

Wellness Tourism Development Strategy for Poncokusumo Tourism Village, Malang Regency

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The Indonesian tourism sector faces challenges in improving sustainability and competitiveness. One emerging approach is wellness tourism, which emphasizes the health and well-being of tourists. Poncokusumo Tourism Village in Malang Regency serves as an example, with the attraction of Pondok Ashitamuru, which offers forest bathing, meditation, and trekking activities. This study aims to formulate a development strategy for Poncokusumo Tourism Village as a wellness tourism destination. The method used is descriptive qualitative through observation, interviews, questionnaires with 64 respondents, and a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results show that Poncokusumo Tourism Village is positioned in quadrant I (Strength–Opportunity) or a rapid growth strategy. The formulated strategies include diversification of wellness tourism products, strengthening policies through partnerships, developing infrastructure and health services, increasing human resource capacity, innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and digital promotion. This study recommends the preparation of sustainability-based planning documents, active support from local governments, and synergy between the government, the private sector, and the local community so that Poncokusumo Tourism Village can become a leading wellness tourism destination in East Java.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism, Tourism Village, SWOT Analysis, Development Strategy

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1. Introduction

The tourism industry is also a major sector in creating jobs and driving local economic growth in various regions. [1]. In 2020, the global tourism sector was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This included a significant decline in the number of domestic and international tourists, and the temporary and permanent closure of several accommodation businesses, restaurants, and tourist destinations due to financial inability to survive. The government has undertaken various efforts to restore the tourism sector, one of which is the development of wellness tourism. Post-COVID-19, wellness tourism has experienced significant growth as a global trend, driven by increased individual understanding and awareness of the urgency of holistic health care, encompassing the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. This necessitates more intensive marketing efforts to promote Indonesia as an attractive and safe tourist destination [2].

According to the Global Wellness Economy Monitor 2023 report, in 2022, approximately 819.4 million domestic and international wellness trips were recorded, up from 483 million in 2020 and 608 million in 2021. Wellness trips contributed 7.8% of all global tourism trips in 2022 and accounted for 18.7% of total tourist expenditure, thus demonstrating a significant economic contribution per trip [3].

The Global Wellness Institute defines wellness tourism as travel related to efforts to maintain or improve personal well-being [3]. Wellness tourism is a form of travel that aims to maintain and improve an individual's overall or holistic health, including physical, mental, spiritual, intellectual, social and emotional

health [4]. Wellness tourism is supported by proactive and non-medical activities. [5]. Wellness tourism is also understood as "a planned journey to provide nourishment to the body, mind and spirit to achieve a balanced condition." [6]. Wellness tourism is also motivated by the desire to maintain a healthy lifestyle, prevent disease, reduce stress, manage bad habits, and enjoy authentic experiences. One wellness tourism destination currently being developed in Indonesia is the Poncokusumo Tourism Village, Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency, East Java Province.

The flagship tourism product in Poncokusumo Tourism Village is Ashitameru Cottage, which is the first wellness tourism destination in East Java. Based on observations, Ashitameru Cottage is managed by Mr. Purna Irawan as the Head of the Dewi Kusumo Tourism Group (Pokdarwis) and in collaboration with Perhutani. Poncokusumo Village was designated a tourist village in 2011 with a decree from the Malang Regency Tourism and Culture Office. Poncokusumo Tourism Village is a buffer village for the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park (TNBTS) area with an altitude of 700-1300 meters above sea level, so it has a cool, typical mountain atmosphere. Ashitameru Cottage is a wellness tourism destination, one of which is forest bathing. Forest bathing has been proven to have a significant psychological impact by reducing stress, improving mood, and mental well-being through decreasing sympathetic nerve activity and increasing parasympathetic nerve activity that supports relaxation [7]. Forest bathing activities have a positive influence on mental health conditions, especially for individuals who have a tendency towards depression [8].

Poncokusumo Tourism Village offers a wellness tourism experience that not only promotes physical and mental health but also strengthens the connection between humans and nature. In addition to forest bathing activities, Poncokusumo Tourism Village also offers a variety of other tour packages, such as village live-in tours and jungle tracking. Accommodation is affordable, with a number of homestays managed by the local community available. Furthermore, a tourism information center located at the Pokdarwis Secretariat helps visitors obtain information about tourist destinations and activities. As part of its marketing and promotional efforts, Pokdarwis Dewi Kusumo has utilized its website and social media platforms, such as Instagram, as promotional tools, filling them with engaging photos and short videos. The village has also partnered with Atourin, an online tourism promotion platform, to sell tour packages.



Fig 1. Forest Bathing and Trekking Activities

According to data from the Malang Regency Tourism and Culture Office, in 2021, this village received 1,322 tourists. However, in 2022, this number decreased to 1,092. This decrease was partly due to the community still recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023, the number of tourist visits increased to 1,435, indicating increased interest and increased promotional activities by the tourism village management. Meanwhile, in 2024, 665 tourists visited. This decline is thought to be due to several factors, including limited accessibility to the tourism village, especially for tourists without private vehicles, and a lack of

supporting facilities such as public transportation. Furthermore, extreme weather conditions that occurred that year also influenced tourists' decisions to visit.



Fig 2. Tourist Visits to Poncokusumo Tourism Village
Source: Malang Regency Tourism and Culture Office, 2025

According to the Tourism Village Network website, in 2024, Poncokusumo Tourism Village was nominated for the top 100 in the Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI) held by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia. This nomination indicates that Poncokusumo Village possesses excellence and competitiveness. However, in its development, Poncokusumo Tourism Village faces various challenges and problems, including limited public transportation options to reach the village and inadequate public facilities to support sustainable tourism activities, such as the lack of health facilities in the village. Furthermore, tourism facilities to support tourism activities are also inadequate. To support the development of wellness tourism in Poncokusumo Tourism Village, a study and identification of internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) facing wellness tourism development are necessary. Furthermore, the results of this analysis can formulate appropriate wellness tourism development efforts to support environmental conservation, socio-cultural aspects of the community, and improve the well-being of the local community. Other research studies have identified potential to support the development of wellness tourism and empower MSMEs [9]. Furthermore, the SWOT matrix for Wellness Tourism addresses these issues. Research innovations address these issues through direct contact with Tourism Awareness Groups, providing factual information.

Based on previous research, to address these innovations, the researchers developed the title "Wellness Tourism Development Strategy in Poncokusumo Tourism Village, Malang Regency." This title was chosen because Poncokusumo Tourism Village possesses natural and cultural potential that supports wellness tourism development. However, it still faces infrastructure and accessibility constraints, necessitating an appropriate development strategy to become a sustainable, leading destination.

2. Literature Review

Tourism Destinations

According to Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, tourism is a business activity that includes, among other things, tourism business activities to support the organization of entertainment and recreation, meetings, incentive trips and exhibitions, and related activities. Various types of tourism activities are supported by various facilities and services provided by the community, entrepreneurs, the government, and local governments. Meanwhile, a tourism destination is a geographical area located in one or more administrative areas that contains tourist attractions, public facilities, tourism facilities, accessibility, and communities that are interconnected and complement the realization of tourism. Furthermore, the components of a tourism destination include attractions, accessibility, amenities (supporting facilities),

ancillary services (additional services)[9]. Meanwhile, classifying tourist attractions into three categories, namely natural attractions, human attractions, and special attractions [10].

Wellness Tourism

Wellness tourism is a journey undertaken by tourists to seek alternatives to maintain or improve health and well-being [11]. *Wellness tourism is a special interest tourism that aims to maintain the physical fitness of tourists.* [12]. Wellness tourism is motivated by the desire to maintain a healthy lifestyle, prevent disease, reduce stress, manage bad habits, and experience authentic experiences. There are six dimensions of wellness, including physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, social, and environmental. Based on the product dimension, wellness tourism includes: (1) Spa and Beauty, including massage, bathing, body treatments, facials, hair and nail care. (2) Health, including alternative medicine, diagnosis and health check-ups. (3) Healthy Eating, including culinary experiences, nutritional needs, wellness programs, and detoxification. (4) Fitness, including fitness and Pilates classes. (5) Eco and Adventure, including hiking, nature, and cycling. (6) Personal Growth, including retreats, life coaching, reading, enjoying music and art. (7) Spiritual Connection, including worship activities, volunteering, and enjoying time alone or with family. (8) Mind-Body, including yoga, meditation, martial arts, and biofeedback therapy.

Relevant research states 7 (seven) main factors in increasing the competitiveness of wellness tourism, namely the destination environment, policies and strategies, infrastructure and supporting service capacity, artificial and cultural resources, health service strategies and structures, innovation development, and collaboration and proactive marketing [13].

Tourism Villages

Villages have the potential to be community-based tourism destinations based on the local cultural wisdom of their communities. They can also serve as catalysts for economic growth based on the principles of mutual cooperation and sustainability. Tourism villages are areas with unique tourism potential and attractions, where tourists can experience firsthand the life and traditions of rural communities and all their potential [14]. The development of tourism villages as alternative tourism benefits village growth due to their uniqueness, the diversity of tourism products offered, and their focus on local potential [15]. The development of tourism villages is expected to create equitable distribution in the region, aligned with the concept of sustainable tourism development. The existence and development of tourism villages can also add greater value to existing tourism products, for example, the value of rural culture.

Tourism Development Strategy

Strategy can be understood as a specific step or method that is designed systematically to achieve a goal [16]. The concept of a tourism village development strategy is related to the effective use of tourist attractions through the use of appropriate resources to achieve the stated goals, where the strategy is formulated to be in harmony with internal and external environmental conditions [13]. Strategy serves as an approach or plan to achieve desired results. Meanwhile, development refers to efforts to bring something to a better condition, encompassing aspects of change and growth. This growth can be qualitative, such as improving the quality of tourist attractions and services, or quantitative, such as adding a variety of tourist attractions and other supporting facilities. Therefore, tourism development strategies need to be implemented in a planned and comprehensive manner to provide economic, social, and cultural benefits to the community. A tourism development strategy can be summarized as a planned and directed effort to utilize tourism resources and potential to improve the quality, quantity, and competitiveness of a destination, while still considering internal conditions, external opportunities, and the principles of sustainability for the community, culture, and environment.

Framework

The framework for developing a wellness tourism strategy in Poncokusumo Tourism Village is shown in Figure 3.

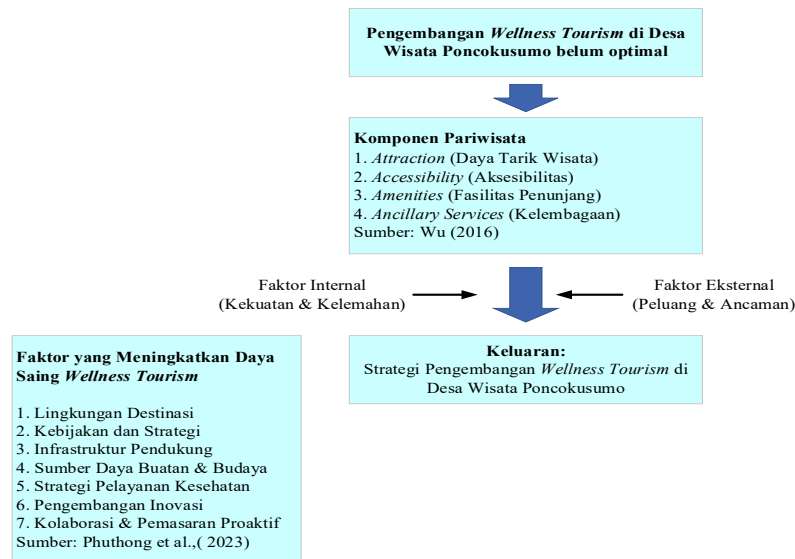


Fig 3. Thinking Framework

3. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. Descriptive research is research conducted to determine the existence of independent variables, whether one or more, without comparing the variables themselves or seeking relationships with other variables [17]. Qualitative research is a research method used to examine natural object conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument. Data collection techniques used include observation and in-depth interviews with open-ended questions (in-depth interviews). Informants were selected selectively using purposive sampling techniques, namely selecting individuals who are considered to have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in tourism development in the research area. Informants in this study included representatives of village officials and managers of the Poncokusumo Tourism Village as well as the Regional Government represented by the Malang Regency Tourism and Culture Office. In addition, data collection was also carried out by distributing questionnaires offline and online via Google Forms to relevant parties. The questionnaire was used to ask questions addressed to respondents related to internal and external factors related to the development of wellness tourism in the Poncokusumo Tourism Village. The questionnaire was created using a Likert scale to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups regarding social phenomena [17]. It is hoped that the data obtained through questionnaires and interviews will support each other so that the information collected will be stronger and more comprehensive.

The data analysis technique used is SWOT analysis. Qualitative data analysis technique with SWOT analysis is an act of systematically identifying strategic factors to formulate a strategy through logical explanation by evaluating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats [19]. Each strategic factor is given a weight ranging from 1.0 (very important) to 0.0 (not important) and a rating on a scale of 5 (outstanding) to 1 (poor) based on the results of the questionnaire that has been distributed. The score is obtained by multiplying the weight by the rating. Calculations are done using Microsoft Excel. Next, a mapping of the quadrant position is carried out to determine the current position of tourism development. The diagram of the position of the development of the study object provides an overview based on the

quadrants produced by the SW vector line and the OT vector line, each quadrant has a strategy formulation as its main strategy.

4. Results and Discussion

SWOT Analysis

The identification of internal and external factors for wellness tourism development in Poncokusumo Tourism Village was based on observations and interviews with relevant stakeholders. Weights were determined based on the significance of each factor, while ratings were obtained from a questionnaire distributed to 64 respondents, including tourists, managers, and staff from the Malang Regency Tourism and Culture Office who had visited Poncokusumo Tourism Village. Based on the identification of internal factors, the IFAS and EFAS matrix tables are presented below.

Table 1. Internal Strategic Factor Analysis (IFAS)

No.	Internal Strategic Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Strength				
1.	Having natural resources that support the development of wellness tourism	0,20	4,7	0,94
2.	Local culture and traditions are still preserved.	0,16	4,6	0,72
3.	Wellness tourism packages are available, such as forest bathing.	0,18	4,5	0,80
4.	A variety of alternative tourism products are available.	0,09	4,6	0,41
5.	Easy road access and adequate infrastructure.	0,13	4,3	0,57
6.	Electricity and clean water are available.	0,11	4,6	0,51
7.	Online ticketing and reservation services for tour packages are available.	0,02	4,7	0,10
8.	Pokdarwis plays an active role in tourism management.	0,07	4,7	0,31
9.	Digital promotion is well underway	0,04	4,6	0,20
		1		4,57
Weakness				
1.	The village is located far from the city center.	0,25	4,1	1,03
2.	Public transportation is limited.	0,21	3,6	0,77
3.	Ticket prices are unaffordable for some visitors.	0,07	4,2	0,30
4.	Unstable telecommunications networks.	0,04	4,3	0,15
5.	Public facilities are inadequate and poorly maintained.	0,18	4,1	0,73
6.	Tourist facilities such as homestays and restaurants are still limited.	0,14	4,3	0,61
7.	Supporting facilities such as gazebos and gardens are inadequate	0,11	3,9	0,42
		1		4,01
Strengths – Weaknesses Score Value : 4,57 – 4,01 = 0,56				

Table 2. External Strategic Factors Analysis (EFAS)

No	External Strategic Factors	Weig ht	Ratin g	Scor e
Opportunity				
1.	Wellness tourism products create cultural interactions between residents and tourists.	0,27	4,5	1,2
2.	Communities benefit economically from tourism	0,33	4,5	1,5
3.	Local government supports the development of wellness tourism	0,20	4,4	0,88

No	External Strategic Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
4.	The number of tourists increases during the holiday season	0,07	4,2	0,28
5.	Technological developments help promote tourism	0,13	4,5	0,6
		1		4,46
Threat				
1.	Various other tourist villages in Malang Regency with more interesting tourism products	0,33	3,9	1,30
2.	Outbreaks such as the Covid-19 pandemic threaten the sustainability of tourism.	0,17	4,4	0,73
3.	There is a potential for natural disasters	0,50	4,4	2,20
		1		4,23
Opportunity – Threat Score Value : $4,46 - 4,23 = 0,23$				

To determine the position of the strategy quadrant that is considered to have high priority and urgent to be implemented immediately, the x- and y-axis formulations are used. The x-axis is IFAS (strengths-weaknesses), while the y-axis is EFAS (opportunities-threats) according to the total score that has been obtained. The results are 0.56 (x) and 0.23 (y). Based on the score calculation and formulation, the development of wellness tourism in Poncokusumo Tourism Village is in quadrant I Strength-Opportunity (S-O), more precisely in the rapid growth strategy. This strategy refers to utilizing the internal strengths of an organization or destination to pursue external opportunities aggressively and quickly, with the goal of significant growth in a short time.

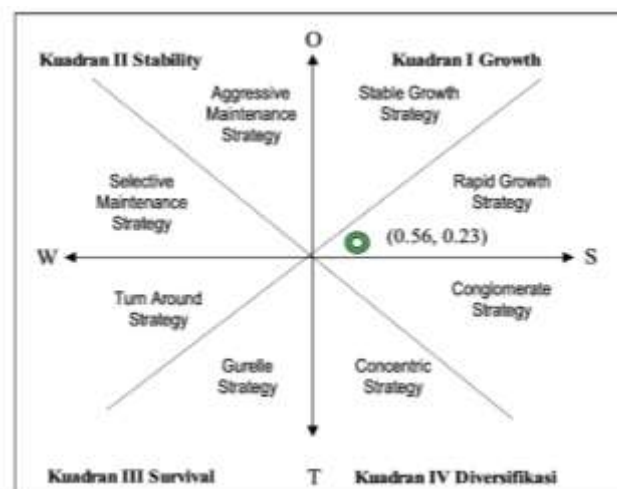


Fig 4. SWOT Analysis Quadrant Chart

Berdasarkan posisi kuadran tersebut, berikut rekomendasi strategi pengembangan SO yang mengacu pada 7 (tujuh) faktor utama dalam meningkatkan daya saing pada destinasi *wellness tourism* di Desa Wisata Poncokusumo [13].

First, Increase the diversification of wellness tourism products in Poncokusumo Tourism Village.

Exploring new themes in wellness tourism products is essential to increase competitiveness. One way to do this is by designing specific tour packages that differentiate them from those offered in other regions by utilizing and integrating other tourism products within the Poncokusumo Tourism Village area. For example, designing tour packages with sunrise or sunset yoga themes at Jamun Spot Sunset (JSS) Hill. By engaging in yoga, tourists can find serenity while enjoying the unique panorama of the mountain landscape. Managers can also develop culture-based wellness products, such as repackaging local herbal remedies and

aromatherapy products for tourists, holding healthy cooking classes using local ingredients, and creating digital detox programs (without gadgets). Furthermore, culturally themed events or festivals that can attract tourists can be packaged by combining natural and cultural potential, such as the Poncokusumo Wellness Culture Fest, Mindful Trekking and Herbal Healing Camp, and developing eco-therapy trails in forest areas.

Second, Strengthening policies and regulations through partnerships with the local government.

According to an interview with Mr. Budi Susilo, Head of Tourism Destination Development at the Malang Regency Tourism and Culture Office, the Tourism and Culture Office has organized activities to support the advancement of tourism village management. One such initiative is providing assistance for the Tourism Village Award (ADWI) competition to boost the image of tourism villages, including Poncokusumo Tourism Village in 2024. Furthermore, the office is collaborating with cross-sector ministries and academics. Building partnerships at the regional and local levels, including with the Poncokusumo Village Government, is an effort that needs to be implemented immediately. For example, jointly developing a master plan or strategic plan for wellness tourism in Poncokusumo Tourism Village. This document serves as a reference and guideline for wellness tourism development and is expected to strengthen funding support from the local government for product and facility development in the area. This is necessary to enhance the wellness tourism positioning of Poncokusumo Tourism Village so that policies can support sustainability efforts.

Third, Developing Infrastructure and Supporting Tourism Facilities

The travel experience is influenced not only by the available tourist attractions but also by adequate facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, it is crucial for relevant parties to ensure adequate infrastructure and facilities that support tourism activities. Public transportation to Poncokusumo Village is still inadequate, therefore, the management needs to encourage the government, through relevant agencies, to provide comfortable public transportation to facilitate tourist visits. Furthermore, other supporting facilities can be developed, such as open spaces or semi-permanent workshops for yoga and meditation, providing bamboo or wooden eco-lodges with high hygiene standards, and developing community-based wellness information centers.

Fourth, Increasing the Capacity of Human Resources in Tourism

Community involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes will foster a sense of belonging to existing tourist attractions. According to Mr. Purna, current community involvement is limited to those who are members of the Tourism Information Group (Pokdarwis), although village youth have begun actively participating in training, such as tour guide training. Based on an interview with Mr. Budi Susilo, the Malang Regency Tourism and Culture Office has also supported human resource development in Poncokusumo Tourism Village. For example, by conducting capacity building activities for Pokdarwis (tourism group) and tourism village managers, providing Core Business assistance from several universities, and enhancing tourism promotion. Mr. Budi Susilo also added that mentoring and collaboration between stakeholders are essential for tourism village development. The Poncokusumo Village Government and the Dewi Kusumo Pokdarwis (tourism group) need to align their perspectives on developing tourism village governance so that wellness tourism activities can be integrated with other tourism products in the village. Transforming knowledge for the younger generation is also crucial for sustainability. Furthermore, strengthening community participation can be realized by utilizing homes as local homestays, training residents as local therapists, meditation guides, and destination managers, as this can create opportunities for economic development.

Fifth, Improve Health Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services

The Poncokusumo Tourism Village lacks adequate health facilities; the Community Health Center (Puskesmas) is only available at the sub-district level. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a clinic or

traditional herbal medicine center in the village. Local residents can also be trained to become certified wellness therapists, providing massage, relaxation, or aromatherapy. Furthermore, consultation services, herbal medicine tour packages, and traditional massage can be offered to visitors.

Six, Increase Innovation and Multi-Party Collaboration

The community, particularly those involved in the Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis), can collaborate with other parties that can support the development of wellness tourism. For example, with academics to conduct studies on herbal medicine and herbal concoctions or create digital wellness products such as health tracking apps.

Seven, Strengthen Promotion and Marketing Through Digital Marketing

The dynamics of tourism, which continue to evolve along with technological advancements, must be viewed as an opportunity, for example in marketing tourism products. According to Mr. Budi Susilo, wellness tourism activities are generally still unfamiliar to tourists, especially in Malang Regency. Therefore, collaborative and coordinated efforts are needed to develop integrated promotions between the government, the private sector, and communities. Some potential initiatives include creating digital promotional platforms on YouTube and Instagram that feature wellness travel tips, stories about Poncokusumo Village, and tourist testimonials about wellness tourism activities and packages they've participated in. Furthermore, collaboration with wellness influencers, travel vloggers, and online travel agents like Traveloka and TripAdvisor can expand the reach of the tourist market.

5. Conclusion

The Wellness Tourism Development Strategy in Poncokusumo Tourism Village has significant internal strengths, namely the natural potential of the mountains, the preserved local culture, and the availability of wellness-based tourism packages such as forest bathing. Furthermore, there are various external opportunities, such as government support for wellness tourism development, increased tourist visits during the holiday season, and the development of information technology for digital promotion. Therefore, the strategic approach used is in quadrant I of the SWOT analysis, namely the Rapid Growth Strategy. This strategy is aimed at accelerating wellness tourism development by maximizing the village's strengths to capture existing market opportunities.

A rapid growth strategy can be realized through increasing human resource capacity, diversifying wellness tourism products, strengthening promotion through digital platforms, developing supporting facilities and infrastructure, and collaborating with the government, private sector, and local communities. With this strategic approach, Poncokusumo Tourism Village has the potential to become a leading wellness destination in East Java, not only attracting tourists but also improving community welfare and maintaining environmental sustainability.

Recommendations: The Regional Government is expected to prioritize the tourism sector, particularly wellness tourism, as a development priority or flagship program. Tourists not only enjoy recreation but also experience tranquility and overall wellness. Support and active involvement from the Poncokusumo Village Government are also needed to synergize between stakeholders and increase the competitiveness of Poncokusumo Tourism Village in the tourism industry in Malang Regency. Furthermore, it is necessary to develop wellness tourism planning and development documents that consider sustainability and local community participation. Improved infrastructure, facilities, and infrastructure readiness, both related to accessibility and supporting tourism facilities, are also needed. Security and safety aspects need to be a

development priority because the topography and natural landscape of Poncokusumo Village is dominated by forest and hilly areas and there is potential for disasters in the area.

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