



Marketing Strategy in Tourism Development Using the SWOT Analysis Method at Sinjai Regency Tourism and Culture Office

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Abstract	
<p>Keywords: Marketing Strategy, Tourism Development, SWOT Analysis, Sinjai</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors state that this study was carried out free from any commercial or financial connections that might be seen as a potential conflict of interest.</p> <p>Copyright © 2023 POVREMA. All rights reserved.</p>	<p>Purpose: This study aims to analyze the tourism marketing strategies employed by the Sinjai Regency Tourism and Culture Office through a SWOT analysis framework to support sustainable tourism development.</p> <p>Research Design and Methodology: The research adopts a descriptive qualitative design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, field observations at tourism destinations, and document analysis of official reports and policy documents. The collected data were analyzed using SWOT analysis to identify internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats influencing tourism marketing strategies.</p> <p>Findings and Discussion: The findings indicate that tourism marketing efforts in Sinjai Regency are primarily focused on promotional activities, including the organization of cultural events, the use of social media platforms, and inter-agency collaboration. However, these strategies have not been implemented consistently or optimally. The SWOT analysis reveals that the region's tourism sector is strengthened by abundant natural and cultural resources, strong community participation, and the existence of flagship tourism events. Nevertheless, several weaknesses persist, particularly limited digital marketing intensity, budget constraints, and inadequate tourism infrastructure. Opportunities arise from the increasing demand for nature-based and cultural tourism, advancements in information technology, and supportive government policies. At the same time, the sector faces external threats such as competition from other destinations, changing tourist preferences, and limited accessibility.</p> <p>Implications: The study highlights the importance of developing an integrated tourism marketing strategy that maximizes strengths and opportunities while addressing weaknesses and mitigating threats. Strategic recommendations include strengthening digital promotion, improving infrastructure, enhancing destination branding, and fostering partnerships with private stakeholders and local communities.</p>

Introduction

Tourism plays a strategic role in driving regional economic growth, preserving cultural heritage, and empowering local communities through job creation and the utilization of local resources. As a multifaceted sector, tourism not only contributes to increasing local revenue but also supports social and cultural sustainability when managed effectively. Sinjai Regency is endowed with a wide range of tourism potential, encompassing natural attractions, cultural and historical heritage, as well as distinctive local culinary offerings. Notable destinations include the Tongke-Tongke Mangrove Forest, which serves as an ecotourism icon, the Batu Pake Gojeng Archaeological Park with its historical value, Larea-rea Island with its coastal charm, the Lembang Saukang and Barambang Waterfalls, and the historically significant Balangnipa Fort.

Despite this diverse and valuable tourism potential, the number of tourist visits to Sinjai Regency remains relatively low compared to other regions in South Sulawesi. This situation suggests that existing tourism resources have not yet been optimally managed or promoted. Limited visibility, inadequate promotion, and increasing competition among destinations highlight the need for more effective and well-targeted tourism marketing strategies. In this context, the application of SWOT analysis is considered highly relevant, as it enables a systematic evaluation of internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats within Sinjai's tourism sector. Through this approach, more adaptive and sustainable tourism development strategies can be formulated to enhance competitiveness and attract a greater number of visitors.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Marketing

Kotler and Keller (2016) define marketing as a social and managerial process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want by creating and exchanging value. This definition emphasizes that marketing is not merely about selling products or services, but about understanding consumer needs and delivering value that satisfies those needs. In the context of tourism, marketing plays a crucial role in shaping the image of a destination, increasing its attractiveness, and creating memorable and meaningful experiences for tourists, which in turn influence their satisfaction and intention to revisit (Hernández et al., 2020). Effective tourism marketing enables destinations to differentiate themselves from competitors and communicate their unique characteristics to potential visitors.

Tourism marketing strategies include several key components, such as market segmentation to identify different groups of tourists, the determination of target markets based on their characteristics and preferences, and destination positioning to establish a distinct image in the minds of tourists. In addition, the use of digital promotional media and the organization of cultural events have become increasingly important tools for reaching wider audiences and enhancing destination visibility in a competitive tourism environment (Cooper et al., 2008).

Tourism Development

According to Sunaryo (2013), tourism development is a systematic and planned process aimed at improving the quality, attractiveness, and competitiveness of tourism destinations. This process involves the active participation of local communities, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the strengthening of supporting infrastructure to ensure that tourism growth provides long-term benefits. Tourism development is not only focused on increasing visitor numbers, but also on improving the overall quality of the tourism experience and the welfare of local residents. Furthermore, Inskip (1991) emphasizes the importance of balancing economic, social, and environmental aspects in the implementation of sustainable tourism development. This balance is essential to ensure that tourism activities do not harm the environment or local culture, while still contributing to economic growth.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is a strategic analysis tool used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within an organization or sector (David, 2011). This analytical approach helps decision-makers understand internal capabilities and limitations, as well as external conditions that may influence performance. In the field of tourism, SWOT analysis is widely applied in planning and policy formulation, as it provides a comprehensive framework for developing strategies that are both relevant to current conditions and sustainable in the long term (Humphrey, 2005).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on theories of tourism marketing, tourism development, and SWOT analysis. The Tourism and Culture Office of Sinjai Regency possesses diverse tourism potential as an internal strength, including natural, cultural, historical, and culinary attractions. However, it also faces internal weaknesses, such as limited promotional activities and financial resources, which hinder the optimal utilization of this potential. From an external perspective, the increasing trend of nature-based and cultural tourism, along with support from the government, presents significant opportunities for tourism development. At the same time, growing competition among regions and limited accessibility to certain destinations pose serious threats.

By applying SWOT analysis, these internal and external factors can be systematically identified and evaluated to formulate appropriate tourism marketing strategies. These strategies include SO strategies that utilize existing strengths to seize available opportunities, WO strategies that aim to minimize weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities, ST strategies that use strengths to address and overcome threats, and WT strategies that focus on reducing weaknesses to mitigate the impact of external threats. Therefore, the effectiveness of tourism marketing strategies in Sinjai Regency is largely determined by the ability of the Tourism and Culture Office to optimize its strengths and opportunities while effectively managing and minimizing its weaknesses and threats in an adaptive and sustainable manner.

Research Design and Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research approach aimed at gaining a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of tourism marketing strategies implemented by the Tourism and Culture Office of Sinjai Regency. This approach is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore phenomena in their natural context and to capture detailed information regarding planning, implementation, and challenges faced in tourism marketing. The study focuses not only on the strategies applied but also on the internal and external factors that influence their effectiveness. Data are obtained from both primary and secondary sources and are subsequently analyzed using the SWOT analysis model to systematically evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the tourism sector.

Population and Sample

The population of this research includes all stakeholders involved in the management, promotion, and utilization of tourism in Sinjai Regency. These stakeholders consist of government officials, members of local communities, and tourists who directly or indirectly contribute to tourism activities. The sample is selected using a purposive sampling technique, whereby informants are chosen based on their relevance, experience, and level of understanding of the research topic. The sample comprises key informants, namely the Head of the Tourism and Culture Office, the Head of the Promotion Division, the Head of the Destination Division, and the Head of the Culture Division. In addition, additional informants include retribution officers, MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise) actors operating around tourist destinations, and tourists visiting Sinjai Regency.

Operational Definitions

In this study, a marketing strategy is defined as a series of planned and systematic efforts undertaken by the Tourism and Culture Office of Sinjai Regency to promote tourist destinations. These efforts include the use of social media platforms, the organization of cultural events, cross-sectoral collaboration, and destination branding initiatives. Tourism development refers to a range of activities aimed at enhancing destination attractiveness, strengthening promotional efforts, improving infrastructure, and increasing community participation to support sustainable tourism growth. Meanwhile, SWOT analysis is defined as a strategic analytical tool used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the tourism sector of Sinjai Regency as a basis for formulating appropriate marketing strategies.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument in this qualitative research is the researcher themselves, who acts as a human instrument responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data. To support this process, several data collection tools are employed. Semi-structured interview guidelines are used to obtain in-depth and flexible information from both key and additional informants. Observation sheets are utilized to record promotional activities, the physical condition of tourist destinations, and the extent of community involvement in tourism activities. In addition, documentation in the form of tourist visit statistics, photographs, promotional materials, and official reports is collected to enrich the data and strengthen the validity of the analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is conducted qualitatively using the SWOT analysis framework through several systematic stages. These stages begin with data reduction, which involves selecting, simplifying, and organizing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The next stage is the identification of internal factors, namely strengths and weaknesses, and external factors, namely opportunities and threats. These factors are then organized into IFAS and EFAS matrices to assess their relative importance. Based on this analysis, SO, WO, ST, and WT strategies are formulated. Finally, conclusions are drawn by integrating empirical findings from the field with the relevant theoretical framework to provide a coherent interpretation of the research results.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The findings of this study indicate that the Tourism and Culture Office of Sinjai Regency has implemented various tourism marketing strategies as part of its efforts to promote local tourist destinations. One of the main strategies identified is the organization of cultural events, particularly the *Sinjai Culture Carnival*, which is held annually and functions as a promotional medium to showcase local culture, traditions, and creative products to a wider audience. In addition to event-based promotion, the Tourism and Culture Office utilizes several social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, to disseminate information related to tourist destinations, tourism activities, and cultural events. These digital platforms are intended to reach broader market segments, especially tourists who rely on online information when planning their trips. Furthermore, cooperation with related institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, is carried out to support promotional activities and strengthen coordination in tourism management and promotion.

Despite the implementation of these marketing strategies, the findings reveal that their execution has not yet been carried out optimally. Social media promotion is conducted inconsistently, with irregular content uploads and a lack of integrated promotional planning. The absence of a dedicated digital marketing team results in limited creativity and weak coordination in managing online promotion. In addition, promotional activities are rarely evaluated in a systematic manner, making it difficult to measure their effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement. These conditions contribute to the limited impact of tourism marketing efforts on increasing the number of tourist visits to Sinjai Regency.

The results of the SWOT analysis show that Sinjai Regency possesses several internal strengths that support tourism development. These strengths include diverse tourism potential encompassing natural attractions, cultural heritage, and historical sites that can attract various types of tourists. Strong support and participation from local communities also represent an important asset in tourism activities, particularly in maintaining destinations and supporting cultural events. Moreover, the existence of annual cultural events serves as a distinctive attraction, while many tourist destinations remain relatively natural and are located in areas that are considered strategically accessible.

However, the study also identifies several internal weaknesses that hinder the effectiveness of tourism marketing and development. These weaknesses include inconsistent digital promotion practices, limited promotional budgets that restrict the scope of marketing activities, and a lack of creative and skilled human resources in the field of tourism promotion. In addition, infrastructure at several tourist destinations is still inadequate, which affects visitor comfort and overall travel experience.

From an external perspective, the findings indicate that there are considerable opportunities that can be utilized to support tourism development in Sinjai Regency. These opportunities include the increasing trend of nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and ecotourism, which aligns well with the characteristics of Sinjai's tourism resources. Support from both central and local governments also provides opportunities in the form of policy support and potential funding. Furthermore, rapid advancements in digital technology offer more efficient and cost-effective promotional channels, while potential cooperation with influencers and private sector partners can help expand promotional reach. Nevertheless, the tourism sector in Sinjai Regency also faces several external threats, including intense competition with other tourist destinations, changes in tourist preferences and travel trends, and limited accessibility to certain destinations, which may reduce overall competitiveness.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that tourism marketing strategies in Sinjai Regency have not yet been implemented in an integrated and systematic manner. Promotional activities remain largely conventional and are predominantly centered on cultural events, while the utilization of digital media as a strategic marketing instrument is still limited and fragmented. As a result, tourism promotion tends to be episodic and event-driven rather than continuous and strategically planned. This condition indicates that tourism marketing practices in Sinjai have not fully adapted to the dynamic changes in tourist behavior, particularly the increasing reliance on digital platforms for destination information, travel planning, and decision-making processes. In the absence of a coherent digital marketing strategy, the visibility and competitiveness of Sinjai's tourism destinations remain relatively low.

These findings are consistent with the study by Rismawati and Setyawan (2022), which emphasizes that digital marketing has become a primary and indispensable tool in tourism promotion. The limited use of digital platforms in Sinjai Regency reflects deeper structural challenges, particularly the lack of creative and digitally skilled human resources, as well as constrained promotional budgets. These conditions limit innovation in content creation and reduce the effectiveness of online engagement with potential tourists. Consequently, these limitations further reinforce the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis, highlighting the vulnerability of tourism marketing efforts when they are not supported by adequate institutional capacity, professional management, and sufficient resource allocation.

From the perspective of external opportunities, the growing trend of nature-based and cultural tourism provides Sinjai Regency with a strong potential competitive advantage. The region's natural landscapes and rich cultural heritage are highly compatible with current tourism preferences that emphasize authenticity, sustainability, and experiential travel. This alignment creates favorable conditions for positioning Sinjai as an alternative destination for tourists seeking meaningful and environmentally conscious travel experiences. Nevertheless, this potential advantage is accompanied by increasing competition from other well-established destinations such as Toraja and Bantaeng, which already possess strong destination images and wider market recognition. This competitive

environment necessitates the development of a stronger, more distinctive, and consistently communicated destination brand to clearly differentiate Sinjai from competing regions. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Agustin and Wijaya (2021), which asserts that destination branding plays a critical role in enhancing regional tourism competitiveness and influencing tourist choice.

By employing the SWOT analytical approach, this study offers a comprehensive and balanced assessment of the internal and external conditions shaping tourism development in Sinjai Regency. The analysis demonstrates that effective tourism marketing cannot be separated from broader issues of governance, infrastructure readiness, and stakeholder collaboration. The results underscore that the effectiveness of tourism marketing strategies is highly dependent on the ability of local authorities to transform existing strengths and emerging opportunities into concrete strategic advantages, while simultaneously addressing internal weaknesses and mitigating external threats. In this context, strengthening digital promotional strategies, improving tourism infrastructure, and enhancing multi-stakeholder collaboration emerge as key priorities. These strategic directions are essential not only for increasing the effectiveness of tourism marketing but also for strengthening the overall attractiveness, competitiveness, and sustainability of tourism development in Sinjai Regency.

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze tourism marketing strategies in the development of tourism in Sinjai Regency using SWOT analysis. The results indicate that the marketing strategies implemented by the Tourism and Culture Office are still largely limited to promotion through cultural events, the use of social media, and cooperation with other institutions. However, these strategies have not been optimally implemented due to constraints in budget availability, limited human resources, and the absence of continuous and systematic evaluation. The SWOT analysis reveals that Sinjai Regency has significant strengths in the form of diverse natural and cultural tourism potential, as well as strong support from local communities. Nevertheless, notable weaknesses persist, particularly in digital promotion practices and the adequacy of tourism infrastructure. Meanwhile, key opportunities arise from the growing trend of nature- and culture-based tourism and strong government support, while threats include interregional competition, changing tourist preferences, and limited accessibility to several tourism destinations. Based on these findings, relevant development strategies include strengthening creative and consistent digital promotion, developing destination branding that highlights local identity and uniqueness, improving supporting tourism infrastructure, and enhancing collaboration with the private sector, local communities, and influencers. The implementation of these strategies is expected to improve the competitiveness of tourism in Sinjai Regency and enhance its ability to attract a greater number of tourists, both domestic and international, in a sustainable manner.

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