



# Revealing the Secrets of Tourists' Hearts: A Study of Perceptions of the Marketing Mix at the Pangandaran Tourism Destination

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## ABSTRACT

This study looks at how tourists perceive the marketing mix in Pangandaran, one of Indonesia's most visited tourist destinations. However, despite its charm, the area has struggled to market itself successfully, which could have an impact on both the satisfaction of tourists and their destination preferences. This study's main objective is to investigate how visitors view the seven Ps of the marketing mix—product, price, place, process, promotion, people, and tangible evidence—in connection to Pangandaran's tourism development initiatives. For example, the 'people' factor scored 74.7%, indicating that tourists generally agree with the success of the marketing mix. The 'price' component, on the other hand, scored lower at 69.3%, suggesting worries about inconsistent pricing and a lack of standardization. To increase Pangandaran's awareness, local authorities are advised to create a thorough marketing plan that incorporates precise pricing schemes and promotional initiatives. The visitor experience could be further enhanced by training programs for local service providers, which could enhance hospitality and service quality.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a vital component of the economic framework in the 21st century, playing a significant role in driving economic growth and societal modernization. While the level of economic reliance on tourism varies across nations, there are countries where tourism serves as a cornerstone of their economy. Even in nations with less prominent tourism industries, its influence is deeply embedded in modern economic systems, contributing substantially to their overall economic performance (Bunghez, 2016).

Pangandaran Regency is one of the regencies in West Java, which is a newly autonomous region (DOB) resulting from the division of Ciamis Regency on October 25, 2012. In line with its vision of "Pangandaran Regency as a World-Class Tourist Destination," Pangandaran Regency has established the tourism sector as its main economic driver. As stated in the Master Plan for Tourism Development of West Java Province (RIPPARPROV) for 2016-2025, Pangandaran Regency is designated as one of the tourism destination centers in the southern part of West Java.

According to the National Tourism Master Plan (RIPPARNAS) for 2010-2025, Pangandaran Regency has been designated as one of the National Strategic Tourism Areas (KSPN) with an emphasis on developing marine tourism activities and special interests. The designation of KSPN also serves as a momentum for Pangandaran Regency to receive support for tourism development from the Central Government, particularly through the Ministry of Tourism and the West Java Provincial Government.

By leveraging these strategic issues, it is hoped that Pangandaran Regency can accelerate its tourism development and contribute to national tourism development, especially in West Java Province. However, based on the document of the Grand Design for World-Class Tourism Destination Development in West Java Province published by the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of West Java Province in 2017, it is explained that the beach tourism developing in the Pangandaran area tends to lead to mass beach recreation, which raises concerns about potential problems if development is left unchecked. Therefore, appropriate planning and policy direction are needed to develop the Pangandaran area sustainably.

Nevertheless, from field observations, the local government's priorities have not been vigorous regarding tourism destination marketing. One of the issues is the lack of a clear marketing concept, as the focus remains on destination arrangement. Without promotion, a destination cannot effectively offer its attractions. Promotion can be highlighted from the conceptual framework such as the 7P concept (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008), which includes product (whether the tourism destination provides value to tourists), price (the destination must have competitive pricing), place (accessibility of the destination in terms of location and information), promotion (the way managers communicate with tourists), people (referring to the human resources involved), process (referring to the service delivery process), and physical evidence (the tourist's experience in using the products or services at the tourism destination).

Several studies have shown that the marketing mix is a key to successful tourism destination management (Buhalis, 2000; Laws et al, 2002; Watu et al, 2024; Gowreesunkar, 2018; Fyall et al, 2007; and Spyriadis, 2014). However, in Pangandaran as a tourism destination, its marketing communication has not adapted to the existing tourism dynamics (Dahliah, 2024). Various studies have already contributed to marketing efforts for tourism destinations in Pangandaran (Badriatin & Rinandiyana, 2023; Rafsanjani, 2022; Jasmine, 2023; Hakim et al, 2022; Putra et al, 2020; Komariah & Sunandar, 2019; and Wijaya et al,

2012). Therefore, this research focuses on analyzing tourists' perceptions of the marketing mix that has been implemented in Pangandaran as a tourism destination.

## 2. METHODS

This research employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design (Creswell 2013). Primary data is obtained through surveys or questionnaires distributed to tourists who have visited or are currently visiting the Pangandaran tourism destination. To gather secondary data, various relevant studies and government policy documents related to the marketing of the Pangandaran tourism destination are utilized. The total population of tourists over the last three years amounts to 11,894,084 visitors. The minimum sample size for this study is set at 100 respondents, with a margin of error of 10%.

The researcher selected 150 respondents using accidental sampling. Below is the operationalization of the variables from the applied theory used in this research. The data will be analyzed using descriptive analysis or frequency distribution.

**Table 1.** Operationalization of Variable

Sub Variable	Indicator	Interval Scale				
		Semantic Poles Left	Tendency towards leftist semantics	Neutral	Tendency towards right semantics	Semantic Poles Right
<b>Product</b>	Pangandaran has a unique tourist attraction	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
	Pangandaran has the provision of tourism infrastructure	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
	Pangandaran has easy accessibility	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
<b>Price</b>	Pangandaran offers affordable ticket prices for each tourist attraction	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
	Pangandaran offers many discounts and economical tour packages	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
<b>Place</b>	Pangandaran has a strategic location	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
<b>Promotion</b>	Pangandaran offers ease in accessing tourism information	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
	Pangandaran offers a lot of tourist information through various print and online media	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree

Sub Variable	Indicator	Interval Scale				
		Semantic Poles Left	Tendency towards leftist semantics	Neutral	Tendency towards right semantics	Semantic Poles Right
<i>People</i>	The people of Pangandaran are hospitable towards tourists	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
	The majority of tourism operators in Pangandaran are friendly, tidy, polite, and courteous, while also providing good service	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
<i>Process</i>	Access to information and services before, during, and after returning from Pangandaran is very easy	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
<i>Physical Evidence</i>	The arrangement of tourist spaces or landscapes in Pangandaran is well-organized	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree
	The tourist attractions in Pangandaran provide a good experience because they are neat, comfortable, well-maintained, and clean	Cell 1 Strongly Disagree	Cell 2 Disagree	Cell 3 Neutral	Cell 4 tidak setuju Agree	Cell 5 Strongly Agree

Source: Booms & Bitner (1981); Kotler and Armstrong (2008)

In addition to the indicators mentioned above, the researcher also identifies tourist characteristics from three aspects: demographic, geographic, and psychological (Kotler, 2006). These aspects include the tourists' place of origin, gender, age, education, occupation, income, and motivation for visiting.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, to identify the characteristics of tourists and their perceptions of the marketing mix of Pangandaran tourism, a questionnaire was distributed to 150 respondents. (the survey loactions at Pantai Timur and Pantai Barat Pangandaran, Cagar Alam and Taman Wisata Alam Pananjung, Citumang, Wonder Hill Jojogan, and also using Google Forms). Below are the data regarding the characteristics of tourists at the Pangandaran Tourism Destination, divided into three aspects. These aspects include the geographical aspect (the origin of the tourists), the demographic aspect (gender, age, education, occupation, and income), and the psychological aspect (motivation for the visit) (Kotler, 2006).

Based on the psychological aspects or motivations of tourists, where in this section the motivations of tourists are divided into six dimensions, namely physical, cultural, emotional, status, personal development, and personal motives (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2005). Therefore, the data regarding the analysis of tourist motivations for visiting Pangandaran is as follows:

**Table 2.** Tourist's Motivation

Indikator		SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Amount	Total Score	Ideal Score
<i>Cultural</i>	f	2	5	28	88	27	150	583	750
	%						100%	77,7%	
<i>Physical</i>	f	1	9	15	94	31	150	595	750
	%						100%	79,3%	
<i>Emotional</i>	f	3	9	47	164	77	300	1203	1500
	%						100%	80,2%	
<i>Status</i>	f	1	10	34	69	36	150	579	750
	%						100%	77,2%	
<i>Personal Development</i>	f	1	5	36	78	29	150	576	750
	%						100%	76,8%	
<i>Personal</i>	f	7	18	44	61	20	150	519	750
	%						100%	69,2%	

Based on the table above, tourists to Pangandaran have emotional motivations. Where this indicates that they tend to choose a vacation to Pangandaran because for them, the tourism activities are a rare and important event, where at that moment they can take a break from their work routine, which may cause boredom among them. The results of the survey on tourist characteristics from demographic and geographic aspects are as follows below.

**Table 3.** Results of the Tourist Characteristics Survey

No	Indicator	Dominant Answer	Frequency	Percent
1	Origin	Bandung Raya	112	75%
2	Gender	Women	92	61%
3	Age	21-30 & 31-40	56	37%
4	Education	Bachelor	87	58%
5	Occupation	Private employee & entrepreneur	39	26%
6	Average monthly income	> Rp 5.000.000	75	50%

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the majority of Pangandaran tourists come from the Bandung Raya area, which indicates that land accessibility, such as well-maintained provincial roads or public transportation modes like the Budiman Bus fleet and the Bandung – Banjar train, operates effectively.

The more diverse and adequate tourist attractions and amenities can also be a factor for tourists from the Bandung Raya area to visit, even though they can access other coastal tourist attractions such as Ranca Buaya Beach, which is 119 km away, and Santolo Beach in Garut Regency, which is 148 km away. These distances are closer compared to the location of Pangandaran, which is 215 km from the capital of West Java Province (Bandung).

These factors are merely hypotheses or preliminary assumptions that need to be re-tested for their validity. Then, Pangandaran tourists are predominantly female, aged 21-40 years, with a bachelor's degree background, working as private employees and entrepreneurs. Then their average income is around > Rp 5,000,000.

In this study, tourists' perceptions of the Pangandaran marketing mix are intended to assess the performance of the marketing mix implemented by the Pangandaran Regency Government to attract tourist interest. The dimensions assessed for the marketing mix consist of the 7Ps (product, price, place, promotion, people, price, and physical evidence). (Kotler and Amstrong, 2008). Below are the results of the data analysis regarding tourists' perceptions of the marketing mix in Pangandaran tourism:

**Table 4.** Results of the Tourists' Perception of the Marketing Mix

Indicator		SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Amount	Total Score	Ideal Score
<i>Product</i>	f	8	45	144	190	62	450	1600	2250
	%						100%	71,1%	
<i>Price</i>	f	2	35	125	97	41	300	1040	1500
	%						100%	69,3%	
<i>Place</i>	f	4	10	50	63	23	150	541	750
	%						100%	72,1%	
<i>Promotion</i>	f	6	34	70	133	57	300	1101	1500
	%						100%	73,4%	
<i>People</i>	f	2	12	94	148	44	300	1120	1500
	%						100%	74,7%	
<i>Process</i>	f	1	5	67	62	15	150	535	750
	%						100%	71,3%	
<i>Physical Evidance</i>	f	21	65	127	77	48	300	1080	1500
	%						100%	72%	
<b>Score Total</b>								7017	
<b>Percent</b>									71,97%

Based on the table above, which is the result of data processing from tourists' perceptions of the performance of the Pangandaran tourism marketing mix, it shows a percentage of 71.97%. The results of this data processing are then entered into a continuum line with the following measurement steps:

$$\text{Maximum Score} = 5 \times 13 \text{ (Number of Items)} \times 150 \text{ (Sample Size)} = \mathbf{9750}$$

$$\text{Minimum Score} = 1 \times 13 \text{ (Number of Items)} \times 150 \text{ (Sample Size)} = \mathbf{1950}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Interval} &= (\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Minimum Score}) : 5 \\ &= (9750 - 1950) : 5 = \mathbf{1560} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Percent} &= (\text{Score Total} : \text{Minimum Score}) \times 100 \\ &= (7017 : 9750) \times 100 = \mathbf{71,9\%} \end{aligned}$$

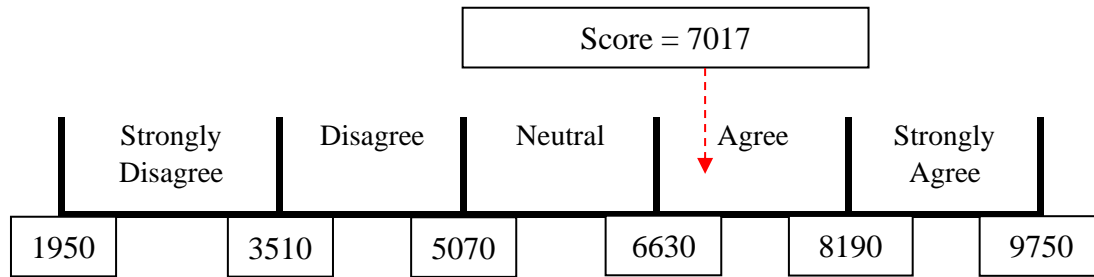


Figure 1. Garis Kontinum

Based on the image above, which is the result of respondents' answers regarding perceptions of the Pangandaran tourism marketing mix, it can be interpreted that the level of perception of domestic tourists towards the Pangandaran tourism marketing mix is at the 'agree' level. Where the direction of domestic tourists' perception agrees with the people dimension (74.7%) or the readiness of the Pangandaran community regarding hospitality. However, tourists have a low percentage regarding the price dimension (69.3%) or the prices of services or goods offered to tourists, which is caused by the lack of standardization.

This is in line with the observation results where many prices, from food and beverages to vehicle rentals by the community, are less friendly and fluctuate. However, the price itself is a determination of the value of a product for consumers (Nana, 2015). The value of a price should naturally be proportional to the product being offered. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), there are two factors that need to be considered in price determination, namely internal factors (marketing objectives, company, marketing mix strategy, and production costs) and external factors. (Market characteristics and demand, competition, government policies and regulations). Therefore, there needs to be price control or standardization by the government to ensure price equality, creating a tourist-friendly destination in Pangandaran. Then, there is a need for tour packages in Pangandaran offered by tourism service providers with attractive discounts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The research successfully identifies the perceptions of tourists regarding the marketing mix in the Pangandaran tourism destination. The majority of tourists are motivated by emotional factors, viewing their trips to Pangandaran as significant events that allow them to escape their daily routines. This emotional connection is crucial for understanding tourist behavior and preferences. The survey revealed that most visitors to Pangandaran come from the Bandung Raya area, indicating that accessibility plays a vital role in attracting tourists. The effective transportation options, such as buses and trains, contribute to this trend. The analysis of the marketing mix using the 7P framework shows a generally positive perception among tourists, with an overall score of 71.97%. The dimension of 'people' received the highest approval, reflecting the hospitality of the local community, while the 'price' dimension was rated lower, suggesting a need for better price standardization. Enhance the tourist experience and competitiveness of Pangandaran, it is essential for local stakeholders to address pricing issues and consider implementing standardized pricing strategies. Additionally, creating attractive tourism packages could further entice visitors and improve overall satisfaction.



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