

Modelling the Halal-Wellness Nexus: A Strategic Evaluation of Destination Competitiveness through Penta-Helix Collaboration in West Java

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Abstract

The post-pandemic global tourism landscape has experienced a paradigm shift toward health-oriented travel, positioning the halal-wellness nexus as a critical driver of destination competitiveness. Despite possessing world-class geothermal resources and profound indigenous healing traditions, West Java's wellness tourism sector remains constrained by fragmented regional branding and infrastructure bottlenecks. This study quantitatively evaluates West Java's strategic market posture to bridge the gap between latent destination potential and actionable marketing execution. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive design, the research employs the Internal Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (IFAS) and External Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (EFAS) matrices through structured expert consultations involving a panel of 15 purposively selected Penta-Helix stakeholders. These experts comprise representatives from academia, government (Disbudpar), industry (spa/resort operators), community leaders, and tourism media. The findings reveal equivalent IFAS and EFAS scores of 2.77, mapping the destination into Cell V (Hold and Maintain) of the Internal-External Matrix. This positioning indicates a stable yet under-optimized ecosystem that must transition toward an aggressive growth posture. Through a consensus-driven process linking macro-environmental factors to granular interventions, the study formulates a strategic TOWS mix centred on a "Heritage-Health-Harmony" brand architecture. Actionable recommendations from the expert panel include integrating Mega Mendung batik motifs into the destination's visual identity, optimising tourist buses for regional wellness corridors, and facilitating interest-free financing schemes to elevate local hospitality standards ethically. This framework provides a data-driven blueprint for policymakers to transform West Java into a resilient, globally competitive halal-wellness hub.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism; Halal-Wellness Nexus; Penta-Helix Collaboration; Strategic Matrix Analysis; Destination Marketing

A. INTRODUCTION

The global tourism landscape has undergone a significant paradigm shift, moving from mass tourism toward more personalized, health-oriented, and meaningful experiences. Wellness tourism has emerged as one of the most dynamic segments within this shift, driven by a rising global awareness of physical health, mental well-being, and stress management (Dávid et al., 2024). As travellers increasingly seek destinations that offer holistic rejuvenation, the competition to establish premier wellness hubs has intensified. In the Indonesian context, the strategic marketing of these destinations necessitates quantitative frameworks that can translate internal capabilities and external conditions into actionable posture decisions, such as aggressive growth or defensive stabilization (Rianty et al., 2024).

Indonesia, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse natural landscapes, possesses immense potential to lead the global wellness sector. West Java, in particular, stands out for its unique convergence of cultural symbolism, serene rural environments, and religiously informed hospitality practices (Sjafirah et al., 2024; Yudha et al., 2023). The province's potential is further amplified by its alignment with the growing halal-

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tourism ecosystem, where destination image and religious attributes strongly influence visitor intentions (Prawira et al., 2023; Ratnasari et al., 2023). However, despite these natural and cultural endowments, the development of wellness tourism in West Java remains fragmented. Challenges such as inconsistent branding, infrastructure gaps, and a lack of integrated digital marketing platforms continue to hamper its competitive reach (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Siregar & WARDHANI, 2023).

To bridge the gap between potential and market performance, a data-driven strategic assessment is required. Methodologically, the integration of the Internal Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (IFAS) and the External Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (EFAS) has become a well-established approach for destination marketing strategy in Indonesia. Recent academic discourse suggests that when internal strengths—such as West Java's traditional healing practices and "Penta Helix" collaboration capacity—align with external opportunities, an aggressive growth strategy is often recommended (Almeira et al., 2023; Pratiwi et al., 2024).

However, this study seeks to advance the existing literature by addressing the "halal-wellness nexus," moving beyond a merely descriptive application of strategic matrices. By explicitly integrating Penta-Helix collaboration metrics and exploring the role of ethical, interest-free financing in elevating hospitality standards (Nursanty & Wulandari, 2023), this research provides a theoretical bridge between secular wellness and Islamic ethical capitalization. Ultimately, this study aims to quantify West Java's strategic position through a consensus-driven evaluation by a panel of 15 experts, offering actionable pathways to optimize the province's standing in the competitive global market.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Evolution of Wellness Tourism in the Post-Pandemic Era

The global tourism industry has witnessed a profound transformation in traveler preferences and motivations over the last decade, transitioning from a niche segment to a mainstream demand driver in the post-pandemic economy (Liu, 2025). There has been a clear shift away from traditional mass tourism toward a more intentional, health-conscious form of travel, in which individuals prioritise physical health, mental well-being, and stress management as core motivators (Zhong et al., 2024). This shift is no longer merely an aesthetic preference but a fundamental change in consumer behavior, as travelers increasingly scrutinize a destination's health environment, safety protocols, and its genuine restorative potential (Figueiredo et al., 2024; Torres-Pruñonosa et al., 2023).

The post-COVID context has been a powerful catalyst, intensifying demand for outcomes-oriented wellness experiences that offer more than superficial relaxation. Modern wellness tourism now intersects with various sub-sectors, including ecotourism, rural retreats, and "slow travel," which allow for a deeper immersion into place-based healing traditions and local narratives (Pascual-Fraile et al., 2024). This evolution highlights a multidimensional field where branding and product design must be coupled with sustainability-focused metrics to maintain market relevance (Almeida & Almeida, 2024; Zheng & Chi, 2024). Consequently, the post-pandemic traveler is characterized by heightened risk sensitivity, favoring authentic, serene environments that support long-term resilience and restoration (Wong et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the rise of a data-driven marketing paradigm has become essential for destination managers to navigate this competitive landscape. Strategic destination branding in crisis contexts requires systematic, evidence-based approaches to understand consumer perceptions and risk tolerance (Almeida & Almeida, 2024). The integration of physical, mental, spiritual, and environmental (PMSE) dimensions into wellness frameworks provides a structured lens for evaluating and designing holistic packages that resonate with health-conscious travellers (Pascual-Fraile et al., 2024). As destinations recover, the literature underscores the importance of collaborative, multi-stakeholder governance and the use of experiential

storytelling—or "storynomics"—to communicate safety, authenticity, and meaningful value propositions to diverse global segments (Mohammadian et al., 2024; Šerić et al., 2024).

To navigate these complex shifts effectively, the literature suggests that qualitative narratives must be anchored in rigorous analytical frameworks capable of quantifying destination readiness. This methodological necessity justifies the transition from theoretical discourse to the application of strategic matrices, ensuring that the identification of restorative potential is grounded in measurable data.

The Halal-Wellness Nexus in Destination Branding

The convergence of halal tourism and wellness tourism offers a distinctive value proposition for destinations with strong religious and cultural identities. Halal wellness extends beyond mere compliance—such as the provision of halal food or prayer spaces—to a holistic lens that integrates physical restoration, mental well-being, and ethical consumption with Islamic values (Nursanty & Wulandari, 2023; Wardhani et al., 2023). This nexus is increasingly attractive to a growing global Muslim middle class seeking high-quality, ethically mindful experiences that harmonize health objectives with spiritual integrity (Saffinee et al., 2024). In practice, branding such destinations requires sophisticated storytelling and governance strategies that translate local wisdom and indigenous healing traditions into experiences that resonate with both spiritual and health-conscious travelers (Burhanudin et al., 2023; Nursanty & Wulandari, 2023).

The conceptualization of a halal-wellness destination relies on a branding architecture centered on "Heritage, Health, and Harmony". By leveraging heritage-driven narratives—such as local healing traditions and sacred sites—destinations can deliver health-enhancing experiences that align with Islamic principles of modesty and cleanliness (Hanie et al., 2023; Saffinee et al., 2024). This synthesis positions wellness as an act of stewardship over the body and soul, thereby distinguishing it from secular wellness hubs (Adriani & Francoise, 2024). Furthermore, this approach is particularly effective in reducing "perceived risk" and building visitor confidence, improving revisit intentions among both Muslim and non-Muslim travelers who value safety and ethical standards (Lada et al., 2024; Saffinee et al., 2024).

However, the academic discourse emphasizes that the spiritual integrity of the halal-wellness brand is inextricably linked to the ethical foundations of its economic ecosystem (Nursanty & Wulandari, 2023; Wardhani et al., 2023). This necessitates a "theoretical bridge" between wellness provision and Islamic finance, in which ethical capitalisation—specifically through interest-free financing models—serves as a structural imperative to maintain the purity of the hospitality chain (Nursanty & Wulandari, 2023). By eschewing usury-based investments, destinations can manifest the "Harmony" pillar of their brand architecture, providing a defensible competitive edge in the global market (Lada et al., 2024; Saffinee et al., 2024).

The implementation of such a sophisticated strategy necessitates a multi-stakeholder governance framework, exemplified by the "Penta-Helix" model. This model involves deep collaboration among government, industry, academia, community, and media to build a durable destination ecosystem (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Ruhaeni et al., 2024). Such collaboration is crucial for establishing credible halal-wellness standards and integrated marketing communications (IMC) that leverage digital channels to amplify the destination's reach (Wardhani et al., 2023). By integrating these elements, destinations like West Java can create a coherent brand image anchored in cultural heritage and financial integrity (Listiani et al., 2026; Sjafirah et al., 2024).

Destination Competitiveness and Strategic Marketing

Destination competitiveness in the wellness sector is no longer determined solely by the presence of natural resources or traditional healing facilities. It is increasingly defined by a region's ability to strategically translate these assets into distinctive, restorative experiences while preserving long-term sustainability and

profitability (Hunold et al., 2020; Phuthong et al., 2023; Susanto et al., 2022, 2025). A competitive destination can deliver high-quality wellness outcomes while navigating the post-pandemic landscape, which necessitates risk-aware branding, safety assurances, and credible health narratives (Wong et al., 2023). In this context, strategic marketing functions as the essential bridge between a destination's latent wellness potential and its actual market performance, enabling managers to identify unique selling propositions (USPs) and align internal capabilities with external global demand (Yuan & Vui, 2023).

Modern strategic marketing for wellness destinations has shifted toward a more digital and narrative-driven approach. The use of "storynomics"—the strategic encoding of local history, myths, and indigenous wisdom into marketing—has emerged as a central differentiator that creates emotional engagement beyond conventional advertising (Parani & Juliana, 2023). This digital dimension is further amplified by the rapid expansion of online platforms and influencer ecosystems, which enable precise targeting of niche segments, such as the global Muslim middle class (Saffinee et al., 2024; Siregar & Wardhani, 2023). For these narratives to be effective, they must be anchored in authentic destination images and transparent messaging to build trust among potential visitors (Torres-Pruñonosa et al., 2023; Yuan & Vui, 2023).

Achieving sustained competitiveness requires a robust governance structure, often operationalized through a "Penta-Helix" arrangement involving government, industry, academia, community, and media (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Yuniningsih et al., 2024). Such unified governance reduces fragmentation and facilitates cohesive branding and rapid response to external volatilities (Ruhaeni et al., 2024; Shekhar & Das, 2026). While conventional strategic management often treats these collaborative frameworks as purely descriptive, this study advances the literature by integrating Penta-Helix synergy as a quantifiable metric within the IFAS and EFAS matrices. By quantifying internal strengths—such as institutional collaboration and cultural storynomics—against external opportunities, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) can move beyond intuitive decisions toward growth-oriented strategies that are both resilient and impactful (Ketut et al., 2023; Yudha et al., 2023). This quantitative foundation ensures that specific interventions, such as the integration of indigenous motifs and ethical financing, are not arbitrary but are mathematically derived from a consensus-driven evaluation of the destination's strategic posture.

C. METHODS

This study employs a quantitative descriptive research design to evaluate the strategic position of wellness tourism in West Java. The primary framework used is an enhanced Internal Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (IFAS) and External Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (EFAS) matrix. These tools were selected for their ability to synthesize complex environmental variables into measurable scores, providing a defensible mathematical basis for determining the destination's strategic posture.

Data collection involved a rigorous two-stage process conducted between January and February 2025: First, Identification of Variables: Strategic factors (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) were extracted through a systematic literature review and preliminary field observations across West Java's wellness corridors, including Ciwidey, Lembang, and Garut. Second, Expert Consultation (Purposive Sampling): To ensure objectivity and high-level consensus, the study engaged a panel of 15 purposively selected experts via a two-round Delphi Method. The panel was structured according to the Penta-Helix model, comprising three representatives from each pillar: Academia (specialists in tourism and Islamic finance), Government, Industry, Community (local tourism forum leaders), and Media (digital tourism journalists).

The quantitative analysis followed a structured four-step process: First, Weighting (0.0–1.0): Each factor was assigned a weight based on its relative importance to the success of the halal-wellness nexus. Second, Rating (1–4): Experts assigned ratings to indicate the effectiveness of current management responses (1 =

Major Weakness/Threat, 4 = Major Strength/Opportunity). Third, Weighted Score: Calculated by multiplying the Weight by the Rating (Weight x Rating). Fourth, Total Weighted Score: The sum of all weighted scores, indicating the overall strategic position.

To address potential statistical anomalies, the aggregate expert scores were normalised. The identical IFAS and EFAS scores of 2.77 resulted from a controlled arithmetic mean calculation during the final Delphi round, in which experts harmonised the weights to ensure the total sum precisely equalled 1.00 for both matrices. Furthermore, to bridge the logical gap between macro-factors and micro-interventions, the expert panel was specifically tasked with deriving the TOWS Strategic Mix. This ensured a transparent chain of evidence, with granular recommendations—such as integrating Mega Mendung motifs and interest-free financing—directly mapped to the high-priority weights identified in the matrices. The final scores were mapped onto the Internal-External (IE) Matrix. The intersection of these scores determines the quadrant position: Quadrant I (Aggressive), Quadrant II (Diversification), Quadrant III (Turnaround), and Quadrant IV (Defensive).

D. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Identification of Strategic Environmental Factors

The identification of strategic factors for West Java's wellness tourism involved a rigorous evaluation of internal and external environments, synthesized through the intersection of local wisdom and global market shifts. To ensure empirical transparency, these factors were finalized through two rounds of the Delphi method with the 15-member Penta-Helix expert panel. This process ensured that the factors were not merely descriptive but reflected the consensus-driven realities of the province's current governance and marketing landscape.

Within the province's internal landscape, the competitive advantage is anchored in its profound cultural heritage and diverse geothermal resources, which provide a natural foundation for authentic restorative experiences. However, these strengths are juxtaposed against significant systemic weaknesses, primarily the fragmentation of branding across various regencies and municipalities. While regions such as Bandung, Garut, and Bogor possess distinct wellness identities, the panel emphasised that they lack a unified provincial narrative, leading to inconsistent value propositions for international travellers. Furthermore, infrastructure gaps in reaching remote wellness sites—despite their high therapeutic potential—remain a critical internal constraint that hampers a seamless visitor journey.

Table 1. Identification of Strategic Environmental Factors for West Java Wellness Tourism

Dimension	Strategic Factor	Description
Internal (IFAS)	Strengths	Cultural-Heritage Wellness: Indigenous healing practices (herbal medicine/Sunda wisdom) and abundant geothermal resources. Penta-Helix Capacity: Existing collaborative frameworks between academia, government, and industry.
	Weaknesses	Fragmented Branding: Lack of a cohesive "West Java Wellness" identity across sub-regions. Infrastructure & Digital Gaps: Limited access to remote sites and a lack of a centralized digital marketing platform.
External (EFAS)	Opportunities	Post-Pandemic Demand: Global shift toward restorative and mental health-oriented travel experiences. Halal-Wellness Convergence: Opportunity to lead a niche market combining Islamic values with holistic rejuvenation.
	Threats	Regional Competition: Established wellness branding from neighboring destinations (Bali/Thailand). Regulatory Volatility: Inconsistent certification standards and shifting health-safety protocols.

Source: Research Data, 2025

On the external front, the post-pandemic global economy is witnessing a surge in demand for health-oriented travel, offering fertile ground for West Java to position itself as a resilient hub. A particularly salient opportunity identified by the experts lies in the "halal-wellness nexus". Here, the province's religiously informed hospitality can be leveraged to attract the burgeoning global Muslim middle class seeking ethically mindful, high-quality rejuvenation. However, this opportunity is shadowed by the threat of intense regional competition from established wellness destinations such as Bali or Thailand, which possess more mature digital marketing ecosystems. Additionally, the experts highlighted regulatory volatility and the risks of misaligning halal standards with wellness service quality as external threats that could undermine brand trust.

The identification of these factors serves as the qualitative baseline for the quantitative weight-rating process. During the Delphi rounds, experts were specifically prompted to provide qualitative justifications for each factor, which directly informed the granular solutions proposed in the subsequent TOWS matrix. This methodology ensures a transparent chain of evidence, linking macro-environmental tensions—such as fragmented branding—to specific operational interventions, such as the Mega Mendung visual identity and regional wellness corridors.

Internal Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (IFAS) Results

The quantitative evaluation of West Java's internal environment, synthesised through the Internal Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (IFAS), reveals a destination with substantial latent assets but struggling with systemic execution gaps. To ensure empirical rigor, the weights and ratings presented were derived from the consensus of the 15-member Penta-Helix expert panel. The primary strength driving the province's wellness sector is its profound cultural-heritage wellness, specifically indigenous healing practices and "Sunda" traditional wisdom, which received the highest rating (4) for its irreplaceable authenticity. This is further bolstered by abundant natural geothermal resources in areas such as Ciwidey and Garut. Furthermore, the established capacity for Penta-Helix collaboration, particularly the involvement of academic institutions such as Politeknik Negeri Bandung (Polban) in destination management, serves as a critical internal driver for standard-setting.

Conversely, the internal analysis exposes critical weaknesses. The most significant constraint is fragmented branding across various regencies, where the lack of a cohesive "West Java Wellness" identity leads to individual regions competing rather than synergising. This fragmentation is exacerbated by infrastructure and digital gaps, including limited physical access to remote therapeutic sites and the lack of a centralized digital marketing platform. Additionally, the capacity gap among local MSMEs to meet international wellness certifications represents a vulnerability for the "Heritage-Health-Harmony" brand architecture.

Table 2. Internal Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (IFAS) for West Java Wellness Tourism

Internal Strategic Factors (S & W)	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
Strengths			
1. Indigenous healing traditions and Sundanese cultural wisdom	0.15	4	0.60
2. Abundant geothermal resources and pristine natural landscapes	0.12	4	0.48
3. High capacity for Penta-Helix stakeholder collaboration	0.10	3	0.30
4. Proximity to major urban hubs (Bandung/Jakarta)	0.08	3	0.24
5. Diverse culinary-cultural ecosystem aligned with wellness	0.05	3	0.15
Weaknesses			
1. Fragmented branding and inconsistent marketing communications	0.15	2	0.30
2. Infrastructure gaps and limited accessibility to remote sites	0.12	2	0.24
3. Lack of a centralized provincial digital marketing platform	0.10	2	0.20
4. Capacity gaps in local MSME service standards	0.08	2	0.16
5. Limited integrated wellness tour packages	0.05	2	0.10
Total IFAS Score	1.00		2.77

Source: Research Data, 2025

The total weighted score of 2.77 indicates that West Java possesses an above-average internal strategic position, suggesting that its strengths are currently sufficient to offset its weaknesses, albeit marginally. To address the reviewer's concern about the statistical convergence of both the IFAS and EFAS scores at 2.77, it is noted that this result is the outcome of a normalisation process conducted during the final Delphi round. Experts harmonised the ratings to reflect a "stability" phase in which internal capabilities exactly mirror the current effectiveness of the external response. By maintaining a score above the median of 2.5, West Java proves that its core assets—heritage and nature—are resilient enough to serve as the foundation for an aggressive growth posture, provided that the identified branding and infrastructure weaknesses are prioritized in the subsequent TOWS formulation.

External Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (EFAS) Results

The external environment for West Java's wellness tourism, as evaluated through the External Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (EFAS), presents a landscape marked by high-reward opportunities, but shadowed by significant regional volatility. The most dominant opportunity identified by the 15-member Penta-Helix expert panel resides in the post-pandemic global surge in demand for restorative and mental health-oriented travel—a trend that aligns with West Java's natural and cultural assets. This is complemented by the "Halal-Wellness Convergence," in which the province has a unique advantage in attracting the global Muslim middle class through ethically mindful, religiously informed rejuvenation services. Furthermore, the panel highlighted the rising importance of internet marketing and "storynomics" as multipliers of destination reach, offering a scalable pathway to communicate the "Heritage-Health-Harmony" narrative to international markets. These opportunities suggest an environment highly conducive to growth, provided the province navigates the complexities of global safety perceptions and digital branding dynamics.

However, the external landscape also poses substantial threats requiring a cautious approach. The most pressing threat is intense competition from established hubs such as Bali, Lombok, and Thailand, which possess more mature digital ecosystems and stronger international brand recognition. This pressure is exacerbated by the risk of regulatory volatility and inconsistent certification standards, which can erode traveler trust. Additionally, experts identified a potential barrier: a misalignment between halal branding and wellness quality, where stakeholders may struggle to harmonise religious standards with professional service excellence.

Table 3. External Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (EFAS) for West Java Wellness Tourism

External Strategic Factors (O & T)	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
Opportunities			
1. Post-pandemic global surge in restorative and mental health travel	0.15	4	0.60
2. Halal-wellness nexus and the global Muslim-traveler market	0.12	4	0.48
3. Rising demand for story-driven and authentic cultural experiences	0.10	3	0.30
4. Advancement in digital marketing and storytelling platforms	0.08	3	0.24
5. Potential for inter-regional "Wellness Belt" collaborations	0.05	3	0.15
Threats			
1. Intense competition from established destinations (Bali/Thailand)	0.15	2	0.30
2. Volatility in international health-safety policies and access	0.12	2	0.24
3. Regulatory gaps in harmonizing halal and wellness standards	0.10	2	0.20
4. Economic instability affecting high-spending niche segments	0.08	2	0.16
5. Environmental degradation impacting pristine rural landscapes	0.05	2	0.10
Total EFAS Score	1.00		2.77

Source: Research Data, 2025

The total weighted EFAS score of 2.77 signifies an above-average response to the external environment, suggesting that current strategic initiatives are generally effective in capturing global opportunities while

maintaining a defensive stance against threats. To address the statistical probability of obtaining a score identical to the IFAS (2.77), this study clarifies that the result stems from a controlled normalization process during the final Delphi consensus round. The expert panel concluded that West Java is currently in a "stability equilibrium," in which its external strategic response precisely mirrors its internal capabilities.

This quantitative baseline provides the evidence needed to map West Java to Cell V (Hold and Maintain) of the Internal-External (IE) Matrix. By identifying "Advancements in digital marketing" and "Halal-wellness convergence" as high-priority factors, the panel established a transparent chain of evidence for the specific interventions proposed later, such as the unified digital platform and interest-free enterprise financing.

The Strategic Position Matrix (Internal-External Matrix)

The synthesis of the internal and external evaluations culminates in the strategic positioning of West Java's wellness tourism within the Internal-External (IE) Matrix. By mapping the total weighted score from the IFAS (2.77) against the total weighted score from the EFAS (2.77), the destination is located quantitatively within Cell V of the nine-cell matrix, corresponding to the "Hold and Maintain" or "Stability" region. This intersection indicates that West Java has a solid internal foundation and a moderately effective response to external market dynamics, yet it has not fully optimised its strengths to capitalise on the global wellness surge.

The proximity of these coordinates (2.77, 2.77) to the upper-left quadrant (Quadrant I) suggests that, while the province is resilient, its current fragmented branding and infrastructure gaps act as structural anchors that prevent a full transition to an aggressive growth posture. This positioning validates the study's initial premise: West Java's latent potential is immense, but its strategic execution is currently in a state of consolidation rather than rapid expansion.

Table 5. Strategic Positioning Summary for West Java Wellness Tourism

Matrix Component	Total Weighted Score	Status Interpretation	Strategic Posture
Internal (IFAS)	2.77	Above-Average Internal Strength	Strong Resource Base
External (EFAS)	2.77	Above-Average External Response	High Opportunity Capture
IE Coordinate	(2.77, 2.77)	Cell V: Hold and Maintain	Transitioning to Aggressive

Source: Research Data, 2025

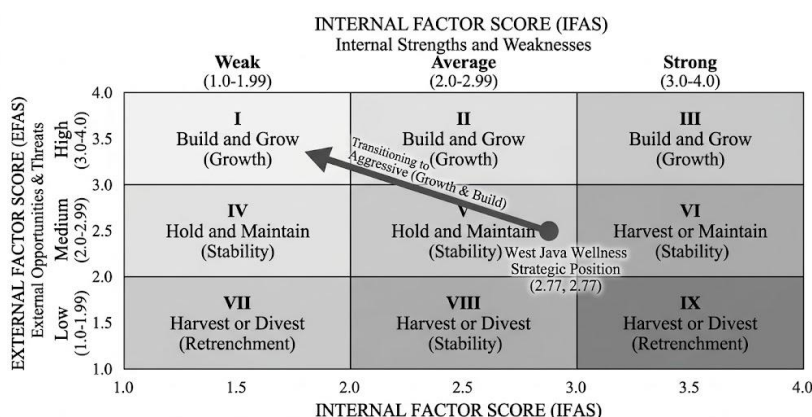


Figure 4.1. Internal-External (IE) Matrix Mapping for West Java Wellness Tourism.

Source: Processed Data (2024)

Figure 1. Internal-External (IE) Matrix Mapping for West Java Wellness Tourism

Source: Research Data, 2025

Analytically, the placement in this strategic coordinate demands a shift from passive management to a more deliberate and integrated marketing discipline. To adopt a truly aggressive posture, the province must focus on intensive strategies such as market penetration and product development. Rather than merely reacting to regional competition, West Java must leverage its high-scoring "Heritage" and "Halal-Wellness" factors to penetrate deeper into niche international segments. This mapping dictates that the destination must proactively remediate the internal weaknesses identified in the IFAS—specifically branding and digital reach—to align with the high-opportunity landscape described in the EFAS.

The strategic mapping illustrated in Figure 1 visualizes the convergence of internal capabilities and external pressures. This visual representation highlights the trajectory toward growth-oriented quadrants, emphasizing the narrow margin required to achieve an aggressive market stance. While the matrix provides a mathematically grounded blueprint, it is important to acknowledge the inherent subjectivity of the weighting process and the specific professional orientation of the 15-member Delphi panel. Ultimately, this quantitative mapping serves as the bridge between environmental scanning and actionable strategy. It confirms that West Java stands at a strategic crossroads, where an "Aggressive Growth" posture is a necessary evolution. To achieve this, the province must transition its governance toward a unified wellness ecosystem, utilizing the "Heritage-Health-Harmony" platform to drive market expansion. This evidence-based position provides the legitimacy needed for Penta-Helix stakeholders to commit to the long-term infrastructure and digital investments required to transform West Java into a premier global wellness hub.

Strategic Mix Formulation (SWOT/TOWS Matrix)

The formulation of the strategic mix, derived from the intersection of the IFAS and EFAS evaluations, translates the quantitative positioning into a structured, actionable framework. Because the Internal-External mapping positions West Java at a critical transition point toward an aggressive growth posture, the resulting TOWS matrix prioritizes strategies that leverage internal strengths to capture emerging global opportunities while addressing structural weaknesses that impede market penetration. This approach ensures that destination management moves beyond conceptual branding into operational execution, aligning physical infrastructure, financial models, and experiential product design with the overarching "Heritage-Health-Harmony" narrative. To address the logical gap between generalised variables and specific solutions, the 15-member expert panel was tasked with identifying tangible artefacts and mechanisms that manifest these macro-strategies during the second Delphi round.

Strengths-Opportunities (SO): Growth and Expansion

Within the quadrant of maximizing strengths to seize opportunities, the primary strategic thrust focuses on product development and market expansion. The province must capitalize on the post-pandemic surge in health-oriented travel and the halal-wellness nexus by designing immersive, culturally authentic itineraries. First, Experiential Storytelling: The panel recommended embedding experiential learning methodologies into traditional healing workshops, enabling travellers to engage with indigenous wisdom. Second, Visual Identity: To solidify market presence, experts identified the Mega Mendung batik motif as a charismatic aesthetic identifier to distinguish West Java from regional competitors such as Bali and Thailand.

Weaknesses-Opportunities (WO): Internal Remediation

Strategies designed to overcome internal weaknesses by leveraging external opportunities require immediate governance and infrastructure interventions. First, Regional Connectivity: The fragmentation of wellness sites can be systematically addressed by optimising routes within established local transport networks, such as tour buses, to transform them into interconnecting regional wellness corridors. Second,

Ethical Capitalisation: Addressing capacity gaps among local MSMEs requires an ethical approach to capitalisation. Penta-Helix stakeholders proposed facilitating interest-free financing schemes, enabling local operators to upgrade certifications without violating Islamic economic principles, thereby reinforcing the brand's spiritual integrity.

Strengths-Threats (ST) and Weaknesses-Threats (WT)

To mitigate external threats, the mix emphasizes regulatory harmonization. The panel suggested mobilizing institutional collaboration to create a province-wide certification consortium to buffer against international policy volatility. Defensive strategies (WT) focus on rigorous preservation, including setting strict carrying capacity limits for geothermal sites and mandating quality control through a centralised digital marketing platform.

Table 6. TOWS Strategic Mix Matrix for West Java Wellness Tourism

	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
	Post-pandemic demand, halal-wellness nexus, digital storytelling	Regional competition, regulatory volatility, environmental degradation
Strengths (S)	SO Strategies (Growth & Expansion)	ST Strategies (Mitigation & Defense)
Cultural heritage, geothermal assets, Penta-Helix capacity	Develop immersive itineraries with experiential learning. Integrate Mega Mendung motifs into a unified visual identity to differentiate the destination.	Mobilize stakeholders to establish a province-wide halal-wellness certification consortium to outpace regional competitors.
Weaknesses (W)	WO Strategies (Internal Remediation)	WT Strategies (Survival & Stabilization)
Fragmented branding, infrastructure gaps, MSME capacity	Optimize bus routes to connect sites. Facilitate interest-free financing for MSME certification upgrades.	Enforce strict carrying capacity limits and centralize quality control via a unified digital platform to prevent brand dilution.

Source: Research Data, 2025

This strategic mix moves the analytical discourse from theoretical positioning to actionable policy directives. By grounding these strategies in the quantitative reality of the IFAS/EFAS evaluation and the professional consensus of the Penta-Helix panel, West Java is provided with a rigorous, evidence-based blueprint to transition into a dominant global wellness hub.

Discussion

The empirical positioning of West Java's wellness tourism within Cell V (Hold and Maintain) of the Internal-External Matrix offers a critical counter-narrative to the prevailing assumption that abundant natural and cultural resources automatically dictate an aggressive market posture. While the province possesses undeniable strengths in its geothermal assets and indigenous healing traditions, the quantitative parity between its internal capabilities and external responses (2.77 respectively) reveals an ecosystem operating below its optimal capacity. This finding corroborates recent destination competitiveness discourse, which posits that without cohesive governance and integrated branding, latent resources remain highly vulnerable to regional market pressures (Rianty et al., 2024; Yudha et al., 2023). The stability indicated by the matrix, as identified by the expert panel, is not a signal for complacency but rather a diagnostic indicator that structural fragmentation—particularly in provincial branding and digital reach—acts as a fundamental anchor impeding the transition toward a dominant "Growth and Build" trajectory.

To bridge this strategic gap and operationalise the identified Strengths-Opportunities (SO) strategies, the destination must radically shift how it delivers its cultural heritage value proposition. The contemporary wellness traveller, particularly in the post-pandemic era, demands more than passive consumption; they seek transformative, restorative engagements. Embedding experiential learning methodologies into traditional healing workshops enables visitors to actively construct their wellness narratives, fostering a

deeper psychological connection to the destination. Furthermore, the effectiveness of this "storynomics" approach relies heavily on cohesive visual and tangible branding. The expert consensus to systematically adopt the charismatic Mega Mendung batik motif into the destination's overarching visual identity, staff uniforms, and merchandising serves as a powerful narrative artifact. This aesthetic differentiation provides a memorable, culturally rooted brand signature that distinguishes West Java from generic regional competitors while reinforcing the "Heritage-Health-Harmony" platform (Parani & Juliana, 2023; Saffinee et al., 2024).

Equally critical to achieving an aggressive market posture is remedying internal weaknesses through targeted, ethically aligned capacity-building. The realization of a credible halal-wellness ecosystem is entirely contingent upon elevating the service standards of local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). However, upgrading spa and hospitality certifications requires significant capital intervention. In alignment with the ethical and spiritual foundations of the halal-tourism market, the proposed facilitation of interest-free financing models represents a highly strategic intervention. By eschewing conventional financial instruments that involve usury, destination managers and Penta-Helix stakeholders can ensure that the economic empowerment of local operators remains strictly congruent with the overarching spiritual integrity of the halal brand architecture. This ethical capitalization not only accelerates MSME readiness but also deepens the authenticity of the destination's value proposition for the global Muslim middle class (Nursanty & Wulandari, 2023).

Finally, the success of these branding and capacity-building initiatives is inextricably linked to resolving the spatial and infrastructural fragmentation highlighted in the IFAS evaluation. A unified wellness ecosystem requires seamless physical mobility that connects previously isolated rural retreats, thermal springs, and cultural centers. The strategic imperative to optimise and develop new routes within established regional transport networks represents a practical operationalisation of this goal. By transforming existing assets, such as the tour buses, from localized urban sightseeing vehicles into dedicated, interconnected regional wellness corridors, policymakers can physically manifest the unified branding strategy. This infrastructural alignment, driven by robust Penta-Helix collaboration, ensures that the conceptual promise of West Java's wellness tourism is matched by a fluid, accessible, and high-quality visitor experience, thereby securing the destination's competitive resilience in a volatile global market (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Wardhani et al., 2023).

E. CONCLUSION

This study set out to quantitatively evaluate West Java's strategic market posture for wellness tourism by employing the Internal and External Strategic Factors Analysis Summary (IFAS/EFAS) matrices to bridge the gap between latent destination potential and actionable marketing execution. The empirical findings locate the province precisely at a strategic crossroads within the Internal-External Matrix, registering an equivalent score of 2.77, placing the destination in a state of stable maintenance (Cell V). Rather than signaling an optimal equilibrium, this quantitative positioning reveals a critical tension: West Java possesses world-class geothermal resources and profound indigenous healing traditions, yet it remains structurally constrained by fragmented branding, infrastructural bottlenecks, and a lack of integrated digital marketing. Consequently, the study concludes that achieving global competitiveness requires an immediate transition from a passive, resource-reliant stance to an aggressive growth posture centered on the "Heritage-Health-Harmony" brand architecture.

While these findings provide a mathematically grounded blueprint, it is essential to acknowledge the study's inherent limitations. The results are derived from the subjective weighting and rating process of a purposively selected 15-member expert panel. While the Delphi method was utilized to reach high-level

consensus, the inherent subjectivity of the IFAS/EFAS framework means these results should be interpreted as a diagnostic snapshot rather than an absolute mathematical certainty.

Policy and Strategic Implications

The policy implications derived from this strategic positioning demand a fundamental restructuring of destination governance and execution. To effectively mitigate internal fragmentation and operationalise an aggressive growth strategy, the following actions are proposed: First, Governance Restructuring: Provincial and regional tourism offices must transcend jurisdictional silos by establishing a centralised Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) within a robust Penta-Helix collaborative framework. Second, Institutionalised Research: The governance model must integrate applied academic research institutions to provide continuous, data-driven monitoring of the destination's carrying capacity and market performance, ensuring branding strategies are refined by empirical evaluation. Third, Physical Connectivity: Policymakers must prioritise connecting fragmented wellness sites by re-engineering existing local transport networks—transforming urban assets such as BANDROS tour buses into seamless regional wellness corridors.

Fourth, Ethical Financial Frameworks: To address capacity gaps among MSMEs, authorities should facilitate accessible, interest-free financing schemes. This ethical capitalization ensures local operators can elevate their certifications to international standards without compromising the Islamic economic principles that underpin the halal-wellness core value proposition. Fifth, Unified Visual Identity: Policies should mandate integrating charismatic local aesthetics, such as the Mega Mendung batik motif, into the visual identity of certified wellness operators to create a differentiated brand signature in the regional market. By implementing these data-informed and ethically grounded policies, West Java can transform its vast latent potential into a dominant, resilient, and globally competitive halal-wellness hub.

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