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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

In recent decades, sports tourism has undergone a significant shift: from a minor recreational activity to one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry [1]-[3]. Various studies estimate that this sector contributes significantly to global tourism revenues, as tourists' interest in active, wellness-oriented, and experiential travel increases [4]-[6]. In such conditions, the quality of destination management is a determining factor that differentiates competitive tourist locations from those that fail to convert their natural and recreational potential into sustainable tourism experiences and economic benefits [7]-[9].

Among the various issues in sports tourism management studies, the question of governance forms remains a point of debate that has not been widely explored [10]-[12]. The question of whether public or private sector management leads to better performance in sports tourism destinations has both theoretical weight and practical implications, but comparative empirical evidence from developing countries is still very limited [13], [14]. In developed countries, findings generally indicate that private management tends to excel in operational flexibility, market responsiveness, and innovation, while public management excels in broad accessibility, commitment to sustainability, and community engagement [15]-[17]. However, it is unclear whether these contrasting patterns of governance excellence apply equally to nature-based sports tourism destinations in developing countries. This issue is particularly relevant in Indonesia, given that government tourism management is often carried out through state-owned enterprise schemes such as Perhutani, a hybrid form of governance that combines public ownership with a commercial operational mandate, creating unique managerial opportunities and limitations.

Banyumas Regency in Central Java is an ideal location to examine these governance issues. Situated on the southern slopes of Mount Slamet, Indonesia's second-highest active volcano, the regency boasts a wealth of natural resources for nature-based sports tourism, ranging from highland forests and hot springs to rivers and mountainous areas. However, utilization of this potential has been uneven, in part because the two main sports tourism destinations in the region are managed using very different models [18]-[20]. Palawi Risorsis, a subsidiary of the state-owned forestry company Perhutani, operates within a public bureaucratic framework that prioritizes institutional compliance and risk management [21]. In contrast, Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF), managed by PT Bangkit Maju Wisata in partnership with Perhutani, employs a commercially oriented, entrepreneurial approach and has become one of the most recognized nature-based sports tourism destinations in Central Java.

Destination governance is increasingly recognized as a determining factor for competitiveness, sustainability, and stakeholder coordination in the tourism industry. Governance structures determine resource allocation, decision-making processes, and collaboration patterns between public and private actors in destination development. Previous studies have shown that effective governance contributes to improved service quality, visitor satisfaction, and long-term destination resilience, while ineffective governance tends to lead to fragmented decision-making and inefficient resource utilization [22]-[24]. Therefore, examining how different governance structures operate in sports tourism destinations can provide important insights into destination performance and the direction of their strategic development.

Academic attention to sports tourism in Indonesia continues to grow, driven by government policies such as the 2010–2024 National Sports Development Grand Design, which explicitly positions recreational sports as an instrument of economic development, and by the success of events such as the Dieng Culture Festival, Borobudur Marathon, and Baliem Valley Festival in attracting international tourists. However, academic literature specifically examining the organizational management aspects of sports tourism destinations, regardless of their physical or market potential, remains very limited [25], [26]. Most research in Indonesia focuses on assessing destination potential or evaluating the impact of events, leaving the governance and management dimensions underdeveloped theoretically.

From an international perspective, comparative management literature provides a rich theoretical framework. The classification of sports management into event management, institutional management, and facility management provides a useful analytical framework for examining destination operations [27]–[30]. Meanwhile, the identification of planning, organizing, staffing, leadership, and controlling as the five core management functions serves as the primary analytical foundation for this research [30]–[32]. The distinction between planning as a goal-setting process and organizing as a decision-allocation process highlights the practical differences between well-functioning and problematic management systems. Recent findings regarding bureaucratic rigidity and centralization of public sport governance in Brazil and Portugal bear similarities to some of the management characteristics found in Palawi Risorsis, while the more flexible and adaptive management of Baturaden Adventure Forest reflects the advantages of a decentralized and market-oriented governance structure in managing sport tourism destinations [34].

From a cross-national perspective, the governance comparisons in this study are also relevant beyond the Indonesian context. Thailand serves as a relevant comparison case because its tourism governance model combines strong state promotion of tourism with extensive private sector participation in the management of adventure tourism and ecotourism. Like Indonesia, Thailand also experiences governance tensions between public accountability and market orientation, particularly in nature-based tourism destinations [35]-[37]. However,

Thailand's more mature tourism ecosystem allows private operators to play a greater role in innovation, branding, and the development of experience-based tourism. In Iran, sports tourism governance remains heavily influenced by centralized institutional arrangements, particularly in the publicly managed recreational and outdoor tourism sector [38], [39]. However, recent policy directions increasingly emphasize commercialization, destination competitiveness, and sustainable recreation development, creating governance dynamics similar to those in Indonesia, where public sector management often struggles to match the flexibility and innovation capacity of private tourism operators.

The research gaps underlying this study are twofold. First, comparative empirical evidence on how different governance structures influence the effectiveness of managerial and organizational practices in nature-based sports tourism destinations remains limited, particularly in developing country contexts. In Indonesia, no research has systematically compared government-managed and privately managed sports tourism destinations within the same study area. Second, the sports tourism management literature lacks empirically based SWOT analyses that link governance and management findings to applicable strategic development recommendations for specific destination contexts [40]-[42].

This study seeks to fill this gap by comparing governance and management practices in two sports tourism destinations operating under different organizational structures. Specifically, the objectives of this study are: (1) to compare the implementation of core management functions planning, organizing, staffing, leadership, and controlling in 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 a comparative SWOT analysis to identify the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats of each destination; and (4) to formulate strategic recommendations for the development and governance of sustainable sports tourism in Banyumas Regency and similar 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 a contextual and process-oriented understanding of how management functions are implemented across different organizational and governance environments, a form of understanding that is not adequately captured by quantitative approaches [43]. The comparative case study design enabled analytical generalization from empirical findings to theoretical propositions regarding the influence of governance type on the quality of sport tourism management and strategic development capacity [22], [23]. 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. Comparative case selection is commonly used in tourism governance research to examine how different institutional arrangements influence destination management practices and development outcomes [22]. 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 for their institutional knowledge and direct involvement in the planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling functions, while tourist participants were included to provide complementary perspectives on 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 continued until thematic saturation was achieved, as indicated by the recurrence of key themes

related to governance practices, management functions, facility management, and strategic development [44]. 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 purposively selected for 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 [43]. 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, and strategic development
Direct field observation	Both destination sites	Physical facilities, visitor activities, and management processes
Documentary analysis	Organizational records, policy documents, and 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].

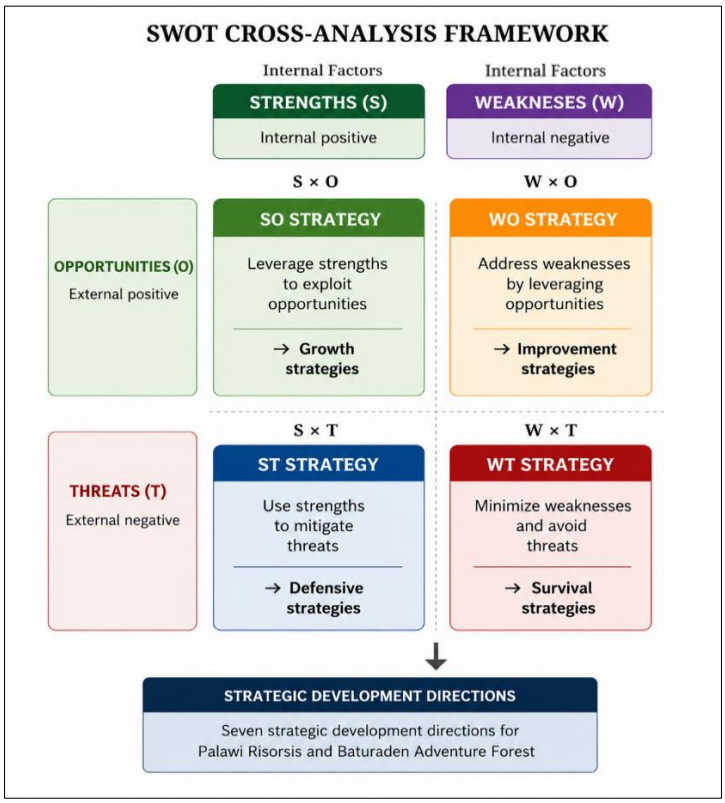


Figure 1. SWOT Cross-Analysis Framework Applied in This Study

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.

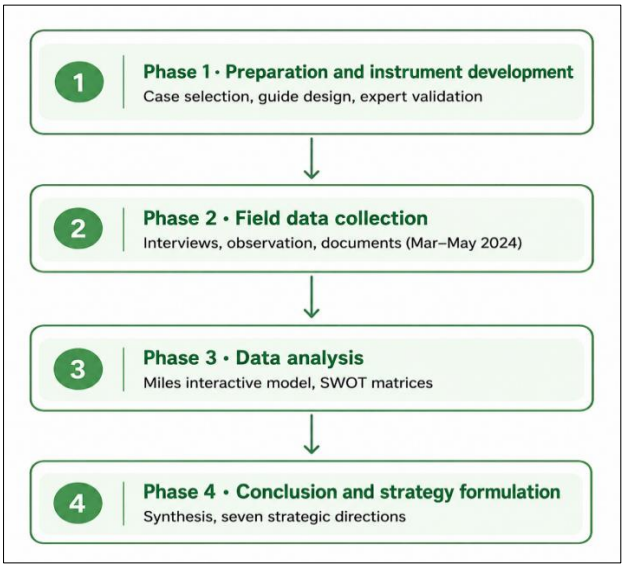


Figure 2. Research Procedure of the Study

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, the southern slope of 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 the 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 in 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 the 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 in the 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 is affecting the visitor experience
5	Strategic road access for large vehicles	Low public engagement with sports 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 of the language gap between educated and less-educated staff
5	High-quality safety-compliant natural facilities	The leader occasionally overinvests 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 limits the 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 an 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 Rights Consolidation	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 Evaluation Packages	Develop tailored activity packages that match visitor capability levels, improving safety and satisfaction across diverse demographic segments	Palawi (currently underdeveloped)
Sport Tourism Specialization 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 Sports Expansion	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 in this study provide strong empirical support for the theoretical hypothesis that private governance results in superior implementation of management functions in the context of sports tourism destinations. Of the five management functions examined, BAF outperformed Palawi Risorsis in four of them planning, organizing, leadership, and controlling in terms of operational effectiveness, strategic responsiveness, and the quality of the visitor experience. Only in the staffing dimension, specifically the provision of employee welfare, did Palawi demonstrate a clear advantage reflecting the capacity and mandate of state-owned enterprises to provide comprehensive social protection, something that small-scale private companies without formal welfare budgets struggle to match.

These findings align with the international comparative evidence reviewed. The leadership appointment mechanism emerged as a significant factor: Palawi's institutionally appointed leaders with no tourism background reflected governance failures that had a ripple effect across all other management functions, while BAF's competency-based leaders created a positive managerial culture that strengthened organizational performance across all dimensions. These findings reinforce the theoretical proposition that leadership quality is the single most influential factor in the effectiveness of sports organization management, while extending this proposition to the context of comparing specific governance types [56]-[58].

In Indonesia, nature-based sports tourism destinations are often managed through hybrid governance schemes involving state-owned enterprises (SOEs) such as Perhutani. While this structure guarantees legal control over forest resources and environmental protection, it often results in administrative rigidity, slow decision-making, and limited managerial autonomy. The findings at Palawi Risorsis reflect these structural characteristics, where bureaucratic procedures and centralized authority limit innovation, leadership responsiveness, and operational effectiveness. Relatively similar governance patterns are also found in Thailand, particularly in tourism destinations managed through collaborations between state institutions and private tour operators. Previous studies in Thailand have shown that privately managed adventure tourism destinations tend to be more adaptive to market trends, more innovative in their visitor orientation, and more flexible in service management than state-managed tourism facilities. Thailand's tourism sector could benefit from a stronger integration of local entrepreneurship, destination branding, and experience-based tourism development, particularly in ecotourism and adventure tourism areas [58]-[60]. This explains why the managerial flexibility and customer-oriented leadership observed at BAF align with the successful private tourism governance model in Thailand.

Meanwhile, the Iranian context provides another important comparative perspective. In Iran, the development of recreational sports tourism is increasingly part of the government's strategy to diversify the regional economy and promote outdoor recreation [62]. However, similar to Indonesia, many tourism and sports facilities there remain heavily influenced by centralized government structures and strict regulatory controls. Studies of sports tourism in Iran often highlight the tension between commercialization efforts and state oversight,

particularly regarding investment flexibility, human resource development, and destination competitiveness [37]. The issues identified at Palawi Risorsis particularly leadership incompatibility, bureaucratic inefficiency, and limited managerial responsiveness reflect similar institutional issues reported in a number of public-sector sports tourism organizations in Iran.

Despite the differences in context, these three countries exhibit a common pattern: governance structures significantly influence the quality of tourism management, organizational learning capacity, and strategic innovation. Private governance models tend to encourage adaptive leadership, rapid decision-making, and market responsiveness [63], [64], while public governance models are superior in terms of social protection, community access, and long-term resource management. Therefore, the findings of this study contribute not only to the Indonesian sports tourism literature but also to the broader discussion in tourism governance studies in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, particularly regarding the optimal balance between public accountability and entrepreneurial management flexibility.

The novelty of this research contribution lies in three dimensions. First, this study is a computer management analysis. This is the first published narrative on a public-private sports tourism destination pair in the Central Java context, providing an empirical baseline for future longitudinal, multi-site comparative research. Second, this study demonstrates that SWOT-based strategic analysis, when integrated with an assessment of management functions rather than treated as a stand-alone planning tool, yields richer and more applicable strategic insights. The SWOT matrix in this study is interpreted through the lens of management function gaps, rather than simply a list of environmental factors [65]. Third, the resulting seven-pronged synthesis framework offers a transferable template for regional-level sports tourism strategic planning, which can be adapted to similar district-level tourism governance challenges in other regions of Indonesia as well as comparable Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern contexts.

Regarding limitations, this study relies on a relatively limited number of key informants in each location, and the cross-sectional design employed does not allow for longitudinal tracking of management developments over time. The findings reflect conditions as observed during the 2024 field data collection period and do not capture developments that may have occurred subsequently in both destinations. Future research should utilize a larger, more systematically sampled interview panel, expand the comparative framework to include other sports tourism destinations in Banyumas to test the generalizability of the findings regarding governance types, and employ a longitudinal design to track whether strategic priorities, including the planned expansion of the cafe/restaurant and flying fox at BAF and the professionalization of leadership at Palawi, have been successfully implemented.

The practical implications of this research are substantial. For the Banyumas Regency government, professionalizing the management of publicly owned sports tourism destinations requires a fundamental review of the leadership appointment mechanism, prioritizing tourism management competency over institutional seniority [66]. For Perhutani, these findings suggest that a passive supervisory relationship with Palawi Risorsis actually undermines the destination's competitive performance, and that a more active engagement model, along with tourism-specific performance indicators and resource support, has the potential to significantly improve outcomes. For BAF, these findings validate the organization's management approach, but also highlight the urgent need to institutionalize a staff welfare fund and develop standardized service quality protocols to reduce reliance on individual staff initiative.

4. CONCLUSION

This comparative qualitative study shows that governance type significantly shapes management quality and strategic development capacity at sports tourism destinations in Banyumas Regency. The privately managed Baturaden Adventure Forest (BAF) consistently outperforms the state-owned Palawi Risorsis model in planning, organization, leadership, and control, resulting in greater strategic clarity, organizational cohesion, visitor satisfaction, and market responsiveness. Given that both destinations share similar natural assets at the foot of Mount Slamet, BAF's status as a leading destination in Central Java reflects superior management quality, not superior resources, while Palawi's suboptimal performance stems from the structural characteristics of Perhutani's governance architecture, namely its leadership appointment mechanism, bureaucratic financing, and limited coordination.

Both destinations also face the same strategic challenge: transforming underutilized land into competitive infrastructure without adequate external financing support, BAF through its principle of avoiding bank debt, Palawi through Perhutani's slow capital allocation. Both could potentially benefit from innovative financing mechanisms, such as cooperative investment, mixed public-private schemes, or well-targeted government grants. The seven strategic directions resulting from the comparative SWOT analysis of land development, community empowerment, land rights consolidation, tourism package evaluation, branding enhancement, market diversification, and extreme sports expansion offer an empirically grounded roadmap for the sector. Theoretically, this study provides the first empirical evidence that governance type is a significant determinant of management

quality and strategic capacity in nature-based sports tourism destinations in developing countries, while also offering a framework that local authorities and stakeholders can apply in coordinated development planning.

Future research should expand this comparison to all sports tourism destinations in Banyumas to test the generalizability of the findings, conduct a cross-country analysis of governance models in Indonesia, Thailand, and Iran to examine moderating contextual factors, incorporate quantitative data on visitor satisfaction and willingness to pay, and track both destinations longitudinally over five to ten years to assess how governance shapes development trajectory and long-term 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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