

LEVERAGING MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR THE GROWTH OF TLOCOR MARINE TOURISM IN SIDOARJO, EAST JAVA

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Abstract:

Background: Marine tourism utilizes coastal and marine environments as primary attractions. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, Tlocor Marine Tourism in Sidoarjo Regency has experienced fluctuating, yet generally declining, visitor numbers.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to formulate effective marketing strategies that focus on digital technology utilization, enhanced promotion, destination branding, and the development of innovative, sustainable tourism products.

Design/methodology/approach: A qualitative descriptive method was employed, involving four key informants from Tlocor Marine Tourism management. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix).

Findings/Result: The results indicate that Tlocor Marine Tourism falls into Quadrant III of the SWOT matrix, suggesting a turnaround (WO) strategy to minimize weaknesses and leverage available opportunities. Seven alternative strategies emerged from this analysis, with QSPM identifying the recruitment of professional experts in marketing and tour guiding as the top priority.

Conclusion: The study concludes that Tlocor Marine Tourism requires strategic improvements focused on professional marketing, innovation, and digital promotion. The top priority identified is recruiting qualified marketing personnel and tour guides to enhance visibility, improve visitor experience, and support sustainable growth.

Originality/value (State of the art): This research presents a structured model integrating SWOT and QSPM for post-pandemic marine tourism recovery, emphasizing digital marketing, destination branding, and sustainable product innovation as key drivers for boosting competitiveness.

Keywords: marine tourism, marketing strategy, SWOT, QSPM, digital marketing

How to Cite:

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a significant aspect of modern life and is one of the key sectors contributing to a country's economic development (Astina & Artani, 2017). In Indonesia, marine tourism holds immense potential due to its extensive coastline and rich marine biodiversity, which are critical for fostering economic growth and sustainability. As a maritime nation, Indonesia's marine sector is valued at approximately \$8.22 trillion annually, with marine tourism being one of the primary contributors (Hastuti et al. 2023). The economic benefits of marine tourism, particularly in coastal regions, are evident through income generation and job creation (Amanda et al. 2024). To maximize these benefits, sustainable management practices and the integration of blue economy principles are essential to balance economic growth with marine conservation (Sari & Muslimah, 2020). Moreover, promoting local cultures and natural beauty enhances the appeal of marine tourism to international markets (Sudarmo, 2020).

Marine tourism activities, such as diving and ecotourism, have also demonstrated their role in encouraging biodiversity conservation, thereby providing long-term economic and ecological benefits (Mustika et al. 2020). One such destination is Tlocor Marine Tourism, located in Kedungpandan Village, Jabon District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java. This attraction, managed by Pokdarwis Tlocor since its inauguration in 2011, offers visitors a unique experience of natural beauty through boat rides along the Porong River and trips to Lusi Island, the latter being a primary attraction formed by Lapindo mud sedimentation. Tlocor Marine Tourism serves as the only official access point to Lusi Island.

Despite its rich offerings, Tlocor Marine Tourism faces several challenges. Tourist visits remain low, with only 57,131 recorded in 2023 (BPS Sidoarjo Regency, 2024). This is concerning given Indonesia's global standing as a marine biodiversity hotspot, which presents significant opportunities for sustainable tourism (Amanda et al. 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges by restricting travel, reducing tourist flows, and disrupting local income and conservation efforts (Chebby et al. 2024; Singh et al. 2021). Moreover, insufficient digital promotion, weak branding, and a lack of product diversification are common barriers in the development of marine tourism in Indonesia (Rahantoknam, 2022;

Briandana et al. 2018). Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies, including community engagement and capacity building, to ensure local stakeholders benefit from tourism development while promoting sustainability (Sari & Muslimah, 2020).

Research on Indonesia's marine tourism largely focuses on established destinations such as the Thousand Islands (Agustin et al. 2022), Gili Labak Madura (Arfiyanto, 2017), and Raja Ampat (Iriani, 2019). However, emerging destinations like Tlocor Marine Tourism have received limited attention. Existing studies often emphasize infrastructure, environmental management, and external partnerships, while marketing strategies especially those involving branding, tourism product innovation, and digital media remain underexplored (Chamboko-Mpotaringa & Tichaawa, 2023). This gap highlights the need for research on effective marketing strategies for lesser-known destinations like Tlocor Marine Tourism. Digital marketing, including the use of augmented reality and personalized online engagement, is crucial for addressing these gaps and ensuring sustainable tourism growth (Deb et al. 2022; Pocinho et al. 2021). Moreover, a strategic marketing mix and targeted approaches are critical for providing a comprehensive framework for tourism development across various market segments (Jayanti et al. 2023). Effective marketing strategies can help destinations overcome challenges and leverage opportunities for growth (Rizvanović et al. 2023). While previous studies have focused primarily on well-established marine destinations and emphasized infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, or institutional collaboration, this study fills a critical gap by focusing on lesser-known destinations such as Tlocor Marine Tourism. It contributes to the scientific discourse by integrating SWOT and QSPM methods to formulate strategic, digital-based marketing solutions tailored to small-scale coastal tourism. This approach provides a replicable model for post-pandemic tourism recovery and offers new insights into how community-based and innovation-driven strategies can enhance the competitiveness of emerging marine tourism sites.

The research approach is structured to evaluate digital marketing, branding, and community engagement strategies through a qualitative SWOT-QSPM framework. Key informants from the management team and external stakeholders provide insights on current challenges and opportunities. Digital marketing is explored through the identification of technological

barriers and potential channels for outreach, including social media, brochures, and online engagement. Branding strategies are assessed by analyzing visitor perceptions, the uniqueness of the Tlocor identity, and the visual promotion of local icons such as Lusi Island. Community engagement is evaluated by investigating existing local participation, readiness for souvenir production, and opportunities for training and entrepreneurship. The strategies are then prioritized using QSPM to determine the most impactful and feasible solutions.

This study aims to formulate effective and practical marketing strategies to enhance the competitiveness of Tlocor Marine Tourism. The research seeks to identify the key internal weaknesses and external opportunities influencing the destination, develop strategic alternatives with an emphasis on digital marketing, destination branding, and community engagement, and prioritize these strategies based on their potential impact and feasibility. Ultimately, the goal is to provide actionable recommendations that support sustainable tourism development and improve the overall visitor experience.

METHODS

This qualitative descriptive research was conducted at Tlocor Marine Tourism, Sidoarjo Regency during August-September 2024. The study employed purposive sampling to select specific samples aligned with research objectives (Hardani et al. 2020). The research participants comprised 4 management team members with marketing expertise and understanding of internal factors. External stakeholder data was gathered from 13 respondents, including tourism office officials, travel agents, local community members, visitors, and marketing experts. Data collection utilized both primary sources (direct interviews, observations, documentation, and management questionnaires) and secondary sources (literature, scientific journals, books, and official websites).

Primary data for this study were obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observation, documentation, and questionnaires administered to key informants, including members of the Tlocor Marine Tourism management team, local community representatives, visitors, and tourism stakeholders. These methods were designed to capture comprehensive insights

into the internal and external factors influencing the destination's development. Secondary data were collected from relevant literature, including scientific journals, books, government reports, and official websites, to provide supporting context and strengthen the analysis.

This study utilizes SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) analyses. SWOT analysis evaluates internal and external factors through IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) and EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) matrices, consolidated into a SWOT matrix. QSPM analysis serves as the final decision-making tool to objectively evaluate and select optimal strategic alternatives (David, 2011).

IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) is an analytical tool used to assess the significance of internal resources and their relative contribution to organizational performance. IFAS also helps the organization in grouping internal strategic factors into the categories of strengths and weaknesses (Riyanto et al. 2021). IFAS matrix can be made through several stages as follows (David, 2011):

1. Identify the most important internal factors in the form of strengths and weaknesses.
2. Give weight to each factor with a scale of 0 to 1. The total of all factors must be 1 (100%). Weight assessment is based on how important these factors are on the performance of a tour.
3. Give a score of 1-4 to each factor. Score 1 = very weak, 2 = weak, 3 = strong, 4 = very strong.
4. Calculate the weighted score by multiplying the weight with a rating on each factor.
5. Add up the weighted score for each variable to determine the total weighted score.

EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) is an analytical tool used to assess the importance of external environmental factors and the ability of the organization in responding to these factors. EFAS helps organizations group external factors into the categories of opportunities and threats (Riyanto et al. 2021). EFAS matrix can be made through several stages as follows (David, 2011):

1. Identify the most important external factors in the form of opportunities and threats.
2. Give weight to each factor with a scale of 0 to 1. The total of all factors must be 1 (100%). Weight assessment is based on how important these factors

are on the performance of a tour.

3. Give a score of 1-4 to each factor. Score 1 = bad response, 2 = less, 3 = good, 4 = very good.
4. Calculate the weighted score by multiplying the weight with a rating on each factor.
5. Add up the weighted score for each variable to determine the total weighted score.

The SWOT matrix is a tool used to formulate the strategic factors of a tourist attraction. The results of the SWOT matrix analysis are used to formulate strategies based on the combination of external and internal factors (Harlan et al. 2020). This analysis was carried out using the results of the value of the IFAS and EFAS matrix. The main strategy that can be used as an alternative consists of four types namely SO, ST, WO, and WT strategies which are divided into quadrants. In the SO (Strength - Opportunity) quadrant, the strategy that can be created is by looking at the power to overcome threats. Strategy quadrant (strength - threat), the strategy created is used to see strength in overcoming threats. WO quadrant (Weakness - Opportunity), a strategy created is used to minimize weaknesses by utilizing opportunities. WT quadrant (Weakness - Threat), a strategy created is used to minimize weaknesses and avoid threats (Mujito, 2023). After making a strategy on the SWOT matrix, then decision making through the SWOT analysis diagram to determine which strategies will be used in tourism development. Determination of the quadrant position is obtained from the calculation of the total difference in internal and external factors scores. The coordinates of the x-axis are obtained from strength factors (S) minus weaknesses (W), while the coordinates of the Y axis are obtained from opportunities (O) minus threats (T). The SWOT analysis diagram can be seen in Figure 1.

QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) is a technique used in determining the alternative priority strategy tools or the most suitable for the company. QSPM can evaluate various alternative strategies objectively, which are determined based on the results of the identification of internal and external factors. QSPM analysis has the advantage of being able to observe each series of strategies simultaneously and sequentially to see the great influence of external and internal factors affecting alternative strategies, and can mark important relationships that influence strategy decisions (Maulidah et al. 2023). According to Mujito (2023), the QSPM value can be determined through several stages as follows:

1. Determine the value of attractiveness scores (AS) which is used as a numerical value that shows relative attractiveness of each alternative strategy. Determination of AS values can be done by calculating each internal and external key factor at a time.
2. Calculating the total AS (TAS) carried out by multiplying each weight with each AS value. The TAS value shows the relative attractiveness of each alternative strategy.
3. Calculate the average value of total attractiveness scores (TAS), entering the value of the TAS in each strategy column. The average value of the bag shows the most attractive strategy.
4. Alternative strategy is determined based on the number of TAS values, where the highest TAS value shows the alternative strategy is the first choice while the smallest TAS value shows that the alternative strategy is the last choice.

The research framework depicted in Figure 2 demonstrates the systematic methodology addressing Tlocor Marine Tourism's key challenges. The process initiates with identifying core problems: visitor fluctuation, digital promotion limitations, and insufficient tourism innovation. Following literature review and gap analysis, comprehensive data collection supports SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of internal and external factors. Strategic alternatives are then evaluated using QSPM, generating actionable recommendations for enhancing competitiveness, branding, and innovation. This structured framework provides a replicable model for tourism development research.

RESULTS

Profile of Tlocor Marine Tourism

Tlocor Marine Tourism is a marine tourism located in Tlocor, Kedungpandan Village, Jabon District, Sidoarjo Regency of East Java Province. This tour is the only nature tourism in Sidoarjo Regency that offers a boat tour to Lusi Island as its main attraction. Tourists who visit this tour will be served with the beauty and naturalness of the Porong River through a boat tour which will later deliver to the island of Lusi in the mouth of the Porong River. Along the tourist boat tour will be served with birds that fly naturally in their ecosystems. Tourists can also see firsthand the situation of the beautiful Lusi Island

with the surrounding mangroves and suitable as a visit for family tourism (Daniswari, 2024). In this tourist area there are also food stalls that provide processed coastal grilled fish. One of the advantages of this destination is the availability of a spacious parking area offered free of charge, unlike many competing sites.

Tlocor Marine Tourism is open every day from 07.00 to 16.00 WIB. The price of admission to this tour is charged IDR5,000/person. Air bus tickets for toddlers are IDR5,000, children amounting to IDR15,000, and adults IDR 25,000. Not only air bus, this tour also provides a speedboat at a price of IDR250,000 (a maximum of 3 people).

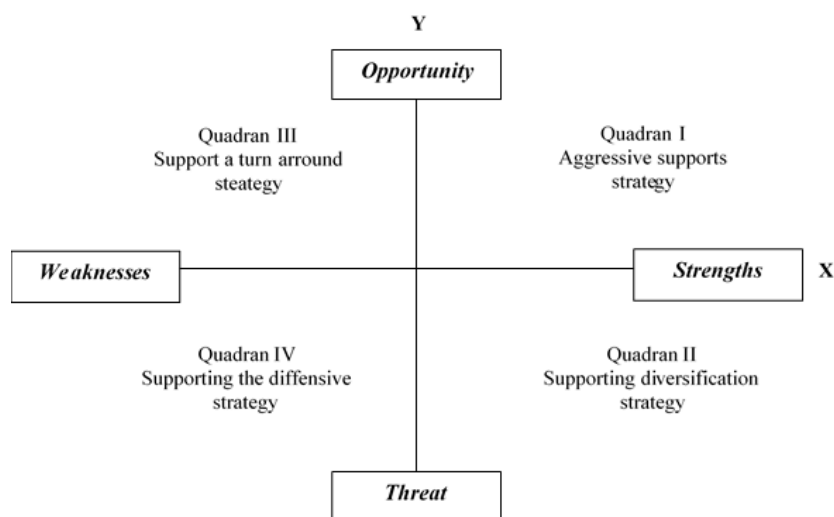


Figure 1. SWOT Analysis Diagram (Rangkuti, 2006)

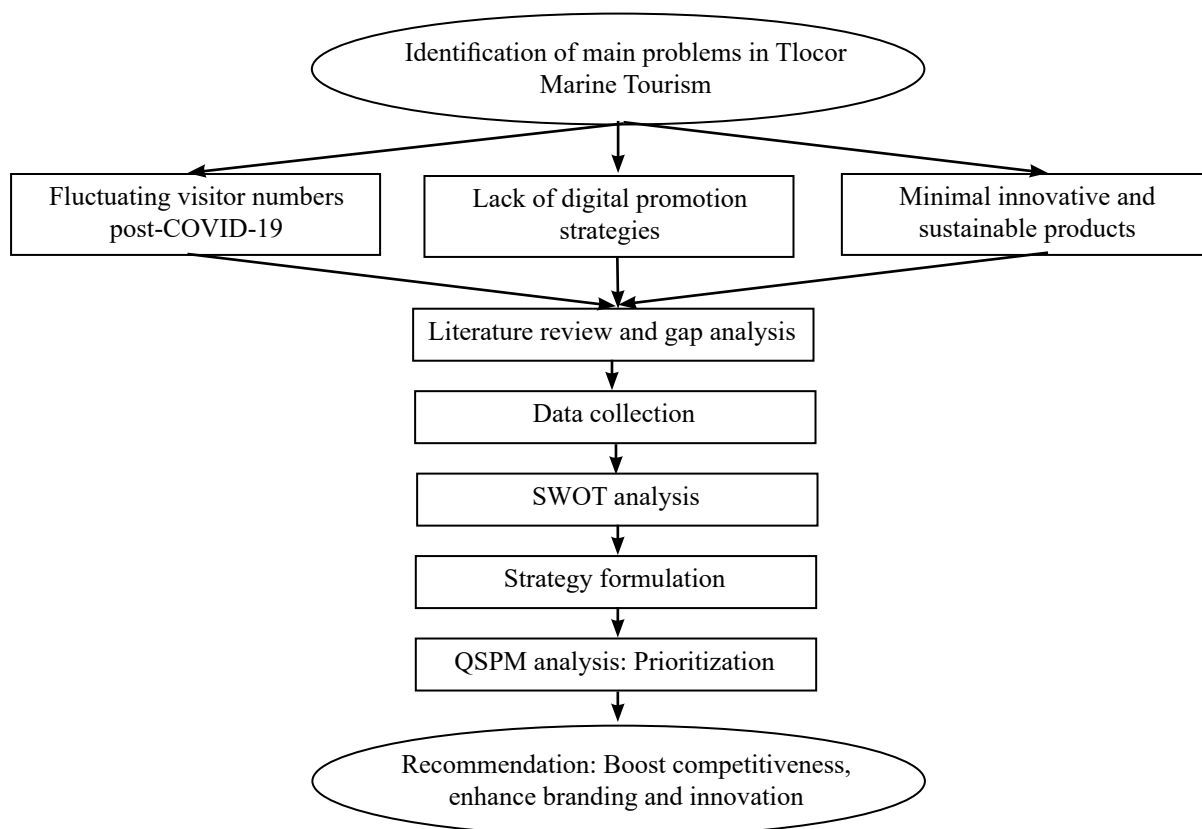


Figure 2. Framework of research thought

Internal Factor (IFAS: Internal Factor Analysis Summary)

IFAS in this study is useful for marketing strategies planning in Tlocor Marine Tourism (WBT) by reviewing the internal environment that leads to the strengths and weaknesses of attractions. Determination of internal factors is obtained from the results of observations and interviews directly by the manager in the field. After the internal factor is obtained, then the score is determined from internal factors based on multiplication between the weight and the rating. Determination of the score of internal factors for the development of marketing of Tlocor marine tourism is presented in Table 1.

Based on the results of Table 1, the number of strength component scores is 0.954 and the number of weaknesses is 1.031. The accumulation of internal factors scores obtained from reducing strength scores with weakness scores is -0.077. The accumulation obtained can determine the position of the strategy in the SWOT analysis diagram.

External Factor (EFAS: External Factor Analysis Summary)

EFAS in this study is useful for marketing strategies planning in Tlocor marine tourism (WBT) by reviewing in terms of external environment that leads to opportunities and threats of attractions. Determination of external factors is obtained from the results of observations and interviews directly by the manager in the field. After an external factor is obtained, then the score is determined from external factors based on multiplication between the weight and the rating. Determination of the score of external factors for the development of marketing Marine Tourism Tlocor is presented in Table 2.

Based on the results of Table 2, the number of opportunities component scores is 1.843 and the number of threat scores is 0.773. The accumulation of the external factor score obtained from the reduction in the opportunity score with a threat score is 1.070. The accumulation obtained can determine the position of the strategy in the SWOT analysis diagram.

Table 1. Analysis of Internal Factor

Code	Internal Factor	Score	rating	weight
Strength				
S1	WBT offers a tourist attraction with natural views	0.072	2	0.144
S2	Tourism crew services at WBT are carried out in a friendly manner	0.072	2	0.144
S3	WBT ticket prices are relatively affordable	0.072	3	0.216
S4	Strategic location is easy to reach	0.077	3	0.232
S5	There is a special discount for tourists who visit the group	0.072	3	0.216
	Sub total	0.366	13	0.954
Weakness				
W1	WBT doesn't have a professional marketing team	0.082	1	0.082
W2	Lack of variety of tourist attractions in WBT	0.082	2	0.165
W3	Do not have a marketing budget	0.077	1	0.077
W4	There are no souvenirs or souvenirs typical of WBT	0.077	2	0.155
W5	Not yet optimal the use of information technology as a means for promotion	0.077	1	0.077
W6	Lack of aggressive promotions carried out by WBT	0.077	2	0.155
W7	Facilities in WBT are incomplete (there is no gazebo and minimal place to gather)	0.082	2	0.165
W8	The absence of a tour guide in WBT	0.077	2	0.155
	Sub total	0.634	13	1.031
	Total	1.000		

Table 2. Analysis External Factor

Code	External Factor	Score	rating	weight
Opportunity				
O1	There is a community involvement in managing and doing business in the WBT area	0.087	2	0.174
O2	The existence of tourism support programs from local governments such as special tourism buses	0.076	3	0.227
O3	The access road to WBT is very good and already paved	0.093	4	0.372
O4	The development of increasingly sophisticated digital marketing technology can be used as a means of promotion	0.087	4	0.349
O5	Availability of promotional facilities through print and electronic media	0.087	4	0.349
O6	The existence of cooperation with KKP as the manager of Lusi Island to make the tourist destination the main attraction of WBT	0.093	4	0.372
Sub total		0.523	21	1.843
Threat				
T1	The existence of similar tours that offer more attractive and varied attractiveness	0.058	2	0.116
T2	At least an investment in supporting activities in WBT	0.087	2	0.174
T3	There is no cooperation with Travel Agent	0.070	2	0.140
T4	Lonely Tourist Visitors on Day Besides Weekend	0.087	1	0.087
T5	The use of marketing technology that is applied by other tours is superior	0.081	2	0.163
T6	There is no support from the local government in the form of a budget	0.093	1	0.093
Sub total		0.477	10	0.773
Total		1.000		

SWOT Analysis

After getting an IFAS and EFAS analysis, the next is to combine the results of the analysis of internal and external factors. SWOT analysis is a tool procedure that can formulate strategies carried out as an effort to find alternative development solutions. Merging the SWOT matrix obtained several alternative S-O strategies, S-T strategies, W-O strategies, and W-T strategies. The following SWOT Matrix Marketing Development from Tlocor Marine Tourism is presented in Table 3.

From the results of the SWOT matrix obtained, the next step is decision making using the SWOT analysis diagram. In determining the strategic position, it is obtained from the difference in the number of internal and external factor scores. Reducing the number of strength scores (S) with weaknesses (W) results in (-0.077) which is used as the X-axis coordinate point. Then, reducing the number of opportunity scores (O) with threats (T) results in (1.070) which is used as the Y-axis coordinate point. After obtaining the X and Y coordinate points, it can be described in the SWOT analysis diagram in Figure 3.

The results of the SWOT analysis diagram show that the intersection of the two coordinate points is in quadrant III, which indicates the implementation of a turnaround strategy. Tlocor Marine Tourism is in quadrant III, where this tourism has great opportunities but on the other hand faces several obstacles related to its internal weaknesses. Therefore, an alternative strategy is needed based on the weaknesses and opportunities it has. Alternative turnaround strategies are as follows:

1. Recruiting professional experts in the field of marketing and tour guides.

Marketing significantly determines tourism attraction sustainability. Tlocor Marine Tourism requires professional marketing expertise for effective branding, promotion, and community outreach. The recruitment of marketing professionals and tour guides is essential to establish external partnerships, enhance visitor guidance, and ensure operational sustainability. This professional integration aims to optimize marketing effectiveness and advance tourism development strategies.

Table 3. SWOT Matrix

	<p>Strength</p> <p>S1. WBT offers a tourist attraction with natural views</p> <p>S2. Tourism crew services at WBT are carried out kindly</p> <p>S3. WBT ticket prices are relatively affordable</p> <p>S4. Strategic location is easy to reach</p> <p>S5. The existence of special discounts for tourists visiting the group</p>	<p>Weakness</p> <p>W1. WBT does not have a professional marketing team</p> <p>W2. Less varied tourist attractions in WBT</p> <p>W3. Do not have a marketing budget</p> <p>W4. There are no souvenirs or souvenirs typical of WBT</p> <p>W5. Not yet optimal use of information technology as a means for promotion</p> <p>W6. Lack of promotion carried out by WBT</p> <p>W7. Facilities in WBT are incomplete (gazebo and a place to gather)</p> <p>W8. Lack of tour guides in WBT</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>O1. There is a community involvement in managing and doing business in the WBT area</p> <p>O2. The existence of tourism support programs from local governments such as special tourism buses</p> <p>O3. The access road to WBT is very good and has paved</p> <p>O4. The development of increasingly sophisticated digital marketing technology can be used as a means of promotion</p> <p>O5. The availability of promotional facilities through print and electronic media</p> <p>O6. There is cooperation with KKP (Ministry of Fisheries) as the manager of Lusi Island to make the tourist destination the main attraction of WBT</p>	<p>SO Strategy</p> <p>1. Improve and maintain good service, affordable prices, and cleanliness of tourism to stay clean and natural (S1, S2, S3, S5, O1)</p> <p>2. Maintaining good relations and communication with the KKP and local governments to increase better WBT reputation (S2, O2, O5, O6)</p> <p>3. Utilizing information technology as a means of promotion by highlighting the advantages of tourism, strategic location, and easy road access (S1, S2, S3, S4, O2, O3, O4, O5)</p>	<p>WO Strategy</p> <p>1. Recruiting professional experts in the field of marketing and tour guides (W1, W8, O1)</p> <p>2. Adding tourist attractions such as interesting photo spots, playgrounds, mangrove educational tours, and outbound (W2, W4, O1, O4, O5, O6)</p> <p>3. Conducting training on the use of digital technology as a means of tourism promotion (W3, W5, W6, O1, O4, O5)</p> <p>4. Utilizing digital technology as a means of gaining partnerships with external parties to increase marketing funds (W3, W5, W6, O4, O5)</p> <p>5. Adding facilities that do not yet exist (gazebo) (W7, O1)</p> <p>6. Conducting socialization of training on making local souvenirs to the surrounding community and opening souvenir shops around the tourist area (W4, O1)</p> <p>7. Providing information related to easy access to tourist attractions by creating brochures and through social media including road conditions and the availability of special bus transportation from the local government that can be used by tourists (W5, W6, O3, O4, O5)</p>
<p>Threat</p> <p>T1. The presence of similar tours that offer more attractive and varied attractiveness</p> <p>T2. The lack of investment in supporting activities in WBT</p> <p>T3. There is no cooperation with travel agents</p> <p>T4. Lonely tourist visitors on days other than weekends</p> <p>T5. The use of marketing technology that is applied by other tours is superior</p> <p>T6. There is no support from the local government in the form of a budget</p>	<p>ST Strategy</p> <p>1. Dominating the Market through Tourism Branding and Partnerships with External Stakeholders (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, T1, T2, T3, T4)</p> <p>2. Following and applying technological developments as a means of increasing competitiveness with similar tourism (S1, S2, T1, T4, T5)</p> <p>3. Submitting financial assistance to the government by creating a tourism development design proposal (S1, S2, S3, S4, T2, T6)</p>	<p>WT Strategy</p> <p>1. Optimizing the use of information technology as a means of tourism development and sustainability (W3, W5, W6, T1, T2, T3, T5)</p> <p>2. Holding interesting events around fishing activities on certain days to attract visitors (W2, T1, T4)</p> <p>3. Conducting socialization related to Tlocor Marine Tourism objects in schools to increase the number of tourist visits (W6, T5)</p>

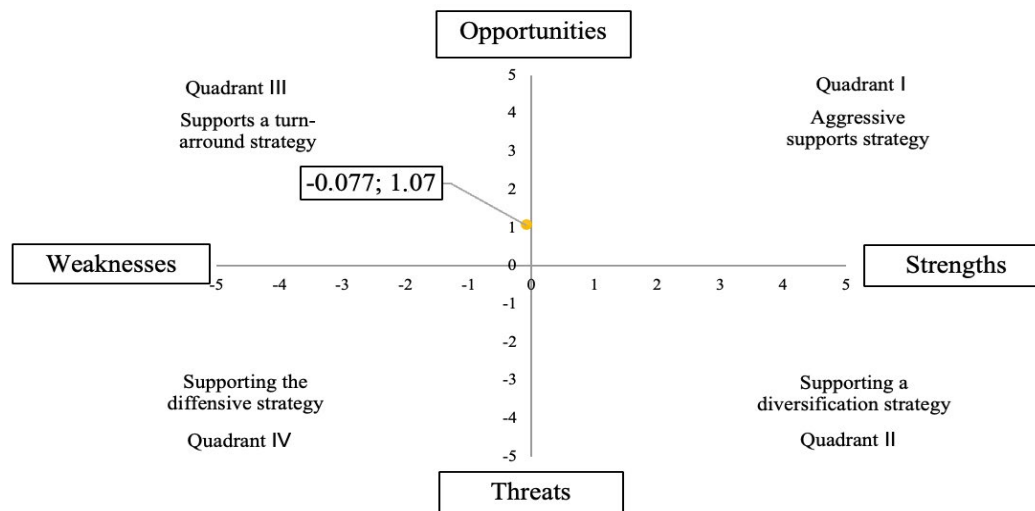


Figure 3. SWOT Analysis Diagram

2. Adding tourist attractions such as interesting photo spots, playgrounds, mangrove educational tours, and outbound.

Tlocor Marine Tourism's current attractions (boat rides, speedboats, children's games, and photo spots) require diversification to maintain market competitiveness. Recommended expansion includes enhanced photo opportunities beyond existing acrylic signage and heart monument, expanded playground facilities with additional equipment (seesaws, merry-go-rounds), and outbound activities utilizing the extensive area. Proposed outbound facilities include net ladders, bridges, and flying fox installations to promote family engagement. Additionally, proximity to Lusi Island enables mangrove education programs through planting activities and ecosystem awareness initiatives, promoting environmental conservation while enhancing visitor experience.

3. Conduct training on the use of digital technology as a means of tourism promotion.

Training in the use of digital technology is very important, considering that in today's modern era where all activities are carried out online. Through this training, it is expected to improve the skills of managers in digital technology which will later be used as a means of promotion. Through this training, it will have an impact on online-based promotions that are well-managed and attractive which can attract tourists throughout Indonesia.

4. Utilizing digital technology as a means of gaining partnerships with external parties to increase marketing funds.

Utilizing digital technology as a means of marketing communication is very important for a tour because the more communication is carried out, the wider the marketing reach will be and the more famous it will be among the public. The use of digital technology can also be used as a means of building partnerships with external parties to obtain investments that can be used as an allocation of funds in marketing development by Tlocor Marine Tourism.

5. Adding facilities that are not yet available (gazebo and internet access).

Tlocor Marine Tourism's current facilities include toilets, information centers, prayer rooms, food courts, boat waiting rooms, and parking areas. While these amenities adequately serve basic visitor needs, additional facilities are required for enhanced tourist satisfaction. Priority additions include gazebos for visitor rest areas and internet access (Wi-Fi) to address reported connectivity challenges, enabling better information access and sharing during visits.

6. Conducting socialization of training in making local souvenirs to the surrounding community and opening souvenir shops around the tourist area.

Souvenirs or gifts are a must-bring after doing tourism activities. Tlocor Marine Tourism so far

does not have typical souvenirs in the form of souvenirs or food. Therefore, it is necessary to hold training in making typical Tlocor Marine Tourism souvenirs for the surrounding community which are the characteristics of this tourism. In addition to training, establishing a souvenir center for Tlocor Marine Tourism is also needed as a means of marketing products. The existence of typical souvenirs from this tourism will later become an attraction in itself which can increase tourist visits.

7. Providing information related to easy access to tourist attractions by making brochures and through social media including road conditions and the availability of special bus transportation from the local government that can be used by tourists.

Visitor decision-making depends on accessible and reliable information disseminated through both offline channels (recommendations, brochures, pamphlets) and online platforms. Tlocor Marine Tourism management must prioritize information dissemination regarding accessibility, including road conditions and public transportation options such as government-provided tourist buses. This information should be strategically distributed through both printed materials and social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to facilitate visitor planning and encourage word-of-mouth promotion among potential tourists.

QSPM Analysis

QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) analysis is a tool used to help select the best strategic priorities from available alternatives. QSPM analysis is measured using attractiveness scores (AS) for each strategic factor. The selection of the strategic priority order is based on the total TAS (Total Attractiveness Scores) value obtained from the multiplication of the strategic factor weight with the attractiveness score (AS). The higher the TAS value indicates the higher priority of the strategic factor to be implemented. The following is presented in the Table 4 for the results of the QSPM analysis.

Based on the results of the QSPM analysis, the main priority strategy for developing a marketing strategy at Tlocor Marine Tourism is to recruit professional experts in the field of marketing and tour guides with a TAS value of 5.537. This alternative is a priority

because of the importance of the role of a marketer and guide in a tour as a bridge in promoting and introducing a tourist attraction. The second priority strategy alternative with a TAS value of 4.954 is to conduct training on the use of digital technology as a means of promoting tourism, which with this training can add skills and broader experience regarding digital technology. The third priority strategy alternative with a TAS value of 4.932 is to utilize digital technology as a means of gaining partnerships with external parties to increase marketing funds, by utilizing this digital technology it will later help in connecting with external parties who can later obtain financial assistance. The fourth priority strategy alternative with a TAS value of 4.869 is to provide information related to easy access to tourist attractions by creating brochures and through social media including road conditions and the availability of special bus transportation from the local government that can be used by tourists. The fifth alternative strategy priority with a TAS value of 4.979 is to add tourist attractions such as interesting photo spots, playgrounds, mangrove educational tours, and outbound. Through interesting tourist attractions and many choices, tourists can be interested in making tourist visits. The sixth alternative strategy priority with a TAS value of 4.418 is to add facilities that do not yet exist (gazebos and internet access), by adding facilities that do not yet exist, it can provide comfort to visiting tourists and can provide satisfaction to tourists for the service facilities provided. The last alternative strategy priority with a TAS value of 4.416 is to conduct socialization of training in making local souvenirs to the surrounding community and open souvenir shops around the tourist area. The existence of these typical tourist souvenirs is also an attraction that can provide its own characteristics of Tlocor Marine Tourism that can be remembered by tourists who have visited.

The development of effective marketing strategies for Tlocor Marine Tourism aligns closely with prior research on tourism marketing and destination development. For instance, Widyastutik et al. (2020) highlight the critical role of government facilitation and inter-agency synergy in enhancing the competitiveness of Indonesia's tourism sector, with case studies in Lake Toba and Bali. Their insights emphasize the importance of professional human resources and institutional collaboration, consistent with the current study's recommendation to recruit marketing experts and tour guides to address Tlocor Marine Tourism's internal limitations.

Table 4. QSPM Analysis

Alternative Strategy	TAS	Priority
Recruiting professional experts in marketing and tour guides	5.537	1
Adding tourist attractions such as interesting photo spots, playgrounds, mangrove educational tours, and outbound	4.797	5
Conducting training on the use of digital technology as a means of promoting tourism	4.954	2
Utilizing digital technology as a means of gaining partnerships with external parties to increase marketing funds	4.932	3
Adding facilities that do not yet exist (gazebo and internet access)	4.418	6
Conducting socialization of training on making local souvenirs to the surrounding community and opening souvenir shops around the tourist area	4.416	7
Providing information related to easy access to tourist attractions by creating brochures and through social media including road conditions and the availability of special bus transportation from the local government that can be used by tourists	4.869	4

Similarly, Novitaningtyas et al. (2020) stress the importance of developing tourism products that align with current visitor preferences while also improving the quality and quantity of tourism facilities. These findings echo the current study's recommendation to introduce attractions such as mangrove education tours, interactive playgrounds, and aesthetically appealing photo spots to attract and retain visitors to Tlocor Marine Tourism.

Furthermore, Muchtar et al. (2024) explore the impact of the 7P marketing mix on customer loyalty, moderated by customer satisfaction, in Tapandullu Beach Tourism. Their study reveals that an effective application of the marketing mix significantly enhances visitor retention and satisfaction. This aligns with the current study's emphasis on utilizing digital marketing and promotional tools to create a more engaging and attractive destination.

Broader literature further supports the strategies proposed in this research. Agustin et al. (2022) emphasize structured promotion and destination branding as essential for increasing visitor numbers to marine tourism destinations in Kepulauan Seribu, Jakarta. Similarly, Bian et al. (2022) demonstrate that innovative tourism products, such as mangrove education tours, play a vital role in enhancing destination attractiveness.

Digital marketing has emerged as a pivotal tool for promoting tourism destinations, enabling businesses to reach broader audiences and improve visitor engagement. Rizvanović et al. (2023) discuss the

extended impact of digital marketing on start-up growth, highlighting its role in customer engagement and market expansion. However, Singh et al. (2021) caution against the risks of greenwashing in digital marketing, emphasizing the importance of transparency and authenticity to build trust among consumers. These insights support the current study's recommendation for utilizing digital platforms effectively to enhance Tlocor Marine Tourism's outreach and visibility.

Community-based tourism models also present significant value. Nugraha & Lussie (2020) emphasize the importance of integrating conservation with economic benefits in Nusa Penida's mangrove ecotourism. Wardiatno et al. (2020) further highlight how collaborative management involving local communities can balance ecosystem preservation and tourism development, as seen in Lembar Bay, Lombok. These examples are mirrored in this study's proposal to engage local communities in souvenir production and other entrepreneurial activities.

Rahmawati (2024) provides additional evidence for the role of strategic partnerships in enhancing tourism operations, as seen in Morotai Island. This aligns with the study's emphasis on fostering partnerships through digital tools to secure sustainable funding and collaboration. Furthermore, Putra et al. (2020) examined mangrove ecosystem tourism development in Semarang, Central Java, providing valuable insights into successful ecosystem integration strategies. This aligns with the study's focus on innovative and sustainable tourism products.

Lastly, Astina and Artani (2017) and Iriani (2019) highlight the significance of affordability, accessibility, and unique attractions in driving competitiveness, elements central to this study's strategies. Collaborative frameworks, such as in Senggigi Beach, West Lombok, demonstrated the effectiveness of integrated stakeholder in marine tourism development (Suhardi et al. 2024).

This study makes a significant empirical contribution by highlighting the importance of strategic, community-based approaches to the sustainable development of marine tourism in Tlocor, East Java. The findings align with Rahmawati (2024), who emphasizes that collaborative partnerships between local governments, communities, and stakeholders are critical for enhancing the appeal and competitiveness of tourism destinations, as exemplified in Morotai Island. Similarly, Putra et al. (2020) underscore the importance of community-based management in mangrove ecotourism development in Semarang, balancing ecological sustainability with local economic growth a balance that is also evident in Tlocor's development potential.

The study's recommendation to leverage digital technologies for tourism promotion complements the insights of Rizvanović et al. (2023), who highlight the transformative role of digital marketing in expanding market reach and enhancing visitor engagement. Additionally, the study aligns with Novitaningtyas et al. (2020), who argue that introducing innovative tourism products, such as environmental education programs and interactive attractions, is essential to addressing evolving tourist preferences and enhancing destination competitiveness.

This research reinforces the importance of structured destination branding, as discussed by Agustin et al. (2022), who demonstrate how well-planned promotional strategies and strong destination images can boost tourist numbers in marine tourism areas such as Kepulauan Seribu. In terms of sustainability, the study's focus on integrating conservation and economic benefits resonates with Mustika et al. (2020), who show how well-managed ecotourism can simultaneously support biodiversity conservation and generate long-term economic benefits.

Moreover, this research adds to the growing body of literature on community-based tourism models. For instance, Nugraha and Lussie (2020) illustrate the success of collaborative management between local

communities and stakeholders in Kepulauan Seribu, East Nusa Tenggara, in fostering harmony between conservation and economic development. In the context of post-pandemic recovery, the findings align with Pocinho et al. (2021), who emphasize the importance of transparent and sustainable digital engagement strategies in revitalizing the tourism sector.

By situating these findings within the existing body of knowledge, this study provides valuable insights into the development of innovative, community-based marine tourism models. The integration of digital marketing strategies, innovative product development, and community empowerment underscores the potential for Tlocor to become a competitive and sustainable marine tourism destination. These contributions position this research as a pivotal reference point for similar efforts in other emerging destinations globally.

Managerial Implications

Managerial implications prioritize professional marketing recruitment and digital technology adoption to enhance promotion and partnerships. Development of diverse tourism products, including educational tours and interactive facilities, will strengthen market competitiveness. Community engagement in souvenir production and entrepreneurship is essential for local economic benefits. Infrastructure improvements and stakeholder partnerships will ensure sustainable tourism development and visitor satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study set out to develop effective marketing strategies for Tlocor Marine Tourism by identifying its internal weaknesses and external opportunities, with particular attention to digital technology, destination branding, and sustainable tourism development. The findings reveal that although Tlocor holds untapped potential, its growth is constrained by inadequate infrastructure, limited tourism appeal, and the absence of professional marketing efforts. By proposing context-specific strategies such as leveraging digital platforms, enhancing destination identity, and promoting community-based sustainability the study offers a practical roadmap for revitalizing the destination.

Theoretically, this research adds to the literature on sustainable and digital tourism in emerging coastal regions by demonstrating how strategic marketing can bridge local limitations and global expectations. The findings align with prior studies that emphasize the role of digital engagement and place-based branding in increasing competitiveness. However, this study goes further by integrating sustainability and community empowerment into the strategic framework, contributing a more holistic perspective. Practically, the results can inform local governments, tourism managers, and community stakeholders in formulating inclusive and adaptive marketing strategies. By prioritizing digital transformation and leveraging local cultural and environmental assets, destinations like Tlocor can enhance their visibility and resilience in a post-pandemic tourism landscape.

The research faced limitations, particularly regarding data access and stakeholder engagement due to institutional and pandemic-related constraints. These were addressed through purposive sampling and triangulation with community insights, yet future studies should aim for broader participation and longer-term impact evaluations to validate and refine the proposed strategies. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the strategic integration of digital tools, branding, and sustainability not only addresses Tlocor's challenges but also offers a model for other underdeveloped coastal destinations seeking to grow responsibly and competitively.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Tlocor Marine Tourism development focus on key stakeholders. Management should hire marketing professionals and trained guides while implementing digital technology training for staff. Digital platforms should facilitate partnerships with tourism agencies and local businesses for funding. Local authorities must improve transportation infrastructure and accessibility. Management should diversify attractions through photo opportunities, educational tours, and recreational facilities. Essential amenities like gazebos and Wi-Fi require implementation. Community engagement through souvenir production and sales training will enhance economic benefits. These interventions will establish Tlocor as a sustainable tourist destination.

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This publication is expected to contribute significantly to both academic and practical domains. For the authors, it provides an opportunity to advance scientific discourse in tourism marketing, particularly in the context of small-scale and post-pandemic marine tourism destinations. Additionally, the research outcomes offer evidence-based recommendations that can support local government initiatives and serve as a reference for community-based tourism development programs. This strengthens the authors' role in promoting sustainable tourism and community empowerment through applied research.

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