

Sacred Rhythm and Sunset Views: Elevating Uluwatu's Kecak Dance as a Cultural Tourism Icon

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pendekatan strategis untuk mengoptimalkan pengelolaan paket wisata “Half Day Sunset Over Uluwatu and Kecak Dance” di PT Destination Asia, dengan tujuan meningkatkan kepuasan wisatawan—terutama dengan menonjolkan makna artistik tarian Kecak. Metode kualitatif diterapkan, yang menggabungkan kerangka kerja POAC (Perencanaan, Organisasi, Pelaksanaan, Pengendalian) dan analisis SWOT. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, pengamatan lapangan, dan kuesioner yang dibagikan kepada wisatawan yang mengikuti tur. Hasil penelitian menyoroti bahwa keberhasilan operasional tur bergantung pada perencanaan yang teliti, termasuk pemilihan pemandu wisata yang tepat, komunikasi destinasi yang efektif, dan logistik yang terorganisir dengan baik. Analisis SWOT mengidentifikasi kekuatan inti dalam komponen budaya, terutama Tari Kecak, pertunjukan Bali yang unik berakar pada epik Hindu, dikenal dengan nyanyian hipnotis dan koreografi dinamisnya. Namun, beberapa tantangan tetap ada, seperti ketidaknyamanan penonton selama pertunjukan dan ketidakefisienan teknis dalam penjualan tiket dan pengendalian kerumunan. Sebagai pusat emosional dan artistik tur, tarian Kecak tidak hanya memberikan hiburan tetapi juga pengalaman budaya yang mendalam. Untuk memperkaya pengalaman ini, disarankan untuk meningkatkan narasi, estetika panggung, dan interaksi dengan penonton. Dengan menerapkan strategi POAC dan memanfaatkan wawasan dari analisis SWOT, PT Destination Asia dapat meningkatkan kualitas layanan turnya, mengatasi keterbatasan saat ini, dan memberikan pengalaman yang lebih menarik dan kaya budaya bagi pengunjung.

Kata Kunci: Budaya, Tari, Kecak, Suci, Pariwisata

ABSTRACT

This research explores strategic approaches to optimizing the management of the Half Day Sunset Over Uluwatu and Kecak Dance tour package at PT Destination Asia, aiming to boost tourist satisfaction—particularly by highlighting the artistic significance of the Kecak dance. A qualitative methodology was adopted, incorporating POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) and SWOT analysis frameworks. Data were collected through interviews, field observations, and questionnaires distributed to tourists who took part in the tour. The results emphasize that successful tour operations depend on meticulous planning, including the appropriate selection of tour guides, effective destination communication, and streamlined logistics. The SWOT analysis identified core strengths in cultural components, especially the Kecak dance, a distinctive Balinese performance rooted in Hindu epics, known for its hypnotic chanting and dynamic choreography. However, some challenges persist, such as discomfort for the audience during the show and technical inefficiencies in ticketing and crowd control. As the emotional and artistic centerpiece of the tour, the Kecak dance provides not only entertainment but also a deep cultural experience. To further enrich this experience, improvements in storytelling, stage aesthetics, and audience interaction are recommended. By implementing POAC strategies and drawing on insights from the SWOT analysis, PT Destination Asia can enhance its tour service quality, resolve current limitations, and deliver a more engaging and culturally enriching experience for visitors.

Keywords: Cultural, Dance, Kecak, Sacred, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is globally recognized for its vast tourism potential, marked by extraordinary natural landscapes, rich cultural diversity, and vibrant living traditions that stretch across its extensive archipelago. From Sabang in the west to Merauke in the east, each region showcases unique cultural identities, making Indonesia a prime destination for cultural tourism [1]. This diversity in ethnicity, language, and customs is a key factor in attracting millions of international visitors annually. Among the many destinations, Bali remains a premier tourism hotspot, celebrated not only for its scenic beaches and terraced rice fields but also for its deep-rooted cultural expressions that seamlessly integrate art, spirituality, and daily practices [2].

The high influx of visitors to Bali has made tourism a cornerstone of the local economy, opening up employment opportunities across hospitality sectors such as hotels, restaurants, and tour services—consequently helping to reduce unemployment levels. As reported in [3], taxes collected from hotels and restaurants contribute significantly to regional revenue (PAD), enabling local governments to improve infrastructure and public services. Furthermore, tourism stimulates the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), such as handicraft producers and sellers of local goods, who benefit from increased tourist spending [4]. In this way, tourism not only boosts economic growth but also enhances the overall quality of life for local communities.



Figure 1. Portrait of Kecak and Fire Dance in Uluwatu

[Source: Personal Document]

One of the most captivating cultural attractions in Bali is the Kecak Dance, a performance that exemplifies the island's rich artistic heritage. Commonly showcased at Uluwatu Temple, perched on dramatic cliffs above the Indian Ocean, the Kecak Dance enthralls audiences through a distinctive format—dozens of male performers rhythmically chanting in unison as they act out scenes from the Ramayana epic. Unlike other traditional Balinese dances that rely on gamelan orchestras, the Kecak employs only the voices of the performers to create an intense and entrancing ambiance. The dance's choreography, traditional attire, fire elements, and mythological narrative offer a sacred yet theatrical experience [5].

Beyond its entertainment value, the Kecak Dance is a living cultural expression, reflecting core elements of Balinese cosmology, spirituality, and artistic tradition. Its sunset setting adds emotional depth and aesthetic power, transforming each performance into a memorable and immersive cultural event for audiences. The combination of spectacular ocean views and sacred

rituals allows tourists to experience Bali's spiritual landscape in a tangible and emotionally resonant way [6]. This makes the Kecak Dance not only a tool for cultural preservation but also a vital tourism asset that significantly contributes to the local economy.

Growing interest in the Uluwatu Kecak Dance offers travel agencies substantial opportunities to design and promote tour packages centered around this performance. The increasing number of spectators eager to attend the show has prompted many tour operators to craft experiences that blend cultural engagement with natural exploration. One such product is the Half Day Sunset Over Uluwatu and Kecak Dance tour package developed by PT. Destination Asia, which presents a carefully planned itinerary that allows visitors to enjoy the dramatic cliffside views, Bali's famous sunset, and the emotionally charged Kecak performance in one cohesive experience.

As a prominent tour operator in Bali, PT. Destination Asia offers a wide range of travel experiences, from standard packages to customizable tours tailored to individual preferences. While standard tours typically follow fixed routes to popular destinations, custom options allow tourists to design their own experiences, whether they seek cultural immersion, culinary discovery, or eco-adventures [7]. However, this flexibility and demand also bring managerial challenges. Poor coordination, communication breakdowns, or logistical issues can hinder the tourist experience and damage the company's credibility. Hence, strengthening the management of culturally oriented tour packages—particularly those involving high-value performances like the Kecak Dance—is essential to ensure visitor satisfaction and support the sustainable preservation of Balinese traditions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research methodology aimed at analyzing the management strategies behind the Half Day Sunset Over Uluwatu and Kecak Dance tour package by PT. Destination Asia [8], [9]. A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for investigating multifaceted and context-dependent topics such as cultural tourism operations and organizational management practices. The research draws on various data collection techniques, including in-depth interviews, direct observation, document analysis, and case study evaluation.

Primary data were sourced from structured and semi-structured interviews with key personnel at PT. Destination Asia, including operations staff, customer service teams, and seasoned tour guides. These individuals were selected for their firsthand experience in organizing and delivering the Uluwatu tour, thus offering valuable insights into both strategic decisions and on-the-ground execution. The interviews explored several themes, such as internal decision-making, communication flows, logistical challenges, and strategies to improve the tourist experience—especially regarding the cultural aspects of the Kecak Dance.

In addition to interviews, the researchers conducted non-participant observations during several tours, particularly on occasions that included the Kecak performance. These observations were critical for validating interview data and revealing real-time operational conditions such as tourist flow, guide performance, and responses to unpredictable factors like weather changes or schedule disruptions. Supporting documentation, including company materials, promotional content, and tour itineraries, were also reviewed to triangulate findings and add contextual depth.

For data analysis, the study utilized a qualitative descriptive method complemented by two analytical frameworks: SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) [10] and the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) management model [11]. The SWOT analysis provided a structured way to evaluate both internal resources—such as staff expertise and service

delivery—and external influences like tourism trends, market competition, and tourist expectations. The POAC model, rooted in classical management theory, was applied to examine internal managerial processes at PT. Destination Asia, with each function—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling—analyzed in detail.

By integrating these frameworks, the study offers a holistic view of strategic alignment and operational performance, helping to identify gaps and opportunities in the management of culturally themed tour packages. Ultimately, the findings aim to deliver practical recommendations for enhancing the quality, sustainability, and impact of Bali's cultural tourism offerings.

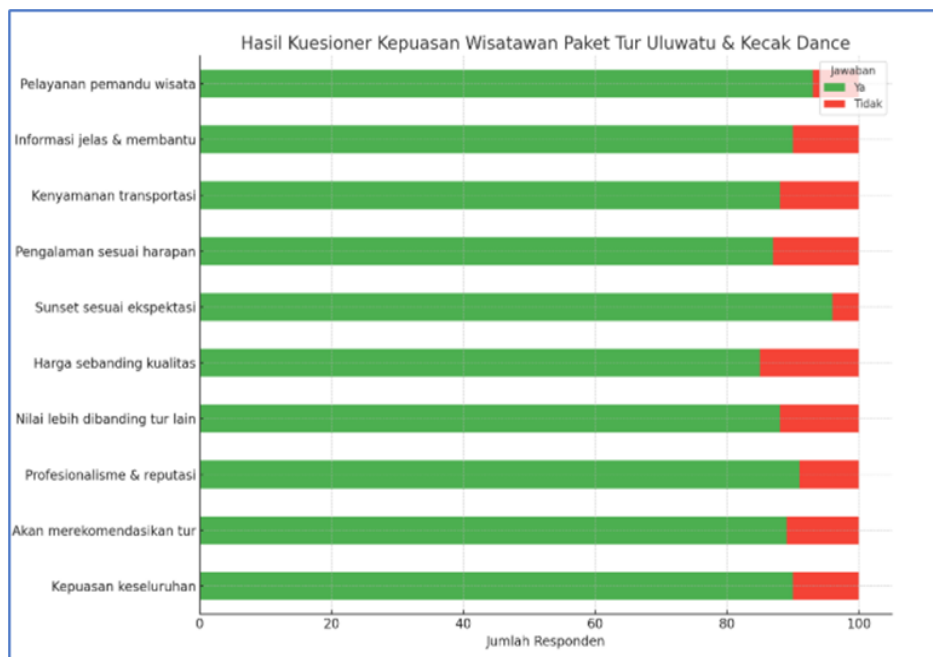


Figure 2. Results of Tourist Questionnaire

[Source: Processed Data, Customer Service Department, PT. Destination Asia, 2025]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

The analysis identifies several key elements that influence overall tourist satisfaction and experience. To support the SWOT analysis, a structured questionnaire was distributed to participants of the Half Day Sunset Over Uluwatu and Kecak Dance tour. This questionnaire assessed aspects such as guide performance, transport quality, itinerary clarity, cultural interaction, and satisfaction with the Kecak Dance. The data collected were analyzed to reveal patterns in tourist perceptions and expectations. These quantitative findings complemented the qualitative insights gained through interviews and direct observation, providing a holistic view of the tour's service quality and areas needing improvement.

Insights from the satisfaction survey are integrated into the SWOT analysis to better understand PT. Destination Asia's internal capabilities and external challenges. Key strengths identified include the uniqueness of the Kecak Dance and the stunning landscape of Uluwatu, both serving as major attractions. Conversely, weaknesses such as limited itinerary flexibility and communication gaps are examined to determine their root causes and identify potential solutions. Furthermore, the growing global interest in cultural tourism and digital integration presents

opportunities, while threats such as overcrowding and local competition are acknowledged. By mapping the survey data into the SWOT framework, the study provides actionable insights that reflect actual tourist feedback.

1. Strengths

Tourist feedback highlights high levels of satisfaction, with over 90% expressing contentment with the experience. The most praised elements were the sunset moment (96%) and the quality of tour guides (93%). These ratings suggest that the tour is not only well-managed but also emotionally impactful.

Operationally, PT. Destination Asia demonstrates strong coordination. Timely pickups, well-organized tour flows, and proactive problem-solving contribute to smooth execution. Collaboration with local stakeholders, such as Uluwatu Temple managers and Kecak dance communities, ensures efficient delivery. Support for local MSMEs, including crafts and food vendors, further enhances the tourist experience while supporting community development.

This combination of destination appeal, service quality, operational efficiency, and local engagement reflects the company's commitment to providing professional, sustainable, and culturally enriching tourism.

2. Weaknesses

Despite its strengths, PT. Destination Asia faces several challenges. One major limitation is the tour's rigid itinerary. Being a half-day program, some tourists feel rushed and unable to explore nearby attractions such as Garuda Wisnu Kencana or enjoy a leisurely dinner in Jimbaran. The lack of customizable or add-on options also reduces the appeal for travelers seeking exclusive experiences, such as photography, spiritual, or eco-tourism. Additionally, some tourists perceive the package price to be high compared to informal local tours. Although the quality and safety standards are superior, the absence of clear cost breakdowns may deter budget-conscious travelers and affect competitiveness.

Operational timing is another issue. The tour often coincides with peak traffic hours, leading to delays and reduced time at destinations. Overcrowding, especially during peak seasons, can compromise the quality of the experience—some guests even fail to secure tickets for the Kecak performance at Uluwatu, forcing changes to alternate venues like Kecak Melasti. This mismatch between expectations and reality can negatively impact satisfaction. These weaknesses suggest the need for innovation in tour design, enhanced digital communication, and clearer value-based pricing to better serve diverse tourist needs.

3. Opportunities

PT. Destination Asia has significant potential to enhance its tour offerings by aligning with current global tourism trends. There is increasing demand—particularly among European and North American travelers—for cultural and sustainable tourism. Authentic experiences like the Kecak Dance and Uluwatu Temple visit align well with this trend. Digital expansion offers another major opportunity. Strategic partnerships with platforms such as TripAdvisor, Viator, and Klook under B2B arrangements can help the company reach a broader international audience. These platforms enhance visibility and credibility through user reviews and ratings, reinforcing the company's reputation and market position.

4. Threats

External threats include price competition from unregulated local tour providers who offer lower costs but inferior service. While these operators may not meet quality standards, their attractive pricing can influence tourist choices, potentially tarnishing Bali's tourism image and affecting perceptions of official operators like PT. Destination Asia. Maintaining competitiveness and service quality will require PT. Destination Asia to continuously monitor the external landscape and adapt to shifting market dynamics.

B. Discussion

This discussion integrates the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) framework with SWOT analysis to evaluate PT. Destination Asia's strategy for maximizing tourist satisfaction through the Half Day Sunset Over Uluwatu and Kecak Dance package.

1. Planning

PT. Destination Asia plans its tours based on thorough data and field knowledge. Schedules are carefully crafted to align with the optimal time for viewing the Kecak Dance – sunset – enhancing the emotional and visual appeal. Pick-up and drop-off logistics consider accommodation locations and traffic patterns to minimize delays. The company's established local partnerships and operational experience support agile planning and resource allocation. This enables flexible schedule adjustments without compromising service quality.

2. Organizing

Strong organizational structures support seamless tour execution. Assignments for drivers, guides, and coordination with Uluwatu Temple management and the Kecak Dance community ensure operational coherence. Schedules are optimized to avoid peak crowd times, enhancing the exclusivity of the experience. To counter common issues like traffic and weather disruptions, the company prepares backup plans and employs time-efficient logistics, reinforcing its image as a dependable service provider.

3. Actuating

Tour implementation emphasizes both operational precision and cultural sensitivity. Guides follow established SOPs while also building rapport with tourists. They explain historical and spiritual significance, answer questions, and tailor pacing and photo opportunities, providing a flexible and engaging experience. This human touch differentiates the company's service and contributes significantly to customer satisfaction.

4. Controlling

Monitoring is conducted through post-tour evaluations and internal guide reports. Tourists provide feedback on services, punctuality, narrative quality, and overall comfort. Guides submit reports detailing issues, logistics challenges, or tourist behavior. These inputs are regularly reviewed to refine operations and address service gaps. Growing global interest in culture-based tourism reinforces the importance of maintaining high standards and quality control, both of which are central to the company's strategy.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to develop strategic recommendations for enhancing the Half Day Sunset Over Uluwatu and Kecak Dance tour package managed by PT. Destination Asia, with a focus on improving tourist satisfaction and supporting sustainable cultural tourism. By applying the POAC framework in conjunction with SWOT analysis, key internal capabilities and external factors influencing the tour's effectiveness have been identified. To turn these insights into action, the TOWS matrix was used to link internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats. The most impactful strategies include offering more flexible itineraries, deepening collaboration with local communities to preserve authenticity, and investing in human resource development through continuous training. These initiatives are expected to enhance the overall tourist experience, increase satisfaction levels, and ensure that the Kecak Dance remains a compelling cultural highlight in Bali's competitive tourism sector.

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