has a unique hot water phenomenon	3.85	Very high
2	The location of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction is on the main road.	3.55	Very high
3	Availability of food vendors	3.5	Very high
4	The area can be accessed or traversed by land transportation (motorbikes, cars, buses and other land transportation)	3.3	Very high
5	Maintaining the beauty	3.15	Very high
6	Have a good photo spot	3.05	Very high
7	The local people are friendly to visiting tourists.	3.05	Very high
8	The prices set by the area traders are acceptable to tourists.	3.05	Very high
9	The road conditions to the object are good	3	Tall
	GRAND MEAN	3.31	Very high

Source: Processed Research Results, 2025

Based on the data above, the overall average strength of the Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction is 3.31, placing it in the very high category. This indicates that the Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction has a very high strength level.

Weakness Factors

Here is the average tourist reaction to the shortcomings of the Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction.

Table 5. Mean Weaknesses of Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction

No	Weakness	Mean	Information
1	Cleanliness is maintained	2.95	Tall
2	Clean and well-maintained swimming pool conditions	2.9	Tall
3	Security and surveillance systems that provide convenience in various sectors	2.85	Tall
4	Facilities (prayer room, public toilets) that meet the needs of tourists	2.55	Tall
5	Availability of a network or telephone signal that supports it	2.5	Tall
6	Availability of shopping places (souvenirs) around the Suban Hot Springs natural tourist attraction	2.45	Tall
7	There are adequate rest or seating facilities for visitors.	2.4	Tall
8	Availability of electricity to meet the needs of tourists	2.1	Tall
	GRAND MEAN	2.59	Tall

Source: Processed Research Results, 2025

The average weakness in the development of the Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction is relatively high (2.56), so it must be taken seriously and considered carefully so as not to hinder its growth.

Opportunity Factor

The following is the average response from visitors to the Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction.

Table 6. Mean Opportunity of Suban Hot Springs Tourism Object

No	Opportunity	Mean	Information
1	Information about tourist attractions can be obtained easily, quickly and practically.	3.4	Very high
2	The existence of the Suban hot spring tourist destination makes job prospects easier for the surrounding residents.	3.22	Very high
3	Information about the Suban hot spring tourist attraction can be easily accessed via the internet.	3.12	Very high
4	The Suban Hot Springs natural tourist attraction offers tourism products similar to other tourist destinations.	1.95	Low
5	Increasing the number of facilities and quality of services provided by competing tourist attractions	1.93	Low
	GRAND MEAN	2.72	Tall

Source: Processed Research Results, 2025

The Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction has great potential if it can utilize its potential, as shown by the average score of 2.72, which is included in the large category.

Threat Factors

The following are the average responses from visitors to the Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction.

Table 7. Mean Threats to Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction

No	Threat	Mean	Information
1	The government provides assistance for the Suban hot spring tourist attraction	3.07	Very high
2	There is cooperation between the government and the local community in developing the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction in order to achieve maximum village development.	3.05	Very high
3	Socio-cultural support for the existence of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction by introducing its culture	3.03	Very high
4	The existence of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction helps increase the income of the local community.	3	Tall
5	Positive external culture can influence the community around the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction.	2.8	Tall
	GRAND MEAN	2.99	Tall

Source: Processed Research Results, 2025

With an average threat factor score of 2.99, it is classified as high. This indicates a high level of threat to the Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction, which must be addressed immediately as it could hamper its development.

Table 8. Internal Strategic Factors of the Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction (IFAS)

Internal Strategy Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Strength			
➤ Has a unique hot water phenomenon	0.13	4	0.50
➤ The location of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction is on the main road.	0.12	4	0.43
➤ Availability of food vendors	0.12	4	0.42
➤ The area can be accessed or traversed by land transportation (motorbikes, cars, buses and other land transportation)	0.11	3	0.37
➤ Maintaining the beauty	0.11	3	0.34
➤ Have a good photo spot	0.10	3	0.32
➤ The local people are friendly to visiting tourists.	0.10	3	0.32
➤ The prices set by the area traders are acceptable to tourists.	0.10	3	0.32
➤ The road conditions to the object are good	0.10	3	0.31

TOTAL STRENGTH SCORE	1		3.30
Weakness			
➤ Cleanliness is maintained	0.14	3	0.42
➤ Clean and well-maintained swimming pool conditions	0.14	3	0.41
➤ Security and surveillance systems that provide convenience in various sectors	0.14	3	0.39
➤ Facilities (prayer room, public toilets) that meet the needs of tourists	0.12	3	0.31
➤ Availability of a network or telephone signal that supports it	0.12	3	0.30
➤ Availability of shopping places (souvenirs) around the Suban Hot Springs natural tourist attraction	0.12	2	0.29
➤ There are adequate rest or seating facilities for visitors.	0.12	2	0.28
➤ Availability of electricity to meet the needs of tourists	0.10	2	0.21
TOTAL WEAKNESS SCORES			2.62

Table 9. External Strategy Factors of Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction (EFAS)

External Strategy Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
opportunity			
➤ Information about tourist attractions can be obtained easily, quickly and practically.	0.25	3	0.85
➤ The existence of the Suban hot spring tourist destination makes job prospects easier for the surrounding residents.	0.24	3	0.76
➤ Information about the Suban hot spring tourist attraction can be easily accessed via the internet.	0.23	3	0.71
➤ The Suban Hot Springs natural tourist attraction offers tourism products similar to other tourist destinations.	0.14	2	0.28
➤ Increasing the number of facilities and quality of services provided by competing tourist attractions	0.14	2	0.27
TOTAL SCORE OPPORTUNITIES			2.88

Threat			
➤ The government provides assistance for the Suban hot spring tourist attraction	0.21	3	0.63
➤ There is cooperation between the government and the local community in developing the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction in order to achieve maximum village development.	0.20	3	0.62
➤ Socio-cultural support for the existence of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction by	0.20	3	0.62

introducing its culture			
➤ The existence of the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction helps increase the income of the local community.	0.20	3	0.60
➤ Positive external culture can influence the community around the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction.	0.19	3	0.52
TOTAL THREAT SCORE			2.99

The following table displays the final values of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on the SWOT analysis calculations:

Table 10. Recapitulation of the Results of Calculation of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

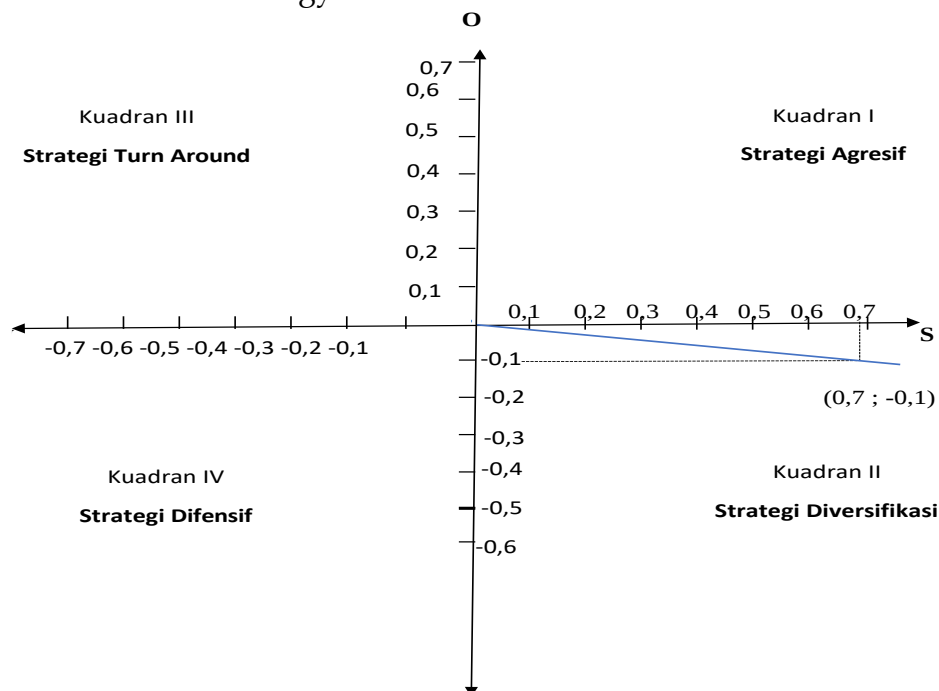
No	Description	Mark
1	Internal Factors ➤ Strength ➤ Weakness	3.3 2.62
2	External factors ➤ Opportunity ➤ Threat	2.88 2.99

The Suban Hot Springs tourist attraction has dominant strengths compared to its weaknesses, and its opportunities are smaller than its threats, as can be seen from the calculation results in the following figure.

Strength- Weaknesses (internal factors): $3.3 - 2.62 = 0.7$

Opportunity- Threats (external factors): $2.88 - 2.99 = -0.1$

It is clear that the growth of the tourism sector of the Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction is in a diversification strategy position if these values are included in the Main Strategy.



Matrix

Based on the diagram above, it shows that the intersection point $(-0.1; 0.7)$ is in quadrant II, where this situation can be done by utilizing strengths and reducing threats in order to increase the growth of the Suban Hot Springs Tourist Attraction. ST strategy is used to utilize internal strengths to anticipate and control the impact of external factors.

ST Strategy Policy

1. Local Independence-Based Government Assistance Management Policy Utilizing the uniqueness of the hot spring phenomenon and the strategic location of tourist attractions, local governments need to formulate policies so that government assistance does not create dependency, but is instead directed towards:

- Improving the quality of tourism facilities
- Strengthening the capacity of local managers Thus, the strength of tourist attractions remains the main factor for development.

2. Tourism Development Control Policy to Maintain Natural Beauty With the strength of the natural beauty of the area and the environmental conditions that are still maintained, the government needs to establish policies:

- Restrictions on activities that have the potential to damage the environment
- Zoning regulations for tourist areas This policy aims to anticipate the impact of increased tourist visits due to cooperation between the government and the community.

3. Policy to Strengthen the Role of Local Communities in Management Cooperation Taking advantage of the friendliness of the community and the availability of local traders, the government needs to create policies:

- Priority of local community involvement in tourism management
- Protection of local businesses from unfair competition. This policy aims to prevent the negative impacts of socio-economic changes due to external cultural influences.

4. Policy for Controlling the Influence of External Culture With strong local socio-cultural support, the government and managers need to establish policies:

- Preservation of local values and culture in tourism activities
- Integration of local culture as the main tourist attraction. This policy is used to anticipate the influence of outside culture so as not to shift the identity of the local community.

5. Price Standardization Policy and Tourism Services Utilizing the power of affordable prices and good accessibility, the government needs to formulate policies:

- Standard prices for tourism products and services
- Supervision of the quality of service of traders and managers. This policy aims to anticipate potential social conflict due to increased income and tourist visits.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research results concluded several strategies for developing the Suban hot spring natural tourist attraction, including: (i) a policy of managing government assistance based on local independence, (ii) a policy of controlling tourism development to maintain its natural beauty, (iii) a policy of strengthening the role of local communities in cooperation, (iv) a policy of controlling the influence of external culture, (v) a policy of standardizing prices and tourism services.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

The advanced research perspective emphasizes an integrated strategy for developing the Suban hot spring that prioritizes local self-reliance, environmental conservation, and community-based governance. This approach combines controlled tourism development, strengthened local cooperation, regulation of external cultural influences, and standardized pricing and services to ensure sustainable, equitable, and high-quality tourism management.

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