

The Formulation of Rural Beach Tourism Development Strategies in Malang Regency, East Java, Indonesia: Swot Analysis Approach

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ABSTRACT

Ungapan Beach, located in Gajahrejo Village, Malang Regency, East Java, is a 1-kilometer coastal area surrounded by small islets that serve as lobster breeding grounds and offer direct access to the Muara Gunung Getun mangrove conservation area. The beach provides various recreational activities for visitors, such as swimming, kayaking, and river boating. This study investigates the current status and potential of rural beach tourism of Ungapan Beach. Data were collected in 2023 through focus group discussions, field observations, and interviews with 10 key stakeholders. A SWOT analysis was conducted at the local level to evaluate tourism potential, acting as both a research and assessment tool. Although rural beach tourism in Gajahrejo Village is still in its early stages, the findings reveal significant internal challenges, including limited human and institutional capacity and insufficient government support. External threats such as safety concerns, financial support instability, social conflicts, and natural disasters further complicate development efforts. Nevertheless, Ungapan Beach benefits from strong natural attractions, openness from the local community, government backing, and promising opportunities for growth. These strengths offer a solid foundation for sustainable tourism development, provided that the identified challenges are effectively addressed through strategic planning and community engagement.

Keywords: Beach tourism; rural tourism; sustainable development; SWOT analysis; rural development

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the importance of tourism for regional development has significantly increased. As it was stated by Saarinen (2003), tourism represents crucial element in the regional economies and in everyday life, it can be a means of providing economic development in peripheral regions. The growth of tourism influences the economy by generating new jobs and raising consumer demand for goods and services. An area with a high concentration of tourism-related activity provides several job prospects for the local population (Rao 2014). When considering rural and peripheral areas, it becomes evident that national development policies and local programs assign a structural role to tourism development in boosting the economy. In fact, tourism is positioned as a primary option for rehabilitating areas that have suffered from the crisis in rural economies and the growing abandonment of the countryside (Sharpley 2002).

However, tourism development in rural areas is a challenge, because at the same time, rural areas are vulnerable to the ecological, economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism development (Hassan et al. 2022). According to Upadhyay (2016), the main problems and challenges in developing tourism in rural areas depend on two factors. One is inherent rural characteristics, and the other is start-up and infrastructure/sustainability issues. Other major challenges are (1) conserving and conserving resources by setting limits on their use; (2) developing balanced tourism activities, both temporally and spatially; (3) equal distribution of regional income originating from tourism and (4) convincing local tourism actors of the economic feasibility of investing in rural tourism (Stoian & Stoicea 2011).

The promotion of tourism is among of the main development initiatives in Malang Regency. The Malang Regency government encourages all villages to explore their unique potential through tourism to achieve economic equality and eradicate poverty (Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Malang 2022). Tourism development in each village is expected to increase village income which will have an impact on improving the quality of life of the population. With this strategy, Gajahrejo Village is also trying to develop tourism in its area to improve the welfare of its residents. The Gajahrejo Village area, which is mostly covered by the sea, gave rise to the idea of developing beach tourism as the

main tourist destination in the village. Currently, Gajahrejo Village is focusing on developing Ungapan Beach as a major tourist destination. However, development activities that have been carried out so far have been carried out without careful planning. Ungapan Beach has been undergoing development since the early 2010s, initiated by local government and community-based efforts to boost rural tourism, though much of the progress has been informal and uncoordinated, resulting in limited infrastructure and inconsistent visitor management.

Currently, local and regional government units are making maximum efforts to utilize their tourism potential to increase economic growth, improve the quality of life and create employment opportunities for their residents. However, problems in planning and development have become a significant obstacle for both local and regional governments, primarily due to a lack of technical expertise in sustainable tourism management and limited access to reliable data for informed decision-making. This lack of skills makes it difficult for them to protect the environment while supporting the local economy and community. Lack of reliable information, such as visitor numbers and community needs, making it difficult to make informed decisions. As a result, these challenges lead to inefficient planning processes, poorly coordinated development efforts, and ultimately hinder the long-term success and sustainability of tourism initiatives in the region. These challenges are further compounded by inadequate stakeholder coordination and insufficient financial and human resources, leading to delays, inefficient use of funds, and poorly implemented infrastructure projects that do not support long-term tourism goals. Therefore, an appropriate strategy is needed to plan and develop tourism in an area. Thus, in starting tourism development in Gajahrejo Village, a tourism development strategy for this village is very important.

SWOT analysis will help tourism authorities and related stakeholders position tourism in overall and general strategic planning (Goranczewski & Puciato 2010). Considering that local government units are mandated by law to initiate and lead their respective tourism development plans, SWOT analysis can be an instrument for carrying out planning, coordination, monitoring, control, and promotion activities. SWOT analysis is also useful in terms of marketing of places by local governments to stimulate development-related processes and other tourism-related business efforts. Ghanbari et al. (2012) also emphasized that SWOT can be a valuable tool in the travel and tourism industry for sustainable development and attracting tourists at the international level. Therefore, this paper aims to examine the status and potential of rural beach tourism of Ungapan Beach by using SWOT analysis to identify key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, with the objective of proposing strategic recommendations that will guide sustainable tourism planning and improve community welfare in Gajahrejo Village.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Typically, coastal regions serve a significant role in attracting tourism investments and the development of facilities related to them. This is primarily due to the presence of diverse natural resources combined with valuable cultural assets in these areas (Hengky 2019). Rural beach/coastal tourism requires a clear understanding from decision-makers to enable the development of innovative planning strategies that foster connections between coastal and rural regions (Ramos et al. 2015). Coral reefs, sandy beaches, birds, fish, marine mammals, and other wildlife associated with cultural beauty, such as historic sites, coastal towns, ports, fishing fleets, and so on, are natural resources that are not unlimited, but also fragile and scarce. Therefore, well-planned tourism development and tourism-related activities are necessary to prevent the rapid extinction of natural resources in the region (McLoughin et al. 2020).

Sustainable beach tourism is rapidly becoming one of the most popular sectors in the tourism industry. To ensure its effective management, a structured approach to beach/ coastal and marine governance is essential, involving strategies aimed at promoting sustainable practices (Daskin et al. 2020). These strategies might involve policy development for coastal and marine management, environmentally conscious infrastructure planning, the application of technical expertise and community education, as well as fostering economic growth that supports the conservation of natural resources.

However, the success of tourism in any destination relies heavily on the support of local residents for tourism development. Local residents' attitudes toward tourism are shaped by various factors. Key influences include the level of interaction between tourists and locals, the community's overall perception of the tourism industry, and potentially other social or cultural elements that affect their viewpoint (Murphy 1985). As such, gaining insight into residents' attitudes and concerns is crucial for creating a sustainable tourism industry. According to McLoughin et al. (2020), ongoing monitoring is vital to ensure the economic sustainability of tourism, as it plays a key role in long-term viability. Because if not managed properly, excessive use of resources without adequate awareness can lead to harmful socio-cultural impacts and environmental degradation in the future.

Dyer et al. (2003) emphasized that local communities have the opportunity to interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles, which, through the 'demonstration effect,' can inspire locals to adopt improved ways of living and practices introduced by tourists. For example, sustainable tourism can enhance traditional activities

and infrastructure, contributing to improvements in local living standards, including increased income, job creation, education, and healthcare services. Overall, the sociocultural impacts of beach/coastal tourism should be assessed from both positive and negative perspectives (Timothy & Said 2023). Importantly, all influencing factors can significantly affect coastal communities, making it essential for local authorities to carefully manage sustainability efforts.

METHODOLOGY

This section will detail the methodology adopted in obtaining data and data analysis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research sample was selected using purposive and accidental sampling techniques to ensure that participants had relevant knowledge and experience related to tourism development at Ungapan Beach. Interviews with individual stakeholders further enriched the data by exploring specific issues and opinions in greater detail. Accidental sampling was also used to include tourists and residents who were available and willing to participate during data collection periods, providing additional perspectives. The research was conducted in Gajahrejo Village, Malang Regency, East Java. Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods. Qualitative descriptive research describes phenomena rather than explaining them. Qualitative descriptive research aims to provide a comprehensive summary of events. This research design approach is journalistic, with the aim of answering the questions who, what, where and how (Doyle et al. 2019). This research aims to create a clear, systematic, factual and accurate picture of the facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena being investigated (Mohajan 2018).

The diagnostic tool used in this research is SWOT analysis. It is used to provide an overview of the problems to be indicated for a particular need and to analyze the relationships between problems, providing strategies for current and future scenarios (Gürel & Tat 2017). SWOT is a planning framework that uses the community as the main respondents and informants. In this way, the communities involved can freely articulate their socio-economic priorities, interests in tourism businesses and express their opinions and concerns regarding tourism development.

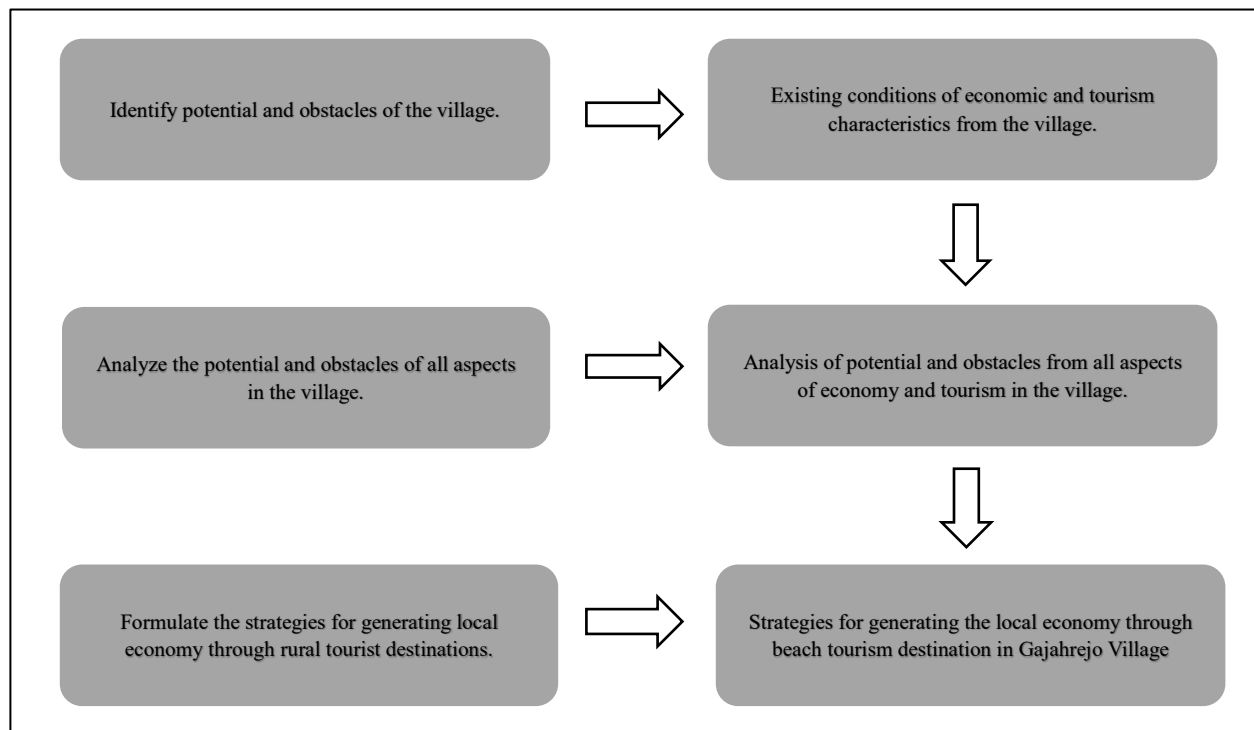


FIGURE 1. Research Stage (Source: Wijijayanti et al. (2020))

Figure 1 shows the stages carried out in this research. The initial step in this research is to identify the characteristics of the village along with the potential and obstacles that arise; analyze emerging potentials and

obstacles; carry out identification and analysis relating to economic conditions; and characteristics of tourist destinations in the village. Beach tourism development and general strategies are formulated with the results of identification and analysis based on the SWOT analysis obtained from the research object.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data collection is carried out through rapid rural assessments. It involved multiple methods, including focus group discussions (FGDs), direct observation, and interviews to gather comprehensive insights. The FGDs facilitated in-depth discussions on the opportunities, challenges, and community perceptions of tourism development, while direct observation allowed researchers to assess environmental conditions and infrastructure firsthand. The FGDs were conducted with a group of 10 key respondents, including local community leaders, village officials, tourism business owners, and representatives from local government agencies. These respondents were chosen purposively based on their active involvement or influence in tourism activities within the village. A total of three rounds of FGDs, direct observations, and interviews were conducted. Data collection was carried out using a collaborative approach. This approach was chosen to find out more about who the relevant stakeholders are in decision making, starting from analyzing problems and conditions, setting goals, identifying strategies, and planning implementation.

Data is also collected through primary and secondary data collection. In primary collection, data is obtained from field observations, direct interviews and focus group discussion with key informants. In addition, secondary data was collected through related literature provided by local village offices and tourism-related organizations as well as private entities in the location. Additionally, to provide broader information and discussion of the findings, data were also collected through careful review and analysis of related scientific literature and current research.

RESEARCH LOCATION

Gajahrejo is a village located in the southern part of Malang Regency. This village has great coastal tourism potential, because it borders directly on the Indian Ocean in the south with a coastline of 6.249 km. This village has an area of around 19.03 km², but 25% of the area is critical land. Located at coordinates 8.2085 South Latitude – 112.3883 East Longitude and is approximately 65 kilometers from Malang City. The village borders Gedangan Village in the north, Sindurejo Village in the west, Sidodadi Village in the east and the Indian Ocean in the south (Figure 2). This village has superior plantation products, namely coconut, banana, and coffee. The results of coconut plantations are usually reprocessed into virgin coconut oil, and the waste is made into broomsticks and herbal medicines. Meanwhile, banana plantation products are processed into banana chips. This village also has many shrimp and salt ponds.

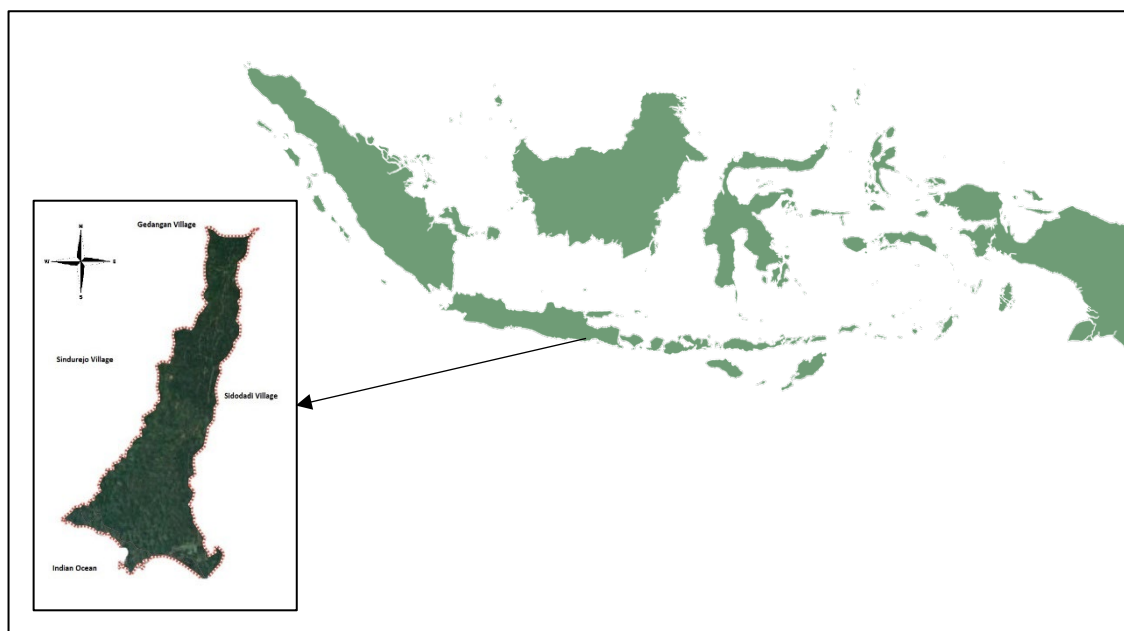


FIGURE 2. Location of the study
Source: Authors' own work

The location that is being developed as a main tourist destination by this village is Ungapan Beach (Figure 3). Ungapan Beach is about 1 km long. There are several small islands around this beach where lobsters breed. This beach also has direct access to a mangrove conservation area called Muara Gunung Getun. Tourists who visit Ungapan beach usually also go swimming, kayaking or take a boat along the river at Muara Gunung Getun. Ungapan Beach already has several basic facilities such as entrance and exit; security posts, places to eat, toilets, places of worship, and homestays. Identifying the main issues that arise when conducting tourism development in Ungapan Beach are as follows:

1. Infrastructure development still needs to be strengthened and faces strong financial constraints. Ungapan Beach is a tourist destination that is quite far from the city center (61 km from nearest city and 140 km from nearest international airport). The current situation with the lack of inconvenient land travel routes means that the accessibility of Ungapan Beach is low, which in turn increases the difficulty of attracting a wider market of tourists from outside the region or abroad.
2. There are obstacles in managing management. There are no permanent members who consistently manage this place to take care of basic things such as cleanliness, security, and visitors safety. There is no innovation to increase the attractiveness of this beach.
3. Tourism products need to be polished and developed further. The stagnation and decline in the number of beach visitors has had a significant economic impact on residents who set up businesses in the area around the beach.



FIGURE 3. Ungapan Beach at Gajahrejo Village
Source: Google Earth Pro

Therefore, developing tourism on this beach requires extensive research and planning. Without the right strategy, tourism development at Ungapan Beach cannot be realized. Considering the urgency above, it is necessary to examine the various strategic factors that Ungapan Beach has using sophisticated tools such as SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this research, the SWOT framework is used to develop a tourism strategy for Ungapan Beach. The four main components of the internal-external matrix diagram are the following: SO strategies, or offensive strategies, refer to using capabilities to seize opportunities; WO strategies, or conservative or adaptive strategies, refer to using capabilities to improve environmental conditions; ST strategies, or competitive strategies, refer to using opportunities to improve internal systems; and WT strategies, or defensive strategies, refer to minimizing weaknesses and gaining a competitive advantage.

Data collected from focus group discussions (FGDs), direct observations, and interviews provide comprehensive and detailed insights into various aspects of the Gajahrejo's tourism environment. Through FGDs (figure 3), the voices and perceptions of local community members are captured, revealing their attitudes, concerns, and expectations regarding tourism development (Islam 2022). Observations provide firsthand information about the physical environment, infrastructure conditions, natural resources, and how tourism activities in Ungapan Beach are currently managed or impacting the area. Interviews with key stakeholders, including local leaders, government officials, business owners, and tourists, help uncover diverse perspectives on the opportunities, challenges, and overall potential for tourism growth in Ungapan Beach in particular and Gajahrejo Village in general.

Based on the findings from the FGDs, several key viewpoints have emerged as notable outcomes.

“The local community is very open to tourism development, but there needs to be stronger coordination and more support from the local government to ensure sustainability.” (Respondent – 1)

“One of the biggest challenges we face is the lack of technical expertise and limited financial resources, which makes it difficult to improve infrastructure and manage tourism effectively.” (Respondent – 3)

“I think it's really important to get the community more involved in tourism activities. When locals take an active role, they become great promoters of the destination, which helps attract more visitors and boosts economic benefits for everyone.” (Respondent – 4)



FIGURE 3. Focus Group Discussion with stakeholders
Source: Authors' Documentation

These insights inform the SWOT matrix used to examine the threats, opportunities, weaknesses, and strengths related to the tourism development of Ungapan Beach (Table 1). By comparing external opportunities and threats with internal strengths and weaknesses based on this collected information, the matrix provides a comprehensive foundation for strategic planning. This approach ensures that future tourism initiatives are broad-based, community-driven, and sustainable over the long term.

TABLE 1. SWOT matrix for the tourism development of Ungapan Beach

	Weakness (W) 1. Village community participation tends to be as implementers or objects, 2. The educational background and tourism knowledge of the community is still low, 3. Limited village funds, 4. There is no/low assistance and support from the government, 5. Some of the land that will be used as a tourist attraction does not purely belong to the village, 6. There is no high economic value of local products, 7. The type of sea is deep sea, 8. The location is very far from the busy center, 9. Infrastructure (roads) in surrounding areas is not supported	Threats (T) 1. Lack of overall coordination of regional development plans with the community, 2. There are individual investors who want to build tourist facilities without involving the community, 3. Natural Disasters, 4. There are no social institutions or NGOs to manage the tourism destination.
Strength (S) 1. Attractive natural resource attractions (sea), 2. Openness of local communities to tourism development, 3. Full support from local and regional governments, 4. Abundant marine products.	SO Strategies 1. Taking advantage of the potentials and natural, historical, etc. 2. Using the capabilities of tourism to revive the villages and economic prosperity of the residents. 3. Training local community in alternative jobs. 4. Build and develop infrastructure to support the tourism destination.	ST Strategies 1. Determining the ecological tolerance capacity and preventing the overexploitation of natural resources by tourists 2. Formulation of strategic plans to maximize potentials and opportunities in order to attract wider segment of tourists 3. Development of beach tourism and ecotourism in rural areas
Opportunity (O) 1. There are regulations from the government that encourage tourism development, 2. There is concern for CSR, 3. The beach/coastal tourism market is still wide open, 4. Local communities will get business opportunities.	WO Strategies 1. Enhancement of service and welfare facilities in accordance with the natural environment of the region 2. Implementing initiatives to eradicate unemployment and poverty by empowering and reassuring the local community	WT Strategies 1. Developing a strategic plan to create natural disaster management 2. Expansion of formal and informal skill training to teach specialized and qualified human resources in tourism-related industries.

Source: Authors' own work, 2024

As can be observed from the results of SWOT analysis of Ungapan Beach, the strategies were determined as follows

1. SO strategies (offensive strategies): Taking advantage of the potentials and natural, historical, etc; Using the capabilities of tourism to revive the villages and economic prosperity of the residents; Training local community in alternative jobs; and build and develop infrastructure to support the tourism destination.
2. ST strategies (variety/ competitive strategies): Determining the ecological tolerance capacity and preventing the overexploitation of natural resources by tourists; Formulation of strategic plans to maximize potentials and opportunities in order to attract wider segment of tourists; and Development of beach tourism and ecotourism in rural areas
3. WO strategies (conservative/adaptive strategies): Enhancement of service and welfare facilities in accordance with the natural environment of the region; Implementing initiatives to eradicate unemployment and poverty by empowering and reassuring the local community
4. WT strategies (defensive strategies): Developing a strategic plan to create natural disaster management; Expansion of formal and informal skill training to teach specialized and qualified human resources in tourism-related industries.

The SWOT analysis for Ungapan Beach highlights strategic approaches that leverage the destination's strengths and opportunities to drive sustainable tourism development. The SO strategies focus on utilizing natural and cultural assets to stimulate local economic growth by reviving village economies, providing community training in alternative jobs, and improving infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience. Meanwhile, ST strategies emphasize protecting the environment by assessing ecological capacity to prevent overexploitation and developing targeted plans to attract a wider tourist segment, including promoting ecotourism and beach tourism in rural areas. These approaches aim to balance growth with environmental preservation, ensuring the destination remains competitive and sustainable.

On the other hand, the WO and WT strategies address internal weaknesses and external threats through adaptive and defensive measures. WO strategies prioritize improving service facilities and community welfare by empowering locals to reduce poverty and unemployment, aligning development efforts with the natural environment. WT strategies focus on risk mitigation by creating disaster management plans and expanding skill training programs to build qualified human resources for the tourism sector. Together, these strategies form a comprehensive framework that balances proactive development with careful management, aiming for long-term economic benefits while safeguarding the environment and community well-being.

While the SWOT analysis presents useful strategies for sustainable tourism development at Ungapan Beach, implementation may face challenges. Financial constraints and a lack of technical expertise can slow down infrastructure and training efforts. Success also depends on strong community engagement and trust, which requires ongoing involvement (Alamineh et al. 2023). Coordination between stakeholders is crucial but currently weak, while ecological management and disaster preparedness require ongoing monitoring and capacity building. Given these challenges, a phased approach that prioritizes strengths and opportunities before addressing weaknesses and threats is more practical. Building partnerships, securing resources, and promoting local ownership will be key to achieving sustainable outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Ideally, if the local tourism industry is properly planned, implemented, evaluated, and monitored in each local government unit's jurisdiction, it can generate extensive economic opportunities that can improve the quality of life of each community and boost the local economy. Tourism development locally, namely at the village level, is the main responsibility of the village government itself, through the formulation of programs and recommendations to develop facilities, attractions, local resources, and local tourism funds; assisting in the regulation and supervision of tourism-oriented companies; monitoring tourism business permits in the area; and strictly enforce sanitation standards in public facilities and services. One management strategy that can guarantee this is through a SWOT analysis of local destinations where planning becomes more of a multi-sectoral collaboration, involving various stakeholders in the region. This method allows authorities to specifically identify the areas to be targeted by SWOT analysis and can effectively position appropriate strategies and/or actions to achieve the desired results. However, future studies should focus on enhancing community participation, assessing environmental impacts, and exploring economic feasibility to support sustainable tourism development at Ungapan Beach. Additionally, research on disaster risk management, policy effectiveness, and the socio-cultural effects of tourism will be essential for long-term planning and resilience.

In the case of Ungapan Beach, several challenges may hinder tourism development if not addressed properly. Internally, weaknesses such as limited human and institutional capacity to develop tourism products, along with insufficient government support, restrict progress. Externally, threats including safety and security concerns, economic downturns, social conflicts, natural disasters, and ongoing uncertainties related to new normal conditions pose significant risks that require careful mitigation. Despite these obstacles, Ungapan Beach benefits from key strengths that provide a solid foundation for tourism growth. The area boasts attractive tourist resources and enjoys strong openness and support from both the local community and government. Moreover, multiple opportunities exist at national, regional, and local levels, offering promising avenues for tourism expansion. Recognizing these strengths and opportunities alongside the identified weaknesses and threats is crucial in guiding effective planning and ensuring sustainable development at Ungapan Beach.

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