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# Marketing Strategy of the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Culture and Tourism Office in Increasing the Number of Tourists

# Durahman Marpaung<sup>1\*</sup>, Dang Panagaman Tamba<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>STIE Muhammadiyah Asahan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, <u>durahmanmarpaung97@gmail.com</u>
<sup>2</sup>STIE Muhammadiyah Asahan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, <u>nagamsaragi800@gmail.com</u>

\*Corresponding Author: <u>durahmanmarpaung97@gmail.com</u><sup>1</sup>

Abstract: The urgency of this research is that this research is important because it can provide an in-depth look at the strategies implemented by the Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office, so that concrete recommendations can be made to increase the attractiveness and popularity of these tourist destinations. This research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office in expanding the number of tourists. The research methods used in this research are data collection obtained from observations, interviews with research subjects, and documentation studies, literature studies, identifying problems, preprocessing, analyzing data using SWOT analysis, BCG analysis, SPACE analysis, and QSPM analysis, data analysis results, final evaluation, research approach with mix method. The results of SWOT analysis on the evaluation of internal factors IFE and evaluation of external factors EFE show that the internal and external positions are in quadrant I, in a growing position and must continue to be improved. The results of the BCG matrix evaluation, Samosir Lake Toba Regency tourist destinations are classified in the Stars position. The results of the SPACE matrix calculation, the tourist position of Samosir Lake Toba Regency is in an aggressive position that occurs when all dimensions are positive. Based on the results of OSPM, 3 prioritized strategies can be taken and implemented as the main steps in developing tourist destinations.

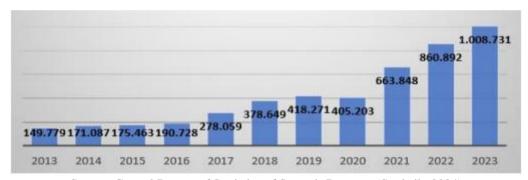
**Keyword:** Lake Toba, Culture and Tourism Office, Number of Tourists, Samosir Regency, Marketing Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most famous tourism destinations in North Sumatra is the Lake Toba area. Lake Toba is one of Indonesia's priority destinations included in the UNESCO Global Geopark (Tobing et al., 2020). The recognition of the Lake Toba area as a super-priority tourism destination is the main focus of tourism sector development in Indonesia. The natural beauty of the Lake Toba region is well known, supported by the attraction of religious, cultural, and rich culinary tourism (Saragih & Simarmat, 2023).

Samosir Regency, located in the vicinity of Lake Toba, is a potential tourism destination in Indonesia with its rich natural and cultural heritage (Pardede & Suryawan, 2016). Although it has great potential to attract tourists, the number of visitors who come still does not reach its full potential (Wahyuni, 2020). In this context, it is important to identify and develop effective marketing strategies to increase the tourist attractiveness of Samosir Regency (Saputra & Ali, 2020). The Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office has a very important role in these efforts and it is necessary to conduct in-depth research to formulate a marketing strategy that is in accordance with the unique characteristics and diversity of Samosir Regency (Tarigan et al., 2021).

Samosir Island, located in the middle of Lake Toba and in Samosir Regency, is one of the popular destinations frequented by tourists visiting the Lake Toba region (Angin & Yolanda, 2024). Featured tourism in Samosir Regency involves a number of interesting objects, such as the traditional Tomb of King Sidabutar, Tuktuk Siadong area, Batu Kursi Parsidangan Siallagan, Hutabolon Museum, Parbaba White Sand Beach, Aek Rangat Pangururan, Tele View Tower, Dolok Holbung Sipege, Aek Sipitu Dai, Batu Sawan, Effrata Waterfall, Naisogop Waterfall, and Pangaribuan Waterfall. Marpaniaran (traditional female dance) (Octavianna et al., 2021) and the tradition of the traditional Toba Batak ceremony Mambosuri (Silaban & Sibarani, 2021) is also an attraction in Samosir Regency. The following is the development of tourist visits in the last 10 years to Samosir Regency:



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics of Samosir Regency (Statistik, 2024) Figure 1. Number of Tourists Visiting Samosir Lake Toba Regency

Based on the data above, it can be seen that every year tourists visiting Samosir Regency continue to increase. However, there was also a decline in 2020, due to Covid-19. This is in line with research (Sánchez-Sánchez et al., 2024) which states that Covid-19 significantly impacts the number of tourists. Samosir Regency is part of Lake Toba which is included as a super priority tourism in Indonesia (Marizki et al., 2022). When viewed from the data above, the development of the number of tourist visits is certainly still very far compared to other super-priority tourism such as Borobudur Temple, Mandalika, Labuan Bajo, and Likupang (Ulfahira, 2024).

An effective and efficient marketing strategy is critical to success in any endeavor (Hong & Nguyen, 2020). The marketing and management of Samosir Regency tourism is under the authority of the Samosir Regency Tourism and Culture Office (Sazali et al., 2020). It has the responsibility to plan, develop, and draft regulations and provide guidance to the tourism industry in the region (Makahinda et al., 2015). In carrying out its duties, the Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office requires an effective strategic plan to deal with the dynamics of change in the tourism and marketing industry. This aims to increase the number of tourist visits, both domestic and foreign, to the Samosir Regency area. In this context, it is necessary to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the strategies implemented by the Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office in an effort to market tourism potential in the region. In

this study, researchers used the 7P marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place, people, process, dan physical evidence) (Murtini et al., 2019).

The urgency of this research is that Samosir Regency, especially around Lake Toba, has abundant natural and cultural wealth, but the challenge of increasing the number of tourist visits requires an effective marketing approach (Sitompul, 2021). This research is important because it can provide an in-depth look at the strategies implemented by the Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office, so that concrete recommendations can be made to increase the attractiveness and popularity of the tourist destination. By detailing appropriate marketing strategies, this research has the potential to make a positive contribution in supporting local economic growth, cultural preservation, and the achievement of Samosir Regency's full tourism potential.

The advantage of solving this problem is that previous researchers used a 4P marketing strategy approach (product, price, place, dan promotion) (Asih et al., 2022) while this research uses the 7P marketing strategy (product, price, promotion, place, people, process, dan physical evidence). Then, related to the methods used, the previous study used a qualitative approach (Simbolon & Khairifa, 2018) This research uses a mixed method approach (qualitative and quantitative) with SWOT analysis, BCG analysis, SPACE analysis, and QSPM analysis. This research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office in expanding the number of tourists.

### **METHOD**

Data collection was carried out by making direct observations to the research location. Then, researchers conducted interviews with research subjects consisting of leaders and all staff of the Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office and researchers conducted documentation studies used to obtain data that became the object of research. After obtaining the required data, the next step is to analyze the existing data. The method used in this research is mix method (qualitative and quantitative). Qualitative analysis was carried out using Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis, Boston Consulting Group (BCG) analysis, and Strategic Position and Action Evaluation (SPACE) analysis. Then, quantitative analysis obtained from the analysis used using the SWOT analysis matrix, BCG analysis matrix, and SPACE analysis matrix will then produce numbers that will be interpreted with descriptive quantitative. After all the analysis figures are obtained, they will be compared using Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) analysis.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **SWOT Analysis**

Internal and external factors that influence marketing strategies in increasing the number of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency are classified based on SWOT analysis. Internal factors consist of strengths and weaknesses. External factors consist of opportunities and threats.

### Strength

- 1. Diverse selection of service products.
- 2. Superior products become the icon of Lake Toba.
- 3. Easy to reach place/location.
- 4. Friendly service and can explain to consumers in a language that is easy to understand.
- 5. Having employees who excel in serving consumers.
- 6. Relatively cheap prices.

#### Weakness

- 1. Marketing that does not maximize in promotional activities.
- 2. Lack of utilization of own social media.
- 3. Lack of worship facilities and bathrooms in the tourist environment.
- 4. Lack of cleanliness in the tourist environment.
- 5. Unsafe road access.
- 6. Lack of optimal coordination and cooperation between stakeholders.

## Opportunities

- 1. Organize cooperation strategies with various parties.
- 2. Broad market share.
- 3. Get support from the government.
- 4. The number of visitors from young people today.
- 5. Increased accessibility to tourist destinations.
- 6. Development of information technology and digital marketing platforms.

#### **Threats**

- 1. Competitors who set up tours in the same area.
- 2. Lack of synergy between stakeholders.
- 3. Weather factors that are sometimes erratic make visitors decrease.
- 4. Risk of health crises and natural disasters.
- 5. Low interest of local tourists.
- 6. Risk of social conflict.

SWOT analysis allows the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Culture and Tourism Office to identify both positive and negative influencing factors from within and from outside. The key role of SWOT is to help develop a full awareness of all the factors that can influence strategic planning and decision making. The results on the SWOT matrix of marketing strategies in increasing the number of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency are as follows which have been added with the 7P marketing mix:

	Table 1. Results of SWOT Analysis on Samosir Lake Toba Regency Tourism							
				Strength (S)		Weakness (W)		
			1.	Diverse selection of service	1.	Marketing that does not		
				products.		maximize in promotional		
			2.	Superior products become the		activities.		
				icon of Lake Toba.	2.	Lack of utilization of own		
			3.	Easy to reach place/location.		social media.		
			4.	Friendly service and can	3.	Lack of worship facilities and		
				explain to consumers in a		bathrooms in the tourist		
				language that is easy to		environment.		
				understand.	4. Lack of cleanliness in the			
			5.	Having employees who excel		tourist environment.		
				in serving consumers.	5.	Unsafe road access.		
			6.	Relatively cheap prices.	6.	Lack of optimal coordination		
						and cooperation between		
						stakeholders.		
	Opportunity (O	<b>)</b> )		(SO)		(WO)		
1.	Organize co	operation	1.	Utilize support from the	1.	In order to focus more on		
	strategies with variou	us parties.		government.		target marketing not only		
2.	Broad market share.		2.	Using social media to promote		through individuals but also		
3.	Get support from	om the		tourism.		one of putting up banners on		
	government.		3.	Maintain services so that		the roadside.		
4.	The number of visi	tors from		consumers feel comfortable.	2.	Must always read the market		

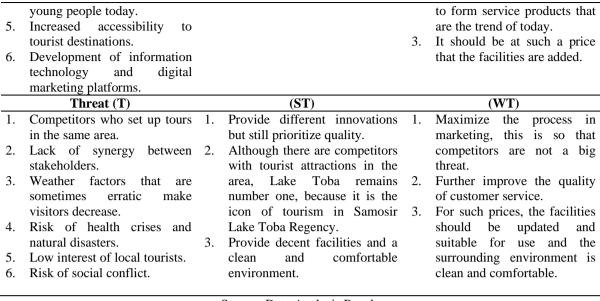


Table 2. IFE (Internal Factor Evaluation) Matrix Analysis Results

	Internal Factor						
No	Strength	Weight	Rating	Weight *Rating			
1	Diverse selection of service products.	0.09	3.76	0.32			
2	Superior products become the icon of Lake Toba.	0.09	3.88	0.34			
3	Easy to reach place/location.	0.09	3.96	0.36			
	Friendly service and can explain to consumers in a						
4	language that is easy to understand.	0.08	3.48	0.28			
5	Having employees who excel in serving consumers.	0.08	3.44	0.27			
6	Relatively cheap prices.	0.08	3.36	0.26			
Total Strength				1.83			
No	Weakness	Weight	Rating	Weight *Rating			
	Marketing that does not maximize in promotional						
1	activities.	0.08	3.68	0.31			
2	Lack of utilization of own social media	0.08	3.48	0.28			
	Lack of worship facilities and bathrooms in the tourist						
3	environment.	0.09	3.84	0.34			
4	Lack of cleanliness in the tourist environment.	0.08	3.6	0.30			
5	Unsafe road access.	0.09	3.76	0.32			
	Lack of optimal coordination and cooperation between						
6	stakeholders.	0.08	3.44	0.27			
Total	Weakness			1.82			
Total	Value	1.00	·	3.65			

Source: Data Analysis Results

Evaluation of internal factors IFE (Internal Factor Evaluation) is one way to assess the internal strengths and weaknesses of marketing strategies in increasing the number of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency. The IFE score of the marketing strategy in increasing the number of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency is 3.65, indicating that the internal position is in quadrant I, which is in a growing position and must be improved.

Table 3. EFE (External Factor Evaluation) Matrix Analysis Results

	External Factors	S		
No	Opportunities	Weight	Rating	Weight *Rating
1	Organize cooperation strategies with various parties	0.09	3.76	0.32

2	Broad market share.	0.09	4	0.37
	Get support from the government.			
3		0.09	3.88	0.35
4	The number of visitors from young people today.	0.08	3.48	0.28
5	Increased accessibility to tourist destinations.	0.08	3.44	0.27
	Development of information technology and digital			
6	marketing platforms.	0.09	4	0.37
Tota	l Opportunities			1.95
No	Threats	Weight	Rating	Weight *Rating
1	Competitors who set up tours in the same area.	0.08	3.48	0.28
2	Lack of synergy between stakeholders.	0.09	3.84	0.34
	Weather factors that are sometimes erratic make			
3	visitors decrease.	0.09	4.04	0.37
4	Risk of health crises and natural disasters.	0.07	3.2	0.23
5	Low interest of local tourists.	0.07	3.12	0.22
6	Risk of social conflict.	0.08	3.36	0.26
Total	Threats			1.71
Total	Value	1.00		3.66

Evaluation of external factors EFE (External Factor Evaluation) is one way to assess the external opportunities and threats of marketing strategies in increasing the number of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency. The IFE score of the marketing strategy in increasing the number of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency is 3.66, indicating that the external position is in quadrant I, which is in a growing position and must be improved.

### **Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Analysis**

The BCG analysis method is a method used in developing a strategic business unit plan by classifying potential profits. Meanwhile, the BCG matrix is a strategy tool to guide resource allocation decisions based on market share. The BCG matrix has four quadrants, namely stars, question marks, cash cows and dogs. In order to determine the level of market growth, data on the number of tourist visitors in Samosir Lake Toba Regency from 2013 to 2023 is needed.

**Table 4. Tourist Growth Rate** 

No	Year	<b>Number of Visitors</b>	Growth Rate (%)
1	2013	149779	-
2	2014	171087	14.23
3	2015	175463	2.56
4	2016	190728	8.70
5	2017	278059	45.79
6	2018	378649	36.18
7	2019	418271	10.46
8	2020	405203	-3.12
9	2021	663848	63.83
10	2022	860892	29.68
11	2023	1008731	17.17
Total			225.47
Rata-	rata		22.55

Source: Data Analysis Results

Based on the results above, it shows that the growth rate of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency is high, namely with a growth rate of 22.55%. Market share analysis shows the size of the market share of the volume of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency compared to its competitors, namely Sabang and Aceh. Data on the number of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency in 2023 and Sabang and Aceh in 2023. Based on the calculation of the BCG matrix to determine the relative market share, it is known that the relative market share of Samosir Lake Toba Regency in 2023 compared to its competitors Sabang and Aceh is 1.57 x> 1 which indicates its superiority over its competitors because it exceeds the number one.

Based on the analysis that has been conducted, the growth of tourists in Samosir Lake Toba Regency is 22.55%, indicating a significant increase in demand. In addition, the relative market share in 2023 has also been calculated at 1.57. From the evaluation results of the BCG matrix, the tourist destination of Samosir Lake Toba Regency is classified in the Stars position. The Stars classification indicates that the business service product has a large market share, rapid growth, and generates significant revenue. This indicates that the service products produced are superior products that are in demand by the market.

# Strategic Position and Action Evaluation (SPACE) Analysis

Space Matrix (Strategic Position and Action Evaluation) is used to map the company's condition using a model presented using a cartesian diagram consisting of 4 quadrants with the same size scale. The four quadrants indicate whether to indicate an aggressive, conservative, defensive, or competitive strategy. The following are the results of the SPACE matrix calculation using EFE and IFE analysis.

Table 5. Strength of Samosir Regency Tourism Destination Lake Toba

No	Strength	Weight
		Score
1	Diverse selection of service products.	0.32
2	Superior products become the icon of Lake Toba.	0.34
3	Easy to reach place/location.	0.36
4	Friendly service and can explain to consumers in a language that is easy to understand.	0.28
5	Having employees who excel in serving consumers.	0.27
6	Relatively cheap prices.	0.26
Tota	Total Strength	

Source: Data Analysis Results

Table 6. Weakness of Samosir Lake Toba Regency Tourism Destination

No	Weakness	Weight
		Score
1	Marketing that does not maximize in promotional activities.	0.31
2	Lack of utilization of own social media	0.28
3	Lack of worship facilities and bathrooms in the tourist environment.	0.34
4	Lack of cleanliness in the tourist environment.	0.30
5	Unsafe road access.	0.32
6	Lack of optimal coordination and cooperation between stakeholders.	0.27
Tota	l Weakness	1.82

Source: Data Analysis Results

Table 7. Opportunities Samosir Lake Toba Regency Tourism Destination

No	Opportunities	Weight
		Score
1	Organize cooperation strategies with various parties	0.32
2	Broad market share.	0.37
3	Get support from the government.	0.35
4	The number of visitors from young people today.	0.28

Tota	al Opportunities	1.95
6	Development of information technology and digital marketing platforms.	0.37
5	Increased accessibility to tourist destinations.	0.27

Table 8. Threats Samosir Regency Tourism Destination Lake Toba

No	Threats	Weight
		Score
1	Competitors who set up tours in the same area.	0.28
2	Lack of synergy between stakeholders.	0.34
3	Weather factors that are sometimes erratic make visitors decrease.	0.37
4	Risk of health crises and natural disasters.	0.23
5	Low interest of local tourists.	0.22
6	Risk of social conflict.	0.26
Tota	l Threats	1.71

Source: Data Analysis Results

Average threats = (-1.71)/6 = (-0.285)Average opportunities = 1.95/6 = 0.325x-axis = 0.04Average weakness = (-1.82)/6 = (-0.303)Average strength = 1.83/6 = 0.305y-axis = 0.002

Based on the results of calculations using the SPACE matrix, the tourist position of Samosir Lake Toba Regency is in an aggressive position that occurs when all dimensions are positive. This condition indicates that the organization has a competitive advantage that can be maintained and consolidated through its financial strength. This means that Samosir Lake Toba Regency tourism is in a good condition to use its internal strengths to take advantage of external opportunities, overcome internal weaknesses and avoid external threats. Thus, suitable strategies are market penetration, market development, product development, backward integration, forward integration, horizontal integration, or combination strategies are feasible strategies, noting that the strategy will depend on the specific conditions of the company.

### **Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) Analysis**

QSPM analysis of Samosir Lake Toba Regency tourism is carried out using the QSPM matrix as a strategy determination stage that will get priority in deciding on alternative strategies that have been recommended by the SWOT matrix. The strategy prioritization stage in the QSPM matrix is to see the highest TAS (Total Attractive Score) value. The results of the QSPM matrix calculation on Samosir Lake Toba Regency tourism can be seen in the following table:

**Table 9. QSPM Matrix Analysis Results** 

No	Alternatif Strategi	TAS	Ranking
1	Utilize support from the government.	5.97	10
2	Using social media to promote tourism.	6.29	2
3	Maintain services so that consumers feel comfortable.	5.99	9
	In order to focus more on target marketing not only through individuals but also		7
4	one of putting up banners on the roadside.	6.02	
5	Must always read the market to form service products that are the trend of today.	6.36	1
6	It should be at such a price that the facilities are added.	5.93	11
7	Provide different innovations but still prioritize quality.	6.24	3
8	Although there are competitors with tourist attractions in the area, Lake Toba	6.00	8

	remains number one, because it is the icon of tourism in Samosir Lake Toba Regency.		
9	Provide decent facilities and a clean and comfortable environment.	6.17	5
10	Maximize the process in marketing, this is so that competitors are not a big threat.	6.09	6
11	Further improve the quality of customer service.	5.90	12
	For such prices, the facilities should be updated and suitable for use and the		4
12	surrounding environment is clean and comfortable.	6.21	

Based on the QSPM results, of the 12 alternative strategies that have been obtained in the SWOT matrix for Samosir Lake Toba Regency tourism, 3 strategies are obtained that are prioritized to be carried out by the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Tourism and Culture Office in developing tourist destinations by looking at the TAS (Total Attractive Score) value or the overall value of each alternative strategy from the highest. These 3 priority strategies can be taken and implemented by the company as the main step in developing tourist destinations.

By looking at the highest TAS value, the top priority marketing strategy of the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Culture and Tourism Office in increasing the number of tourists is to always read the market to form service products that are trending today. Continuous market reading is key in shaping products and services that are relevant to current trends. Some concrete steps that can be taken by the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Culture and Tourism Office are to conduct regular market research to monitor changes in tourist preferences and behavior. Use surveys, focus groups, and data analysis to gain deep insights. Keep abreast of global tourism trends through industry publications, blogs and research reports. This helps to identify what is popular among travelers around the world. Collect feedback from travelers who have visited Samosir. Their reviews and suggestions can provide valuable information on what they liked and what needs improvement. By applying this approach, the Culture and Tourism Office can create products that match the needs and wants of the market, thus attracting more tourists to Samosir.

Furthermore, the second priority marketing strategy of the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Culture and Tourism Office in increasing the number of tourists is using social media to conduct tourism promotions. Using social media for tourism promotion is an effective strategy and can reach a wider audience. Some steps that can be taken by the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Culture and Tourism Office are posting high-quality photos and videos that showcase the natural beauty, culture, and attractions in Samosir. Visually appealing content is more likely to get attention and be shared. Share testimonials and stories from travelers who have visited Samosir. These can be short videos or posts that showcase their positive experiences. Use relevant and popular hashtags to increase visibility. This helps reach a wider audience. Invite influencers or travel bloggers to visit Samosir and share their experiences. This can increase trust and attract more visitors. With these steps, the Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office can effectively utilize social media to attract more tourists.

Furthermore, the third priority marketing strategy of the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Culture and Tourism Office in increasing the number of tourists is to provide different innovations but still prioritize quality. Providing different innovations while still prioritizing quality is very important to attract the attention of tourists. Some strategies that can be implemented by the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Culture and Tourism Office are involving local communities in the development of tourism products. For example, inviting local artists to showcase their work or offering the experience of staying in homestays managed by local residents. Develop environmentally friendly initiatives, such as eco-tours or waste reduction programs. Travelers are increasingly concerned with sustainability, and this can be a big draw. Use storytelling to convey interesting stories about Samosir's culture and history. This can create an emotional connection with tourists. By implementing these innovations, the

Samosir Regency Culture and Tourism Office can provide a different and exciting tourism experience, while maintaining a high quality of service.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The results of SWOT analysis on the evaluation of internal factors IFE and evaluation of external factors EFE show that the internal and external positions are in quadrant I, in a growing position and must continue to be improved. From the results of the BCG matrix evaluation, Samosir Lake Toba Regency tourist destinations are classified in the Stars position. The Stars classification indicates that the business service product has a large market share, rapid growth, and generates significant revenue. This indicates that the service products produced are superior products that are in demand by the market. Based on the results of calculations using the SPACE matrix, the tourist position of Samosir Lake Toba Regency is in an aggressive position which occurs when all dimensions are positive. This condition indicates that the organization has a competitive advantage that can be maintained and consolidated through its financial strength. Based on the QSPM results, of the 12 alternative strategies that have been obtained in the SWOT matrix for Samosir Lake Toba Regency tourism, 3 strategies are obtained that are prioritized to be carried out by the Samosir Lake Toba Regency Tourism and Culture Office in developing tourist destinations by looking at the TAS (Total Attractive Score) value or the overall value of each alternative strategy from the highest. These 3 priority strategies can be taken and implemented by the company as the main step in developing tourist destinations.

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