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Article Title

Development Strategy for Palaes Village Mangrove Park Ecotourism as a Buffer Destination of the Likupang National Strategic Tourism Area

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ABSTRACT

Palaes Village possesses significant mangrove ecotourism potential as a buffer destination for the Likupang National Strategic Tourism Area; however, its performance remains low. This study aims to formulate a sustainable ecotourism development strategy by identifying potential opportunities, analyzing strategic factors (SWOT), and developing a priority digital marketing strategy. A descriptive qualitative method was employed. Data were collected via observation, in-depth interviews with purposive informants, and documentation, then validated using triangulation. Data were analyzed using the SWOT framework, which was further developed by the 4A1I and CBET frameworks. The findings reveal a fundamental paradox. The destination possesses significant Strengths in Attraction and Amenities, including the availability of homestays and MSME Kiosks. However, these are nullified by critical structural Weaknesses. These Weaknesses are identified as a severe deficit in Accessibility (poor roads), a complete failure in Ancillary Services (promotion), and institutional fragility (governance). The development strategy must be CBET-based, striking a balance among the conservation, economic, and social pillars. Two priority strategies are recommended: infrastructure advocacy to improve Accessibility and the adoption of Digital Marketing, rebranding the destination as 'Educative Ecotourism'.

Keywords: 4A1I Framework; Development Strategy; Mangrove Park Ecotourism; SWOT Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has been established as a primary pillar of Indonesia's national economic development. Its development focus has shifted toward sustainable tourism based on local natural and cultural potential (Arafat et al., 2022). This policy is implemented through the designation of Super Priority Tourism Destinations (*Destinasi Pariwisata Super Prioritas* or DPSP), with Likupang in North Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi, as one of the primary locations. This designation opens large-scale investment opportunities and triggers the development of surrounding buffer destinations (Lucia et al., 2025). Palaes Village, strategically located in West Likupang Sub-district, is one of the villages directly impacted by this policy. The village possesses significant potential in the marine tourism sector, particularly through its Mangrove Park. Development in Palaes is expected not only to contribute to the visitor targets of the Likupang DPSP but also to align with the principles of Green Tourism, which emphasizes ecological preservation and community empowerment (Rampengan et al., 2024).

The ecotourism approach, particularly for mangrove ecosystems, has become a crucial development model in Indonesia's coastal regions. Ecotourism is viewed as a dual strategy that enables economic utilization while simultaneously ensuring environmental conservation (Wisdaningrum et al., 2022; Latupapua & Siahaya, 2023). Studies in various locations, such as Karangsong, Indramayu (Indrayani & Jumanah, 2023) and Tabilaa, Gorontalo (Makalalag et al., 2022), indicate that the success of mangrove ecotourism heavily depends on formulating the right strategy. This strategy encompasses attraction management, community participation, and supporting infrastructure. Failure to formulate this strategy can cause a destination to stagnate or even result in adverse environmental and social impacts (Heniwati et al., 2023).

Despite its clear natural potential, the development of Palaes Village Mangrove Park faces significant operational challenges. A tangible gap exists between its potential and its on-the-ground destination performance. Typical challenges in emerging destinations are the primary constraints hindering this destination's competitiveness. These constraints include limited basic infrastructure (Ferdy et al., 2022), low community involvement in management, and suboptimal promotional strategies. This gap reflects a broader issue in tourism development within DPSP buffer zones, where natural potential is often not matched by managerial and infrastructural readiness (Rahman et al., 2025).

Numerous studies on mangrove ecotourism development strategies have been conducted, but they often focus on a single aspect. Some research concentrates on potential and land suitability analysis (Latupapua & Siahaya, 2023), general strategy formulation using Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis (Riantoro & Aninam, 2021; Azwari et al., 2023), or institutional analysis (Syahril et al., 2025). Conversely, studies in North Minahasa, such as those in Budo Village (Lucia et al., 2025) and Darunu Mangrove Park (Hutabarat et al., 2024), highlight more specific aspects, including accessibility and strategy comparison. However, no study has yet integrated a comprehensive 4A1I (Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, Ancillary, Institutions) analysis with an in-depth digital promotion strategy.

The research gap this study aims to fill lies in the lack of a holistic and integrated strategy analysis for the Palaes Village Mangrove Park context. This research will not only utilize SWOT analysis but also deepen the analysis of these factors using the 4A1I framework by Wardana et al. (2020) to provide a more nuanced diagnosis. Furthermore, this study will specifically address weaknesses in the Ancillary Services aspect. This is achieved by developing a targeted digital marketing strategy. This aspect is crucial in the modern era but is often overlooked in strategy analyses for emerging destinations (Anggraini et al., 2023; Sianipar et al., 2024).

Based on the background above, this research aims to comprehensively formulate an ecotourism-based development strategy for the Palaes Village Mangrove Park Marine Tourism. Furthermore, this study has three specific objectives. *First*, to identify the existing potential and conditions of the Palaes Village Mangrove Park destination, including its attractions, amenities, and initial institutions. *Second*, to analyze the internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) influencing the destination's development. *Third*, to formulate sustainable ecotourism development strategies, with a priority focus on digital destination marketing strategies to increase visibility and attract more tourists.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in its addition to tourism studies, particularly in applying the 4A1I framework, integrated with SWOT analysis, to evaluate a mangrove ecotourism destination within a DPSP buffer zone. The practical benefits are aimed at stakeholders in Palaes Village. For the Village Government and the

Village-Owned Enterprise (Badan Usaha Milik Desa or BUMDES), this study provides a structured strategy blueprint. This blueprint is handy for identifying infrastructure improvement priorities and concrete steps for implementing digital marketing. For the local community, the research findings can serve as a guide for enhancing active participation in Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET), ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism are felt directly and sustainably.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. This approach was selected because it aimed to understand the phenomenon in-depth and holistically (Creswell, 2013). Its objective was not merely to present data but also to analyze the context behind the Palaes Village Mangrove Park development strategy. The study focused on constructing a comprehensive overview of existing conditions, analyzing the dynamics of strategic factors, and formulating contextual development strategies. The research location was focused on Palaes Village, West Likupang Sub-district, North Minahasa Regency. The specific locus of the study comprised the Palaes Village Mangrove Park area and the stakeholders involved in its management. Data were collected using three primary techniques. *First*, direct observation was used to visually identify physical potential, attraction conditions, amenities, and accessibility. *Second*, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the perceptions, challenges, and expectations of the informants. *Third*, documentation was used to gather secondary data, such as visitor data, village profiles, and related news coverage.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling. Informants were chosen based on their capacity and relevance to the research objectives. Key informants consisted of Palaes Village Government officials (the Village Head), who understand village policy; destination managers (from BUMDES or Pokdarwis), who understand daily operations; and representatives of the local community. These representatives were individuals involved in providing tourism services (e.g., operators of homestays or MSME Kiosks). Data validity was tested using source triangulation. This method involved comparing and cross-verifying data obtained from observations, documentation, and interviews with various informants to ensure the validity and objectivity of the findings.

The data analysis technique employed in this study was a systematic, interactive qualitative analysis (Miles et al., 2014). The first stage involved data reduction, where all field data were organized and sorted to focus on aspects relevant to internal factors (Strengths and Weaknesses) and external factors (Opportunities and Threats). The second stage was data display, where the reduced data were presented in the form of a SWOT matrix. The third stage was conclusion drawing and strategy formulation (SO, ST, WO, WT matrices). Departing from the standard SWOT analysis, this study

employed three established theoretical frameworks to enhance the analysis in the Results and Discussion chapter. *First*, the 4A1I framework was used to diagnose and categorize the SWOT factors. *Second*, the CBET perspective was employed to analyze and ensure that the formulated strategies fulfilled the pillars of sustainability (conservation, local economy, and social participation). *Third*, the Digital Destination Marketing framework was explicitly used to formulate priority strategies that address the weaknesses in the promotional aspect.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Potential and Existing Conditions of Palaes Village Mangrove Park

Palaes Village Mangrove Park is located in Palaes Village, West Likupang Sub-district, a geographically strategic coastal area within the Likupang DPSP constellation (Rampengan et al., 2024). Palaes Village itself has demographic characteristics dominated by livelihoods in fishing and farming. According to 2025 data from the Palaes Village Government (Table 1), the village population is divided into six areas (jaga), totaling 1,282 inhabitants across 399 households. The designation of Palaes Village as a tourism village opens opportunities for economic diversification for the community through the tourism sector. The Palaes Village Mangrove Park destination is managed by village institutions (BUMDES) and the Tourism Awareness Group (*Kelompok Sadar Wisata* or Pokdarwis), although, in practice, their participation levels and managerial capacity remain limited.

Table 1. Population of Palaes Village

Area	Male	Female	Total Population	Total Households
Jaga 1	119	92	211	64
Jaga 2	109	110	219	73
Jaga 3	109	91	200	63
Jaga 4	125	128	253	83
Jaga 5	87	98	185	56
Jaga 6	115	99	214	60
Total	664	618	1,282	399

Source: Palaes Village Government Data, 2025.

The main potential and attraction of this destination lies in the authenticity of its mangrove ecosystem. The area features dense mangrove vegetation that serves as a buffer for the coastal ecosystem. This ecosystem supports a diverse array of marine biota, including fish, shrimp, mangrove crabs, and numerous waterbird species, making it rich in biodiversity (Naibaho et al., 2023). This ecological function provides substantial educational and conservation value (Wisdaningrum et al., 2022). In addition to ecological potential, the destination

offers marine recreational attractions, supported by beautiful beach conditions. Man-made attractions that have been developed include a wooden tracking path for exploring the mangrove forest, water rides, and river cruising tours. The costs for these attractions are set affordably at IDR 25,000/person for the banana boat, canoes, paddle boards, and the whale-shaped water ride. Meanwhile, the cost to enjoy the sea for snorkeling is IDR 100,000/equipment.



Figure 1. Boat



Figure 2. Banana Boat and Canoe



Figure 3. Paddle Board



Figure 4. Whale-shaped Water Ride



Figure 5. Snorkeling Equipment

In terms of amenities, Palaes Village Mangrove Park possesses basic infrastructure managed by the community. The main facilities include the availability of homestays, or lodging, integrated with residents' homes. These lodgings offer accommodation packages for approximately IDR 250,000/night, including breakfast, providing an authentic experience for tourists. Additionally, the MSME Kiosks serve local cuisine, and the facilities include gazebos, toilets, a parking area, a meeting hall, a library, and photo spots. Floating gazebos are also available for rent at IDR 250,000/unit. However, observations and findings by [Ferdy et al. \(2022\)](#) indicate a critical weakness in basic amenities: inadequate clean water infrastructure in the beach area, which poses a severe constraint to tourist comfort. The entrance ticket to the tourism area is set at IDR 10,000/visitor, inclusive of parking fees.



Figure 6. Homestay



Figure 7. MSME Kiosk



Figure 8. Gazebo



Figure 9. Toilet



Figure 10. Parking Area



Figure 11. Meeting Hall



Figure 12. Smart House/Library



Figure 13. Floating Gazebo

Interview results with management (Table 2) confirm a discrepancy between potential and the reality of management. Although managers recognize the destination's main attractions (beach, mangrove forest, rides), they also acknowledge that tourist visit numbers are erratic and remain very low. Community participation in management, especially in promotional aspects, is acknowledged as minimal due to limited knowledge of managing information media.

Table 2. Interview Results with Village Government

Question	Answer
What is the area of the Mangrove Park Marine Tourism Object?	305 hectares
What is the length of the Mangrove Park Marine Tourism dock?	200 meters
What are the attractions at the Mangrove Park Marine Tourism Object?	Attractions include the beach, mangrove forest, marine tourism, and recreational rides.
What is the number of visitors at the Mangrove Park Marine Tourism Object?	The number of visits to this tourism destination is erratic, depending on the daily influx of visitors.
How is community cooperation being utilized in managing the Mangrove Park Marine Tourism Object?	The community's role in managing this tourism object is not yet fully cooperative. The reason is that the community does not yet fully understand how tourism can be an economic opportunity.
What developments have been made to increase tourist visits?	Developments aimed at increasing tourist visits include providing adequate facilities and other supporting infrastructure.
What promotional strategies are used by the community to introduce the Mangrove Park Marine Tourism?	For strategies in promoting this tourism object, the community has not played an active role in marketing, due to a limited understanding of managing information media.

Source: Interview Data, 2025.

This suboptimal destination performance is validated by tourist visit data (Table 3). Data from May 2025 show a total visitation of only 60 people. This figure is extremely low for a destination located within a DPSP area. It indicates that the existing potential of attractions and amenities has not been converted into actual visits. This failure indicates fundamental issues beyond the destination's physical potential, which will be further analyzed in the factors of accessibility, ancillary services, and institutions.

Table 3. Tourist Visits, May 2025

Time	Visitors (people)
Week I	7
Week II	13
Week III	5
Week IV	35
Total	60

Source: Palaes Village Government Data, 2025.

B. Critical Analysis of Strategic Factors (SWOT) Based on the 4A1I Framework

Based on primary data obtained through observation, interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), internal strategic factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) were identified as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. SWOT Analysis Mapping of Palaes Village Mangrove Park

Internal Factors	External Factors
Strengths (S)	Opportunities (O)
1. Possesses natural beauty (beach and mangroves). 2. Complete facilities at the tourism site providing comfort for tourists. 3. Adequate tourism attractions (marine tourism, education). 4. Attractive cultural tourism.	1. Collaboration with other tourism objects in North Minahasa Regency. 2. Potential to provide economic impact for the community. 3. Utilizing digital platforms to introduce the tourism object. 4. Cooperating with stakeholders to assist promotion.
Weaknesses (W)	Threats (T)
1. Poor road access (infrastructure). 2. Lack of promotion to introduce this tourism object broadly.	1. Competition with similar tourism objects in surrounding villages. 2. Climate change, which could reduce tourists' intention to vacation.

Source: Primary Research Data, 2025.

The factors identified in Table 4 cannot be understood in isolation and require a more comprehensive examination to comprehend their underlying causes. Using the 4A1I framework analysis, which consists of Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, Ancillary Services, and Institutions (Wardana et al., 2020; Saragih et al., 2025), an apparent paradox emerges. The destination's main strengths are concentrated in the Attraction and Amenities components. However, these strengths are superficial, as the destination suffers from critical structural weaknesses in the other three 4A1I components. These weaknesses ultimately inhibit the conversion of potential into tourist visits.

The Attraction component is undoubtedly the main strength (S1, S3, S4). As previously described, the combination of natural attractions (mangrove ecosystem and beach) with man-made attractions (water rides and photo spots) and cultural attractions fulfills the basic requirements of a destination (Adibrata et al., 2023). This strength is supported by the Amenities component, which appears "complete" (S2), featuring the availability of homestays and MSME Kiosks. However, this completeness of amenities is illusory. Observations and findings by Ferdy et al. (2022) identified a critical weakness in basic amenities: the absence of adequate clean water infrastructure in the beach area. It indicates that existing facilities are more focused on short-term recreation (rides) than on residential comfort (basic clean water needs). This condition hinders the potential for further development of homestays.

The most significant weakness hindering this destination lies in the Accessibility component, as identified in factor W1 (“poor road access...”). The poor road infrastructure leading to Palaes Village is a primary physical barrier that increases travel costs and time for tourists, thereby reducing their interest in visiting. This failure in accessibility is a common problem in emerging destinations and often becomes the primary determinant of destination failure ([Makalalag et al., 2022](#)). A comparative study in the North Minahasa region, such as in Budo Tourism Village, also identified accessibility as a primary strategic challenge requiring local government intervention ([Lucia et al., 2025](#)). Without radical improvements to the Accessibility component, the strengths in Attraction and Amenities become irrelevant.

Furthermore, the destination suffers from a severe deficit in the Ancillary Services component, manifesting as a “lack of promotion” (W2). The extremely low tourist visit data provide empirical proof of this promotional failure. Although the opportunity (O3) to utilize digital platforms is wide open, the management and community (as per Table 2) acknowledge their lack of capacity to execute it. In the modern tourism ecosystem, a destination that is not present in the digital space is effectively considered “non-existent.” This failure in promotional support services causes Palaes Village Mangrove Park to lose the competition for tourist attention, despite its strategic location in the DPSP buffer zone.

Finally, weakness W2 (lack of promotion) and the interview data (Table 2), which indicate “low community involvement,” suggest fragility in a fundamental component: institutions. Currently, no local institution (such as Pokdarwis or BUMDES) is functioning effectively to manage, coordinate, and market the destination professionally. The low community involvement indicates a “collaborative governance deficit” ([Syahrial et al., 2025](#)). It means the community has not yet been positioned as the primary subject in ecotourism development ([Rampengan et al., 2024](#)). This institutional fragility makes the destination highly vulnerable to Threat (T1): losing the competition to other, better-managed mangrove destinations, such as in Darunu ([Hutabarat et al., 2024](#)), Wonorejo ([Saragih et al., 2025](#)), or other locations also analyzed via SWOT ([Riantoro & Aninam, 2021](#); [Azwari et al., 2023](#)).

This 4A1I framework-based diagnosis concludes that the failure of Palaes Village Mangrove Park to attract tourists is not due to a lack of Attraction potential. This failure is primarily caused by structural failures in Accessibility (physical infrastructure) and Institutions (social/managerial infrastructure). This institutional failure directly leads to the failure in Ancillary Services (promotion). These findings subsequently form the basis for formulating development strategies in the following discussion.

C. Formulation of the Sustainable Ecotourism Development Strategy Matrix

After diagnosing the strategic factors through the 4A1I framework, the next step is to formulate development strategies. By integrating the internal and external factors from Table 4, a comprehensive SWOT strategy matrix was formulated (Table 5). This matrix presents four strategy quadrants: SO (utilizing strengths to seize opportunities), WO (overcoming weaknesses by leveraging opportunities), ST (using strengths to avoid threats), and WT (minimizing weaknesses and avoiding threats).

Table 5. SWOT Strategy Matrix for Palaes Village Mangrove Park Development

	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Opportunities (O)	SO Strategy 1. Building cooperation with stakeholders to increase tourist interest (S1, S3, O4). 2. Utilizing the availability of tourism attractions as a driver for economic impact (S3, O2). 3. Enhancing cooperation with surrounding tourism villages (e.g., Budo Village) for attraction collaboration (S4, O1).	WO Strategy 1. Cooperating with the regional government for road access improvement (W1, O2, O4). 2. Utilizing digital platforms and cooperating with media for promotion (W2, O3, O4).
Threats (T)	ST Strategy 1. Overcoming competition by conserving natural beauty, maintaining cultural attractions, and adding new, unique attractions (S1, S3, S4, T1). 2. Maintaining all existing facilities so they can become an attraction (S2, T1).	WT Strategy 1. Improving road access to enhance infrastructure development to be able to compete (W1, T1). 2. Increasing promotion to anticipate competition (W2, T1).

Source: Primary Research Data, 2025.

The strategy matrix in Table 5 presents a technical roadmap. However, for these strategies to be effective, each must be analyzed more deeply using the CBET approach. The CBET approach demands a balance among three fundamental pillars: conservation sustainability (environmental), local economic empowerment (economic), and community participation (social). Without this analysis, the formulated strategies risk becoming exploitative mass tourism strategies rather than sustainable ecotourism.

From the perspective of the environmental conservation pillar, the SO and ST strategies are already aligned. Efforts to “conserve natural beauty” (ST1) and “maintain facilities” (ST2) are the foundation of ecotourism. Development must not damage the primary asset: the mangrove ecosystem (Naibaho et al., 2023). This strategy must ensure that attraction development (S3) does not exceed the area’s ecological carrying capacity. This principle is also emphasized in the development of mangrove ecotourism in other locations (Wisdaningrum et al., 2022; Indrayani & Jumanah, 2023). This pillar also proactively addresses the Threat (T2) of climate

change. Mangrove preservation (ST1) serves as a disaster mitigation and risk management strategy (Heniwati et al., 2023).

The local economic empowerment pillar is the core of Strategy SO2 (“utilizing attractions... economic impact”). This economic potential must be distributed to the local community. Field findings show the availability of affordable MSME Kiosks and homestays, which are the embryos of a community-based economy. Development strategies must focus on strengthening the capacity of these MSMEs, ensuring they receive direct benefits from increased visitation (O2). Without policy intervention favoring local participants, the destination risks experiencing an “investment paradox,” where economic growth is enjoyed only by external investors, while the local community stagnates (Riantoro & Aninam, 2021; Rahman et al., 2025).

The social participation (institutional) pillar is the most critical and weakest aspect in Palaes Village, as diagnosed in the institutional deficit. Strategies SO1, WO1, and O4, which call for “cooperation,” must be translated beyond mere stakeholder coordination. Authentic ecotourism development demands a collaborative governance model where the community acts as the subject, not the object (Syahril et al., 2025). Implementing this strategy requires the establishment or revitalization of local institutions, such as the Pokdarwis or BUMDES, to specifically manage the destination (Latupapua & Siahaya, 2023). Studies in Palaes Village itself (Rampengan et al., 2024) and other villages in North Minahasa, like Darunu (Hutabarat et al., 2024) and Budo (Lucia et al., 2025), confirm that active community participation is an absolute prerequisite for sustainable Green Tourism.

Based on this analysis of the three CBET pillars, the strategies in Table 5 can be distilled into two urgent priority strategies. The priority is the long-term capital-intensive strategy (WO1, WT1), focusing on improving Accessibility (road access), which requires strong advocacy to the regional government. The second priority is the short-term digital-intensive strategy (WO2, WT2), which addresses the deficit in Ancillary Services (promotion). This promotion strategy is crucial because it can be executed by strengthened local institutions (BUMDES/Pokdarwis) without waiting for road infrastructure improvements to be completed.

D. Priority Strategy Focus: Digital Destination Marketing for Palaes Village Mangrove Park

The preceding analysis has conclusively identified the most critical weakness as a severe deficit in the Ancillary Services component, specifically in the area of promotion. This weakness is the reason why the performance of Palaes Village Mangrove Park is suboptimal, despite its strong Attraction potential. The extremely low tourist visit data (Table 3) provide empirical proof of this marketing failure. In the competitive Likupang DPSP context, a passive promotion strategy is not

an option. Competing destinations in North Minahasa, such as Darunu Mangrove Park (Hutabarat et al., 2024) and Budo Tourism Village (Lucia et al., 2025), are also actively competing. Therefore, the WO/WT strategy to “increase promotion” by leveraging the “digital platform” opportunity (Table 4) becomes an urgent priority strategy to be executed by village institutions.

The formulation of this digital marketing strategy must be sustainable and internalized within local institutions (BUMDES or Pokdarwis). This strategy must not depend on external intervention. The focus must shift from merely conducting promotions to building the capacity of local managers, enabling them to execute marketing independently. This approach aligns with the study on social media optimization in the Bakau Serip Tourism Village, which emphasizes the importance of contributions and training for village tourism managers, enabling them to manage social media independently (Anggraini et al., 2023).

The first step in this strategy is rebranding and positioning. Digital marketing is not merely uploading aesthetically pleasing photos; it is about communicating a unique selling proposition. Given the existing competition, Palaes Village Mangrove Park cannot position itself simply as a “photo spot” or “beach tourism.” Promotion must aggressively communicate its identity as an educational and Conservation Ecotourism destination, aligning with the identified potential. This branding must target segments of special interest tourists, families, and educational institutions (Wisdaningrum et al., 2022; Saragih et al., 2025). Furthermore, promotion must highlight the Green Tourism label to attract tourists concerned with sustainability issues (Rampengan et al., 2024; Muchlis et al., 2025).

The content strategy developed on social media platforms (such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok) must reflect this educational branding. Content should not focus solely on visual beauty (Attraction) but must also include storytelling. This storytelling can cover conservation efforts, the uniqueness of mangrove biota (Naibaho et al., 2023), and local cultural experiences through interaction with homestay operators (Fathimah et al., 2024). Managers must be encouraged to create interactive content, such as quizzes about mangroves, videos of the seedling planting process, or virtual tourist testimonials (Anggraini et al., 2023). The use of User-Generated Content (UGC)—by encouraging visitors to use hashtags (#MangrovePalaes, #LikupangGreenTourism)—can also serve as a low-cost, authentic promotional tool.

Platform optimization is crucial for reaching different audiences. Platforms like Instagram are highly effective for building visual brand awareness and attracting young audiences (Fathimah et al., 2024). Facebook, on the other hand, is more effective for building community, sharing practical information (such as ticket prices and tour packages), and reaching family or group segments (Sianipar et al., 2024). TikTok can be utilized to present short, viral, cinematic experiences,

such as river cruising activities by canoe or paddleboard. The strategy across all these platforms must consistently highlight the ecotourism and education aspects (Saragih et al., 2025).

The implementation of this digital strategy cannot stand alone; it must be supported by institutional strengthening and physical infrastructure. *First*, village institutions (BUMDES/Pokdarwis) must have a clear social media unit or person in charge. Digital capacity training is an absolute prerequisite for the sustainability of this strategy (Anggraini et al., 2023), addressing the Weakness of “limited knowledge.” *Second*, digital promotion must be supported by on-site physical promotional media. The installation of informative information boards (mading) about the mangrove ecosystem and clear signage along the tourism tracks is necessary (Depari et al., 2024). These physical media serve to reinforce the educational and conservation message built digitally, while also addressing similar weaknesses identified in neighboring destinations (Lucia et al., 2025).

Ultimately, this digital marketing strategy formulation is a tactical step to answer an urgent problem (low visitation) and a strategic step to build a long-term identity. By shifting the promotional focus from mere “recreation” to “education and conservation,” Palaes Village Mangrove Park can create a strong niche market. This strategy enables the destination to compete based on the uniqueness of an authentic ecotourism experience, rather than solely on the completeness of its facilities. The success of this strategy will directly impact increased visitation. This increase will, in turn, propel the local economy pillar and justify the sustainability of the conservation pillar (Azwari et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it is concluded that the development strategy for Palaes Village Mangrove Park faces a paradox. The destination possesses fundamental strengths in the Attraction component (mangrove ecological potential, recreational and cultural attractions) and basic Amenities (availability of homestays, MSME Kiosks, and supporting facilities). However, this potential has not been optimally utilized. This is reflected in the low visitation data, resulting from critical structural weaknesses in three vital supporting components. These weaknesses were identified as a deficit in Accessibility (poor road infrastructure access), a severe failure in Ancillary Services (unsystematic promotion and marketing), and fragility in Institutions (institutional governance and extremely low community participation).

In response to this strategic diagnosis, this study formulates that the development strategy must be executed through the CBET framework. This framework must simultaneously balance three primary pillars. *First*, the environmental conservation pillar, which prioritizes mangrove ecosystem preservation as the main Attraction asset and as mitigation against the threat of abrasion. *Second*, the local economic

empowerment pillar, which ensures that the economic impact of tourism activities is distributed equitably and directly enjoyed by the community managing homestays and MSME Kiosks. *Third*, strengthening social and institutional participation is a prerequisite for overcoming the governance deficit through the revitalization of BUMDES or Pokdarwis.

Practically, this study recommends two urgent priority strategies for implementation by village institutions. The priority is infrastructure advocacy. Local management (Village Government/BUMDES) must proactively utilize the Likupang DPSP status as leverage with the regional government to improve the vital Accessibility (road) component. The second priority is managerial strengthening. Management must immediately adopt a systematic digital destination marketing strategy to address the deficit in ancillary services (promotion). This marketing strategy is recommended to focus on redefining the destination's branding as "Educative Ecotourism," rather than merely a "recreation spot." Its implementation must include narrative content development (conservation education) and platform optimization (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok), supported by digital capacity building for local managers.

The academic implications of this study suggest the need for further research. Given that this study's focus was on qualitative strategy formulation based on SWOT and 4A1I, future quantitative research is essential. Such research could measure tourists' perception and satisfaction levels regarding service quality after improvement. Furthermore, additional studies are required to analyze the ecological and social carrying capacity of the Palaes Village Mangrove Park area. Such studies are crucial to ensure that future increases in tourist visitation do not create adverse impacts, but rather guarantee the destination's long-term sustainability.

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