

Local Government Strategies in Developing Tourism Destinations in Sumedang Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate strategies for developing tourism in Sumedang Regency carried out by the Office of Culture, Tourism, Youth, and Sports Affairs. This research was conducted using qualitative descriptive methods in a naturalistic setting. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Four subjects in this study were selected through purposive sampling. Meanwhile, the data analysis employed was Miles and Huberman's model, which consisted of the following steps: data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The findings of this research indicated that the strategy for developing tourism in Sumedang had been implemented. However, the implementation was not optimal. It can be seen that tourism marketing was still not optimal due to: (1) the diversity of people's desires for tourism. Thus, there were difficulties in determining the target market, and (2) the accessibility and quality of the infrastructure. Some tourism destinations did not meet the standards in their infrastructure. Researchers recommended that a data inventory related to tourism in Sumedang was needed, such as places that have the potential to be attractive tourist destinations, marketing strategies for tourism which fit with their target market, as well as urgent infrastructure improvements to tourism spots in Sumedang Regency because infrastructure is the main factor for bringing in both local and foreign tourists.

Keywords: Strategy, Tourism, Development

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary tourism development is increasingly oriented toward sustainable tourism models grounded in community-based empowerment principles (Budiani et al., 2018). This approach emphasizes that tourism development must not only focus on destination growth but also ensure long-term benefits for local communities through participation and sustainable management. In line with sociological perspectives, development should be understood as a social process that involves structural change and community engagement (Cohen, 1992).

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Received: November 11, 2025; Revised: January 24, 2026; Accepted: February 4, 2026

Tourism is therefore not merely an economic activity, but a social phenomenon that shapes and is shaped by community interaction and social institutions. Sumedang Regency is endowed with diverse tourism destinations supported by favorable environmental conditions, offering various attractions such as swimming facilities, mountain viewpoints, and other nature-based tourism activities. This diversity reflects the region's predominantly mountainous topography, with only limited lowland areas in its northern part. From a sociological standpoint, geographical conditions significantly influence patterns of social and economic activities within a community, including the development of tourism as a strategic sector (Berry, 1995).

The tourism potential of Sumedang Regency is relatively comprehensive, encompassing cultural heritage sites such as Dayeuh Luhur, the Prabu Tajimalela Cultural Heritage Site, and the Sumedang Heritage Building. Historical tourism assets include Gunung Kunci, Kroma Ring Bridge, Lingga Monument, and Batu Dua Gunung Lingga. In addition, natural tourism attractions consist of Curug Cigorobog, Curug Ciputrawangi, Curug Cinulang, Kampung Toga, Panjunan Nature Tourism Area, Margawindu Tea Plantation, Sirah Cipelang Spring, and the Jatigede Reservoir tourism area. This variety reflects the concept that tourism resources consist of natural, cultural, and artificial attractions that can be developed as economic assets when managed systematically (Pitana & Diarta, 2017). Details of the tourism potential of each sub-district are presented in Table 1, which provides a systematic classification of tourism attractions across Sumedang Regency based on their main typologies, including cultural, historical, and natural tourism resources.

Table 1. Details of the tourism potential of each sub-district are presented

No	Sub District	Primary Tourism Potentials
1	Sumedang Selatan	Curug Cigorobog (waterfall), Curug Cipongkor (waterfall), Gunung Kunci (Mount), Gunung Palasari (Mount), Kampung Toga, Prabu Geusan Ulun Museum (nature tourism, local culture, heritage tourism)
2	Sumedang Utara	Historical tourism and cultural tourism, museum, local cuisine (Tahu Sumedang)

3	Cimanggung	Curug Sindulang (waterfall), potensial of a tourism Sindulang village and Pasirnanjung
4	Cimalaka	Curug Cipadayungan (waterfall), nature tourism and geotourism
5	Jatinangor	Sports tourism (paragliding, cycling track), nature tourism and educational tourism
6	Tanjungsari	nature tourism and outbound, tourism village of Cinangjung
7	Rancakalong	Panenjoan rock face, cultural tourism village, traditional craft and local batik
8	Pamulihan	Tourism village of Ciptasari and Citali village
9	Tomo	Situ Sari, water-based tourism and cultural tourism village
10	Paseh	Situ Cipaingeun, and tourism village of Paseh Kaler
11	Conggeang	Cilengsing hot spring and water tourism
12	Buahdua	Sekarwangi and Cileungsing hot spring
13	Cisitu	Batu Dua paragliding tourism, cultural tourism village of Pajagan
14	Situraja	tourism village attractions and cultural tourism in leuwiseeng
15	Darmaraja	Cultural tourism village of Darmaraja, Darmajaya, and Cipeuteuy
16	Ganeas	Cultural tourism village of Dayeuhluhur
17	Cibugel	Nature tourism of Dupang, Curug Pakuan, Balong Geulis (pond)
18	Jatigede	Jatigede dam, scenic tourism, water sport and constracted tourism site

Source: Office of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs of Sumedang Regency

Based on Table 1, tourism potential in Sumedang Regency is widely distributed across sub-districts, with each area demonstrating different dominant attractions. Several sub-districts

show strong natural tourism resources, particularly waterfalls, reservoirs, and plantation-based ecotourism, while other areas are characterized by cultural heritage and historical sites. This distribution indicates that Sumedang possesses a diverse tourism profile and substantial development opportunities, both in terms of destination variety and regional tourism integration. Such regional diversity is consistent with the concept of local economic development, where each area has unique resources that can be transformed into competitive advantages through strategic planning and regional autonomy (Kuncoro, 2004). However, despite this extensive tourism potential, the development and management of destinations have not been equally optimized across locations.

The factual challenges of tourism in Sumedang Regency include disparities in destination quality, inadequate maintenance, and limited promotional efforts. These conditions reflect the importance of community participation and collective responsibility in managing public spaces and environmental resources (Horoeputri, 2013). Without active involvement from local stakeholders, tourism governance tends to become fragmented and unsustainable. Across various tourism sites, physical conditions such as cleanliness and vendor arrangements vary considerably. From a sociological perspective, such disparities illustrate differences in social organization, coordination patterns, and community capacity in managing shared resources (Narwoko & Suyanto, 2010). Furthermore, many destinations still lack properly maintained facilities and supporting equipment that could enhance the uniqueness of attractions and align them with contemporary tourism trends. This situation indicates that tourism development is not solely a matter of infrastructure provision, but also of strengthening social systems and participatory management mechanisms (Alfianto, 2021; Soekanto, 2007).

These issues are largely due to insufficient maintenance conducted by both site management and local government authorities. In addition, the absence of comprehensive and integrated promotional strategies, involving both the regional government and local communities, has resulted in destinations gaining only temporary popularity (Awalliyah et al., 2022). This condition reflects that destination development requires consistent policy direction and integrated governance in order to create sustainable tourism competitiveness (Bambang, 2013; Yoeti, 2002). Another critical issue is the deterioration of existing facilities and equipment, which often gives the impression that tourism sites are treated merely as

temporary recreational spaces rather than as strategic assets requiring sustainable management and continuous development (Suwantoro, 2004).

Challenges arise, as some tourist attractions in Sumedang Regency tend to gain popularity only for a short period of time. After the decline in visitor numbers, facilities and supporting equipment are often poorly maintained, creating the impression that these destinations are treated merely as temporary recreational spaces rather than sustainable tourism assets. This phenomenon indicates weaknesses in policy design and long-term regulatory frameworks for tourism development, which should ideally integrate sustainability principles and structured governance mechanisms (Berliandaldo & Prasetio, 2022). Furthermore, the decline of tourist destinations after an initial surge of popularity reflects the limited synergy between government and private actors in ensuring continuity of investment, maintenance, and innovation. Effective tourism development requires structured collaboration between public and private sectors to ensure sustainability and competitiveness (Djabbari et al., 2021). In addition, the optimization of tourism potential is highly dependent on the active involvement and clearly defined roles of various stakeholders, including government, private sector, local communities, and supporting institutions (Ginting et al., 2021). This condition is unfortunate, considering that Sumedang actually possesses a wide range of attractive tourism destinations with significant development potential. Without integrated stakeholder coordination and sustainable policy implementation, these potentials risk remaining underutilized and vulnerable to cyclical popularity trends rather than becoming stable drivers of regional economic growth (Harirah et al., 2021; Hutagalung & Hermawan, 2021; Khotimah & Pawestri, 2022).

In strategic management perspective, such fluctuations indicate weaknesses in long-term planning, monitoring, and resource allocation, which should be consistently managed to ensure destination sustainability (David, 2008; Fahmi, 2017). This fluctuating pattern of tourism performance can be observed from the official visitor statistics recorded between 2021 and 2024, as presented in Chart 1.

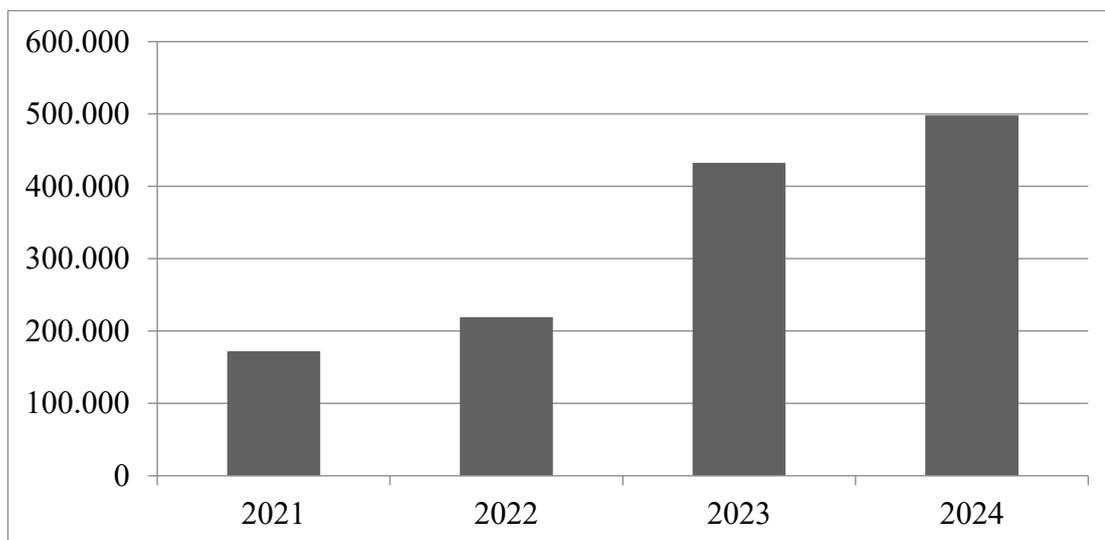


Chart 1. Data of Sumedang Tourism Visitors 2021-2024

Source: Office of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs of Sumedang Regency

Based on Chart 1, the data of Sumedang tourist visitors in 2021–2024 show that the number of tourists in Sumedang has increased every year. However, the increase in visitors only happened in several popular tourist attractions in Sumedang, such as Cipanas and Cileungsing Hot Spring, Cipanas Sekarwangi, Toga Village, Cigorobog Waterfall, BGG Golf & Resort, and Ciherang Village. This condition indicates that tourism development has not yet been evenly distributed across sub-districts, even though many areas possess potential attractions. Such unequal development is commonly found in regional tourism management, where the local government tends to prioritize destinations with existing popularity rather than systematically strengthening emerging tourism areas (Apriliani Laming & Sumual, 2023; Febrianti et al., 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to implement more comprehensive and inclusive development strategies to ensure tourism contributes more effectively to regional economic growth and local revenue.

To enhance the tourism potential of Sumedang Regency, the local government, through the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports, implements Regent Regulation of Sumedang Regency Number 38 of 2016, which stipulates that the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports is responsible for administering governmental affairs under regional authority in support of the Regent’s duties in the sectors of tourism, culture, youth, and sports.

In carrying out these responsibilities, the Department performs several core functions, including policy formulation in tourism development, human resource development in tourism and the creative economy, cultural affairs, as well as youth and sports services.

The research gap identified in this study lies in the limited dissemination of tourism information, inadequate promotional strategies, and suboptimal tourism management practices implemented by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports of Sumedang Regency. These challenges are further exacerbated by insufficient public awareness and capacity, as many community members possess only a superficial understanding of tourism without fully comprehending its broader economic and social significance. This study aims to evaluate tourism development strategies in Sumedang Regency in order to enhance tourist interest and increase visitation to local tourism destinations.

The novelty of this research is reflected in its effort to formulate regional tourism development strategies by positioning local actor dynamics as a central element in policy planning and implementation processes, grounded in context-specific tourism development frameworks.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive research design with an inductive approach. Descriptive research is a method used to examine the current status of human groups, objects, conditions, systems of thought, or classes of events (Sugiyono, 2015).

The informants in this study consisted of four: the Head of the Tourism Division, the Section Head of the Tourism Division, and two staff members of the Tourism Division. These participants were selected to provide institutional perspectives on tourism governance and policy implementation in Sumedang Regency.

The participants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. The authority held by the informants, especially related to the Tourism Development Strategy in Sumedang.
2. Considered to have a lot of information about the Tourism Development Strategy in Sumedang.
3. Having a connection, either individually and institutionally, with tourism managers and the community regarding the Tourism Development Strategy in Sumedang.

Based on these criteria, the selected informants were considered capable of providing comprehensive and credible insights regarding tourism development strategies in Sumedang Regency. To ensure that the interview process remained systematic and aligned with the research objectives, the study employed a set of structured research question guidelines. These interview guidelines were developed to capture key information related to policy implementation, stakeholder roles, and challenges in tourism development. The detailed research question guidelines used in this study are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Research Question Guidelines

Focus of The Problems	Focus of The Theories	Indicators	Numbers of Item
Tourism Development Strategy, according to Kuncoro (2004:291-294)	Image Marketing	Positioning Differentiation Branding	1 2 3
	2 Attraction Marketing	Natural Resources Man-made	4,5 6
	Infrastructure Marketing	Accessibility Quality of Infrastructure	7 8,9
	4 People Marketing	Famous people Regional Leaders Competent and entrepreneurs Attitude of the community	10 11 12 13,14, 15

With qualitative research, data are obtained from various sources using different data collection techniques (triangulation) and are collected continuously until the data becomes saturated. To process the data from interviews and observations, the research conducted on-site data processing, referring to the data analysis techniques (Sugiyono, 2015), which are as follows Figure 1:

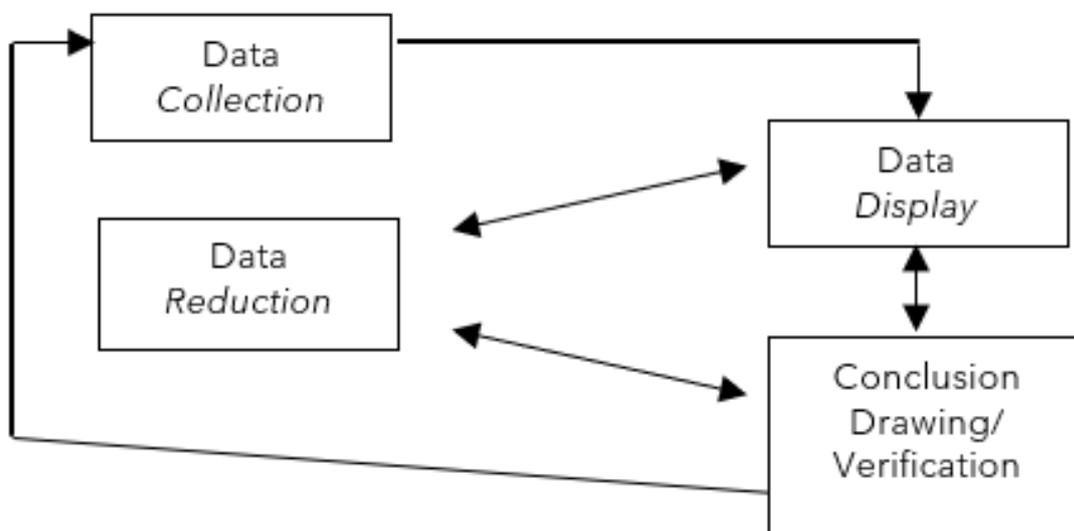


Figure 1. Components in Data Analysis

Source: Sugiyono, 2015

Data reduction

Reducing data means summarizing, selecting the main points, and focusing on the important aspects to identify themes and patterns. Thus, the data that has been reduced will provide a clearer picture of the problem being studied.

Data display

Data presentation is carried out in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, and similar forms, making the presented data tend to be narrative. Furthermore, Sugiyono (2005) suggested that in addition to narrative text, data can also be in the form of graphs, matrices, networks, and charts.

Conclusion Drawing/Verification

This is drawing conclusions and verification. These conclusions are new findings in the form of description or presentation of the research object and are supported by reliable data. This conclusion can finally be used as a research hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourism development refers to systematic efforts to improve and advance tourism destinations in order to enhance their quality and attractiveness, both in terms of physical settings and supporting facilities, thereby increasing tourist interest among domestic and international visitors. In general, tourism development is positioned as a leading and strategic sector for stimulating economic growth, increasing local government revenue, empowering community-based economies, expanding employment opportunities, and improving overall social welfare (Pitana & Diarta, 2017; Suwanto, 2004). This view is also consistent with tourism planning principles that emphasize the importance of integrated destination management and sustainable development in strengthening regional competitiveness (Yoeti, 2002).

According to Kuncoro (2004), the development of regional leading sectors, including tourism, should be implemented through locally based development strategies supported by adequate infrastructure, high-quality human resources, and active involvement of local governments in collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

Kuncoro (2004) further identifies four key strategic approaches required to attract investment, human capital, and industries to a region:

1. **Image Marketing**
Image refers to the collective perceptions, beliefs, and impressions held by the public regarding a particular region. Regional image represents a simplified synthesis of diverse information associated with a destination.
2. **Attraction Marketing**
Attractions constitute the primary motivation for tourists, investors, and capital to visit or invest in a specific location.
3. **Infrastructure Marketing**
Infrastructure serves as the fundamental foundation for regional promotion, as accessibility, public facilities, and service quality significantly influence destination competitiveness.
4. **People Marketing**
People marketing emphasizes the role of human capital in regional development, including prominent figures, local leaders, skilled professionals, entrepreneurs, and, ultimately, community attitudes that shape the overall investment and tourism climate.

Based on the perspectives of the experts, tourism development can be understood as an integrated effort to strengthen existing tourism assets while simultaneously creating new initiatives, with careful consideration of the core components that support sustainable destination growth. Tourism policy must be designed through structured government

intervention that integrates planning, implementation, and evaluation to ensure balanced regional development (Kurniati et al., 2023).

Furthermore, effective tourism development requires strategic execution at the institutional level, where programs are translated into operational actions that enhance destination competitiveness and visitor experience (Kurniawan & Herman, 2023). This indicates that tourism growth is not merely a spontaneous market-driven process, but rather the result of deliberate policy formulation and strategic management carried out by responsible public institutions. Thus, tourism development should be positioned as a comprehensive governance process that combines asset strengthening, innovation creation, and strategic program implementation to ensure sustainable and competitive destination advancement (Lestari et al., 2023; Mariane et al., 2022; Masrurun & Nastiti, 2023).

This process emphasizes coherence among planning, implementation, and resource management in order to enhance overall tourism performance. In strategic management terms, the integration of planning and implementation is essential to ensure that development programs remain consistent with organizational goals and capable of responding to environmental challenges (David, 2008; Fahmi, 2017).

Tourism development strategy refers to a set of planned actions designed to identify and optimize tourism potential within a specific area. These strategies involve improvements in both physical and non-physical infrastructure, aiming ultimately to promote community welfare in tourism destination areas. Gagne (in Iskandarwassid & Sunendar, 2015) defines strategy as an individual's internal capacity to think critically, solve problems, and make decisions, while Hornby (in Iskandarwassid & Sunendar, 2015) conceptualizes strategy as a systematic approach to organizing operations, originally rooted in military planning.

In the context of public sector management, strategy represents a structured pattern or framework that integrates organizational objectives, policy directions, and implementation stages into a cohesive whole. A well-formulated strategy facilitates the effective allocation of resources and enables the creation of a distinctive regional profile, reflected through destination image, attraction quality, adequate infrastructure, and the availability of competent human resources to support policy execution.

The following is an overview of the research flow according to the dimensions and development of research instrument indicators in table 2: Furthermore, the results of the field

research in the form of observations, interviews, and documentation studies were then triangulated or combined from the three data sources in accordance with the indicators in the research instruments that have been compiled. From this process, the description and explanation of the research findings were obtained as follows Figure 2:



Figure 2. dimensions and development of research instrument indicators

Image Marketing Dimension

This section begins with a discussion of the image marketing dimension. Based on interviews with several informants, it was revealed that the development of tourism potential and community mindset in Sumedang Regency is essential. Informants emphasized the need for more attractive tourism offerings capable of stimulating public interest, along with improvements in tourism facilities and infrastructure, supported by engaging promotional strategies. This finding supports the argument that destination image is shaped not only by promotional efforts but also by service quality, infrastructure adequacy, and visitor experiences that influence long-term perception (Purwanto & Purnomo, 2020; Yoeti, 2002).

These findings align with theoretical perspectives suggesting that image marketing reflects public perceptions, beliefs, and impressions associated with a particular region. Destination image represents a simplified synthesis of diverse information related to a place. Regarding the positioning indicator, strengthening public perception toward tourism in Sumedang Regency requires the enhancement of local tourism potential and the cultivation of community awareness through attractive destination features. The practical implications include improving tourism facilities and infrastructure and implementing more effective promotional initiatives to increase visitor engagement. This condition reflects that tourism destination competitiveness is closely tied to the ability of local governments to manage public services and tourism governance professionally (Anggara, 2016; Keban, 2004).

Furthermore, in relation to the differentiation indicator, informants stated that each region possesses unique characteristics, thereby necessitating careful analysis to identify tourism products that are suitable for promotion and aligned with market demand. The concept of differentiation in tourism development emphasizes the importance of creating distinctive features that enhance destination competitiveness. By highlighting local uniqueness, tourism destinations can attract visitors from both within and outside the region. This aligns with marketing perspectives which stress that competitiveness is strengthened when destinations offer unique products and clear positioning compared to competitors (David, 2008; Purwanto, 2012). Therefore, emphasizing the distinctive identity of Sumedang Regency and aligning tourism development with appropriate market segmentation are expected to strengthen destination appeal through clearly defined uniqueness.

Regarding the branding indicator, interviews with several informants revealed that the slogan "Hayu Ka Sumedang" functions as an invitation encouraging tourists to visit Sumedang Regency. The slogan reflects the region's tourism potential and positions Sumedang as a promising destination worthy of recommendation. This finding is relevant to tourism marketing concepts which explain that destination branding is a strategic communication process to create a strong destination identity and strengthen tourist attachment to a region (Purwanto, 2012; Yoeti, 2002). From a theoretical perspective, Kuncoro (2004) defines branding as an identity that differentiates individuals, products, and places. Branding represents a strategic communication process aimed at strengthening and maintaining a brand in order to shape public perception. The use of an appealing slogan such as "Hayu Ka

Sumedang” serves as a destination branding instrument that conveys an invitation to visitors while highlighting the diverse tourism assets available in Sumedang Regency.

Attraction Marketing Dimension

Attractions constitute a fundamental factor influencing the decisions of tourists, investors, and capital flows toward a particular destination. Based on interview findings, informants emphasized the necessity of reassessing tourism resources and strengthening destination management in order to optimize tourism development and clarify marketing directions. This finding is consistent with tourism theory which argues that attractions are the core element of tourism competitiveness, as they determine the uniqueness and reasons for visitors to travel to a destination (Pitana & Diarta, 2017; Suwanto, 2004).

From a theoretical perspective, natural resources refer to elements derived from nature that can be utilized to support human livelihoods. In this context, tourism destinations in Sumedang Regency require systematic re-evaluation to enhance their development potential, supported by effective governance mechanisms and clearly defined marketing strategies. This is in line with sustainable tourism development principles, where natural resources must be managed carefully to ensure long-term sustainability and prevent environmental degradation.

Regarding human-made resources, informants highlighted the importance of transforming existing assets into tourism products and determining appropriate market channels. According to Kuncoro (2004), human-made resources result from the enhancement of natural resources aimed at improving quality, capacity, and environmental sustainability, such as artificial forests, reservoirs, and superior land-use systems that support regional development while maintaining ecological balance. This aligns with tourism development perspectives which highlight that artificial attractions can strengthen tourism appeal when supported by planning and destination management strategies (Bambang, 2013; Yoeti, 2002).

Accordingly, this study underscores the need for comprehensive target market analysis to facilitate more effective marketing of tourism resources in Sumedang Regency. Strategic alignment between attraction development and market segmentation is essential to strengthen destination competitiveness and ensure sustainable tourism outcomes (David, 2008; Purwanto, 2012).

Infrastructure Marketing Dimension

Infrastructure constitutes a fundamental foundation for regional marketing and serves as a critical determinant of tourism competitiveness. Adequate infrastructure plays a pivotal role in supporting tourism promotion across destinations. Accessibility refers to the degree of ease with which individuals can reach specific locations, services, or environments. Interview findings indicate that public transportation to tourism destinations in Sumedang Regency remains limited, resulting in most visitors relying on private vehicles to access tourism sites. This reflects the view that tourism development requires the integration of transportation systems and supporting facilities to ensure that destinations are reachable and inclusive (Suwantoro, 2004; Yoeti, 2002).

In this regard, accessibility can also be understood as the level of connectivity between locations through transportation systems. These conditions suggest that infrastructure provision, particularly public transportation services, has not yet been optimally integrated into tourism development planning in Sumedang Regency. Consequently, visitor mobility remains constrained, potentially limiting destination inclusivity and market reach. This finding is consistent with regional development theory which argues that infrastructure is a strategic driver of economic growth and competitiveness in autonomous regions (Kuncoro, 2004).

Furthermore, infrastructure quality significantly influences regional economic activities. Based on informant responses, several access roads leading to tourism destinations in Sumedang Regency are still inadequate, although some are currently undergoing improvement. In addition, tourism facilities and supporting amenities in several locations remain minimal. This situation reflects ongoing challenges in infrastructure governance, indicating the need for accelerated investment in transportation networks and tourism facilities to strengthen destination accessibility and enhance visitor experience (Bambang, 2013; Yoeti, 2002).

People Marketing Dimension

People marketing represents a strategic approach to regional promotion by emphasizing human capital, including public figures, local leaders, competent professionals, entrepreneurs, and community attitudes. Influential individuals, such as regional leaders, artists, and key stakeholders, play an important role in tourism development by shaping public perception and encouraging broader participation. This aligns with public administration

theory which emphasizes that leadership and stakeholder engagement are central in achieving successful policy implementation (Anggara, 2016; Keban, 2004).

Interview findings indicate that the Department of Tourism facilitates engagement with influential figures through coordination meetings aimed at discussing tourism development in Sumedang Regency and encouraging their active contribution to local tourism initiatives. This collaborative approach reflects stakeholder-based governance in destination development, where multi-actor involvement strengthens tourism management effectiveness (Aprilia & Taufiq, 2023; Keban, 2004).

Local leadership also constitutes a critical factor in tourism advancement. Effective regional leadership that recognizes the strategic importance of tourism can accelerate destination growth. Informants reported that regional leaders in Sumedang Regency actively promote tourism through public campaigns, publications, and direct involvement in producing promotional videos, thereby strengthening destination visibility and institutional commitment. Such leadership-driven promotion reflects the role of government institutions in developing regional competitive advantages through strategic planning and implementation (Anggara, 2016; Kuncoro, 2004).

Furthermore, competent professionals and entrepreneurs contribute significantly to local economic development by supporting tourism management and expanding community-based business opportunities. According to interview data, the Department has implemented investment facilitation policies by streamlining licensing procedures, targeting permit completion within a two-week timeframe to encourage investor participation in tourism management. This is relevant to strategic management perspectives which emphasize that organizational competitiveness can be strengthened through improved institutional efficiency and resource utilization (David, 2008; Fahmi, 2017).

Community attitudes play a crucial role in tourism development, as public willingness to support, develop, preserve, and maintain tourism assets facilitates the overall development process. This condition aligns with tourism sociology perspectives which emphasize that local community support is a key factor in shaping tourism sustainability and destination attractiveness (Pitana & Diarta, 2017). Interview findings indicate that continuous promotion is essential, particularly during the pandemic period, when more intensive efforts are required to sustain tourism visibility in Sumedang Regency.

Based on the above findings, several conclusions can be drawn regarding tourism development strategies in Sumedang Regency, particularly within the image marketing dimension. The positioning indicator has been implemented relatively well, as the Department has undertaken various initiatives to attract visitors and reshape public perceptions toward local tourism destinations. Meanwhile, differentiation has been initiated but has not yet reached optimal effectiveness, primarily due to limited understanding of visitor preferences. Consequently, marketing efforts remain largely target-oriented rather than demand-driven. In terms of branding, the Department has demonstrated strong implementation aligned with the regional slogan "*Hayu Ka Sumedang*", which serves as an invitation for the broader community to explore and experience the diverse tourism destinations across Sumedang Regency. This branding strategy reflects institutional efforts to strengthen destination identity and enhance public engagement through positive regional imagery.

Within the attraction marketing dimension, both natural and human-made resource indicators have been implemented relatively well. Prior to promoting or launching tourism initiatives, the Department identifies target market segments and optimizes the utilization of natural and built resources. These assets are subsequently developed and marketed by the local government to ensure broader public appeal. In contrast, the infrastructure marketing dimension, although initiated effectively, has not yet reached optimal performance. Limitations remain in accessibility and infrastructure quality, as several tourism destinations still fail to meet minimum service standards. These challenges include inadequate road conditions leading to tourism sites, limited tourism facilities, and insufficient internet connectivity in certain locations. Meanwhile, the people marketing dimension has been implemented successfully through collaborative efforts involving regional leaders, government agencies, investors, and local communities. Stakeholders demonstrate a shared commitment to strengthening the tourism image of Sumedang Regency to enhance competitiveness and sustainability. Moreover, the Department and local government maintain an open investment climate by welcoming external stakeholders interested in tourism development.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated analysis of tourism development strategies in Sumedang Regency through a destination marketing framework that combines image, attraction, infrastructure, and community engagement dimensions. Furthermore, this research reveals gaps between strategic planning and field-level implementation. The study contributes

empirical insights to regional tourism development in non-primary destinations by offering context-specific and actionable policy recommendations.

CONCLUSION

Tourism development strategies in Sumedang Regency have been implemented through destination branding, attraction development, infrastructure provision, and community participation, but they remain insufficiently optimized, particularly in identifying target markets and improving the quality of supporting destination infrastructure, which in turn reduces the effectiveness of promotion, limits visitor satisfaction and length of stay, and weakens the destination's competitiveness and economic impact on local communities; therefore, priority should be given to developing a market-segmented tourism potential database to improve target market identification, accelerating strategic upgrades to supporting destination infrastructure, and strengthening more focused and targeted promotional initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of public information dissemination and increase Sumedang Regency's competitiveness as a tourism destination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On this occasion, the researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who have supported and assisted in this research, namely:

1. The Rector of Sebelas April University, Sumedang, for his motivation and support throughout this research.
2. Fellow lecturers at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Sebelas April University, for their encouragement and cooperation.
3. My beloved wife and family, as well as my son, for their constant support and prayers.
4. Research colleagues for their excellent collaboration and teamwork

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