

Development of Tourism in Kerinci Regency Based on E-Tourism to Enhance Tourist Decision-Making and Drive Regional Economic Growth

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Abstract:

To establish Kerinci Regency as a premier tourist destination, a strategic development model is essential. This study aims to develop a tourism promotion model utilizing digital platforms such as websites, social media, and other online tools to enhance accessibility and visibility for tourists. Using the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) method, supported by the IE Matrix and SWOT analysis, data were collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving key stakeholders and tourists. The analysis results indicate that the IE Matrix places the development strategy in quadrant I (Growth and Build), highlighting the need for an aggressive strategy. The QSPM analysis identifies the top-priority strategy as leveraging technology to expand promotional outreach. This approach emphasizes the critical role of e-tourism in driving tourism growth and supporting regional economic development.

Keywords: Tourism, E-Tourism, Decision Making, Regional Economic Growth

Sumbitted: December 20, 2024, Accepted: January 6, 2025, Published: January 31, 2025

1. Introduction

Tourism in the Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh area offers abundant natural beauty and unique local wisdom, making it a hallmark of the region. However, one of the key challenges faced by tourism managers in these areas is the limited utilization of internet-based platforms to promote tourist attractions. In the current era of digitalization, tourists increasingly rely on the internet to search for information about destinations (Saniati et al., 2022). Another issue experienced by tourists visiting Kerinci and Sungai Penuh is the lack of accessible and comprehensive information about local attractions, which leads to inefficiencies in planning and time utilization. This issue arises due to insufficient adoption of e-tourism for promoting tourism destinations in the region. E-tourism systems have proven to be beneficial in providing detailed information about tourist attractions, tour packages, and other supporting components through websites and interactive social media platforms, enabling tourists to access necessary details effectively (Bhahri, 2021; Saniati et al., 2022).

The adoption of information technology in tourism not only enhances local economic development but also creates business opportunities for the community (Indria et al.,

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2023). By embracing technological advancements, local communities can improve access to tourism-related information while preserving cultural values. Integrating information technology into tourism marketing strategies benefits both service providers and destination managers by expanding the reach of promotional activities (Bhahri, 2021). Technology's role in tourism is often realized through the development of websites, mobile applications, and geographic information systems, which optimize the introduction of tourism destinations at the provincial and district levels, reaching both domestic and international travelers (Irfan & Apriani, 2017).

Kerinci Regency, located in Jambi Province, is rich in natural beauty, cultural heritage, arts, and culinary tourism. Known as *Sekepal Tanah Surga* ("a slice of paradise"), Kerinci and the city of Sungai Penuh have immense tourism potential. Effective promotion and development of tourism in these regions can significantly increase visitor numbers and boost the local economy. The increasing use of social media and digital marketing platforms presents an opportunity for leveraging e-tourism to enhance interactive engagement and communication between tourists and destination managers (Wiyanto et al., 2022).

Young tourists, in particular, are a demographic that has grown alongside rapid technological advancements. This group often searches for information about destinations through social media, websites, and online reviews before deciding on a location to visit (Haryono & Albetris, 2022). However, the current state of tourism promotion in Kerinci and Sungai Penuh indicates a lack of effective digital strategies for showcasing their attractions.

This research seeks to address the observed gap by investigating the development of a tourism promotion model through e-tourism platforms. Specifically, it aims to create a framework that simplifies the process for tourists to select destinations in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh. Considering the rapid pace of digital technology development, it is crucial for tourism managers to adopt internet-based promotion methods to remain competitive in attracting visitors.

Based on the issues outlined above, the research question to be addressed in this study is:

How can a tourism development model utilizing e-tourism platforms be designed to facilitate tourists in selecting destinations in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh?

2. Theoretical Background

E-Tourism and Digital Marketing E-tourism has revolutionized the tourism industry by integrating technology into marketing, promotion, and customer engagement. Buhalis and Law (2008) highlighted the evolution of information technology in tourism management over two decades, emphasizing how the internet has transformed the ways tourism services are marketed and delivered. The utilization of e-tourism platforms enables efficient dissemination of information and enhances customer interaction. Similarly, Gretzel et al. (2015) introduced the concept of smart

tourism, which integrates advanced technologies to provide tailored and interactive experiences for tourists.

Social media plays a significant role in digital marketing within the tourism sector. Hays et al. (2013) demonstrated how national tourism organizations use social media as a tool for destination marketing to connect with global audiences. Leung et al. (2013) further elaborated on the importance of social media in the tourism and hospitality industry, providing a comprehensive review of its impact on marketing strategies.

E-Tourism Applications in Local Contexts The adoption of e-tourism in specific regions showcases its potential in promoting local attractions. Bhahri (2021) emphasized the role of Android-based e-tourism applications in introducing Makassar's tourism sector. These applications bridge the gap between local attractions and tech-savvy tourists by providing user-friendly platforms to access information. In a similar vein, Wiyanto et al. (2022) discussed the development of e-tourism in Bekasi, utilizing websites to enhance tourism visibility and accessibility.

Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh, despite their rich cultural and natural heritage, have faced challenges in leveraging e-tourism effectively. Sitindaon and Herry (2020) analyzed the design of a web-based information system for guiding tourists in Kerinci, highlighting the potential of digital platforms to address informational gaps and improve tourist experiences. Saniati et al. (2022) supported this perspective by advocating for the implementation of e-tourism as a strategy to boost promotional activities and attract more visitors.

Strategic Approaches to Tourism Development Strategic planning is essential for optimizing e-tourism initiatives. Irfan and Apriani (2017) analyzed strategies for developing e-tourism as a promotional tool in Lombok, emphasizing the need for comprehensive planning to maximize its benefits. The use of tools like SWOT analysis and Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) has been explored in multiple studies. Rubihanto et al. (2022) utilized these tools to design marketing strategies for a restaurant, demonstrating their applicability in tourism-related contexts. Similarly, Mahsun et al. (2022) employed SOAR analysis and QSPM to develop strategies for the creative tourism industry, focusing on enhancing competitiveness and sustainability.

3. Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is exploratory, using a descriptive qualitative and quantitative approach. The research is conducted in the tourist areas of Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City, specifically Lake Kerinci, Kayu Aro, and Sungai Penuh City. To develop a model, questionnaires are distributed to gather tourists' feedback about tourism in Kerinci. Additionally, open-ended questions are provided to collect input and suggestions from tourists for future improvements. Focus

group discussions (FGDs) are conducted with relevant government agencies and business actors.

The technological achievement level of this research is at level 3, involving the development of a tourism promotion model in the form of a website and social media. This model is expected to enhance tourist satisfaction in selecting and enjoying attractions in Kerinci. Furthermore, the research is anticipated to contribute to the economic growth of Kerinci by increasing the number of visiting tourists.

The data analysis methods used are SWOT Analysis and QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) to design effective strategies and develop the e-tourism system as the research output.

SWOT Analysis

A business is an activity conducted by an organization to provide goods or services to generate profit. Businesses have the potential to grow and thrive amidst competition. Sustainable businesses are those that implement strategies to overcome market challenges. Businesses must identify various factors that serve as strengths and opportunities to formulate competitive strategies (Kurniawan & Abidin, 2020).

One effective approach is using SWOT analysis, which evaluates strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis systematically identifies various factors to maximize strengths and opportunities within the company while minimizing weaknesses and threats from competitors or external environments.

The SWOT matrix can develop strategies across four pillars:

- 1. **Strength-Opportunity Strategy:** Maximizing internal strengths to seize external opportunities for a competitive advantage (Rubihanto et al., 2022).
- 2. Weakness-Opportunity Strategy: Minimizing internal weaknesses by leveraging available opportunities in the market.
- 3. Strength-Threat Strategy: Mitigating external threats by maximizing internal strengths.
- 4. Weakness-Threat Strategy: A defensive approach to reduce internal weaknesses and avoid external threats from competitors or environmental conditions.

QSPM Analysis

The **Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM)** is a matrix offering objective alternative strategies for decision-making in selecting the most appropriate strategy for implementation. QSPM is considered an alternative strategy with the highest attractiveness score (Sitindaon & Herry, 2020).

The QSPM matrix is used to summarize and evaluate various alternatives objectively, based on the internal and external factors of an organization identified earlier. This method helps prioritize strategies that align with organizational goals and external environmental conditions (Mahsun et al., 2022).

4. Empirical Findings/Result

SWOT and QSPM Analysis

The SWOT analysis was conducted to analyze the internal and external factors influencing tourism in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City. This analysis is used to design appropriate strategies for tourism development, as detailed below: *Internal Strategy Factors*

No.	Factors	Relative Weight	Rating Score	
Strengths				
1	Variety of tourist destinations offered	0.095	4	0.38
2	Cool and beautiful scenery at every 0.119		5	0.59
3	Diverse culinary options at each destination	0.071	3	0.21
4	Tourist attractions suitable for all age groups	0.071	3	0.21
5	Affordable entrance fees	0.072	3	0.21
6	Friendly services at each tourist attraction	0.095	4	0.38
Subtotal	0.523	22	1.98	
Weaknesse	s			
1	Inadequate facilities at tourist attractions	0.072	3	0.21
2	Poor access roads to tourist attractions	0.048	2	0.09
3	Insufficient supporting facilities	0.095	4	0.38
4	Lack of relaxation areas like pavilions	0.072	3	0.21
5	Poor cleanliness at tourist attractions	0.095	4	0.38
6	Limited photo spots at tourist attractions 0.095		4	0.38
Subtotal	0.477	20	1.65	
Total	1.00	42	3.63	

Table 1 shows the results of the IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary) matrix calculation. Weighting and rating were conducted by relevant government agencies and business actors. The score for strength factors is **1.98**, while the score for weakness factors is **1.65**.

External Strategy Factors

No.	Factors	Relative Weight Rating Sc		ing Score
Opportuniti	es			
1	Government support for tourism development	0.073	3	0.219
2	Use of social media as a promotional tool	0.123	5	0.615
3	Demand for nearby travel destinations	0.097	4	0.388

No.	Factors	Relative Weight	Ratin	g Score
4	Untapped natural potentials	0.097	4	0.388
5	Rapid technological advancement and information dissemination	0.123	5	0.615
Subtotal	0.513	21	2.23	
Threats				
1	Decline in national economy	0.097	4	0.388
2	Competition with other tourist attractions	0.073	3	0.219
3	Public boredom with repetitive and unchanged attractions	0.097	4	0.388
4	Extreme weather affecting tourist visits	0.123	5	0.615
5	Negative impacts of tourism (e.g., littering)	0.097	4	0.388
Subtotal	0.487	21	1.99	
Total	1.00	41	4.22	

Table 2 presents the results of the EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) matrix calculation. The score for opportunity factors is **2.23**, while the score for threat factors is **1.99**.

Figure 1: Space Matrix Figure 1 represents the space matrix that outlines the strategies to be implemented. Based on the calculation, the coordinates are in Quadrant I. The strategy to be used in Quadrant I is the aggressive strategy. This aggressive strategy is executed by leveraging existing opportunities with the strengths the company possesses.

Table 4: SO Strategy

SO Strategies

- 1. Utilize technology to maximize promotion reach, with active social media and a website that provides complete information about tourist attractions.
- 2. Build unique and innovative attractions by utilizing the existing natural potential, and regularly updating the attractions to keep visitors engaged.
- 3. Offer unique and appealing culinary options.
- 4. Provide training for employees managing tourism so that service quality and knowledge about tourist attractions improve.
- 5. Offer new innovations such as interesting and Instagrammable photo spots.

Table 4 represents the SWOT matrix. From this matrix, four alternative strategies can be derived: SO, WO, ST, and WT. The SO strategy (Strengths, Opportunities) is one of the strategies used in this SWOT matrix, utilizing strengths to capitalize on available opportunities.

Factor Weight	t Strategy 1	Strategy 2	Strategy 3	Strategy 4	Strategy 5
Strength 1	0.095	4 (0.38)	5 (0.475)	4 (0.38)	5 (0.475)
Strength 2	0.119	5 (0.595)	4 (0.476)	4 (0.476)	4 (0.476)
Strength 3	0.071	3 (0.213)	3 (0.213)	3 (0.213)	3 (0.213)
Strength 4	0.071	3 (0.213)	3 (0.213)	3 (0.213)	3 (0.213)
Strength 5	0.072	3 (0.216)	2 (0.144)	3 (0.216)	4 (0.288)
Strength 6	0.095	4 (0.38)	4 (0.38)	3 (0.285)	4 (0.38)
Weakness 1	0.072	3 (0.216)	4 (0.288)	3 (0.216)	4 (0.288)
Weakness 2	0.048	2 (0.096)	2 (0.096)	4 (0.192)	5 (0.24)
Weakness 3	0.095	4 (0.38)	3 (0.285)	3 (0.285)	4 (0.38)
Weakness 4	0.072	3 (0.216)	3 (0.216)	3 (0.216)	3 (0.216)
Weakness 5	0.095	4 (0.38)	3 (0.285)	3 (0.285)	5 (0.475)
Weakness 6	0.095	4 (0.38)	4 (0.38)	3 (0.285)	4 (0.38)
Opportunity 1	0.073	3 (0.219)	4 (0.292)	4 (0.292)	4 (0.292)
Opportunity 2	0.123	5 (0.615)	3 (0.369)	3 (0.369)	3 (0.369)
Opportunity 3	0.097	4 (0.388)	4 (0.388)	4 (0.388)	3 (0.291)
Opportunity 4	0.097	4 (0.388)	3 (0.291)	3 (0.291)	4 (0.388)
Opportunity 5	0.123	5 (0.615)	4 (0.492)	3 (0.369)	2 (0.246)
Threat 1	0.097	4 (0.388)	2 (0.194)	4 (0.388)	2 (0.194)
Threat 2	0.073	3 (0.219)	3 (0.219)	3 (0.219)	4 (0.292)
Threat 3	0.097	4 (0.388)	2 (0.194)	3 (0.291)	3 (0.291)
Threat 4	0.123	5 (0.615)	2 (0.246)	2 (0.246)	2 (0.246)
Threat 5	0.097	4 (0.388)	3 (0.291)	3 (0.291)	3 (0.291)

Internal and External Factors Strategy Alternatives

Total

Strategy TAS
Strategy 1 7.888
Strategy 2 6.427
Strategy 3 6.406
Strategy 4 6.924
Strategy 5 6.451

The table above shows the ranking of alternative strategies to be implemented. Based on the SWOT matrix analysis, the result is in Quadrant I, which corresponds to the SO (Strength, Opportunities) strategy. The first priority strategy selected is utilizing technology to maximize promotional reach, with active social media and a comprehensive website offering information about tourist attractions, with a TAS value of 7.888. The second strategy is to provide training for employees managing tourism to enhance service quality and knowledge about tourist attractions, with a TAS value of 6.924. The third strategy is to offer new innovations, such as interesting and Instagrammable photo spots, with a TAS value of 6.451. The fourth strategy is to build unique and innovative attractions by leveraging natural potential and regularly updating them to keep visitors engaged, with a TAS value of 6.427. The last strategy is to offer unique and appealing culinary options, with a TAS value of 6.406.

Discussion

The SWOT analysis presented earlier reveals that the company is positioned in Quadrant I of the SWOT Matrix, which suggests an **aggressive strategy**. This strategy capitalizes on the company's strengths and the opportunities available in the market. Based on the analysis, five key strategies were identified to enhance the company's tourism operations, focusing on leveraging digital technologies, enhancing employee training, and offering innovative experiences for visitors.

1. Maximizing Promotional Reach through Digital Media

The first strategy, utilizing technology to maximize promotional reach, is supported by recent trends in the tourism industry, which increasingly rely on digital marketing platforms. Active use of social media and a well-maintained website can significantly increase visibility and reach, especially in an era where most tourists search for travel information online (Alghizzawi, Habes, & Salloum, 2019). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are essential tools for creating engagement with potential visitors (Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013). Moreover, interactive and informative websites provide a complete tourist experience, offering insights into attractions, accommodations, and local culture (Bhahri, 2021). This approach not only improves marketing effectiveness but also aligns with current shifts towards digital tourism promotion (Gretzel et al., 2015).

2. Employee Training for Enhanced Service and Knowledge

The second strategy, focusing on employee training, is crucial for improving service quality. By ensuring that employees are knowledgeable about the tourist destinations and well-trained in customer service, the company can significantly improve the visitor experience. This training can be enhanced through e-tourism platforms that provide up-to-date information and best practices (Haryono & Albetris, 2022). This strategy supports the idea that the tourism sector should invest in human capital as a key component of competitive advantage, especially as tourists increasingly demand high-quality service during their visits (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

3. Innovative and Instagrammable Photo Spots

Introducing Instagrammable photo spots is another strategic move that leverages the power of social media. In today's digital age, social media has a profound impact on tourism, with many tourists seeking experiences that are visually appealing and shareable (Saniati et al., 2022). This strategy taps into the growing trend where tourists are not only looking for beautiful experiences but also opportunities to share them on social media platforms, thus increasing the attraction's visibility and appeal (Leung et

4. Building Unique and Innovative Attractions

Building innovative and unique attractions that utilize natural resources is another important strategy. This is supported by findings from Kurniawan & Abidin (2020), who highlight the role of creativity and natural resources in attracting visitors. The company's ability to offer unique experiences, such as nature-based activities or ecotourism, can differentiate it from competitors. Additionally, regular updates to these attractions ensure that they remain fresh and interesting to returning visitors (Gretzel et al., 2015). Such strategies not only attract tourists but also contribute to sustainable tourism development by using local resources responsibly.

5. Offering Unique Culinary Experiences

Lastly, offering unique culinary experiences is a strategy that enhances the tourism product by catering to the growing interest in food tourism. As demonstrated by Mahsun, Rofiq, & Ismail (2022), culinary tourism is a strong driver for many visitors, with food becoming an integral part of the tourism experience. Offering unique and authentic culinary options allows the company to provide a holistic experience for visitors, contributing to both the cultural and economic growth of the region.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the IFAS and EFAS matrices revealed a total of 6 strengths, 6 weaknesses, 5 opportunities, and 5 threats. The IFAS matrix produced a total score of 3.63, while the EFAS matrix yielded a score of 4.22. Based on the results from both matrices and supported by the IE matrix calculations, the strategy is positioned in Quadrant I. This suggests an **aggressive strategy**, which was further refined through the SWOT matrix to formulate alternative strategies. The SWOT analysis recommended the adoption of a **Strengths-Opportunities (SO)** strategy.

The QSPM calculation identified the top strategic priority: developing tourism through technology and expanding promotional reach. Therefore, the most appropriate strategy for tourism managers is to promote tourism by leveraging **e-tourism**, particularly by creating active social media channels and an informative website to enhance the promotion of tourist attractions.

It is recommended that tourism managers implement the proposed strategies outlined in this study to benefit the local community and enhance the tourism experience. For future research, it would be beneficial to further explore the implementation and effectiveness of **e-tourism strategies** in different geographical regions or market segments. Future studies could also investigate additional innovations and technological advancements that could support the continuous growth of the tourism sector. This would help refine strategies and ensure their long-term relevance in an ever-evolving market

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