



Comparative Governance of Public and Private Nature-Based Sport Tourism Destinations in Banyumas, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to compare governance practices, managerial effectiveness, and development strategies between public and private sport tourism destinations in Banyumas Regency, Indonesia. The study specifically examines organizational management functions, governance characteristics, and strategic opportunities that support the sustainability and competitiveness of nature-based sport tourism destinations.

Methodology: A qualitative descriptive comparative case study was conducted at Palawi Risorsis and Baturaden Adventure Forest, Banyumas, Indonesia. Data were collected from destination managers, operational staff, and tourists through structured interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, supported by comparative and SWOT analyses.

Main Findings: The findings revealed substantial differences in governance and management practices between the two destinations. Baturaden Adventure Forest demonstrated greater managerial flexibility, stronger sport tourism orientation, responsive evaluation mechanisms, and a family-oriented organizational culture. In contrast, Palawi Risorsis faced bureaucratic constraints, weaker supervision systems, and limitations in human resource capacity. SWOT analysis further identified seven strategic development directions to strengthen destination competitiveness, operational effectiveness, and long-term sustainability.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study provides one of the few comparative analyses of public and private governance models in Indonesian sport tourism destinations. The research advances existing knowledge by demonstrating how governance structures influence managerial effectiveness, organizational adaptability, and strategic decision-making. It also offers practical insights for policymakers and destination managers seeking to enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of nature-based sport tourism destinations in developing-country contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The global expansion of sport tourism has transformed it from a niche recreational segment into one of the fastest-growing subsectors of the international tourism economy [1]-[3]. Scholars estimate that sport tourism now accounts for a substantial share of total global tourism revenue, driven by increasing consumer demand for active, health-oriented, and experience-based travel [4]-[6]. In this context, destination management quality has emerged as a pivotal factor distinguishing competitive tourism sites from those that fail to translate natural and recreational assets into sustainable visitor experiences and economic returns [7]-[9].

Within the broader sport tourism management discourse, a persistent and underexplored tension concerns governance type [10]-[12]. The question of whether public-sector or private-sector management produces superior outcomes in sport tourism destinations is theoretically significant and practically consequential, yet comparative empirical evidence from developing-country settings remains thin [13], [14]. In advanced economies, scholars have generally found that private management tends to produce greater operational flexibility, market responsiveness, and innovation, while public management offers broader accessibility, stronger sustainability mandates, and greater community embeddedness [15]-[17]. However, whether these contrasting governance advantages produce similar outcomes in nature-based sport tourism destinations within developing-country contexts remains unclear. This uncertainty is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where public tourism management is frequently mediated through state-owned enterprise structures such as Perhutani. These arrangements combine public ownership with commercial operational mandates, creating hybrid governance systems with distinctive managerial opportunities and constraints.

Banyumas Regency in Central Java offers a particularly instructive arena for examining this governance question. Located at the southern foot of Mount Slamet, Indonesia's second-highest active volcano, the regency possesses abundant natural assets for nature-based sport tourism, including highland forests, thermal springs, rivers, and mountainous terrain. However, the development of these assets has historically been uneven, partly because the region's two most prominent sport tourism destinations are governed under diametrically opposed models [18]-[20]. Palawi Risorsis, a subsidiary of the state forestry enterprise Perhutani, operates within a public bureaucratic framework that prioritizes institutional compliance and risk management [21]. Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF), managed by PT Bangkit Maju Wisata in partnership with Perhutani, applies a commercially oriented entrepreneurial approach and has become one of the most recognized nature-based sport tourism destinations in Central Java.

Destination governance has increasingly been recognized as a critical determinant of tourism competitiveness, sustainability, and stakeholder coordination. Governance structures influence how resources are allocated, how decisions are made, and how public and private actors collaborate in destination development. Previous studies suggest that effective governance contributes to improved service quality, visitor satisfaction, and long-term destination resilience, whereas ineffective governance may lead to fragmented decision-making and inefficient resource utilization [20]-[22]. Accordingly, examining how different governance structures operate in sport tourism destinations may provide valuable insights into destination performance and strategic development.

Sport tourism in Indonesia has garnered increasing scholarly attention, stimulated by government policy instruments including the National Sports Development Grand Design 2010–2024, which explicitly identifies recreational sport as a lever for economic development, and by the demonstrated success of events such as the Dieng Culture Festival, Borobudur Marathon, and Festival Lembah Baliem in attracting international visitors. Yet the academic literature on the organizational management of sport tourism destinations as distinct from their physical or market potential remains limited [25], [26]. Most existing Indonesian studies focus on destination potential assessment or event impact evaluation, leaving the governance and management dimensions undertheorized.

From an international perspective, the comparative management literature offers rich theoretical resources. The classification of sport management into event management, institutional management, and facilities management provides a useful framework for analyzing destination-level operations [27]-[30]. The identification of planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling as the five core management functions supplies the analytical backbone for the present investigation [30]-[32]. The distinction between planning as goal-setting and organizing as decision allocation highlights the practical differences between well-functioning and dysfunctional management systems. Recent evidence regarding bureaucratic rigidity and centralized public sport governance in Brazil and Portugal parallels several management characteristics identified in Palawi Risorsis, whereas the more flexible and adaptive management observed in Baturaden Adventure Forest reflects the advantages of decentralized and market-oriented governance structures in sport tourism destination management [34].

From a cross-national perspective, the governance comparison embedded in this study carries relevance beyond Indonesia. Thailand provides a particularly relevant comparative case because its tourism governance model combines strong state tourism promotion with extensive private-sector participation in adventure and ecotourism management. Similar to Indonesia, Thailand has experienced governance tensions between public accountability and market-oriented tourism management, especially in nature-based tourism destinations [35], [36], [37]. However, Thailand's more mature tourism ecosystem has enabled private operators to play a larger role

in innovation, branding, and experiential tourism development. In Iran, sport tourism governance remains strongly influenced by centralized institutional arrangements, particularly in public recreational and outdoor tourism sectors [38], [39]. Nevertheless, recent policy directions increasingly emphasize commercialization, destination competitiveness, and sustainable recreational development. This creates governance dynamics similar to those identified in Indonesia, where public-sector management often struggles to match the flexibility and innovation capacity demonstrated by private tourism operators.

The research gap that motivates this study is twofold. First, comparative empirical evidence examining how different governance structures influence managerial effectiveness and organizational practices in nature-based sport tourism destinations remains limited, particularly within developing-country contexts. In Indonesia, no published study has systematically compared government-managed and privately managed sport tourism destinations within the same regional setting. Second, the sport tourism management literature lacks empirically grounded SWOT analyses that connect governance and management findings to actionable strategic development recommendations for specific destination contexts [40]-[42].

The study seeks to address these gaps by comparing governance and management practices in two sport tourism destinations operating under different organizational arrangements. Specifically, the objectives of this study are: (1) to compare the implementation of core management functions, including planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling, at Palawi Risorsis and Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF); (2) to examine how public and private governance structures influence managerial practices, operational effectiveness, and destination management outcomes; (3) to conduct comparative SWOT analyses to identify each destination's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats; and (4) to formulate strategic recommendations for sustainable sport tourism destination development and governance in Banyumas Regency and comparable regional contexts in Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Type of Research

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design with a comparative case study structure. A qualitative approach was selected because the research objectives required contextual and process-oriented understanding of how management functions are implemented within different organizational and governance environments, a form of understanding that resists adequate capture through quantitative approaches. The comparative case study design enabled analytical generalization from empirical findings toward theoretical propositions regarding the influence of governance type on sport tourism management quality and strategic development capacity. The study was conducted between March and May 2024 at two sport tourism destinations in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, Indonesia: Palawi Risorsis, a state-enterprise managed destination operating under the Perhutani public forestry framework, and Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF), a privately managed destination operated by PT Bangkit Maju Wisata in partnership with Perhutani. These two cases were selected as contrastive purposive cases representing opposing governance models within the same geographic and regulatory environment, thereby controlling for extraneous regional variables and isolating governance type as the primary analytical variable.

2.2 Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at Palawi Risorsis and Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF), both located in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. These two destinations were purposively selected as comparative cases because they represent contrasting governance models within a similar geographical and regulatory context. Palawi Risorsis represents a public management model under the Perhutani state-enterprise framework, whereas BAF represents a privately managed destination operated by PT Bangkit Maju Wisata in partnership with Perhutani.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct relevance to the research objectives and their ability to provide information-rich insights into destination governance and management practices. The participants consisted of destination managers, senior operational staff, and tourists from both destinations. Management informants were selected due to their institutional knowledge and direct involvement in planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling functions, while tourist participants were included to provide complementary perspectives regarding service quality, facilities, and destination experiences.

The study involved six informants representing two stakeholder groups: management representatives and visitors. Although the number of participants was relatively small, this approach was consistent with the qualitative comparative case study design, which emphasizes depth of understanding rather than statistical representation. Data collection was conducted until thematic saturation was achieved, indicated by the recurrence of key themes related to governance practices, management functions, facility management, and strategic development. The participant profile is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Profile by Category and Destination

Category	Participant Type	Destination	Selection Basis
P1 – Management	General Manager	Palawi Risorsis	Institutional knowledge and governance understanding
P2 – Management	Senior Operational Staff	Palawi Risorsis	Operational management experience
P3 – Management	General Manager	Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF)	Institutional knowledge and strategic decision-making
P4 – Management	Senior Operational Staff	Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF)	Operational management experience
P5 – Visitors	Selected Tourist Respondents	Palawi Risorsis	Visitor experience and service assessment
P6 – Visitors	Selected Tourist Respondents	Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF)	Visitor experience and service assessment

Note. Participants were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research objectives. Visitor participants were selected through convenience sampling during the fieldwork period to provide complementary perspectives on service quality, facilities, and destination experiences.

As presented in Table 1, the participant composition was designed to capture complementary perspectives from internal and external stakeholders. Management informants provided insights into governance structures, managerial functions, and strategic practices, while visitor participants contributed experiential assessments of service delivery and facility conditions. The integration of these perspectives supported source triangulation and strengthened the comparative analysis of the two governance models.

2.3 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through three complementary methods to enable source and method triangulation, as summarized in Table 2. First, structured in-depth interviews were conducted with managers, senior staff, and visitors, using validated interview guides. The interview guide was reviewed by two sport tourism experts prior to field deployment to ensure content validity and alignment with the study's analytical framework. Interview questions covered the implementation of the five management functions, planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling, as well as facilities management and strategic development. Second, direct field observations were conducted at both destinations to examine the physical condition of facilities, visitor activities, and observable management processes. Third, documentary analysis was conducted on organizational structures, work program reports, visitor statistics, and relevant policy documents to supplement and verify interview and observational data.

Table 2. Data Collection Instruments and Coverage

Method	Participants/Sources	Focus Areas
Structured in-depth interviews	Managers, staff, visitors	Management functions, governance, facilities, strategic development
Direct field observation	Both destination sites	Physical facilities, visitor activities, management processes
Documentary analysis	Organizational records, policy documents, visitor statistics	Operational context, institutional structure, regulatory framework

Note. All three methods were applied at both destinations to enable cross-method and cross-source triangulation.

As presented in Table 2, the three data collection methods served distinct but mutually reinforcing functions. Interviews provided the primary source of participant perspectives on management practices and visitor experiences. Field observations enabled verification of interview accounts against directly observable site conditions, particularly regarding facility quality and operational processes. Documentary analysis supplied institutional and operational evidence that extended beyond what participants could articulate verbally, including formal organizational structures, visitor flow trends, and programmatic work records. The integration of these three sources through triangulation reduced the risk of single-source bias and strengthened the credibility and confirmability of the findings.

2.4 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. [43], comprising four sequential stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data reduction, interview transcripts, observational field notes, and documentary evidence were systematically coded, classified, and categorized according to the five management functions framework and the SWOT analytical categories [44]. The reduced data were displayed in comparative tables describing the implementation of management functions across the two destinations, and in SWOT matrices for each site. SWOT analysis identified internal factors, strengths and

weaknesses and external factors, opportunities and threats, for each destination. These were cross-analyzed to formulate four strategic response categories as illustrated in Figure 1: Strength–Opportunity (SO), Weakness–Opportunity (WO), Strength–Threat (ST), and Weakness–Threat (WT) strategies [45].

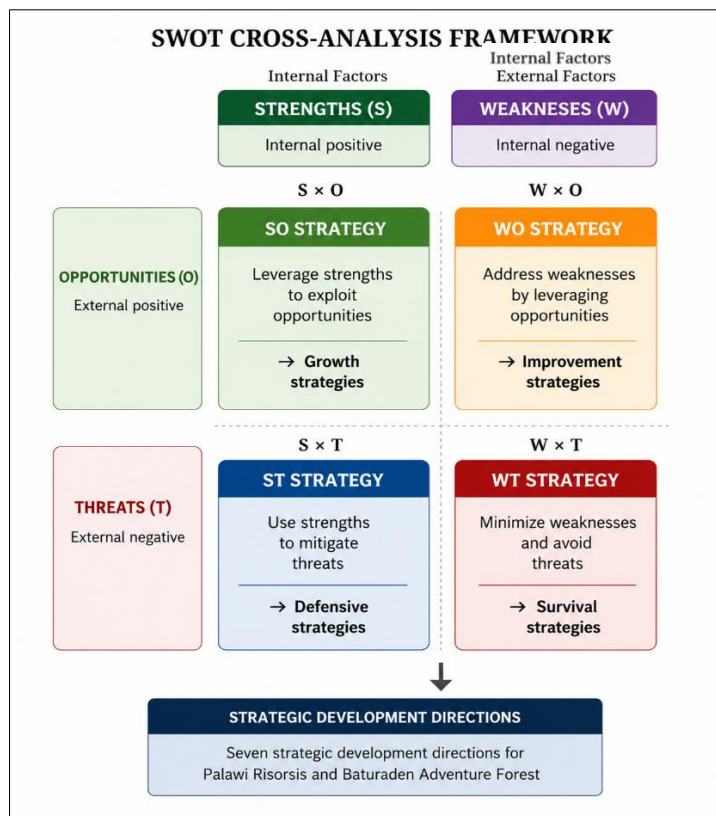


Figure 1. SWOT Cross-Analysis Framework Applied in This Study

As illustrated in Figure 1, this cross-analysis framework generated seven strategic development directions across the two destinations, which are presented in the findings section.

2.5 Research Procedure

The research was carried out in four sequential phases to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and replicability. The overall workflow is illustrated in Figure 2.

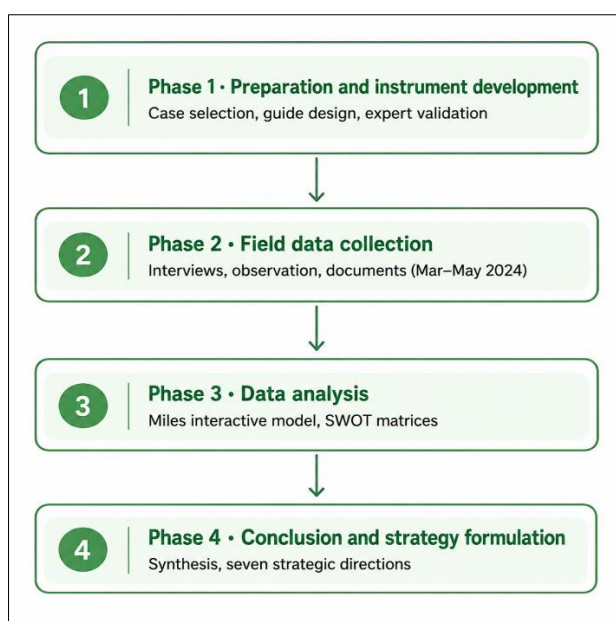


Figure 2. Research Procedure of the Study

As shown in Figure 2, the study followed a structured four-phase procedure, from preparation through to conclusion and strategy formulation.

1. *Phase 1. Preparation and Instrument Development:* The initial phase involved formulating the research problem, conducting a literature review on destination governance and sport tourism management, and selecting the two contrastive cases through purposive sampling. Interview guides were then developed based on the five management functions and the SWOT analytical categories. Prior to field deployment, the instruments were reviewed by two sport tourism experts to establish content validity and alignment with the study's analytical framework
2. *Phase 2. Field Data Collection:* Between March and May 2024, data were collected at both destinations using three complementary techniques: structured in-depth interviews, direct field observation, and documentary analysis.
3. *Phase 3. Data Analysis:* The collected data were analyzed following the interactive model of Miles et al., comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Coded data were organized into comparative tables of management functions and into site-specific SWOT matrices, which were subsequently cross-analyzed (SO, WO, ST, WT) to derive strategic directions.
4. *Phase 4: Conclusion and Strategy Formulation.* In the final phase, comparative findings across the two governance models were synthesized, the seven strategic development directions were formulated, and theoretical and practical implications were drawn. Findings were verified through triangulation and member-checking with key informants to strengthen credibility and confirmability.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Comparative Overview of Study Sites

Table 3 presents a comparative profile of the two study sites across key governance, operational, and activity dimensions

Table 3. Comparative Profile of Palawi Risorsis and Baturaden Adventure Forest

Dimension	Palawi Risorsis	Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF)
Governance Type	Public (State Enterprise – Perhutani subsidiary)	Private (PT Bangkit Maju Wisata + Perhutani partnership)
Location	Baturaden area, Banyumas Regency, ~640 MASL	Adjacent to Palawi, southern slope Mt. Slamet
Land Tenure	Owns land (Perhutani property)	30-year lease from Perhutani
Operational Area	Multiple dispersed sites (Wana Wisata, Telaga Sunyi, Pancuran 3 & 7)	49 hectares (5 ha developed, 44 ha available)
Sport Tourism Activities	Archery, MTB, flying fox, outbound, paintball, camping, hiking	Tree trek, downhill MTB, canyoning, rappelling, flying fox, birdwatching, night adventure
Other Activities	Nature tourism, thermal pools, camping ground, MICE	Ecotourism, family recreation, corporate outbound
Accommodation	3 villas (Ebony, Accacia, Agathis)	Limited (eco-lodging concept)
Sport Tourism Focus	Partial (mixed with nature tourism)	Primary focus (only dedicated sport tourism site in Banyumas)
Provincial Recognition	General ecotourism destination	Central Java Province Sport Tourism Icon
Key Distinguishing Event	Baturaden Marathon	Safari Ramadan, corporate outbound programs

Table 3 highlights clear differences between the two destinations in terms of governance structure, land tenure, operational characteristics, and sport tourism orientation. Palawi Risorsis represents a public management model with broader nature-based tourism functions, whereas Baturaden Adventure Forest reflects a more specialized private management approach centered on sport tourism activities. These structural differences provide an important foundation for examining variations in managerial practices and strategic development priorities.

3.2 Comparative Analysis of Management Functions

3.2.1 Planning

Both destinations implement dual-horizon planning through short-term and long-term work programs, but the character and quality of planning differ substantially. At Palawi Risorsis, planning is decentralized to divisional coordinators who submit separate short-term and long-term program proposals for approval at joint

meetings. Long-term priorities include adding new recreational facilities, road improvements, ticketing system upgrades, land expansion, and waste management enhancement [46], [47]. Short-term priorities focus on facility renewal, vendor management, and marketing area expansion. While this participatory planning architecture has structural merit, its implementation is constrained by the inadequacy of available funding which is derived entirely from ticket revenues and limited Perhutani support and by the insufficient human resource capacity of divisional staff to translate plans into effective implementation.

At BAF, planning is driven directly by the general manager in consultation with staff during regular meetings. The private ownership model allows BAF to align planning cycles directly with market demand signals rather than institutional reporting requirements. Long-term priorities at the time of research included the construction of a café/restaurant to capture the emerging youth market and the installation of a longer, more technically demanding flying fox from the forest ridge to the parking area. Short-term priorities focused on hosting regular programmatic events and systematic facilities maintenance. BAF's planning demonstrates greater market intelligence for instance, the café/restaurant concept was explicitly derived from analysis of trending preferences among Banyumas youth and a more disciplined linkage between planning outputs and evaluation feedback.

3.2.2 Organizing

Palawi Risorsis operates a formal six-department organizational structure encompassing object management, accommodation, marketing, facilities, finance, and outdoor activities, with a General Manager overseeing department heads who supervise divisional staff. Communication between the central leadership (located in Jakarta) and field operations is structurally challenged, as managers must travel considerable distances for coordination meetings and evaluation sessions, leaving field units with limited real-time guidance. Land ownership by Perhutani provides organizational security and flexibility in theory, but Perhutani's bureaucratic processes for approving development proposals create practical constraints that partially negate these advantages.

BAF's organizing principle is explicitly familial and flexible: staff are expected to cross-cover responsibilities as needed while maintaining their primary functional roles. This approach generates organizational cohesion and adaptive capacity but creates service quality risks when primary responsibilities are neglected during cross-cover periods. BAF's sole shareholder (PT Bangkit Maju Wisata) structure provides clear authority lines and rapid decision cycles, eliminating the multi-stakeholder negotiation delays that characterize Palawi's Perhutani relationship. The sharia-compliant finance principle prohibiting bank borrowing while limiting leveraged growth, disciplines the organization toward profit-reinvestment sustainability.

3.2.3 Staffing

Both destinations face human resource quality challenges, though the nature and management of these challenges differ. Palawi Risorsis recruits through formal three-stage processes (administrative screening, written examination, and interview), and maintains three employee categories: permanent, contracted, and partner. The prioritization of local community members in recruitment, while praiseworthy from a social inclusion standpoint, results in a workforce profile in which basic education levels are low, limiting service quality delivery [48]. Employee welfare is strong: comprehensive BPJS health and employment insurance coverage extends to employee families, and capacity development through benchmarking visits and training programs is systematically supported. BAF employs approximately 20 permanent staff supplemented by an indeterminate number of freelancers. Recruitment prioritizes local community members and loyalty over formal educational credentials, creating similar workforce education challenges [49]. Unlike Palawi, BAF does not yet provide a formalized welfare fund for staff, though current salaries exceed the Banyumas Regional Minimum Wage (approximately IDR 1,580,000 per month at the time of research). Professional freelancers, including specialized outbound instructors, are sourced nationally when required, compensating for gaps in the permanent workforce's specialized competencies.

3.2.4 Leading

Leadership at Palawi Risorsis is structurally problematic. The site manager, a Perhutani employee whose career background is in forest management rather than tourism, was appointed by corporate headquarters in Jakarta rather than selected on the basis of tourism management competence. This institutional mismatch between leadership background and operational context limits strategic vision and necessitates heavy reliance on external consultants [50]. Physical distance from corporate principals in Jakarta creates communication delays and reduces the site manager's authority to make independent resource allocation decisions.

BAF's leadership presents a contrasting profile. The site manager, a woman appointed by PT Bangkit Maju Wisata's directors, is described by staff as fast-moving, professional, perfectionist, detail-oriented, and possessing broad contextual intelligence that allows her to anticipate both staff and visitor needs. While informants note an occasional tendency to allow personal emotion to influence professional decisions, this is widely understood as a characteristic of her high-care management style rather than a systematic weakness. BAF regularly engages motivational speakers during staff evaluation sessions, institutionalizing the motivational dimension of

leadership beyond individual personality. This approach aligns with the theoretical emphasis on leader-as-motivator in sport management contexts.

3.2.5 Controlling (Evaluation)

Palawi Risorsis conducts four-tier evaluation cycles: monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual. The structural comprehensiveness of this system is undermined by the logistical challenges of coordinating evaluation participation across geographically dispersed sites with a central leadership physically located in Jakarta. Monthly evaluations typically involve only unit heads rather than full staff, reducing the depth and breadth of organizational learning generated.

BAF conducts bi-monthly full-staff evaluations focused on reviewing handled client outcomes, identifying performance gaps, and planning forward work programs. Evaluation methodology includes graphical trend analysis of visitor flow data to diagnose trajectories and identify strategic adjustment needs. The proximity of all evaluation participants operating from a single consolidated site allows genuine collective learning rather than the hierarchically filtered reporting that characterizes Palawi's evaluation system. This organizational learning advantage is particularly significant given the competitive intensity of the Banyumas adventure tourism market.

The comparative implementation of all five management functions across both destinations is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary Comparison of Management Function Implementation

Function	Palawi Risorsis (Government)	BAF (Private)	Advantage
Planning	Decentralized divisional planning; constrained by funding and HR capacity	GM-led, market-driven; short and long-term with event programming	BAF
Organizing	Formal 6-dept structure; Perhutani bureaucracy creates delays; coordination challenged by distance	Family culture; flexible roles; single shareholder; rapid decision cycles	BAF
Staffing	3-tier recruitment; strong BPJS welfare; training & benchmarking supported	Local priority; above-minimum wages; no welfare fund; professional freelancers as needed	Palawi (welfare)
Leading	Perhutani appointee; forestry background; limited tourism expertise; remote principal	Tourism-competent female GM; professional, detail-oriented; staff motivator	BAF
Controlling	4-tier cycles; logistically constrained; limited full-staff participation	Bi-monthly full-staff; graphical data analysis; genuine collective learning	BAF

As Table 4 illustrates, BAF demonstrates a management advantage in four of the five functions examined, with Palawi Risorsis retaining a clear advantage only in employee welfare provision, a finding that reflects the structural differences between public enterprise social mandates and private enterprise operational priorities.

3.3 Facilities and Infrastructure Management

Facility management represents another dimension on which the two governance models diverge meaningfully. At Palawi Risorsis, infrastructure is funded through a combination of Perhutani capital allocation and ticket revenue reinvestment. A dedicated Facilities Department Head oversees maintenance, but the geographic dispersion of Palawi's attractions across multiple sites creates coordination challenges that result in inconsistent maintenance standards. Tourists interviewed at Palawi Risorsis (P5) consistently raised concerns about safety equipment condition in outbound activities and toilet maintenance, noting that the gap between facility potential and actual upkeep reduced their overall satisfaction and willingness to return. These visitor-identified deficiencies, deteriorating safety equipment, non-functional toilet facilities despite adequate count, and insufficient outbound instructor competence, point to systemic underinvestment in quality management rather than merely physical infrastructure aging [51].

BAF's facility management philosophy is distinctive in its dual commitment to safety compliance and naturalistic aesthetics: no permanent structures are constructed, preserving the forest environment, but all activity equipment meets rigorous safety standards. Facilities funding is entirely profit-reinvested without external financial support, which while limiting expansion pace ensures that maintenance is internally prioritized as an operational cost center. Tourists interviewed at Baturaden Adventure Forest (P6) expressed uniformly positive assessments, with recurring praise for equipment safety standards, staff service warmth, and the natural forest atmosphere. The primary concern raised by P6, insufficient attention to child participants during mixed-age outbound activities, suggests a gap between BAF's adult-oriented service design and the family market it is beginning to attract.

A comparative summary of facilities and infrastructure management across both destinations is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Facilities and Infrastructure Comparison

Facility Dimension	Palawi Risorsis	Baturaden Adventure Forest
Funding Source	Perhutani allocation + ticket revenue	Profit reinvestment only (no bank borrowing)
Construction Philosophy	Mixed (permanent + natural)	No permanent structures; fully naturalistic
Safety Equipment	Needs refurbishment (visitor complaint)	High standard; well-maintained
Toilet Facilities	Adequate in number; poor maintenance	Clean, well-kept; naturalistic design
Visitor Satisfaction	Mixed; concerns about equipment age and instructor quality	High; warm service, natural atmosphere praised
Key Visitor Concern	Equipment safety renewal; female instructors needed	Attention to child participants in mixed-age activities
Activity Expansion Plan	New attractions, road improvements	Longer flying fox; café/restaurant development

Table 5 demonstrates that differences in governance models are reflected in the management of facilities and infrastructure at both destinations. Baturaden Adventure Forest shows more consistent maintenance practices, higher visitor satisfaction, and stronger service standards under its private management approach. Meanwhile, Palawi Risorsis faces several operational challenges, particularly related to equipment renewal, facility maintenance, and coordination across multiple sites. These differences illustrate how governance arrangements shape facility management priorities and service delivery outcomes.

3.4 SWOT Analysis: Palawi Risorsis

The SWOT matrix for Palawi Risorsis, identifying internal strengths and weaknesses alongside external opportunities and threats, is presented in Table 6

Table 6. SWOT Matrix: Palawi Risorsis

Factor	Internal: Strengths (S)	Internal: Weaknesses (W)
1	Structured short- and long-term divisional planning	Funding limited to profit and ticket revenue
2	Local community employment (social integration)	Low average staff education levels
3	Broad recruitment pool; competitive selection	Manager appointed from Perhutani forestry (no tourism expertise)
4	Flexible tourism package customization	Limited Perhutani oversight and responsiveness
5	Four-tier annual evaluation system	Geographically constrained evaluation participation
External	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
1	Sport tourism development on remaining land area	Competitive pressure from similar venues
2	Broad market segmentation (all age groups)	Political cycle effects on institutional client volumes
3	Strong employee welfare (BPJS comprehensive)	Environmental unpredictability (volcanic activity, weather)
4	Staff development and benchmarking opportunities	Unregulated vendor presence affecting visitor experience
5	Strategic road access for large vehicles	Low public engagement with sport activities vs. passive nature tourism

The SO strategic priorities for Palawi center on leveraging Perhutani's land ownership advantage to expand sport tourism infrastructure using available capital from ticket revenues and institutional funding, coupled with maximizing the broad market segmentation appeal across age groups. The WO strategies address human resource quality deficits through expanded training and benchmarking programs while opening the underutilized land area for new sport tourism facilities. ST strategies focus on service quality enhancement to differentiate from competitors, improved vendor management to reduce visitor experience deterioration, and proactive communication with government clients whose activity budgets fluctuate with political cycles. WT strategies involve systematic safety equipment renewal, expanded sport tourism promotion to shift visitor behavior from passive to active engagement, and improved evaluation communication protocols to overcome geographic coordination barriers.

3.5 SWOT Analysis: Baturaden Adventure Forest

The SWOT analysis of Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF) was conducted to identify the internal capabilities and external challenges influencing its sport tourism development potential. The analysis highlights key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that provide the basis for formulating strategic directions for improving competitiveness, sustainability, and market positioning. The SWOT matrix for Baturaden Adventure Forest is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. SWOT Matrix: Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF)

Factor	Internal: Strengths (S)	Internal: Weaknesses (W)
1	Dual-horizon planning with event programming	Funding limited to profit (no bank borrowing)
2	Family-culture teamwork and mutual support	Service quality inconsistency (education gap)
3	Loyalty-based local recruitment; community integration	No formal staff welfare fund (though above-minimum wages)
4	Post-activity evaluation after every program	Evaluation language gap between educated and less-educated staff
5	High-quality safety-compliant natural facilities	Leader occasionally over-invests emotionally in operational issues
External	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
1	44 of 49 hectares available for future development	Land owned by Perhutani (30-year lease tenure risk)
2	Sole dedicated sport tourism venue in Banyumas (unique positioning)	Competing venues offering similar events, sometimes at zero cost
3	Flying fox expansion to enhance competitiveness	Unpredictable weather and natural hazards
4	Staff development investment; professional growth culture	Narrow access road limiting large-vehicle group tourism
5	Café/resto market diversification targeting youth	Capital scarcity limiting development pace

BAF's SO strategies center on exploiting its unique positioning as the region's only dedicated sport tourism venue to capture the growing adventure tourism market from the substantial undeveloped land area, while enhancing product differentiation through the flying fox expansion and café/restaurant development. WO strategies address service quality gaps by investing in targeted training programs and developing standardized service delivery protocols that bridge the educational diversity of the workforce [52], [53]. ST strategies involve proactive innovation in event programming to sustain competitive differentiation, enhanced visitor contracting to manage liability expectations in natural hazard environments, and partnership development with local transport providers to address access constraints [54], [55]. WT strategies focus on securing renewable long-term land tenure agreements, building financial reserves for infrastructure maintenance, and selectively developing new market segments that reduce dependence on the core corporate outbound segment.

3.6 Seven Strategic Development Directions for Banyumas Sport Tourism

Synthesizing the SWOT analysis findings across both destinations and the broader Banyumas regional context, seven strategic development directions emerge with relevance for the regency's sport tourism sector as a whole.

The four strategic response categories generated through the cross-analysis framework illustrated in Figure 1, SO, WO, ST, and WT strategies, are synthesized into seven strategic development directions presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Seven Strategic Development Directions for Banyumas Sport Tourism

Direction	Description	Primary Applicable Destination
Land Development	Utilize undeveloped natural terrain for new sport tourism facilities and activities	Both (Palawi has land ownership; BAF has undeveloped lease area)
Community Empowerment	Systematically integrate surrounding communities as vendors, guides, and service providers to strengthen social license and local economic benefit	Both
Land Consolidation	Rights For Perhutani-affiliated venues, clarify and secure long-term land use rights to enable confident long-horizon investment planning	Palawi (owns); BAF (30-year lease needs renewal strategy)

Direction		Description	Primary Applicable Destination
Visitor Packages	Evaluation	Develop tailored activity packages that match visitor capability levels, improving safety and satisfaction across diverse demographic segments	Palawi (currently underdeveloped)
Sport Specialization	Tourism Branding	Leverage BAF's unique positioning as Banyumas's sole dedicated sport tourism venue to build a distinctive regional brand identity	BAF (primary); Palawi (supportive)
Market Diversification		Expand into trending adjacent markets such as café/restaurant lifestyle tourism and selfie/experiential photography tourism to attract youth demographics	Both (BAF: café; Palawi: selfie installations)
Extreme Expansion	Sports	Add higher-intensity adventure activities (extreme flying fox, via ferrata, advanced downhill MTB) to capture the growing extreme sports market segment	BAF (primary development capacity)

Source: Synthesis of comparative SWOT analysis

Table 8 demonstrates that the proposed strategic directions integrate destination-specific priorities with broader regional development needs. While Palawi requires stronger visitor management and activity diversification to optimize its existing natural assets, BAF has greater potential for specialization through adventure sport branding and facility expansion. Across both destinations, community empowerment, market diversification, and sustainable land utilization emerge as shared strategic foundations for strengthening Banyumas as a competitive sport tourism destination. These integrated strategies indicate that future development should balance economic growth, visitor experience, and local community involvement to achieve long-term sustainability.

3.7 Discussion Governance Type, Management Quality, and Development Trajectories

The comparative findings from this study provide strong empirical support for the theoretical expectation that private governance produces superior management function implementation in sport tourism destination contexts. Across four of the five management functions examined (planning, organizing, leading, and controlling), BAF's private management model outperforms Palawi Risorsis's public enterprise model in operational effectiveness, strategic responsiveness, and visitor experience quality. Only in the staffing dimension specifically employee welfare provision does Palawi demonstrate a clear advantage, reflecting the public enterprise's capacity and mandate to provide comprehensive social protection that a small private enterprise without a formal welfare budget cannot match.

These findings resonate with the international comparative evidence reviewed. The leadership appointment mechanism emerges as particularly consequential: Palawi's institutionally imposed leader with no tourism background represents a governance failure that cascades across all other management functions, while BAF's competence-selected leader generates a positive management culture that amplifies organizational performance across all dimensions. This finding echoes theoretical proposition that leadership quality is the single most influential determinant of sport organization management effectiveness, and extends it to the specific governance-type comparison context [56]-[58].

In Indonesia, nature-based sport tourism destinations are frequently managed through hybrid governance arrangements involving state-owned enterprises such as Perhutani. While this structure ensures legal control over forest resources and environmental protection, it often produces administrative rigidity, slow decision-making, and limited managerial autonomy. The findings from Palawi Risorsis reflect these structural characteristics, where bureaucratic procedures and centralized authority constrained innovation, leadership responsiveness, and operational effectiveness. A relatively similar governance pattern can be observed in Thailand, particularly in tourism destinations managed through collaborations between state agencies and private tourism operators. Previous studies in Thailand indicate that privately managed adventure tourism destinations tend to demonstrate higher adaptability to market trends, stronger visitor-oriented innovation, and more flexible service management compared to state-managed tourism facilities. Thailand's tourism sector has benefited from stronger integration between local entrepreneurship, destination branding, and experiential tourism development, especially in ecotourism and adventure tourism areas [58]-[60]. This explains why management flexibility and customer-oriented leadership, as observed in BAF, align closely with successful private tourism governance models found in Thailand.

Meanwhile, the Iranian context provides another important comparative perspective. In Iran, recreational sport tourism development has increasingly become part of government strategies to diversify regional economies and promote outdoor recreation [62]. However, similar to Indonesia, many tourism and sport facilities remain strongly influenced by centralized governmental structures and regulatory control. Iranian sport tourism studies

frequently highlight the tension between commercialization efforts and state supervision, especially regarding investment flexibility, human resource development, and destination competitiveness [37]. The challenges identified at Palawi Risorsis particularly leadership mismatch, bureaucratic inefficiency, and limited managerial responsiveness mirror institutional issues reported in several Iranian public-sector sport tourism organizations.

Despite these differences, all three national contexts demonstrate that governance structure significantly influences tourism management quality, organizational learning capacity, and strategic innovation. Private governance models tend to encourage adaptive leadership, rapid decision-making, and market responsiveness [63], [64], whereas public governance models contribute more strongly to social protection, community access, and long-term resource stewardship. Therefore, the findings of this study contribute not only to Indonesian sport tourism literature but also to wider discussions in Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern tourism governance research regarding the optimal balance between public accountability and entrepreneurial management flexibility.

The novelty of this study's contribution lies in three dimensions. First, it provides the first published comparative management analysis of a government-private sport tourism destination pair in the Central Java context, offering an empirically grounded baseline for future longitudinal and multi-site comparative research. Second, it demonstrates that SWOT-based strategic analysis, when integrated with management function assessment rather than treated as a standalone planning tool, generates richer and more actionable strategic insights the SWOT matrices in this study are interpreted through the lens of management function gaps rather than simply as lists of environmental factors [65]. Third, the seven-direction synthesis framework offers a transferable template for regional sport tourism strategic planning that could be adapted to comparable regency-level tourism governance challenges elsewhere in Indonesia and in comparable Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern contexts.

Regarding limitations, the study relies on a relatively small number of key informants at each site, and the cross-sectional design precludes longitudinal tracking of management evolution, findings reflect conditions as observed during the 2024 fieldwork period and do not capture subsequent developments at either destination. Future research should employ larger, more systematically sampled interview panels, extend the comparative frame to include additional Banyumas sport tourism destinations to test the generalizability of the governance-type findings, and adopt longitudinal designs to track whether strategic priorities, including BAF's café/restaurant and flying fox expansion and Palawi's leadership professionalization, have been successfully implemented.

The practical implications of this study are substantial. For Banyumas Regency government: professionalizing the management of publicly owned sport tourism destinations requires fundamentally rethinking leadership appointment mechanisms to prioritize tourism management competence over institutional seniority [66]. For Perhutani: the findings suggest that the corporation's passive oversight relationship with Palawi Risorsis is depressing the destination's competitive performance, and that a more active engagement model with tourism-specific performance metrics and resource support could significantly improve outcomes. For BAF: the findings validate the organization's management approach but highlight the urgent need to formalize a staff welfare fund and to develop standardized service quality protocols that reduce dependence on individual staff initiative.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated, through systematic comparative qualitative analysis, that governance type significantly shapes sport tourism destination management quality and strategic development capacity in the Banyumas Regency context. Baturaden Adventure Forest's private management model consistently outperforms Palawi Risorsis's public enterprise model across planning, organizing, leadership, and controlling dimensions, producing superior strategic clarity, organizational cohesion, visitor satisfaction, and market responsiveness. BAF's designation as Central Java Province's sport tourism icon is not an artifact of natural endowment advantage both destinations share comparable forest landscapes at the foot of Mount Slamet but a reflection of management quality advantage. Palawi Risorsis's underperformance is structurally rooted in leadership appointment mechanisms, bureaucratic financing channels, and geographic coordination constraints that are products of its Perhutani governance architecture rather than of inadequate natural resources or market demand.

The SWOT analysis reveals that both destinations face a common overarching strategic challenge: converting abundant underdeveloped natural land assets into competitive sport tourism infrastructure without the benefit of external financing instruments. BAF's principled avoidance of bank debt while admirable from a religious observance standpoint restricts development pace to the rhythm of profit accumulation, while Palawi's dependence on Perhutani's slow and bureaucratically mediated capital allocation creates comparable constraints through different mechanisms. Both destinations would benefit from institutional innovation in rural tourism financing, potentially through cooperative investment structures, blended public-private financing instruments, or government grant programs specifically targeted at sport tourism infrastructure development.

The seven strategic development directions synthesized from the comparative SWOT analysis land development, community empowerment, land rights consolidation, visitor package evaluation, sport tourism specialization branding, market diversification, and extreme sports expansion provide an actionable strategic roadmap for the Banyumas sport tourism sector that is grounded in empirical organizational analysis rather than

abstract planning principles. Theoretically, this study contributes to the sport tourism governance literature by providing the first empirically grounded comparative evidence that governance type, public versus private, is a significant determinant of management function quality and strategic development capacity in nature-based sport tourism destinations in developing country contexts. Regional tourism authorities, destination managers, and community stakeholders would benefit from adopting this framework as a basis for coordinated cross-destination development planning.

For future researchers this study opens several productive inquiry directions. Comparative analysis extending beyond two cases to the full population of Banyumas sport tourism destinations would test the generalizability of governance-type findings. International comparative studies contrasting Indonesian, Thai, and Iranian sport tourism governance models drawing on the authorship team's cross-national expertise could yield insights into how cultural and institutional contexts moderate the governance-performance relationship. Quantitative visitor satisfaction and willingness-to-pay research would complement the qualitative management analysis with demand-side market intelligence. Finally, longitudinal tracking of both destinations over a five-to-ten-year horizon would provide the temporal depth needed to assess whether governance type shapes not only current management quality but also long-term destination trajectory and resilience.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the generation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All aspects of the research, including data collection, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were carried out entirely by the authors without the assistance of AI-based technologies

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