

Analysis of Internal and External Factors of Pangandaran Beach's Attractiveness for Foreign Tourists

Internal and External
Factors of Beach
Attractiveness

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ABSTRAK

Pangandaran Beach, a premier West Java destination, offers stunning beaches and rich culture, but it depends heavily on domestic tourists, with international visitors remaining minimal. This gap presents strong potential to enhance global appeal and support Indonesia's tourism foreign exchange goals post-pandemic. This study aims to analyze the internal and external factors affecting Pangandaran Beach's attractiveness to international tourists and assess their influence. A qualitative descriptive case study approach was employed. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants, field observations, and document review. Analysis used the six tourism components framework (attractions, accessibility, amenities, activities, available packages, ancillary services), along with internal factor evaluation, external factor evaluation, and SWOT matrices. Findings reveal a reasonably good internal condition (score 2.569) driven by natural beauty, unique geography, cultural richness, and friendly locals, though weaknesses persist in environmental management, accessibility, amenities quality, and service consistency. The external environment is moderately challenging (score 2.465), with opportunities from nature-culture tourism trends and low competition among Java beaches not yet fully leveraged against threats like degradation and inconsistent practices. Stronger governance, environmental care, better access and services, and stakeholder collaboration are essential to unlock sustainable international competitiveness, driving higher foreign revenue, jobs, and balanced regional tourism growth.

Keywords: 6A Tourism, EFE, Foreign Tourists, IFE, Pangandaran Beach, Sustainable Tourism, SWOT Analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as an archipelago nation, has rich natural and cultural resources that make the tourism sector a key pillar in driving national economic growth. Tourism is considered effective at boosting foreign exchange because all its resources come from within the country (Rahma, 2020). The government targets tourism foreign exchange up to 20 billion US dollars, supported by rising international tourist visits and tourism's position as one of the top three foreign exchange earners alongside crude palm oil and coal (Direktorat Statistik Keuangan, Teknologi Informasi dan Pariwisata, 2024; Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia, 2025).

In 2024, Indonesia received more than 13 million international tourists, employed nearly 25 million workers, and generated 16.7 billion US dollars in foreign exchange (Direktorat Neraca Produksi, 2025). After a sharp drop during the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector recovered strongly from 2022 onward, creating new momentum for national tourism revival and a greater focus on the international market. Business actors in tourism strongly influence visitor numbers through better services and promotions (Abqoriyyah & Sakinah, 2022; Manurung, 2023).

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At the regional level, West Java Province prioritizes tourism for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with emphasis on destination competitiveness (Pemerintah Daerah Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2023). Pangandaran Regency ranks third in tourist visits in West Java in 2023 (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2024). However, visits remain dominated by domestic tourists, with a very low contribution from international tourists. This gap calls for targeted efforts to attract global visitors, as reflected in the provincial tourism master plan for Pangandaran (Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2023) and the regency's 2021-2026 strategic plan (Dinas Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan Kabupaten Pangandaran, 2022).

Pangandaran Regency features six major natural tourism sites, mostly marine-based. Pangandaran Beach is the largest and main destination, covering 916.751 hectares or 54.76% of the total area, followed by Batukaras Beach (18.57%), Karapyak Beach (13.20%), Madasari Beach (11.78%), Batu Hiu Beach (1.09%), and Green Canyon (0.59%). Pangandaran Beach stands out with its sloping beach, complete facilities, and diverse natural and cultural attractions (Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2023). Yet challenges such as post-disaster recovery, environmental pressure from tourism expansion, and the need for stronger local participation remain important (Nugroho et al., 2013; Dahliah, 2024; Abdurrahman et al., 2025; Ashaf et al., 2025).

Despite its potential, previous studies show a clear research gap in analyzing internal and external factors specifically to attract international tourists to Pangandaran Beach. According to Nugroho et al. (2013) and Hadipuro (2023), ecotourism strategies after the tsunami focused on environmental recovery but paid little attention to international preferences. Hasibuan et al. (2022) and Hamali et al. (2023) proposed general development strategies for competitiveness, yet did not apply the 6A framework for foreign visitors. Hasibuan (2019) used QSPM for area planning, but the focus stayed domestic without a deep internal evaluation for global markets. Azizah et al. (2023) and Iswahyudi et al. (2023) reviewed tourism office strategies in 2020-2021, highlighting policy execution, but overlooked external trends like sustainable travel demands. Fauzi et al. (2019) examined infrastructure growth after regency formation, noting economic gains, yet ignored specific barriers for international tourists, such as access and amenities. Nurhayati et al. (2022) valued marine tourism economics in nearby Batukaras, but did not link it to strategic tools like IFE and EFE for Pangandaran as a whole. These works offer useful local insights but lack a comprehensive internal-external analysis tailored to international tourists under the framework of Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism (Republic of Indonesia, 2009).

Given these conditions, suitable strategies are needed to enhance appeal for international tourists. The 6A framework (attractions, amenities, accessibility, activities, available packages, ancillary services) provides a relevant international benchmark (Buhalis, 1998). Strategic management theory supports the analysis of internal and external factors for effective, sustainable planning (Wheelen, 2018). This study, therefore, uses SWOT, IFE, and EFE matrices to identify and measure the influence of key factors. The main purpose is to analyze the internal and external environment of Pangandaran Beach and assess how these factors affect its attractiveness to international tourists. Through this qualitative approach, the research aims to fill the identified gap and offer practical insights for improving global competitiveness (Adinugraha & Rismawati, 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism and Foreign Tourists

Tourism is a multidimensional sector that involves temporary travel activities supported by various facilities and services. According to the Indonesian Law Number 10 of 2009 on Tourism, tourism includes interactions among tourists, local communities, business operators, and the government, playing a vital role in promoting economic growth and regional development (Republic of Indonesia, 2009). This law emphasizes tourism as a strategic tool for national development, encouraging sustainable practices

and community involvement. The sector not only generates income but also creates jobs and preserves cultural heritage. Rahma (2020) highlights that Indonesia's abundant natural resources and cultural diversity provide strong potential for tourism growth, making it a key driver for foreign exchange and local economies. Understanding these elements helps in building effective tourism policies. Manurung (2023) and Kusumawardhani et al. (2025) add that business actors in tourism significantly influence visitor numbers through service quality and marketing efforts, which directly affect destination appeal. Tourism serves as a bridge between economic benefits and cultural exchange.

International tourists are people who travel to a country other than their residence for less than one year, not for work purposes. The UNWTO classifies international visitors into tourists (with overnight stays) and excursionists (day visitors), based on length of stay (Mahendrayani & Suryawan, 2018; Manurung, 2023). The Central Bureau of Statistics defines them as cross-border travelers whose main purpose is leisure, business, or other non-employment activities (Direktorat Neraca Produksi, 2025). Knowing the characteristics of these tourists is essential for identifying opportunities and challenges in destination development (Direktorat Statistik Keuangan, Teknologi Informasi dan Pariwisata, 2024). Their preferences often focus on unique experiences, safety, and easy access, which shape how destinations position themselves globally. This understanding supports targeted strategies to increase international arrivals and spending.

Tourist Attractions and the 6A Concept of Tourism

Tourist attractions are the main factor influencing a visitor's decision to choose a destination. It comes from unique natural features, cultural elements, and historical aspects that create a destination's identity and competitiveness. Indonesia benefits greatly from its diverse natural and cultural resources, offering high potential for tourism development (Rahma, 2020; Mariyono, 2024). Attractions must be well-managed to maintain appeal over time. Matheus (2024) and Prihadi et al. (2024) explain that a destination's success depends on how well it combines various components to deliver a complete tourist experience. The 6A framework includes attractions (core draws like nature or culture), accessibility (ease of reaching the place), amenities (supporting facilities like hotels and restaurants), activities (things to do), available packages (organized tours or deals), and ancillary services (additional supports like information centers). This model helps evaluate destinations holistically, especially for international markets where expectations are higher. It provides a practical way to assess strengths and gaps in tourism offerings. Many studies apply this framework to improve competitiveness and visitor satisfaction (Ramadhania, 2024; Syuhada, 2024).

The 6A concept is particularly useful for destinations aiming to attract international tourists because it covers both tangible and intangible elements of the travel experience. For example, good accessibility and high-quality amenities can make even a remote natural site more appealing to global visitors who value convenience and comfort. When these components are balanced, destinations can create memorable and repeat visits. Tresna and Nirmalasari (2018) note that sustainable competitive advantage in tourism products, such as those in Pangandaran, relies heavily on integrating these elements effectively to stand out in a crowded market. This approach ensures that attractions remain the core while supported by strong operational aspects.

Strategic Management, SWOT, IFE, and EFE

Strategic management involves a series of decisions and actions that determine the long-term performance of an organization or destination. The process includes environmental scanning, strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Wheelen, 2018; Ramdhani et al., 2021; Rapingah et al., 2022). In tourism, the focus often lies on scanning internal and external environments to identify key factors for sustainable growth. This approach ensures strategies align with changing conditions. David et al. (2020) describe tools like IFE and EFE matrices as ways to quantify internal

strengths/weaknesses and external opportunities/threats through weighting and rating. SWOT analysis, introduced by Albert Humphrey, offers a descriptive tool to examine internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats) factors (Fatimah, 2016). It remains widely used for its simplicity in planning and understanding competitive position. These tools together support better decision-making in tourism by providing structured insights into what drives success or poses risks. They are particularly useful for destinations aiming to attract more international visitors by addressing both local capabilities and global trends. Combining them helps formulate strategies that are realistic and effective.

In practice, these strategic tools allow destinations to prioritize actions based on measurable factors. For instance, IFE helps evaluate how well internal resources are utilized, while EFE assesses the ability to respond to external changes (Wulandari & Ashgaf, 2023; Wulandari, 2024). David et al. (2020) emphasize that proper weighting and rating reduce subjectivity and make the analysis more reliable for planning. When applied to tourism sites, such as coastal areas, these matrices can reveal gaps in infrastructure or market positioning. Martasuganda et al. (2020) demonstrate how similar strategic approaches have been used to guide coastal tourism development in Pangandaran, showing the value of structured environmental analysis in building long-term competitiveness.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design to examine the internal and external factors influencing the attractiveness of Pangandaran Beach for international tourists. The choice of qualitative method allows for an in-depth understanding of the destination's current condition, challenges, and opportunities through rich, contextual data. A case study is particularly suitable because it focuses on a specific real-life phenomenon within its natural setting, enabling detailed exploration of complex tourism dynamics in one particular location. The research was conducted at Pangandaran Beach, located in Pangandaran Regency, West Java Province, which was selected due to its status as the primary and most visited tourism object in the regency, yet still showing limited appeal to foreign visitors compared to its strong domestic market.

Data were collected using multiple techniques to ensure comprehensive and trustworthy findings. Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants who possess relevant knowledge and experience in the tourism sector. These informants included representatives from local government tourism offices, academics with expertise in tourism studies, tourism business operators, certified tour guides, and a number of international tourists who had recently visited the area. Direct field observations were also carried out at various points along the beach, supporting facilities, and surrounding areas to capture real-time conditions and practices. In addition, secondary data were obtained from official documents such as tourism master plans, statistical reports, strategic planning documents of the regency and province, as well as relevant academic literature and previous studies on Pangandaran tourism. The combination of these sources helps build a complete picture of the destination's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats.

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings, data validation was performed through triangulation. Triangulation involved cross-checking information obtained from different informants, comparing interview results with direct observations, and aligning primary findings with secondary documents. This process reduces potential bias and increases confidence in the conclusions drawn. The analysis followed a structured yet flexible approach. First, descriptive analysis was applied to describe the current state of Pangandaran Beach based on the 6A tourism framework, which covers attractions, accessibility, amenities, activities, available packages, and ancillary services. Next, strategic management tools were employed: the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) matrix to assess internal strengths and weaknesses, and the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrix to evaluate external opportunities and threats. Both matrices used weighting and

rating systems to quantify the relative importance and performance of each factor. Finally, SWOT analysis was conducted by synthesizing the results from the descriptive 6A review and the IFE/EFE matrices, providing a clear foundation for understanding the strategic position of the destination in attracting international tourists.

RESULTS

Evaluation of Pangandaran Beach using the 6A Tourism Framework

This section presents the key findings from the analysis of Pangandaran Beach as a tourism destination, with a particular focus on its attractiveness to international tourists. The results are organized into three main parts: first, an evaluation of the destination using the 6A tourism framework; second, a detailed SWOT analysis derived from the 6A assessment and field observations; and third, the quantitative evaluation through IFE and EFE matrices. These findings highlight the destination's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats, providing a clear basis for understanding its current strategic position.

Pangandaran Beach stands out as the flagship marine tourism destination in Pangandaran Regency, characterized by fine sandy beaches, relatively calm waters, and a unique geographical feature that allows visitors to enjoy both sunrise and sunset in the same area. It also includes a nature reserve and a rich local culture, which together contribute significantly to the regency's original local tourism revenue, despite temporary setbacks during the COVID-19 pandemic and a gradual recovery starting in 2021 (Dinas Pariwisata dan Kebudayaan Kabupaten Pangandaran, 2022). The analysis of the 6A tourism components reveals both strong potential and notable challenges when viewed from the perspective of international tourists.

Table 1. 6A Analysis of Pangandaran Beach Tourism

6A Aspect	Current Condition	Problems
Attractions	1. Beautiful and spacious beach 2. Sunrise and sunset in one area 3. Relatively safe waves 4. Nature reserve 5. Arts, culture, and historical heritage 6. Tourism village	1. Waste and pollution issues 2. Environmental degradation 3. Overcrowded atmosphere 4. Poorly organized tourism management 5. Insufficient tourism promotion
Accessibility	1. Reliance on land transportation 2. Train access to Banjar/Sidareja 3. Limited airport access	1. Long travel time 2. Limited public transportation 3. Minimal English-language signage 4. No toll road or direct railway access
Amenities	1. Diverse accommodation options 2. Varied seafood and local cuisine 3. Adequate tourism security 4. Availability of healthcare facilities	1. Public toilets below international standards 2. Inconsistent cleanliness 3. Limited international food options 4. The Tourist Information Center (TIC) is not fully functional 5. Limited English proficiency among staff
Available Packages	1. Beach, nature, and cultural packages 2. Tourism village packages 3. <i>Becak</i> (pedicab) tour packages	1. Packages are not well packaged 2. Packages are not well-known among foreign tourists 3. Lack of promotion for tour packages
Activities	1. Swimming 2. Surfing 3. Snorkeling 4. Leisure walking 5. Village tourism 6. <i>Becak</i> tour 7. Watersports 8. Sunbathing	1. Activities are not yet well scheduled
Ancillary Services	1. Tourism Office 2. Tour guides 3. Lifeguards 4. Local security (<i>Jaga Lembur</i>)	1. Weak coordination among tourism stakeholders

6A Aspect	Current Condition	Problems
	5. Tourism organizations (ASITA, HPI, PHRI)	

Table 1 summarizes the current condition and main issues for each of the 6A elements at Pangandaran Beach. In terms of attractions, the destination offers beautiful, wide beaches, the unique sunrise-sunset experience in one location, safe waves for swimming, a nature reserve, and authentic local arts, culture, and village life. However, problems such as waste accumulation, environmental degradation, overcrowding during peak seasons, disorganized spatial layout, and limited cultural promotion reduce the overall quality. Accessibility relies heavily on land transportation, with train services only reaching Banjar or Sidareja stations, and limited airport options nearby. This results in long travel times, insufficient public transport, minimal English signage, and the absence of toll roads or direct high-speed rail connections, making it less convenient for foreign visitors. Amenities include a variety of accommodations, diverse seafood and Indonesian cuisine, reasonable security, and basic health facilities. Yet, public toilets do not meet international standards, cleanliness is inconsistent, international menu options are limited, the tourist information center functions poorly, and many staff members lack adequate English proficiency. Available packages cover beach, nature, cultural, village tourism, and *becak* (cycle rickshaw) tours, but these are not well-packaged, rarely promoted to foreigners, and lack strong marketing efforts. Activities include swimming, surfing, snorkeling, leisurely walks, village tours, watersports, and sunbathing, though most are not scheduled or organized systematically. Ancillary services involve the tourism office, certified guides, lifeguards, security personnel, and professional associations such as ASITA, HPI, and PHRI, but coordination among stakeholders remains weak.

Pangandaran Beach possesses strong natural and cultural attractions that align well with the preferences of many international tourists, particularly those seeking authentic beach and eco-cultural experiences. Nevertheless, declining environmental quality, poor waste management, seasonal overcrowding, inadequate spatial planning, and inconsistent promotion threaten long-term appeal. Accessibility remains a major barrier due to extended travel times and limited multilingual support. While amenities exist in sufficient quantity, their quality often falls short of international expectations, especially in cleanliness, variety of global cuisine, staff language skills, and consistent service standards. Packages and activities show good potential but require better curation, integration, and international marketing. Ancillary services are present, yet stronger stakeholder collaboration is needed to create a seamless visitor experience.

SWOT Analysis and Strategy for International Tourist Attractions

The SWOT analysis, built upon the 6A evaluation and supported by interviews and observations, identifies nine strengths, nine weaknesses, nine opportunities, and six threats relevant to attracting international tourists. Strengths include the diverse and stunning natural beauty that serves as the primary draw for foreign visitors; the unique geography allowing varied nature-based experiences in one place, rich local arts, culture, and history that strengthen destination identity, a wide range of nature and marine activities matching international preferences, generally friendly local communities that enhance visitor comfort, adequate security supported by lifeguards and authorities, diverse accommodation and dining options for different segments, availability of certified international tour guides, and potential for tourism events to boost global exposure. Weaknesses encompass declining environmental and natural quality that diminishes appeal, low awareness among some residents and businesses about sustainable tourism practices, suboptimal spatial arrangement of the tourism area, limited international cuisine and special dietary options, insufficient facilities tailored for foreign tourists, and restricted accessibility with long travel times. uneven foreign language proficiency and service quality among tourism workers, persistent practices of price markups and

unofficial fees that harm trust, and limited promotion of tourism and culture, resulting in low awareness among international markets.

Opportunities arise from global trends favoring nature, culture, history, and authentic local lifestyles, potential to host arts and cultural performances, possibilities for international-scale tourism events, presence of village tourism to diversify products and extend visitor stays, relatively low competition among beach destinations in Java, upcoming transport infrastructure improvements that could enhance access, and opportunities to develop peaceful, tranquil atmospheres attractive during low seasons. Threats include risks from natural disasters and coastal erosion, suboptimal waste and wastewater management that could create negative perceptions, practices of scams, unofficial fees, and price gouging that erode confidence, competition from better-organized and more accessible beach destinations, shifting global preferences demanding higher cleanliness and sustainability standards, and the spread of negative reviews or misinformation online that damages reputation.

Internal and External Factors Analysis through IFE and EFE Matrix

The IFE matrix quantifies the internal position of Pangandaran Beach. Table 2 presents the IFE matrix. The total weighted score is 2.569, slightly above the average of 2.50, indicating that the internal condition is reasonably good but not yet optimal. Strengths, particularly natural beauty, geographical uniqueness, cultural richness, community friendliness, and certified guides, receive high ratings and contribute positively. However, weaknesses such as environmental decline, accessibility limitations, service inconsistencies, and poor promotion still exert significant drag, suggesting that internal strengths currently offset weaknesses moderately but require stronger management to maximize potential.

Table 2. IFE Matrix of Pangandaran Beach for International Tourists

Factors	Internal Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Strengths	The natural beauty of Pangandaran is highly diverse and serves as a major attraction for international tourists.	0.0637	3	0.191
	Unique geographical features allow tourists to enjoy multiple nature-based experiences within a single destination.	0.0577	3	0.173
	Rich local arts, culture, and historical heritage strengthen the destination's identity.	0.0531	3	0.159
	A wide range of nature and marine tourism activities aligned with international tourist preferences.	0.0561	3	0.168
	Friendly local community attitudes that support tourist comfort.	0.0607	3	0.182
	Adequate security system supported by lifeguards and relevant authorities.	0.0546	3	0.164
	Availability of diverse accommodations and restaurants catering to various tourist segments.	0.0546	3	0.164
	Availability of certified international tour guides.	0.0607	3	0.182
	Presence of tourism events with potential to enhance Pangandaran's international exposure.	0.0486	3	0.146
Weaknesses	Declining environmental and natural quality may reduce destination attractiveness.	0.0577	2	0.115
	Low awareness among local communities and business actors regarding sustainable tourism development.	0.0592	2	0.118
	Tourism area management and spatial planning remain suboptimal.	0.0546	2	0.109
	Limited international culinary options and special menus for foreign tourists.	0.0395	2	0.079
	Limited supporting facilities for international tourists.	0.0561	2	0.112
	Limited accessibility to Pangandaran, with relatively long travel times.	0.0546	2	0.109
	Limited foreign language proficiency and uneven service quality among tourism human resources.	0.0501	2	0.100
	Ongoing price markups and illegal fees may harm tourists.	0.0592	2	0.118

Factors	Internal Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
	Limited tourism and cultural promotion result in low international awareness of the destination.	0.0592	3	0.178
	TOTAL	1.000		2.569

The EFE matrix assesses the destination's response to the external environment. Table 3 shows the EFE matrix with a total weighted score of 2.465, slightly below the average of 2.50. This reflects a moderately challenging external situation. Key opportunities stem from nature- and culture-based tourism trends and low beach competition in Java, yet these are not fully capitalized upon. Major threats include poor waste management, unethical practices, stronger competing destinations, evolving global demands for sustainability, and negative digital publicity. The score indicates that while the destination has some capacity to respond, it faces difficulties in exploiting opportunities and mitigating threats effectively.

Table 3. EFE Matrix of Pangandaran Beach for International Tourists

Factors	External Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Opportunities	Tourism trends focus on natural beauty, arts, culture, history, and traditional local lifestyles.	0.0799	3	0.240
	Pangandaran's potential as a venue for cultural and artistic events.	0.0738	3	0.221
	Opportunities to host international-scale tourism events.	0.0738	2	0.148
	The presence of tourism villages can increase product variety and length of stay.	0.0574	2	0.115
	Relatively low competition among beach tourism destinations on Java Island.	0.0738	3	0.221
	Development of transportation infrastructure that may improve destination accessibility.	0.0861	2	0.172
	Opportunities to develop a calm and peaceful tourism atmosphere to attract international tourists, especially during the low season.	0.0738	2	0.148
Threats	Risk of natural disasters and coastal abrasion that may reduce destination attractiveness.	0.0820	2	0.164
	Suboptimal waste and pollution management may create a negative destination image.	0.0861	3	0.258
	Fraud, illegal fees, and price markups may reduce tourist trust.	0.0799	3	0.240
	Competition from other beach destinations that are better managed and more accessible.	0.0717	3	0.215
	Changes in global tourist preferences that increasingly demand cleanliness and sustainability.	0.0779	2	0.156
	The spread of negative reviews and hoaxes on digital media may damage the destination's reputation.	0.0840	2	0.168
	Total	1.000		2.465

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings in relation to existing literature and highlights their implications for Pangandaran Beach's development as an international tourism destination. The analysis confirms that Pangandaran Beach holds strong potential due to its natural beauty, unique geography that allows sunrise and sunset views in one area, a nature reserve, and authentic local culture, which align well with global preferences for nature-based and cultural tourism (Rahma, 2020). These attractions form the core strength, consistent with Buhalis (1998), who stresses that unique and authentic experiences are critical for competitiveness in international markets. The 6A framework evaluation reveals that while attractions remain a major asset, other components, particularly accessibility, amenities quality, and service consistency, lag behind, creating gaps that hinder appeal to foreign tourists.

The IFE score of 2.569 indicates a reasonably good internal condition where strengths still outweigh weaknesses, though not optimally exploited. This supports Wheelen (2018) in emphasizing that internal capabilities must be leveraged effectively through better

governance to sustain long-term advantages. Key strengths such as community friendliness, certified guides, and diverse activities match findings from local studies, for instance, Tresna and Nirmalasari (2018), who noted sustainable competitive advantages in Pangandaran's tourism products when community and natural elements are integrated. However, weaknesses like environmental degradation, price markups, limited English proficiency among staff, and poor waste management echo concerns raised in previous research. According to Abdurrahman et al. (2025), tourism-driven urban expansion in Pangandaran has led to land cover changes that threaten environmental quality, while Nugroho et al. (2013) highlighted similar post-disaster recovery challenges that affect natural appeal if not addressed sustainably.

The EFE score of 2.465 suggests a challenging external environment, with opportunities from global trends in nature and culture tourism, low competition among Java beaches, and potential infrastructure improvements that are present but underutilized. David et al. (2020) and Fathor et al. (2025) argue that destinations scoring below average on EFE often struggle to respond to external dynamics, which aligns here with threats such as competing better-managed beaches, shifting preferences for sustainability, and negative online reviews. Martasuganda et al. (2020) similarly found in their coastal strategy study for Pangandaran that external factors like environmental risks and competition require proactive responses. The gap between potential and realization is evident in the limited exploitation of village tourism and international events, as noted by Ashaf et al. (2025) regarding local participation in water-based attractions.

These findings indicate that the primary challenge for Pangandaran Beach is not a lack of inherent potential but rather deficiencies in destination governance, service quality, environmental management, and integration of tourism components. This is consistent with broader strategic management principles that stress the need for alignment between internal resources and external conditions (Wheelen, 2018). Compared to nearby sites like Batukaras, where economic valuation showed high marine tourism value (Nurhayati et al., 2022), Pangandaran has a greater scale but faces similar issues in sustainability and accessibility. The persistence of unethical practices and poor coordination among stakeholders further undermines trust, a concern also raised in Hasibuan (2024) regarding general destination competitiveness in the area.

The implications of this study are significant for policymakers, tourism managers, and local communities. Improving governance through stronger environmental protection, standardized amenities, multilingual training for staff, and ethical service practices could substantially elevate international appeal. Leveraging opportunities such as global sustainable tourism trends and infrastructure developments requires collaborative efforts among government, businesses, and residents to package authentic experiences effectively. By addressing these gaps, Pangandaran Beach can transition from a predominantly domestic destination to a more competitive international one, contributing to higher foreign exchange earnings, job creation, and sustainable local development as envisioned in national and regional tourism policies.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Pangandaran Beach has high potential to be developed as a tourism destination for international tourists, mainly because of its superior natural attractions, such as beautiful beaches, the unique geographical feature that allows visitors to enjoy both sunrise and sunset in the same area, and authentic local culture. The IFE analysis shows that the internal condition is in a reasonably good category with a score of 2.569, where internal strengths are still able to cover the existing weaknesses, even though their utilization is not yet optimal. On the other hand, the EFE score of 2.465 indicates that the external environment is in a quite challenging situation, with significant opportunities such as trends in nature and culture tourism, as well as low beach competition on Java Island that have not been maximized to counter threats like suboptimal environmental management and inconsistent service practices.

Practically, these findings indicate that enhancing attractiveness for international tourists requires great improvements in destination governance, environmental protection, accessibility, amenities quality, and professionalism of tourism human resources. However, this study has several limitations, such as its qualitative nature, which relies on subjective interpretation in the IFE and EFE matrix assessments, the limited number of informants, and the lack of direct quantitative data from surveys of international tourists, which may affect the generalizability of the results. For future research, it is recommended to conduct follow-up studies using mixed methods that involve large-scale surveys of international tourists, apply more structured matrix evaluation methods, such as Delphi, to reduce subjectivity, and develop priority strategies using tools like QSPM to provide more operational and measurable recommendations for destination managers.

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