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Ciletuh Geopark Destination Development: Integrating Alternative Food in Hanjeli Tourism Village and Surrounding Destinations

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Abstract

This study explores integrating alternative food practices into the development of the Ciletuh Geopark Destination, focusing on Hanjeli Tourism Village and its surrounding areas. The research aims to enhance visitor experiences and promote sustainable regional development by blending culinary diversity with tourism offerings. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through surveys, interviews, and field observations to assess the current state of alternative food integration and its impact on tourism development. Findings reveal significant opportunities for leveraging alternative food as a unique selling point for the destination, catering to diverse visitor preferences and contributing to the socio-economic growth of local communities. The study underscores the importance of strategic planning and collaboration among stakeholders to effectively integrate alternative food practices into destination development initiatives, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Alternative food; Ciletuh Geopark; Destination development; Hanjeli Tourism Village; Sustainable tourism.

A. INTRODUCTION

Modern tourism plays a vital role in economic development and global environmental preservation. Unique and sustainable tourist destinations have the potential to drive local economic growth while preserving cultural and natural diversity (Droli et al., 2022; Yordan et al., 2022). Amidst the myriad global challenges, such as food security and environmental sustainability, innovation in destination development is increasingly imperative (Li & Song, 2022; Sekabira et al., 2022). One promising avenue for comprehensive solutions lies in integrating geopark destinations with alternative food products from surrounding tourist villages. This integration offers manifold benefits (Abramowicz et al., 2022; Butolo, 2022; Sobreira et al., 2022). Firstly, it enhances visitor experiences by providing a unique and authentic encounter with creative economies, showcasing distinctive alternative food production techniques and environmentally sustainable products rooted in local culture. Secondly, it fosters economic development in rural communities through income generation from producing and selling local food items. Thirdly, integration reinforces a destination's brand identity and instills pride within the local community.

Additionally, merging geopark destination marketing with tourist villages is crucial for supporting sustainable development within the combined area (Mohd Fauzi & Misni, 2022). This facilitates local communities in promoting their crafts and food products, thereby enhancing the destination's overall appeal. Ultimately, integrating alternative food products into geopark destinations catalyzes sustainable regional development, leveraging local community involvement in developing and marketing these destinations to achieve economic growth and development.

Integrated tourist destinations can be cultivated by incorporating alternative food products from neighboring tourist villages. This integration enriches the gastronomic offerings of geopark destinations and fosters economic growth in rural communities while safeguarding local culture and heritage (Abramowicz et al.,

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2022). By seamlessly blending alternative food products from neighboring tourist villages, geopark destinations can offer visitors unique culinary experiences deeply rooted in local traditions (Madeira et al., 2023). Moreover, this integration holds the potential to bolster the economic and environmental sustainability of rural development within geopark destinations. Through a commitment to sustainable tourism practices and active engagement with local communities, geopark destinations can stimulate rural economies by promoting the production and sale of locally sourced food products.

The role of tourism in driving economic development and preserving the environment is increasingly vital worldwide (Cerquetti et al., 2022). Sustainable and distinct tourism destinations have the potential to invigorate local economies while safeguarding cultural and ecological diversity. Amid pressing global concerns such as food security and environmental preservation, exploring innovative approaches to destination development is imperative. An integrated strategy that merges geopark destinations with locally produced alternative food products from surrounding villages presents a promising solution (Zorina et al., 2023). Geoparks actively engage local communities in sustainable development efforts by promoting local crafts and culinary delights. This integration fosters economic income for rural areas and enhances the destination's brand identity, augmenting its allure to tourists. Furthermore, integrating alternative food products into geopark destinations facilitates preserving traditional knowledge, practices, and cultural identity. This symbiotic relationship benefits local communities and enriches the overall visitor experience by offering a diverse array of gastronomic delights rooted in local traditions and environmental stewardship.

Sustainable tourism theory, articulated by (Butler, 1999), emphasizes the need for tourism development to address economic, social, and environmental impacts while mitigating negative consequences. Cultivating alternative food products within tourist villages aligns with the principles of sustainable tourism, bearing direct implications for economic and social dimensions (Yamin et al., 2021). Moreover, integrating these alternative food products into geopark destinations enhances the tourism experience, adding value and depth to visitors' encounters with the destination.

Ciletuh Geopark, located in Sukabumi Regency, exemplifies a destination rich in natural and geodiversity and cultural heritage. Sustainable development strategies within geopark destinations have been examined by (Newsome et al., 2012), underscoring the significance of environmental preservation and community engagement. Adjacent to Ciletuh Geopark, Hanjeli Tourism Village has emerged as a hub for producing alternative food products rooted in local wisdom. (Gurung et al., 2017) have detailed a participatory approach and community empowerment in village tourism development. Integrating alternative food production and promotion from Hanjeli Tourism Village into Ciletuh Geopark creates a unified destination. Such integrated tourism destinations, amalgamating geopark attractions with locally crafted alternative food products, foster economic growth in rural communities and enrich the visitor experience by showcasing local traditions, promoting sustainability, and preserving cultural identity (Abramowicz et al., 2022).

Integrating alternative food products from Hanjeli Tourism Village with geopark destinations and surrounding tourist attractions enhances the potential for a more memorable tourism experience. The concept of tourism experience is intricately linked to the seamless integration of various tourist attractions. Geoparks hold promise as innovative and sustainable tourism destinations, particularly by incorporating alternative food products sourced from local communities. Against this backdrop, this research analyzes the potential, challenges, and strategies in developing a geopark destination that integrates alternative food products from Hanjeli Tourism Village and surrounding tourist attractions. Through this comprehensive approach, the study aims to foster inclusive economic benefits, promote environmental preservation, and enrich tourism experiences following the principles of sustainable tourism.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism and Geoparks

Geoparks encompass diverse tourist attractions, including mountains, waterfalls, beaches, and peaks, all of which draw visitors (Rahmawati et al., 2021). These destinations offer a spectrum of values, encompassing natural, environmental, cultural, and social landscapes, thus enhancing their allure. Geoparks have emerged as significant hubs for geotourism, presenting a wealth of resource values and tourism potential conducive to sustainable development. The integration of geoconservation and geotourism within living landscapes has bolstered the interconnectivity between natural and cultural attributes, giving rise to geotourism as a component of community-based landscape tourism (Lee & Karimova, 2021). However, the competitive edge of geoparks in geotourism studies is often underestimated (Mustafa et al., 2021). Geoparks can spur local communities' growth through tourism while concurrently conserving resources and fostering educational opportunities (Fernandes et al., 2021).

The success of geopark tourist destinations hinges on several pivotal factors (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Firstly, implementing health protocols in tourist areas significantly impacts the attraction and retention of tourists, thereby influencing their loyalty intentions. Secondly, effective management promotion strategies, encompassing advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, public relations, and sales promotion, are instrumental in augmenting visitor numbers to the geopark. Thirdly, the perceived value of a geopark, encompassing emotional, financial, scenic, environmental, and cultural dimensions, also plays a crucial role in its success as a tourist destination (Mustafa et al., 2021). Lastly, maintaining a delicate balance between mass tourism, overtourism, and geotourism is imperative for ensuring the long-term sustainability of geoparks as tourist destinations (Fernandes et al., 2021).

Geoparks are crucial in promoting sustainable development by focusing on three main pillars: geodiversity, biodiversity, and cultural diversity (Deng & Zou, 2022). These destinations offer opportunities to identify and map geological and non-geological assets, such as cultural sites and biodiversity, which can be developed into geotourism attractions (Putra et al., 2020). By fostering initiatives in geoconservation, geoeducation, and geotourism in collaboration with local communities, geoparks contribute significantly to regional sustainable development and the achievement of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Emmaline Montserrat Rosado-González et al. 2020). However, it is imperative to assess the contribution of geoparks to the SDGs on a case-by-case basis, considering that different geoparks may prioritize different objectives (Lama-Larenas et al., 2021). Efforts must ensure that geoparks adopt a comprehensive development framework, emphasizing the cultivation of agricultural industries and implementing supportive policies and projects to alleviate poverty in geopark areas (Emmaline M. Rosado-González et al., 2020). Overall, geoparks serve as a model for developing geotourism and poverty alleviation initiatives, contributing significantly to sustainable rural development.

Geoparks encounter both challenges and opportunities as they navigate the future. A key challenge lies in determining the number of sustainable UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp) at the national level, necessitating a balanced and impartial growth strategy (Orús & Urquí, 2020). Additionally, the effective management and protection of geosites pose another hurdle, with many countries possessing extraordinary or unique geosites that are not adequately managed and protected (Zouros, 2017). Moreover, the rapidly evolving global environment introduces uncertainties, questioning the applicability of success criteria based solely on current or past ecosystem conditions (Stanturf, 2015). Nonetheless, geoparks present several opportunities. They serve as invaluable platforms for studying the dynamic history of the earth and facilitate effective communication among scientists, bureaucrats, and local communities to mitigate geohazards (Stanturf, 2015). Furthermore, geoparks have the potential to offer novel insights into protected and managed natural areas by integrating the perspectives of philosophers, writers, and artists (Farsani et al., 2014).

Sustainable Tourism and Alternative Food

Sustainable food tourism can be realized through thoughtfully crafted experiences centered around participation, consumer engagement, accessibility, and local context (Leer, 2020). Community-based tourism, especially through food-focused strategies, can bolster sustainable livelihoods in rural areas and vulnerable tourism destinations (Sosa et al., 2021). However, the sustainability of culinary tourism is constrained by interconnected considerations involving animal ethics and sustainability (Bertella, 2020). Nevertheless, sustainable tourism and alternative food practices can complement each other, promoting local culture, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Sustainable tourism advocates adopting alternative foods by integrating principles such as slow food tourism (SFT) and ethical paradigms. SFT prioritizes slow, sustainable, safe, and democratic food production and consumption processes, fostering sustainable development, food security, and societal well-being (Bertella, 2020). Recognized as integral to sustainable development, alternative forms of tourism like SFT promote balanced growth while respecting environmental and socio-cultural aspects (Fennell & Bowyer, 2020). By actively involving tourists in ecological and cultural conservation efforts, SFT encourages the appreciation and sharing of bioregional foods within ethnically and culturally diverse environments (Soratana et al., 2021). Furthermore, sustainable tourism can facilitate alternative foods by implementing innovative strategies and cluster models for tourism activities, ensuring economic viability, local prosperity, and efficient resource utilization (Fusté-Forné & Jamal, 2020). In essence, sustainable tourism is a platform to advocate for alternative foods, fostering a conscientious and responsible approach to food production and consumption (Bichurova & Yordanova-Dinova, 2019).

C. RESEARCH METHOD

Research employing a qualitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) seeks to delve deeply into integrating alternative food products from Hanjeli Tourism Village and surrounding destinations into the development of geopark destinations. This methodological choice allows for a comprehensive exploration of the broader context, understanding the stakeholders' perspectives and unraveling the phenomenon's complexity under scrutiny. Adopting a case study approach as the research design enables an in-depth investigation into real-life contexts, focusing on a single case or interconnected cases. The research will involve various stakeholder groups, including residents of Hanjeli Tourism Village, geopark managers, local tourism actors, and geopark visitors. Participant selection will be purposive, considering their insights and experiences in developing geopark destinations and alternative food products.

Data Collection Techniques: 1) Interviews: Interviews will be conducted with participants knowledgeable about geopark development, alternative food products, and interactions between geopark destinations and Hanjeli Tourism Village; 2) Participatory Observation: Researchers will observe activities and interactions at the geopark destination and Hanjeli Tourism Village to gain insights into tourist experiences and local dynamics; 3) Document Analysis: Documents on geopark development, alternative food products, regional development plans, and tourism activity reports will be analyzed to provide additional context.

The collected data will be analyzed using the SWOT strategic environmental analysis approach. This process involves data coding, thematic grouping, identifying patterns and relationships, and synthesizing findings to formulate a framework for inter-regional integration strategies. To ensure research validity, triangulation will be employed, combining data from multiple sources. Additionally, member checking will be conducted by validating findings with participants. The research will adhere to ethical principles, including obtaining informed consent, safeguarding data confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation.

D. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Geopark-Ciletuh Supply System

Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark, situated in West Java, Indonesia, is a geological and ecological marvel. Encompassing approximately 124,000 hectares, this geopark is renowned for its breathtaking landscape, intricate karst formations, cliffs, tropical forests, and pristine coastlines. Recognized as a part of the Global Geopark Network by UNESCO, its significance transcends its geological wonders, embodying a rich cultural heritage and biodiversity. The geological formations of the region, estimated to be around 60-70 million years old, offer a captivating glimpse into the earth's history, providing valuable insights into geological and evolutionary processes. Its natural formations are at the heart of Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark's allure, showcasing diverse landscapes and ecosystems. The grandeur of the karst cliffs, shaped over millennia by geological processes, stands as a signature feature of the park. These limestone formations offer a breathtaking panorama, narrating a geological saga spanning millions of years. Additionally, the geopark boasts magnificent waterfalls such as Cimarinjung and Cikanteh, adding to its allure, as depicted in Figure 1.

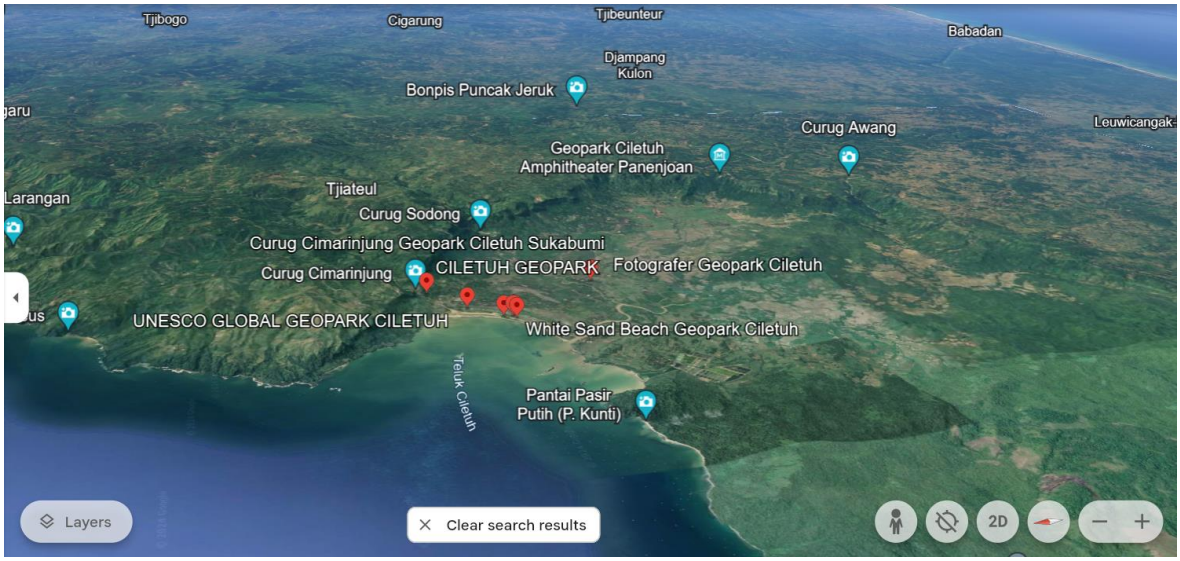


Figure 1. Map of Ciletuh Geopark, Sukabumi, West Java, Indonesia
Source: Google Earth, 2024

Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark caters to diverse visitor interests, offering many activities to explore its wonders. Adventure enthusiasts can hike along designated trails, traverse rugged terrain, or embark on trekking expeditions to witness panoramic vistas from elevated vantage points. For those inclined towards nature, bird-watching tours provide opportunities to observe the park's rich avian diversity across its varied habitats. Educational programs and guided tours allow visitors to delve deeper into the area's geological marvels and ecological significance. Water-based activities such as swimming or simply basking in the serene beauty surrounding rivers and waterfalls are equally popular among tourists. This diverse range of activities ensures immersive experiences tailored to visitors' preferences and interests.

Regarding accommodations, Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark offers options catering to various preferences and budgets. Accommodation choices in the vicinity encompass a broad spectrum, spanning hotels, resorts, eco-lodges, guesthouses, and homestays. These establishments provide visitors with a spectrum of stay experiences, ranging from lavish amenities at hotels and resorts to more authentic and immersive stays at eco-lodges or homestays. Moreover, strategically located accommodations offer convenient access to the park's attractions, ensuring visitors enjoy comfort and proximity during their sojourn. With a diverse range of lodging

options, Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark caters to an array of tourists, from solo adventurers and families to nature enthusiasts and luxury-seeking travelers, enriching the overall visitor experience within the geopark.

Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark boasts a robust transportation infrastructure network that facilitates easy access to and from the park. The area is crisscrossed by well-maintained roads and highways, facilitating seamless entry and exit for visitors whether traveling by private vehicle or public transport. These thoroughfares connect the geopark with nearby cities, notably Sukabumi, and ensure efficient connectivity and hassle-free travel. Furthermore, public transportation services such as buses and taxis operate routes linking the geopark with its surrounding areas, providing a convenient alternative for travelers opting for public transit. Robust transportation infrastructure plays a pivotal role in enabling visitor mobility, ensuring the accessibility of Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark from diverse locations, and enriching the overall travel experience for tourists venturing into this natural marvel.

Strategic Environment of Hanjeli Tourism Village

Located within the expansive Ciletuh-Palabuhanratu Geopark ecosystem, Hanjeli Tourism Village emerges as a pivotal focal point within this geotourism landscape. Nestled amidst breathtaking karst formations and verdant landscapes, Hanjeli Village encapsulates a harmonious amalgamation of cultural legacy, ecological abundance, and community involvement, seamlessly integrated into the broader geopark milieu. Serving as a destination unto itself, it offers visitors an immersive encounter with the region's vibrant creative industries and authentic traditions.

Operating as an integral component of the geopark's sustainable tourism framework, Hanjeli Village prioritizes the preservation of cultural authenticity and environmental stewardship while catering to the interests of tourists. The village hosts various agrarian cultural activities, including traditional performances, handicraft workshops, and culinary demonstrations, allowing tourists to immerse themselves in local customs. This approach enriches the tourist experience and fosters the safeguarding and promotion of the community's cultural legacy and heritage.

Additionally, Hanjeli diligently adheres to sustainable tourism practices, implementing initiatives focused on environmental conservation, waste management, and responsible use of resources. This commitment aligns with the main objective of the Ciletuh-Palabuhanratu Geopark, which aims to promote responsible and sustainable tourism practices in the region. Through a rigorous approach, Hanjeli has emerged as a model for sustainable tourism development within the geopark, offering visitors an educational and immersive journey while upholding the preservation of the area's natural and cultural heritage.

An analysis of the internal strategic environment is presented in Table 1 to map the strategic environment comprehensively.

Table 1. IFAS Weighting and Rating

Aspects	Issues	Sig	Weight	Rating	W X R
STRENGTH	The excellence of Hanjeli Village is based on the motif of preserving authentic local content through creative economy products, traditional performances, craft workshops and culinary experiences.	3	0,13	3	0,39
	Hanjeli Village actively involves local communities in tourism initiatives, promoting sustainable livelihoods and empowering residents by providing opportunities to participate and generate income.	2	0,09	4	0,35
	Located on the geopark's main route, Hanjeli Village is a gateway for tourists looking for an immersive experience with creative economic and cultural content.	3	0,13	4	0,52
	Hanjeli Village Management shows commitment to sustainable tourism by implementing environmentally friendly practices, waste management initiatives, and responsible resource use, in line with the geopark's overall sustainability goals.	2	0,09	5	0,43

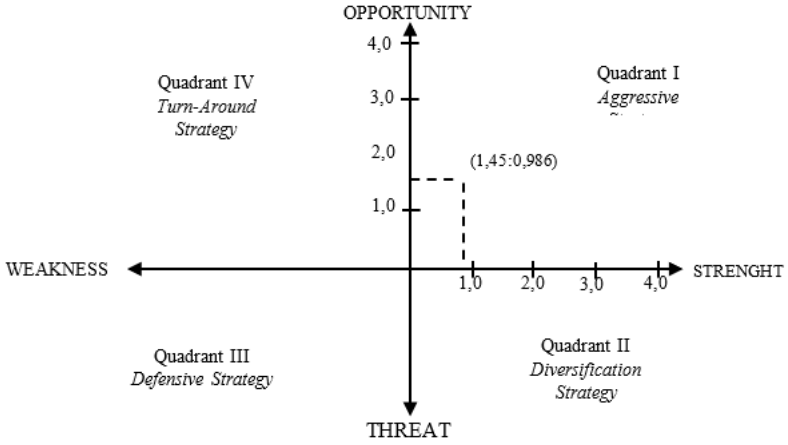
Aspects	Issues	Sig	Weight	Rating	W X R
	The village offers various cultural activities, including traditional performances, craft workshops and gastronomic experiences, catering to various interests and enhancing the overall visitor experience.	2	0,09	4	0,35
	Hanjeli Village can be a benchmark for the performance of sustainable tourism practices in the geopark.	2	0,09	3	0,26
	STRENGTH	**14,00**			**2,30**
WEAKNESS	Road access conditions or transportation options to Hanjeli Tourism Village are not yet effectively connected to the primary destination system.	3	0,13	2,9	0,38
	Difficulty in marketing and promotional efforts compared to leading tourist destinations in the vicinity, potentially resulting in lower visibility among potential visitors.	2	0,09	2	0,17
	Tourism activities in Hanjeli Tourism Village depend on seasons or specific events, causing visitor fluctuations.	2	0,09	1,5	0,13
	Hanjeli Tourism Village faces limited resources, such as a shortage of skilled labor or financial constraints, which impact the ability to increase tourism offerings or develop infrastructure.	2	0,09	2	0,17
	WEAKNESS	**9,00**			**0,86**
	TOTAL IFAS	**23,00**	**1,00**		**3,16**
	DIFFERENCE				**1,45**

Table 2. EFAS Weighting and Rating

Aspects	Issues	Sig	Weight	Rating	W x R
Opportunity	Further implementation of sustainable practices and eco-friendly initiatives to attract environmentally conscious tourists.	2	0,08	3	0,25
	Investing in infrastructure improvements, such as a better road network or transportation options, can improve accessibility and attract more visitors to Hanjeli Village.	3	0,13	4	0,50
	There are potential funding or government initiatives that support sustainable tourism development in the geopark, assisting with infrastructure improvements and promotional campaigns for Hanjeli Village.	1	0,04	3	0,13
	Partnerships with regional or international organizations focused on sustainable tourism and cultural preservation to increase visibility and attract more tourists.	3	0,13	3	0,38
	Increasing global interest in ecotourism and responsible travel allows Hanjeli Village to position itself as an eco-friendly destination, attracting tourists looking for authentic local experiences.	2	0,08	3	0,25
	Cultural exchange programs or collaborations with educational institutions enable Hanjeli Tourist Village to host educational tours or workshops, foster cultural understanding, and attract student groups.	2	0,08	3	0,25
	The availability of grants or funding specifically dedicated to sustainable tourism development projects can assist Hanjeli Village in implementing environmentally friendly initiatives or infrastructure improvements while maintaining cultural authenticity.	1	0,04	3	0,13
	OPPORTUNITY	14	0,58		1,88
THREATS	The threat of natural disasters such as earthquakes or floods poses a risk to the infrastructure and cultural assets of Hanjeli Village, thereby impacting visitor safety and tourism operations.	2	0,08	2,9	0,24
	Increased competition from neighboring or more established tourist destinations may divert tourist traffic away from Hanjeli Village, impacting its economic viability and the number of visitors.	2	0,08	2,9	0,24
	The risk of environmental degradation due to increased tourist visits could harm the natural environment and cultural heritage of Hanjeli Village, thereby causing a decrease in visitor attraction.	1	0,04	1,5	0,06

Aspects	Issues	Sig	Weight	Rating	W x R
	Changes in government regulations or policies related to tourism, land use, or cultural preservation may pose challenges or obstacles to Hanjeli Village's tourism development plans.	2	0,08	2	0,17
	A global external crisis, such as a pandemic or geopolitical tensions, can greatly disrupt tourism activities, causing a decrease in tourist visits and economic instability in Hanjeli Village.	3	0,13	1,5	0,19
	THREATS	10	0,42		0,90
	TOTAL EFAS	24	1,00		2,78
	DIFFERENCE				**0,98**

Based on the calculations in Tables 1 and 2, the strategy option that can be taken is an aggressive/growth strategy.



E. CONCLUSION

Hanjeli Village boasts strengths in maintaining cultural heritage, engaging local communities, and offering diverse tourism experiences encompassing cultural and natural activities. However, weaknesses, including limited infrastructure and marketing efforts, challenge destination accessibility and promotion. Government support, potential collaborations with regional and international organizations, and the rising popularity of ecotourism present opportunities for Hanjeli's development and promotion. Moreover, opportunities such as technology integration, cultural exchange programs, and access to sustainable development funds can be leveraged. On the other hand, threats include risks of natural disasters, competition from other tourist destinations, environmental degradation, regulatory changes, seasonal fluctuations, and the impacts of global crises. These threats can adversely affect infrastructure, tourist attractions, environmental sustainability, economic stability, and visitor numbers. To capitalize on its strengths and opportunities while mitigating threats, Hanjeli Village must address infrastructure and promotional limitations to enhance its allure. Strategic utilization of opportunities like government support, ecotourism trends, partnerships, and appropriate funding can help mitigate threats and foster sustainable development. A carefully crafted strategy balancing threat management and opportunity utilization will be pivotal in establishing Hanjeli Village as a sustainable and enticing tourist destination within the Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark.

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