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SWOT analysis for optimizing sustainable agrotourism development in rural hill areas

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ABSTRACT

Background: Awila Hills Agrotourism is a local agricultural center characterized by diverse horticultural production, including cayenne pepper, curly chili, corn, long beans, pumpkin, mustard greens, and tomatoes. Beyond its role as a tourist attraction, this agrotourism area maintains strong economic linkages with surrounding communities, where local residents regularly purchase fresh agricultural products directly from farmers. This interaction supports a stable local market and strengthens community participation, highlighting the importance of integrated and sustainable agrotourism development. **Methods:** This study was conducted from April to May 2025 using a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative descriptive analyses. A SWOT analysis framework was applied to identify and evaluate internal and external factors influencing the development potential of Awila Hills Agrotourism, thereby supporting strategic decision-making. **Findings:** The analysis indicates that the Strength–Opportunity (S–O) strategy achieved the highest priority score of 3.42, making it the most feasible development strategy. This approach emphasizes leveraging internal strengths to capitalize on external opportunities. Key recommended actions include optimizing natural landscapes and visitor comfort through targeted digital media promotion, developing educational tourism packages that integrate agricultural activities with environmental learning, and maintaining cleanliness and comfort to align with government tourism development programs. **Conclusion:** The prioritization of the S–O strategy underscores the importance of maximizing natural resources and educational potential to increase visitor numbers and enhance local economic benefits. This strategy supports sustainable agrotourism development by balancing tourism growth, community welfare, and environmental conservation. **Novelty/Originality of this Article:** This study offers a strategic development model for agrotourism by integrating SWOT-based analysis with educational tourism and community economic linkages. The findings provide a practical and replicable framework for sustainable agrotourism development in similar rural and agricultural tourism destinations.

KEYWORDS: agrotourism development; educational tourism; horticultural diversity; S-O strategy; SWOT analysis.

1. Introduction

A development strategy is a planned action that requires top management decisions in business development to realize it. A development strategy also affects the life of an organization in the long term, at least for five years. The nature of a development strategy is future-oriented. A development strategy has a formulation function and considers the internal and external factors faced by the company (David, 2004).

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Strategy formulation is a process of developing long-term plans aimed at effectively managing opportunities and threats from the external environment. This process is carried out by considering the internal strengths and weaknesses of the company. The resulting strategy is specific and tailored to the functional management activities within the organization (Hunger & Wheelen, 2003).

Tourism development in Southeast Sulawesi has experienced considerable growth in line with improvements in accessibility, amenities, and supporting facilities for travel to tourist destinations. Tourism activities directly involve the community, bringing various benefits to the local community and its surroundings. The benefits of tourism can be seen from various aspects, namely economic, socio-cultural, environmental, social, and scientific benefits, as well as opportunities (Brata, 2023).

Agrotourism is an agribusiness venture that provides a new image of agriculture in terms of diversification and quality improvement that is unique in nature. The agrotourism business venture emphasizes selling services in the form of areas or agricultural products that have a specific appeal to consumers. The quality of life of farmers can be improved by utilizing their agricultural resources through agrotourism, thereby becoming a source of economic growth for farming households (Kurniasanti, 2019).

Agrotourism is a form of rural tourism that offers agricultural activities as tourist attractions and involves residents in the planning and management of agrotourism areas. Agrotourism is a business conducted by farmers who work in the agricultural sector for the enjoyment and education of visitors. Agrotourism provides potential sources of income and increases community profits. Visitors to agrotourism areas can interact directly with farmers and indirectly support the improvement of agricultural products (Andiri, 2013).

Agrotourism is a form of tourism that focuses on agricultural, plantation, and agribusiness activities. Well-managed agrotourism can reduce the risk of environmental damage by implementing sustainable agricultural practices and maintaining ecosystem balance. Sustainable agrotourism not only serves as an economic solution but also as a means to preserve the environment and local culture (Sumandya et al., 2024).

The benefits of developing environmentally friendly agrotourism include exploring the potential of agricultural cultivation and tourism attractions, while also saving the environment by developing agricultural cultivation, which means continuously maintaining the ecosystem. Developing agricultural cultivation will keep the soil surface covered by plants, which will prevent erosion or the wearing away of the soil surface layer. In addition, the environmental benefits of eco-friendly tourism include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, preserving biodiversity, and restoring damaged ecosystems (Pamulardi, 2006).
Awila Hills Agrotourism is located in the Molawe District, North Konawe Regency. Awila Hills Agrotourism has various types of horticultural crops that are cultivated. The horticultural commodities most commonly cultivated each season are chili peppers, curly peppers, corn, long beans, squash, cabbage, and tomatoes. Residents also often come to purchase agricultural products (Sadimantara, 2022).

Awila Hills Agrotourism is located on the border of Molawe District and Andowia District, precisely in Awila Puncak Village. Visitors are not charged to enjoy the beauty of Awila Hills. The management has also provided several facilities such as seating areas, wooden gazebos, and villas to support visitors' tourism activities. Agrowisata Awila Hills can be reached by car or motorcycle. The route from Kendari City to North Konawe takes approximately 2 hours, depending on traffic and weather conditions. The road surface leading to Agrowisata Awila Hills is very smooth, although there are potholes in some places. To facilitate travel for tourists, directions are provided through a map application.

Agrowisata Awila Hills has beautiful scenery and cool air, offering a peaceful atmosphere for recreation that makes visitors feel at home while exploring the vegetable gardens. The green plants and well-maintained gardens are beautiful to look at and also produce oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, and clean pollutants from the air. Polluted air is absorbed by plants, helping living creatures obtain clean air. If these conditions can be maintained and preserved, Awila Hills Agrotourism, as an environmentally-friendly tourist attraction, will provide many benefits for the environment, economy, and local community.

However, the problems faced by Awila Hills Agrotourism are the lack of visitors, poorly maintained facilities, and a lack of promotion on social media to attract visitors. Agrowisata Awila Hills was inaugurated in 2019 and is managed by the North Konawe Regional Government. When it first opened, this agrotourism site attracted many tourists, but the number of visitors declined due to COVID-19, which brought about major changes in people's tourism patterns. To date, Agrowisata Awila Hills has experienced a decline in the number of visitors.

In the context of regional development, the formulation of a development strategy for agrotourism requires an integrated approach that aligns natural resource potential, community participation, institutional support, and market dynamics. Strategic planning in agrotourism is not merely oriented toward increasing visitor numbers but also toward ensuring long-term sustainability through balanced economic, social, and environmental objectives. This aligns with the concept of sustainable tourism development, which emphasizes meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to benefit from available resources.

The development of agrotourism in rural areas such as Awila Hills has strategic importance because it offers alternative livelihood opportunities for local communities while reducing dependence on single-sector agriculture. By integrating tourism with agricultural production, agrotourism creates value-added activities that can enhance farmers' income stability. This diversification is particularly important in regions vulnerable to market price fluctuations and climate variability. Through agrotourism, agricultural products are not only valued as commodities but also as experiential and educational assets that attract visitors and generate additional revenue streams.

Community involvement plays a central role in the success of agrotourism development. Active participation of local residents in planning, implementation, and management strengthens a sense of ownership and responsibility toward the agrotourism area. When communities perceive direct benefits, such as increased income, employment opportunities, and improved infrastructure, they are more likely to support conservation efforts and maintain the quality of the tourism environment. In Awila Hills Agrotourism, the existing practice of local residents purchasing agricultural products directly from farmers demonstrates a foundation of community-based economic interaction that can be further strengthened through structured agrotourism programs.

From an institutional perspective, government involvement is crucial in providing policy direction, infrastructure development, and promotional support. As Awila Hills Agrotourism is managed by the North Konawe Regional Government, strategic alignment with regional tourism development plans becomes a key factor in its revitalization. Government-led initiatives, such as improving access roads, upgrading basic facilities, and integrating Awila Hills into regional tourism promotion campaigns, can significantly enhance its competitiveness. In addition, collaboration with educational institutions, tourism agencies, and private sector partners can broaden the scope of agrotourism activities and improve service quality.

The SWOT analysis results indicate that the S–O strategy is the most appropriate development option for Awila Hills Agrotourism. This strategy emphasizes the utilization of internal strengths, such as natural beauty, cool climate, agricultural diversity, and accessibility, to capitalize on external opportunities, including increasing interest in nature-based tourism, educational tourism, and environmentally-friendly travel trends. By focusing on strengths rather than merely addressing weaknesses, the S–O strategy provides a proactive development pathway that is adaptive to changing tourism preferences.

One of the key strategic actions is enhancing digital promotion through social media and online platforms. In the current tourism landscape, digital visibility significantly influences travel decisions. The lack of consistent promotion has limited the exposure of Awila Hills Agrotourism to wider audiences, particularly younger travelers who rely heavily on social media for destination discovery. Systematic digital marketing, including visual storytelling, visitor testimonials, and educational content about agricultural activities, can increase awareness and attract new visitor segments.

Educational tourism represents another strategic opportunity that aligns well with the characteristics of Awila Hills Agrotourism. By offering structured learning experiences related to horticultural cultivation, sustainable farming practices, and environmental conservation, the agrotourism site can differentiate itself from conventional nature-based destinations. Educational tourism packages can target students, researchers, and families seeking meaningful travel experiences, thereby extending the duration of visits and increasing visitor expenditure.

Facility maintenance and cleanliness are fundamental factors influencing visitor satisfaction and repeat visits. Poorly maintained facilities can undermine the overall tourism experience, regardless of the attractiveness of natural resources. Therefore, improving facility management, including regular maintenance of gazebos, seating areas, and access paths, is essential to support the S–O strategy. Clean and comfortable facilities also strengthen alignment with government tourism standards and enhance eligibility for tourism development assistance programs.

The decline in visitor numbers following the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the vulnerability of tourism-dependent destinations to external shocks. However, it also presents an opportunity to redesign tourism products in response to evolving visitor preferences. Post-pandemic tourism trends show increasing demand for open spaces, low-density destinations, and health-conscious travel experiences. Awila Hills Agrotourism, with its open agricultural landscape and natural environment, is well-positioned to respond to these trends if supported by appropriate management strategies.

Environmental sustainability remains a critical consideration in agrotourism development. Agricultural landscapes that are well-managed can provide ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, air purification, and biodiversity conservation. Maintaining plant cover and implementing environmentally-friendly cultivation practices help prevent soil erosion and land degradation. By integrating conservation principles into tourism activities, Awila Hills Agrotourism can serve as a practical example of how tourism and environmental stewardship can coexist.

In the long term, the success of Awila Hills Agrotourism depends on the consistency of strategic implementation and continuous evaluation. Development strategies should be periodically reviewed to respond to changes in market conditions, environmental constraints, and community needs. Monitoring visitor satisfaction, economic impacts, and environmental indicators will provide valuable feedback for adaptive management. Through a well-formulated and consistently implemented development strategy, Awila Hills Agrotourism has the potential to regain visitor interest, strengthen local economic resilience, and contribute to sustainable regional tourism development in North Konawe Regency.

2. Methods

This research was conducted in April-May in Awila Village, Molawe District, North Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, located at coordinates 3° 35 '54.31 " South Latitude and 122° 7' 41.34" East Longitude. Molawe Subdistrict is part of North Konawe Regency, which was formed based on Law Number 03 of 2010 concerning the formation of Level II Regencies in Southeast Sulawesi Province. Geographically, Molawe Subdistrict is located in the northern part of North Konawe Regency, extending from north to south between 02°97′ and 03°86′ South Latitude and from west to east between 121°49′ and 122°49′ East Longitude. Based on this geographical position, Awila Puncak 4 Village is administratively bounded by Lahimbua Village to the north, Awila Village to the east, Molore Village to the south, and Mowundo Village to the west.

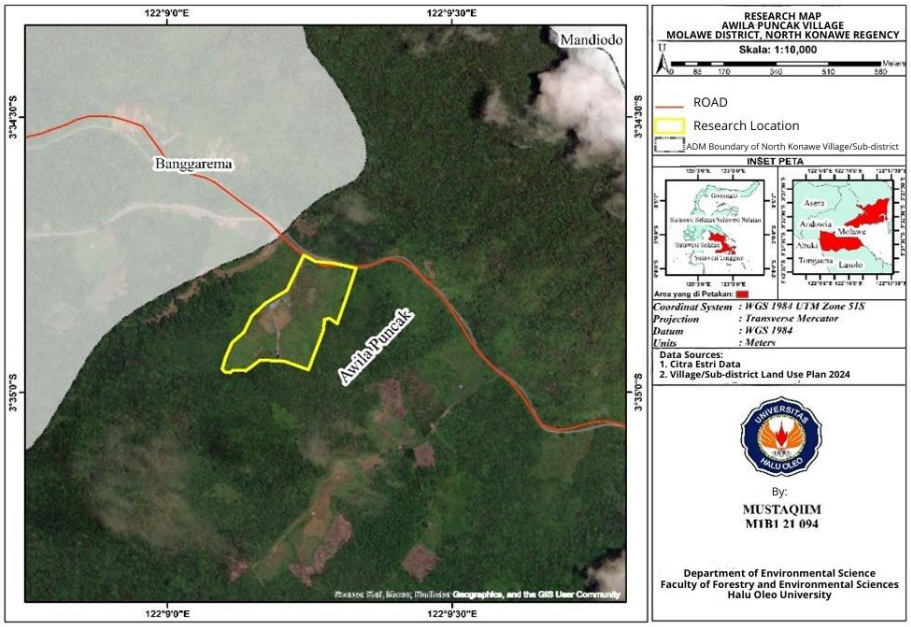

Fig. 1. Map of the research location (Konawe District)

The topography of North Konawe Regency, Molawe District, is generally mountainous, undulating, and hilly, surrounding lowlands that are highly potential for agricultural development. The topography of Awila Puncak Village, which is part of Molawe District, is generally dominated by hilly and highland areas. This village is located not far from the city center, but has a fairly high elevation compared to coastal areas. This condition affects the natural drainage system and water flow patterns in the village. In addition, there are steep slopes and small valleys as a result of the hilly topography (BPS Molawe District, 2024).

The population in this study was the entire community in Awila Puncak Village, Molawe District, North Konawe Regency, consisting of 144 households. The sample size for respondents from the community was determined based on the number of households in Awila Puncak Village using purposive sampling. Arikunto (2006) states that when the population is less than 100 people, 10-15 or 20-25% of the population can be taken. This study took a sample of 15% of the population, namely 21 households. Determination and sampling of respondents from the community was carried out using *Purposive Sampling*. This method was used based on predetermined samples with considerations of a minimum of 10 years of residence as a local community member, a minimum age of 17 years, having visited the location, and a minimum distance of 1.5 km from their place of residence.

The sample for the three Key Persons, namely the village head, village secretary, and manager, was determined using the Snowball Sampling method. Snowball Sampling is an approach to find key informants who have a lot of information about agrotourism issues, including managers and village officials. The types of data in this study are quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is data in the form of numbers or measurable results that can be calculated. The quantitative data in this study is the number of households, while qualitative data is descriptive data or data presented in the form of sentences. The qualitative data in this study is observation and interviews.

The data sources used in this study are primary and secondary data sources. Primary data in this study include natural beauty, flora, and fauna. Secondary data used in this study are data taken from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in Awila Puncak Village, which shows that there are a total of 144 households, 308 males, and 244 females, as well as other supporting data such as articles and journals related to the research location.

The variables used in this study are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The distribution of research variables related to the potential of Awila Hills. The data analysis used to identify the development strategy for Awila Hills Agrotourism in Awila Puncak Village, Molawe District, North Konawe Regency, is descriptive qualitative and quantitative. The method used is to analyze internal factors, namely strengths and

weaknesses, and external factors, namely opportunities and threats, which form the basis for conducting a SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis can maximize strengths and opportunities, as well as minimize weaknesses and threats, which will be implemented and produce strategic guidelines relevant to this study. The tool used in the SWOT method to clearly describe how external opportunities and threats will be adjusted to strengths and weaknesses is the SWOT matrix (Martshinta et al., 2015)

Determining internal strategic factors involves several sequential steps to ensure a comprehensive and accurate analysis. First, factors that represent strengths and weaknesses are identified. Subsequently, these internal factors are evaluated based on their level of importance as well as their relative strengths and weaknesses. Next, a weighting value is assigned according to the level of significance, ranging from 1 (less significant) to 5 (very significant), while each strategic factor is also given a weight in the weight column on a scale from 0.0 (not important) to 1.0 (very important), with the total weight not exceeding 1.00. After that, a rating is calculated for each factor based on its influence and the organization's response, using a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 indicates not strong, 2 less strong, 3 strong, and 4 very strong. Finally, the assigned weights are multiplied by the corresponding ratings to obtain the weighting scores for each factor, which reflect the overall contribution of each internal strategic factor.

$$\text{Weight} = \frac{\text{number of respondents' responses}}{\text{total number of respondents' responses}} \quad \text{(Eq. 1)}$$

$$\text{Rating} = \frac{\text{number of respondents' responses}}{\text{number of respondents}} \quad \text{(Eq. 2)}$$

$$\text{Score} = \text{weight value} \times \text{rating value} \quad \text{(Eq. 3)}$$

Determining external strategic factors also follows a systematic procedure to ensure an objective assessment. Initially, external factors are identified and classified as opportunities and threats. Subsequently, each factor is assigned a weight based on its level of importance, with the total weight of all external factors equal to 1.00. After weighting, a rating is calculated for each factor according to its influence and the response to the factor, using a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 indicates weak, 2 less strong, 3 strong, and 4 very strong. Next, the assigned weight in column 2 is multiplied by the corresponding rating in column 3 to obtain the weighting factor in column 4. Finally, the overall value of the external strategic factors is calculated using the formulas presented in Equations (1), (2), and (3). After the IFE and EFE matrices are compiled, the following matrix will be produced:

Table 1. SWOT analysis framework

EFE and IFE	Strength	Weakness
Opportunities	S-O Strategy Using strengths To take advantage of opportunities	W-O Strategy Reducing weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities
Threats	S-T Strategy Using strength to avoid threats	W-T Strategy Minimizing weaknesses to avoid threats

(Pratiwi et al., 2022)

The SWOT Matrix is an important tool that helps in formulating four types of strategies, namely SO (Strengths–Opportunities), WO (Weaknesses–Opportunities), ST (Strengths–Threats), and WT (Weaknesses–Threats). Matching key internal and external factors is a

complex step in developing the TOWS Matrix and requires careful assessment (David, 2004). The effectiveness of the SWOT Matrix lies in its ability to translate situational analysis into actionable strategic alternatives. By systematically linking internal conditions with external dynamics, organizations can prioritize strategic choices that are realistic and aligned with available resources. The matrix not only supports strategic planning but also helps decision-makers anticipate potential risks and opportunities in a structured manner. Therefore, the accuracy of factor identification and weighting becomes a critical determinant of strategy relevance and feasibility.

According to Reno (2023), SWOT-based strategies can be classified into four main types, namely SO, ST, WO, and WT strategies. The SO (Strength–Opportunity) strategy is formulated by leveraging all internal strengths to seize and maximize available opportunities. In contrast, the ST (Strength–Threat) strategy emphasizes the use of organizational strengths to overcome or mitigate external threats. Meanwhile, the WO (Weakness–Opportunity) strategy focuses on utilizing existing opportunities while simultaneously minimizing internal weaknesses. Finally, the WT (Weakness–Threat) strategy is defensive in nature and aims to reduce internal weaknesses while avoiding or minimizing the impact of external threats. In practice, the selection of an appropriate strategy depends on organizational context, environmental conditions, and long-term development objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Analysis of internal factors (IFAS) and external factors (EFAS)

The analysis of environmental factors in this study aims to evaluate internal factors (IFE), including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (EFE) faced by Awila Hills agrotourism in Awila Puncak Village, Molawe District, North Konawe Regency. Internal environmental factors consist of strengths that can be utilized and weaknesses that need to be anticipated by the management of Awila Hills Agrotourism. External environmental factors consist of opportunities that can be utilized and threats that need to be anticipated.

Table 2. Internal and external strategic factors of Awila Hills agrotourism

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Stunning natural beauty	Inadequate access roads
Exploitation of natural resources	Lack of promotion on social media
The existence of nature tourism activities	Lack of parking space
Cleanliness of the location, free of trash	Lack of activity facilities
Comfort of the agrotourism area	Lack of internet connectivity
No pests	Lack of visitors
Harmony of the natural landscape	
No illegal logging	
No noise pollution	
Opportunities (O)	**Threats (T)**
Government policy support that encourages tourism development	Climate change that can damage agricultural crops
Agricultural education tourism trends	Environmental pollution caused by waste
Online media information technology to facilitate the marketing of tourist destinations through social media	Competition between agrotourism farmers and local communities

3.1.1 Internal factors

Internal strategic factors include strengths and weaknesses based on respondents' results. The results of internal strategic factors, weighting calculations, rankings, and scores are presented in table 3, which includes strengths and weaknesses based on respondents' results. The overall weight for internal factors is 1.00 with a score of 1.83 for the strength

factor, while the weakness factor received a score of 1.20, resulting in a total overall score of 3.03.

Table 3. IFAS matrix

Internal factors	Weight (a)	Rating (b)	Score (a*b)
Strength			
Stunning natural beauty	0.07	3	0.21
Uniqueness of natural resources (strawberries, oranges, papayas, pumpkins, tomatoes)	0.07	3	0.21
The existence of nature tourism activities	0.07	3	0.21
Cleanliness of the location, free of trash	0.07	3	0.21
Comfort of the agrotourism area	0.06	3	0.18
No pests	0.06	3	0.18
Harmony of the natural landscape	0.07	3	0.21
No illegal logging	0.07	3	0.21
No noise pollution	0.07	3	0.21
Subtotal strength	0.60		1.83
Weakness			
Inadequate access roads	0.07	3	0.21
Lack of promotion	0.06	3	0.18
Lack of parking space	0.07	3	0.21
Lack of activity facilities	0.07	3	0.21
Lack of internet network	0.07	3	0.21
Lack of visitors	0.06	3	0.18
Subtotal weaknesses	0.40		1.2
Total strengths – weaknesses = 1.58 - 1.25 = 0.27	1		3.03

3.1.2 External factors

External strategic factors that include opportunities and threats based on respondent results. The results of the external strategic factors, weight calculations, ratings, and scores can be seen in table 4. External strategic factors in table 4. include opportunity and threat factors based on respondent results. The overall weight between external factors is 1.00 with a score of 1.59 for opportunities and 1.44 for threats, resulting in a total of 2.03.

Table 4. EFAS matrix

External Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Opportunity			
Government policy support that encourages tourism development	0.19	3	0.57
Trend of agricultural education tourism	0.17	3	0.51
Online media information technology for easy marketing of tourist destinations through social media	0.17	3	0.51
Subtotal of opportunities	0.53		1.59
Threat			
Climate change can damage crops	0.18	3	0.54
Environmental pollution caused by waste	0.16	3	0.48
Competition between agrotourism farmers and local communities	0.14	3	0.42
Subtotal threats	0.48		1.44
Total opportunities and threats 1.69 – 1.02 = 0.67	1.00		2.03

Based on the results of the internal and external factor analysis, the internal strength factor obtained a score of 1.83, while the weakness factor recorded a score of 1.20, resulting in a total internal factor score of 3.03. Meanwhile, the external opportunity factor achieved a score of 1.59, whereas the threat factor scored 1.44, yielding a total external factor score of 2.03. Furthermore, the difference between internal strength and weakness factors was calculated by subtracting the weakness score from the strength score (1.83 – 1.20), resulting

in a value of 0.63. Similarly, the difference between opportunity and threat factors was obtained by subtracting the threat score from the opportunity score (1.59 – 1.44), which produced a value of 0.15. These differences indicate the relative dominance of strengths over weaknesses and opportunities over threats in the strategic positioning.

Based on the sum of the overall factor scores, it is known that the internal factor, strength, can overcome weaknesses by a difference of 0.63. Meanwhile, in the external factor, opportunities can be utilized to deal with threats by a difference of 0.15. Furthermore, these results are presented in a table that summarizes the strategy rankings related to the internal and external conditions faced. Table 5 explains the assessment of the scores of each SWOT component according to the research results.

Table 5. SWOT component score assessment

EFE and IFE	Strength	Weakness
Opportunities	S-O Strategy 1.83+1.59= 3.42	W-O Strategy 1.20+1.59= 2.79
Threats	S-T Strategy 1.83+1.44= 3.27	W-T Strategy 1.20+1.44= 2.64

The SWOT analysis method aims to identify fundamental problem-solving strategies that can be applied qualitatively by integrating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Sugiyono, 2015). In this framework, the S-O strategy emphasizes maximizing strengths to effectively seize available opportunities. Meanwhile, the S-T strategy focuses on utilizing strengths to anticipate and mitigate potential threats while attempting to transform these threats into opportunities. Furthermore, the W-O strategy is designed to minimize internal weaknesses in order to take advantage of external opportunities. Lastly, the W-T strategy represents a defensive approach that seeks to reduce weaknesses while simultaneously avoiding external threats (Murnianti, 2024). The following is the SWOT matrix for the Awila Hills agrotourism development strategy in Awila Puncak Village, Molawe District.

Table 6. SWOT Strategy Matrix

EFE and IFE	Strength	Weakness
Opportunities	S-O Strategy Using the natural beauty and comfort of the area to attract tourists through online media; Offering educational tourism packages on agriculture and natural resources; Maintaining the cleanliness and comfort of the location to support government programs in tourism development.	W-O Strategy Improving promotion through social media and online platforms to attract visitors; Utilizing government policies to build access roads within the agrotourism area and develop public facilities; Utilizing the educational tourism trend to design tourism programs that can be carried out even though the network is not yet optimal.
Threats	S-T Strategy Using natural beauty and its sustainability to educate tourists about the importance of preserving the environment, thereby reducing the risk of pollution; Establishing good relations with local communities using a conflict-free, environment-based educational approach.	W-T Strategy Addressing the lack of facilities and access through government policies and improving facilities to address the threat of climate change; Submitting requests for internet infrastructure development through government programs to support tourism digitalization with information access.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Analysis of Internal and External Factors

SWOT analysis is conducted to identify the level of readiness of each function from the overall functions performed to achieve the objectives that have been set. Because the level of readiness of a function is determined by the level of readiness of each factor involved in that function, SWOT analysis is conducted on all factors within each function, both internal and external factors. An adequate level of readiness, meaning that it at least meets the readiness requirements necessary to achieve the objectives, is considered a strength for internal factors and an opportunity for external factors. While an inadequate level of readiness, meaning that it does not meet the readiness criteria, is stated as a weakness for internal factors or a threat for external factors (Willis, 2013).

The SWOT matrix is a matrix that allows its compilers to compile, analyze, and match internal factors consisting of strengths and weaknesses with external factors consisting of opportunities and threats to obtain strategic alternatives that will later become the basis for strategies to be implemented in the company. Internal and external factors that can be used to perform strategic analysis. These factors will later be used as the basis for collecting the data needed to conduct a strategic analysis. Internal factors consist of management, marketing, finance, operations, research and development, and management information systems, while external factors consist of economics, socio-culture, demographics, government, politics, law, technology, and competitive forces (Kurniawati, 2020).

SWOT is an acronym for Strength*s*, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. When applying SWOT analysis in determining marketing management strategy objectives, it should be stated that before determining the marketing objectives to be achieved, tourist attractions should analyze their strengths and weaknesses, existing business opportunities, and various obstacles that may arise (Tamara, 2016).

SWOT analysis is essentially a technique for identifying various conditions that form the basis for strategic planning. After identifying the issues faced theoretically, it is necessary to build agreement among stakeholders on "what is desired in the future" regarding these issues. The components or elements that need to be improved, reduced, or even replaced require an analysis process that is largely based on the SWOT map of the issue (Jazuli, 2016).

The first step in formulating a development strategy for Awilla Hills Agrotourism in Awilla Puncak Village, Molawe District, North Konawe Regency is to identify internal and external factors. Internal factors include strengths and weaknesses within the community that influence the success of the Awilla Hills Agrotourism development strategy and can generally be controlled.

Table 2 shows that Awilla Hills Agrotourism has several key strengths that support agrotourism development, namely stunning natural beauty, a landscape dominated by green hills, neatly arranged vegetable gardens such as long beans, tomatoes, cayenne pepper, corn, pumpkin, and eggplant, as well as citrus fruits, papaya, and strawberries. as well as the fog that often covers the area in the morning, resembling a view above the clouds, the cleanliness of the location, and the absence of noise, which are the main attractions for tourists. Several weaknesses that pose challenges in agrotourism management are inadequate access roads, a lack of promotion on social media, such as advertising on official platforms, and a lack of internet access, which are the main obstacles.

External factors consist of opportunity and threat variables. Table 2. shows that opportunities and threats from outside the community that influence the development strategy of Awila Hills Agrotourism are difficult to control completely. External factors that support the development of Awila Hills Agrotourism include government policy support, tourism trends, agricultural education, and information technology, which can also be utilized to increase the promotion of tourist attractions. On the other hand, there are several threats faced in the development of Awila Hills Agrotourism, such as climate change that can damage crops, environmental pollution, and competition between agrotourism

operators and the community. The lack of direct attention to tourist attractions also has an impact on the decline in the number of long-term visitors (Martshita et al*.,* 2015).

3.2.2 Internal Factors

Table 3. shows that the strength variable is a positive internal condition that provides a competitive advantage in facing competition (Suriono, 2021). Based on observations, it has been identified that Awila Hills Agrotourism has stunning natural beauty, located in the mountains with a combination of gardens, trees, and hills, so it is often covered in fog or thin clouds, creating a view as if above the clouds. The uniqueness of natural resources, such as strawberries, papayas, pumpkins, tomatoes, cayenne peppers, curly peppers, corn, long beans, and cabbage, allows visitors to enjoy the lush scenery. Visitors can also be introduced to environmentally friendly farming methods and education about agriculture. The location is free of trash, with cool mountain air and tranquility far from the hustle and bustle of the city, making it suitable for recreation with a score of 1.83. The absence of illegal logging is proof that this area still maintains its environmental sustainability with a score of 1.83. The score of 1.83 for Strengths indicates that the strengths possessed by Awila Hills agrotourism have a significant influence on its competitiveness in agrotourism development. This value is higher than the weakness score of 1.20, which means that the advantages of agrotourism, such as natural beauty, the availability of nature tourism activities, and the cleanliness of the location, are more dominant than its weaknesses, namely inadequate access roads, lack of promotion, and lack of parking space. This can be used as a basis for developing strategies that optimally utilize its strengths to attract tourists. (Yoeti 2008) states that natural beauty and the uniqueness of natural resources are the fundamental assets for attracting tourist visits.

Weakness variables are internal factors that hinder the success process (Bagaskara, 2024). The weakness factor score is 1.20. The variables that have been identified consist of damaged and narrow road conditions, which are a major obstacle for tourists, especially during the rainy season, thereby potentially reducing visitor interest. Furthermore, the lack of promotion, which is still limited to various social media, means that this area is not yet widely known by the public. followed by a lack of parking space, which becomes an obstacle when visits increase, a lack of activity facilities, a lack of internet access that hinders tourists from sharing their experiences directly on social media, and a lack of visitors influenced by limited supporting facilities. The combined score of internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) results in an overall score of 3.03. The score of 1.20 reflects that the weaknesses of Awila Hills agrotourism are quite apparent, but not greater than its strengths. Therefore, the development strategy needs to focus on minimizing weaknesses so as not to hinder development and attractiveness. For example, inadequate access roads can be minimized by repairing the roads and providing directions, and the lack of visitors can be overcome by utilizing social media to attract visitors. The lack of information and tourism promotion can have an impact on the decline in the number of visitors in the long term.

3.2.3 External factors

Table 4 shows that the opportunity variable is a factor that can be utilized for advantage and success (Zainuri & Setiadi, 2023). The identified opportunity variables consist of government support that encourages the development of agrotourism, such as infrastructure development programs and financial assistance. The findings are in line with research showing that government policies can be a major driver in developing the agrotourism and creative economy sectors through local community synergy (Suhartawan 2023). Educational tourism trends, such as planting, fruit picking, and providing education, especially in the field of agriculture. (Wahongan et al., 2015) explains that horticultural tourism and the concept of agricultural education can increase the added value of tourist destinations and attract family and student tourism segments. The development of

information technology has opened up great opportunities to promote tourist destinations at low cost but with wide reach, such as Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms, which can be effective targets in introducing the natural beauty and uniqueness of Awila Hills Agrotourism to the wider community, with a score of 1.59. (Purwanta et al., 2022) found that the use of digital media in agro-educational tourism areas can increase tourist visits and expand the reach of promotions.

The threat variable is the main obstacle to the current or desired position for success (Sari, 2020). The threat variable consists of climate change that can damage crops, such as changes in rainfall and weather patterns in horticultural crops that are the main attractions, such as strawberries and tomatoes, which are very sensitive to changes in temperature and rainfall. In line with the findings (Aprilliza et al., 2021) that found that climate adaptation and the selection of superior varieties are key to addressing these threats. Environmental pollution and competition between agrotourism farmers and local communities scored 1.44. External factors (Opportunities and Threats) combined resulted in a score of 2.03.

Based on the difference between the strengths and weaknesses of the internal factors, namely the strength score (1.83) minus the weakness score (1.20), there is a difference of (0.63), while the difference between opportunities and threats in external factors, namely the opportunity score (1.59) minus the threat score (1.44), results in a difference of (0.15).. The difference between internal and external factors indicates that internal factors are more dominant than external factors.

Table 5 shows the results of the SWOT analysis, which indicate that the S-O strategy has the highest value of 3.42 because this strategy utilizes internal strengths such as stunning natural beauty and freedom from noise with a value of 1.83 and external opportunities such as government policy support for that encourages the development of tourism and agricultural tourism trends with a value of 1.59, meaning that this strategy creates great potential for sustainable agrotourism management. The W-O strategy has a score of 2.79, indicating that external opportunities, such as the trend of agricultural education tourism and information technology for easy marketing of agrotourism destinations through social media, with a value of 1.59, can help overcome internal weaknesses such as a lack of promotion and activity facilities, with a value of 1.20. The S-T strategy has a score of 3.27, indicating that its strengths, with a score of 1.83, can be used to deal with external threats such as climate change, which can damage crops, and environmental pollution, with a score of 1.44. The W-T strategy has the lowest score of 2.64 because internal weaknesses of 1.20 are difficult to offset against significant external threats of 1.44. Therefore, this strategy focuses more on internal improvements, making the S-O strategy the best choice for sustainable agrotourism management.

Based on the results of the EFAS matrix analysis, various strategies can be applied in the development of tourist areas. These strategies are classified into four types, namely the S-O (*Strength-Opportunity)* strategy, the W-O (*Weakness-Opportunity)* strategy, the S-T (*Strength-Threat)* strategy, and the W-T (*Weakness-Threat)* strategy.

The S-O strategy aims to utilize internal strengths to seize external opportunities. Some strategies that can be implemented include using the natural beauty and comfort of the area to attract tourists through online media, offering educational agricultural tourism packages and natural resources, and maintaining cleanliness by adding trash bins and amenities to support the government's program in tourism development. This strategy emphasizes the utilization of stunning natural resources and agricultural education potential to attract more visitors. The implementation of the S-O strategy includes utilizing the natural beauty and comfort of the area to attract tourists through online media, offering agricultural education tour packages based on natural resources, and maintaining cleanliness and comfort to support the government's program in tourism development.

The concept of tourism attraction development and promotion strategies strongly supports this step. Research on Samalona Island shows that developing natural potential as a tourist attraction, combined with the right promotion strategy, is part of an S-O strategy to enter a broader market. This includes creating regular promotional content (images, videos, reels, stories) on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, X (Twitter), and TikTok. It also

involves collaborating with influencers or content creators to promote products or services to their followers, as well as optimizing product descriptions, photos, and reviews to increase sales (Widodo et al., 2023). Research conducted at Goa Pandan successfully identified and categorized the tourist site as a destination with dual potential, namely as 'nature and educational tourism'. This classification indicates that the main appeal of the location lies not only in its physical beauty and natural state but also in the knowledge-based values that can be developed and offered to visitors. Therefore, developing tour packages focused on the educational aspect is considered a strategic move. This initiative not only optimally utilizes internal strengths in the form of existing natural resources but also aptly captures external opportunities to implement the principles of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, this approach intrinsically involves the participation of the local community, both as subjects who benefit economically and as actors in the preservation of culture and the environment, thereby creating a responsible and sustainable tourism cycle (Nurdin, 2016).

The W-O strategy aims to minimize internal weaknesses by taking advantage of external opportunities. The recommended strategies are to improve promotion through social media on online platforms to increase the visibility of the region, use government policy support to improve road access and public facilities in agrotourism areas, and take advantage of the trend of educational tourism as an attraction despite limited internet connectivity. This strategy highlights the importance of improving infrastructure and digital promotion as a means to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism area.

One of the strategic efforts to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of an agrotourism area is through the optimization of social media promotion. This initiative can begin by creating official accounts for the agrotourism destination on popular platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, which serve as the main channels for disseminating information and building a positive image of the area. Through these accounts, the management can regularly upload photos and videos showcasing the natural beauty, tourist activities, and local products to attract potential visitors. In addition, to make the promotion more engaging and interactive, the management can organize digital activities such as quizzes, giveaways, or photo challenges with nature and agriculture themes, encouraging active participation from social media followers. This effort can be further strengthened by collaborating with local influencers who have relevant audiences, thereby expanding the reach of promotion to a wider and more diverse group. To effectively target potential tourists, the management can also utilize paid advertising features (ads) on various social media platforms, allowing promotions to be directed specifically at prospective visitors from major cities. With a well-planned and consistent digital marketing strategy, the agrotourism area can not only increase the number of tourist visits but also build a modern, appealing, and easily accessible image as a desirable destination for the public (Ramadhani & Yuliana, 2022).

S-T is used to utilize existing strengths in facing external threats. The resulting strategies include using natural beauty and environmental sustainability to educate tourists about the importance of preserving the environment, thereby reducing the risk of pollution and establishing good relations with local communities using a conflict-free, environment-based educational approach. This strategy prioritizes an approach of environmental conservation and harmonious social relations as a mitigation effort against potential disasters. According to Wahyudi & Yahya (2021), a conservation-based tourism approach not only reduces negative environmental impacts but also increases the educational value of tourist destinations. This strategy prioritizes an approach of environmental conservation and harmonious social relations as a mitigation effort against potential threats.

An example of a strategy that prioritizes environmental conservation and harmonious social relations can be implemented through a series of integrated activities that function as a mitigation effort against potential disaster threats. One such initiative is the comprehensively designed "Mangrove Edu-Ecotourism" program. This program does not merely offer mangrove seedling planting as a routine tourist activity but simultaneously integrates three crucial aspects: environmental conservation, disaster risk education, and

the economic empowerment of local communities. In its implementation, tourists are not only invited to plant mangroves but also receive in-depth education from trained local guides about the role of mangrove ecosystems as natural wave breakers that can reduce the impact of tsunamis and coastal abrasion, as well as effective carbon sinks. Furthermore, the disaster mitigation aspect of this program is strengthened through the development of a participatory monitoring system that continuously involves local communities and tourists. Each tourist participant is encouraged to become a "foster parent" for the seedlings they plant by conducting routine monitoring through a provided digital platform. This mechanism not only creates an emotional bond but also builds a community-based early warning system against damage to the coastal ecosystem. As revealed by Gramedia Literasi, non-structural mitigation through such participatory approaches has high effectiveness in reducing long-term disaster risk. On the other hand, the aspect of social harmony is developed through the establishment of a Tourism Awareness Groups/*Kelompok Sadar Wisata* (Pokdarwis) that transparently manages funds from the tourism activities. These funds are allocated for guide training, homestay development, and the creation of local handicraft products, thereby creating a multiplier effect for the local economy. A study by Sudini & Arthanaya (2022) confirms that developing environmentally conscious tourism that actively involves the community is able to create harmonious social relations while simultaneously increasing the community's resilience to various threats.

The implementation of this strategy culminates in the form of a regularly held Coastal Culture Festival, where various activity elements are unified into a single, festive, yet meaningful agenda. This festival not only features traditional arts and cuisine but also incorporates disaster evacuation simulations based on local wisdom, competitions for innovative products from natural materials, and exhibitions showcasing the progress of conservation programs that have been implemented. Through this multi-dimensional approach, the strategy of environmental conservation and social harmony is no longer seen as a burden but becomes a valuable investment for building a sustainable, educational, and resilient tourist destination capable of facing various potential disaster threats.

W-T aims to overcome weaknesses while avoiding threats. Strategies that can be implemented include improving coordination between stakeholders and the community to prevent social conflict, as well as submitting requests to the government regarding the development of internet network infrastructure to support tourism digitalization and access to information. This strategy is important to strengthen institutions and improve information technology support facilities. The W-T (Weakness-Threat) strategy, which aims to address internal weaknesses while avoiding external threats, can be implemented through two complementary main approaches. First, in terms of enhancing coordination among stakeholders, a systematic and inclusive mechanism is required to prevent potential social conflicts. One proven effective method is the application of Q Methodology as implemented in research at the Hojobul ecotourism area in Korea. This method enables the quantification and mapping of perceptions from various stakeholder groups, including local communities, government, business actors, and NGOs. The results of this mapping serve as an objective basis for formulating cooperative spatial planning and finding common ground among different interests. Implementation can take the form of establishing regular and transparent communication forums, such as Tourism Awareness Groups/*Kelompok Sadar Wisata* (Pokdarwis), comprising representatives from all stakeholders. This forum functions as a platform for discussing fair economic benefit distribution, program socialization, and gathering community feedback, while also serving as a medium for conducting professionally facilitated participatory planning workshops.

Second, in terms of developing internet network infrastructure, a strategic and evidence-based approach is required. Submissions to the government should not merely be routine requests but should be accompanied by comprehensive proposals based on feasibility studies, such as those conducted in research at the Suban Lesung Tourist Attraction. These proposals should include in-depth analysis of existing conditions,

including signal instability and connection failures, followed by appropriate technical recommendations. Implementation can involve proposing suitable appropriate technology, such as the "Wi-Fi Coin System" successfully piloted in Sanjai Tourism Village, Bukittinggi. This system not only provides internet access for tourists and managers but also creates a new sustainable business model for infrastructure maintenance. Furthermore, proposals should be designed to align with existing government programs, such as integration with the national digital tourism platform TIC Digital Nusantara initiated by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, or the development of simple website-based tourist information platforms as planned by the North Lombok Tourism Office.

These two strategies are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The established coordination forum can serve as a platform for developing participatory infrastructure development proposals, while improved internet access will facilitate communication and coordination among stakeholders. Through this integrated implementation, the W-T strategy not only functions as a defensive measure but can transform into an institutional strengthening strategy and enhance the sustainable competitiveness of tourist destinations. Long-term commitment and significant investment in both these aspects, as emphasized by

4. Conclusions

Based on a comprehensive analysis, it can be concluded that the development of Awila Hills Agrotourism in Awila Puncak Village, Molawe District, North Konawe Regency, holds significant potential through the implementation of the S–O (Strengths–Opportunities) strategy. This strategy was identified as the most appropriate development approach, achieving the highest priority score of 3.42 based on the SWOT analysis results. The selection of this strategy reflects the strong alignment between the internal strengths of Awila Hills Agrotourism and the external opportunities available in the current tourism development context. The S–O strategy emphasizes the optimal utilization of internal strengths, particularly the diversity of horticultural commodities, attractive natural landscapes, cool climate, and relatively good accessibility. These strengths provide a solid foundation for positioning Awila Hills Agrotourism as a nature-based and educational tourism destination. At the same time, the strategy capitalizes on external opportunities such as the increasing use of digital technology in tourism promotion, growing interest in environmentally friendly and educational tourism, and the availability of government support programs for regional tourism development.

The proposed development plan focuses on three main aspects. First, optimizing promotion through digital media is considered essential to improve destination visibility and attract a broader market segment. The use of social media platforms, online tourism content, and digital mapping services can enhance public awareness and encourage tourist visits. Second, the development of educational tourism packages that integrate agricultural activities with natural resource appreciation is expected to create unique and meaningful visitor experiences. These packages can provide learning opportunities related to horticultural cultivation, sustainable farming practices, and environmental conservation, thereby increasing the educational value of the destination. Third, maintaining cleanliness and improving visitor comfort are crucial to ensuring visitor satisfaction and supporting compliance with government tourism development standards. Overall, the implementation of this integrated development strategy is expected to increase tourist arrivals, strengthen local economic activities, and enhance community participation in agrotourism management. In addition to generating economic benefits, the strategy also supports environmental preservation by promoting sustainable land use and responsible tourism practices. Through consistent implementation and support from relevant stakeholders, Awila Hills Agrotourism has the potential to develop into a leading agrotourism destination that balances economic growth, educational value, and environmental sustainability, contributing positively to sustainable tourism development in the North Konawe region.

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