# MANAGEMENT STRATEGY OF THE ROYAL PITA MAHA AS A TOURISM ACCOMMODATION IN UBUD, GIANYAR REGENCY

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#### **Abstract**

Tourism serves as a strategic sector for Indonesia's economic growth, with Bali standing out as a leading destination that has rapidly recovered after the pandemic. Ubud, as the cultural and artistic center of Bali, continues to develop through the contribution of culturally oriented accommodations such as The Royal Pita Maha. This study analyzes the resort's management strategies in maintaining sustainability and competitiveness amid the highly competitive tourism industry. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature study, the data were analyzed using the SWOT framework. The findings reveal that the POAC-based management strategy implemented by the resort emphasizing cultural and nature-based visitor experiences is effective in enhancing guest satisfaction and loyalty while supporting sustainable tourism development in Ubud.

**Keywords:** Management Strategy, Cultural Tourism, POAC

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism plays a vital role in driving Indonesia's economic growth, particularly in Bali, which is renowned as a prime destination due to its rich natural, cultural, and manmade attractions. According to Law No. 10 of 2009, a tourist attraction encompasses uniqueness, beauty, and cultural value that motivate tourists to visit. Although Bali's tourism sector significantly contributes to the region's revenue (PAD), it also faces challenges such as traffic congestion, pollution, and land conversion. Data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) indicate a notable post-pandemic recovery, with 6.33 million international tourist arrivals in 2024, marking a 20.1% increase from the previous year.

Ubud, as the cultural and artistic heart of Gianyar, continues to attract visitors with its enduring traditions, stunning natural scenery, and the rise of luxurious accommodations such as The Royal Pita Maha. This resort exemplifies sustainable tourism by emphasizing environmental and cultural preservation through the use of eco-friendly energy, waste management, and support for local communities. However, without careful management, tourism activities may lead to deforestation, water pollution, and cultural degradation. Therefore, maintaining a balance between luxury, environmental conservation, and social sustainability is essential for the future of tourism in Ubud and Bali as a whole.

The presence of The Royal Pita Maha Resort in Ubud also has the potential to impact local culture negatively if not managed wisely. Although the resort adopts traditional Balinese architecture and applies the Tri Hita Karana philosophy—which emphasizes harmony among humans, nature, and God—the increasing number of

visitors can result in excessive cultural commercialization. This may transform traditional practices into mere tourist attractions, reducing their spiritual and social depth. Furthermore, pressure from the tourism industry can alter local community priorities, influencing social structures and communal values. Thus, balancing tourism development with cultural preservation is crucial to maintaining local identity and traditions.

To maintain its status as one of Bali's premium destinations, The Royal Pita Maha continues to enhance its strengths while facing intense competition within the global tourism industry. Management has implemented several marketing strategies, including collaborations with travel agents and airlines to expand market reach, organizing annual events to strengthen partnerships with vendors, and increasing visibility through the official website and international tourism fairs. However, these efforts have not yet produced a significant increase in visitor numbers, indicating a gap between implemented strategies and expected outcomes. This situation underscores that The Royal Pita Maha still faces challenges in enhancing its brand appeal and competitiveness in the global market. Therefore, strategic adjustments and further innovation are needed to effectively address the dynamics of the international tourism industry and meet the evolving expectations of modern travelers.

Based on this background, the researcher is interested in examining the management strategies implemented by The Royal Pita Maha as one of the leading tourism accommodations in Ubud. Despite the adverse impacts of the pandemic on Bali's tourism industry, The Royal Pita Maha has successfully maintained its existence and continued to develop. This makes it an interesting case to explore how management strategies contribute to the resort's competitiveness amidst the intense tourism industry rivalry. Therefore, this study is entitled "The Management Strategy of The Royal Pita Maha as a Tourism Accommodation in Ubud."

#### **METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm to understand The Royal Pita Maha's strategies in facing post-pandemic competition. The researcher acts as the primary instrument (human instrument) conducting direct observations and in-depth interviews with management, employees, tourists, and local community members. This approach is chosen to capture the meanings and perspectives of key actors while exploring the dynamics of hotel management within Bali's cultural context. Hence, this study not only focuses on operational aspects but also on the understanding of social and cultural values that underpin The Royal Pita Maha's success as a tourism accommodation grounded in local wisdom (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1991).

The research was conducted at The Royal Pita Maha Resort in Ubud, Gianyar Regency, selected for its distinctive blend of traditional Balinese architecture and modern facilities, as well as its application of international-standard hospitality while preserving local cultural values. The resort emphasizes personalized, experience-oriented hospitality, where each interaction reflects Balinese philosophies such as Tri Hita Karana. The study took place from January 2024 to July 2025 to allow comprehensive data collection regarding management strategies, marketing

approaches, and socio-economic impacts on the surrounding community. Data collection methods included participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review to strengthen the analysis (Sugiyono, 2019; Veal, 2006).

Data analysis was carried out using SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by The Royal Pita Maha, along with qualitative descriptive analysis to systematically and interpretively describe the observed phenomena. Primary data were obtained from key informants selected through purposive sampling, while secondary data were derived from company documents, official publications, and relevant literature. The findings are presented in descriptive narratives illustrating the resort's management strategies in enhancing competitiveness and maintaining its image as a sustainable tourism destination in Ubud (Kotler, 2008; Rangkuti, 2018; Nawawi & Martini, 2014).

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

## General Overview of the Research Location

The Royal Pita Maha Resort is a luxury resort that embraces both cultural and natural concepts, located in Kedewatan Village, Ubud, Gianyar, Bali. The resort harmoniously blends the beauty of the Ayung River Valley with distinctive Balinese architecture, rich in artistic and philosophical values. Managed under international standards, The Royal Pita Maha not only emphasizes luxury but also elevates local wisdom as its core identity in providing hospitality services and guest experiences. With both social and commercial visions, the resort's management is committed to cultural preservation and community empowerment through collaborations with local MSMEs, local human resource training, and the active involvement of residents in operational activities and cultural performances. Guided by sustainability principles, the resort has become a model of environmentally and culturally conscious tourism that generates both economic and social benefits for the people of Ubud.

Historically, The Royal Pita Maha stems from the Ubud royal family's dedication to preserving art and culture. It was founded by the three sons of the late King of Ubud Tjokorda Gde Putra Sukawati, Tjokorda Gde Oka Artha Ardana Sukawati, and Tjokorda Gde Raka Sukawati—and officially inaugurated on December 1, 2004. The resort's traditional Balinese architectural design was created by Prof. Dr. Tjokorda Gde Raka Sukawati, SE., MM. The development concept adopts the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, which emphasizes harmony among humans, nature, and God. All building materials are environmentally friendly, and most staff members are local residents who were involved in the resort's construction. Through a professional and culturally rooted organizational structure, The Royal Pita Maha Resort successfully integrates economic, social, and spiritual functions, making it a symbol of Bali's sustainable and character-rich tourism success.

# Implementation of The Royal Pita Maha Resort Management Strategy

The Royal Pita Maha Resort in Ubud serves as a successful example of tourism accommodation management that integrates luxury with local wisdom. Based on interviews with the management, the resort applies the POAC (Planning, Organizing,

Actuating, Controlling) management principles comprehensively. This approach ensures not only operational efficiency but also a balanced integration of tourism development, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Each management stage actively involves the local community to create synergy between the resort and its surrounding environment.

## 1. Planning

The planning stage focuses on developing a culture- and nature-based resort concept. According to Arimbawa (Resort Manager), all planning processes take into account Bali's cultural uniqueness and Ubud's natural beauty to create an authentic and high-class tourism experience. The resort maintains active dialogue with traditional communities from the outset to align activities with local values. This strategy reinforces The Royal Pita Maha's commitment to environmental conservation, community empowerment, and continuous human resource development through ongoing training programs.

## 2. Organizing

The Royal Pita Maha's organizational structure is designed to be efficient and culturally harmonious. Each division has clearly defined roles, from operations and guest services to a cultural division responsible for maintaining the traditional Balinese atmosphere. As stated by the Managing Director, Cok Raka, the resort also collaborates with local farmers, craftsmen, and artists to support its operations. This organizational system demonstrates a balanced collaboration between professional management and community participation, making the resort not only a place to stay but also a center for cultural preservation.

## 3. Actuating

During the actuating stage, management encourages active participation from employees and the community through training, coaching, and opportunities for creativity. Staff members are empowered to innovate in service delivery, such as developing spa programs, yoga sessions, and nature-based activities. The management also maintains close relations with the local community to foster a sense of belonging toward the resort. This participatory and human-centered approach has successfully built a productive work environment, strong employee loyalty, and social support from the surrounding community as strategic partners.

# 4. Controlling

The controlling stage is conducted through comprehensive evaluations, internal audits, and monitoring of guest reviews across multiple platforms. The management reviews daily reports from each division and performs monthly audits to assess service quality, guest satisfaction, and environmental impact. Additionally, guest feedback is addressed promptly through managerial meetings and corrective actions. This adaptive control system ensures service quality consistency, upholds sustainability principles, and enables the resort to remain resilient amid the dynamics of the global tourism industry.

# Business Activities of The Royal Pita Maha Resort

The Royal Pita Maha Resort is a luxury accommodation that harmoniously combines the natural landscape of the Ayung River Valley with traditional Balinese architecture and international service standards. Having operated for more than 18 years, the resort offers a wide range of premium facilities that reflect a balance between modern luxury and local cultural values. Every facility is designed not only for comfort but also to provide guests both domestic and international with a holistic and memorable tourism experience.

## Villa Facilities

The Royal Pita Maha Resort features 75 villas divided into six categories, ranging from Deluxe Pool Villa to Royal House, each spanning between 300 and 500 square meters. Every villa showcases artistic Balinese architecture, equipped with a private pool and offering serene views of the Ayung River and surrounding valley.

#### Restaurant and Bar Facilities

The resort houses four main restaurants Dewata Lounge, Ayung Valley Restaurant, Teras Bali Restaurant, and Ayung Garden Restaurant serving both international and Asian cuisines in a natural setting. Guests may also enjoy 24-hour villa service for private in-room dining. To complete the culinary experience, three bars Dewata Lounge Bar, Ayung Garden Bar, and Kadasa Music House & Bar provide a romantic atmosphere with views of the Ayung River Valley.

## • Event and Recreation Facilities

For meetings and weddings, The Royal Pita Maha offers the Royal Convention House accommodating up to 250 guests, along with several wedding venues such as the Wedding Chapel, Ayung Waters Venue, and Waterfall Wedding Venue. Additionally, the Royal Kirana Spa & Wellness stands out as a signature facility, offering various relaxation treatments within a 2-hectare openair natural setting.

# Additional Facilities

The resort also features three main swimming pools—Royal Infinity Pool, Royal Holy Spring Pool, and Royal Lagoon—each with distinctive characteristics such as river views, natural spring water, and family-friendly water activities. Furthermore, the Yoga Bale and Trekking Route facilities invite guests to engage in wellness activities and explore the surrounding nature. Collectively, these amenities position The Royal Pita Maha as a world-class tourism destination founded on cultural heritage, spirituality, and environmental sustainability.

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Villa Type	Number of Villas	Area (m²)
Deluxe Pool Villa	34 villa	300 m <sup>2</sup>
Royal Pool Villa	26 villa	300 m <sup>2</sup>
Royal Spa Villa	3 villa	300 m <sup>2</sup>
Ayung Healing Villa	10 villa	400 m <sup>2</sup>
Two Bedroom Deluxe pool Villa	1 villa	300 m²
Royal House	1 villa	500 m <sup>2</sup>

Source: The Royal Pita Maha Resort, 2025

# Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of The Royal Pita Maha Resort

# • Strengths of The Royal Pita Maha Resort

The Royal Pita Maha Resort's primary strength lies in its synergy between luxury and the authenticity of Balinese culture, supported by its strategic location in the Ayung River Valley, which enhances its exclusivity. Based on interviews with the management, the resort emphasizes an immersive experience that harmonizes with nature and local culture through traditional Balinese architecture, personalized services, and cultural activities. Its disciplined management strategy, continuous employee training, and omnichannel marketing approach enable the resort to remain competitive in the international market. Facilities such as private villas, natural spas, and locally inspired restaurants further reinforce its image as a premium resort.

From the perspective of the local community, The Royal Pita Maha serves not only as an economic driver but also as a social and cultural partner. The resort actively engages local residents in artistic performances, traditional ceremonies, and environmentally oriented corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. Its tangible contributions to local employment and partnerships with local product suppliers make the resort an integral part of sustainable economic development in the Ubud area. The harmonious relationship between management and the community strengthens the resort's social legitimacy while fostering a mutually beneficial tourism ecosystem.

Meanwhile, from the perspective of tourists, the resort's main strength lies in its tranquil and natural atmosphere, friendly yet professional service, and authentic cultural experiences. The Balinese-style architecture that blends seamlessly with nature, breathtaking valley views, and spiritual activities such as yoga and traditional rituals provide guests with a memorable experience. The combination of luxury, local wisdom, and sustainability makes The Royal Pita Maha Resort not merely a place to stay, but a distinguished destination representing Bali's refined and culturally rich tourism.

# Weaknesses (weaknesses of The Royal Pita Maha Resort)

Interviews with the management revealed that the main weakness of The Royal Pita Maha Resort lies in its high operational costs required to maintain the quality standards and traditional Balinese architecture that define its uniqueness. According to Cok Raka, the President Director of The Royal Pita Maha, "We realize that maintaining high standards involves several internal challenges that must be continuously addressed. The maintenance costs for traditional facilities are quite substantial, and continuous staff training requires significant time and financial investment."

Furthermore, the resort's marketing strategy still heavily relies on foreign tourists, leaving the domestic market underdeveloped. As a result, during global crises such as the pandemic, occupancy rates were significantly affected.

From the local community's perspective, a perceived weakness lies in the limited direct impact of the resort on the economic empowerment of nearby residents. Satriawan, a local resident of Ubud, stated, "Community empowerment programs have only slightly touched the MSME sector. Although there has been

collaboration with artisans, not all small business owners have felt tangible benefits." He also emphasized the need for more transparent communication from the management regarding environmental policies, particularly related to water resource utilization, to ensure a harmonious and sustainable relationship between the resort and the village community.

From the tourists' perspective, weaknesses are observed in guest experience and accessibility. A guest named Joni mentioned that information about the facilities was not provided in detail before check-in, and that lighting along the walking paths at night felt unsafe. He also noted that the service was too formal and lacked a personal touch. Similarly, another guest, Steven Gunawan, commented that access to the resort was difficult and public transportation was limited. He added, "The activities offered within the resort could be more varied to prevent guests from getting bored." Overall, these weaknesses highlight The Royal Pita Maha Resort's challenge to balance exclusivity and sustainability while expanding its market reach and enriching guest experiences without compromising the cultural values that form the heart of the resort.

## Opportunities (Business Prospects)

Interviews with the management indicated that The Royal Pita Maha Resort possesses significant opportunities for growth through the rising trend of sustainable and exclusive tourism. As stated by Cok Raka, the resort's President Director, "Observing global trends, we are optimistic that The Royal Pita Maha can become a leading destination for travelers seeking exclusive and sustainable experiences. Our concept, which integrates with nature and Balinese culture, opens opportunities for developing retreat, wellness tourism, and eco-cultural experience packages that are increasingly in demand." Similarly, Resort Manager Arimbawa added that opportunities for collaboration with international digital platforms, global travel agencies, and travel influencers are expanding. By strengthening digital promotion and targeting the upper-middle-class domestic segment, the resort can maintain occupancy stability throughout the year, even during low seasons.

From the local community's standpoint, opportunities lie in expanding economic collaborations with nearby residents. Satriawan, a local from Ubud, expressed, "There are many economic opportunities through the involvement of small businesses such as handicrafts, traditional Balinese cuisine, and tour guide services. If managed more intensively, these could significantly improve local welfare." He also highlighted the resort's potential as a platform for cultural preservation through activities such as dance performances, batik workshops, and traditional culinary introductions. By expanding these community-based programs, the resort not only reinforces its cultural identity but also contributes to equitable economic benefits for local residents.

From tourists' perspectives, the greatest opportunity lies in the resort's ability to offer authentic and calming experiences amid the growing post-pandemic trends of slow travel, digital detox, and healing tourism. Joni, a returning guest, remarked, "Many travelers now seek tranquility and rejuvenating experiences, and this resort has immense potential to deliver that." Similarly, Steven Gunawan noted the high demand for yoga retreats and meditation experiences. By developing

thematic, culture-based packages in collaboration with local artists and wellness coaches, The Royal Pita Maha has the potential to strengthen its position as a premier destination in Ubud—where the authenticity of Balinese culture harmoniously blends with luxury and natural serenity.

# Threats (Obstacles to Achieving Goals)

The Royal Pita Maha Resort faces several complex external challenges. President Director Cok Raka stated that the primary threats stem from global economic instability, currency fluctuations, potential natural disasters or pandemics, and intense competition from emerging resorts both in Bali and other destinations. He also emphasized the impact of changing government regulations and the power of digital reviews in shaping brand perception—where a single viral negative review can significantly affect reputation.

Resort Manager I Dewa Made Arimbawa added that competition in the luxury accommodation sector is intensifying with the emergence of new resorts offering similar concepts at more affordable prices. He also noted the dependence on foreign tourists and the rapid changes in travel trends, particularly among younger generations who prefer more flexible and budget-friendly accommodations.

From the community perspective, Satriawan, a local resident, pointed out that although The Royal Pita Maha has involved locals in cultural and economic activities, there remains a gap in employment opportunities and participation in strategic roles. He expressed hope that the management would be more open to community aspirations and continue to preserve the environment amidst the development of new facilities that could disrupt Ubud's natural ecosystem.

From the tourists' viewpoint, Joni perceived the main threat as the changing preferences of younger generations who now lean toward modern and affordable accommodations. Meanwhile, Steven Gunawan raised concerns about potential declines in service quality if the number of guests increases without sufficient staff expansion. He also mentioned that the resort's remote location and the potential for cultural exploitation pose risks that must be mitigated to preserve Bali's authenticity and cultural integrity.

Based on these interviews, the main challenges faced by The Royal Pita Maha include global economic factors, shifts in tourism trends, and social and environmental concerns. To address these, the resort has adopted the ST Strategy (Strength–Threat Strategy) leveraging internal strengths to overcome external threats. With advantages such as distinctive Balinese architecture, luxurious facilities, superior service, and a strong eco-luxury reputation, management strives to maintain competitiveness through digital marketing innovation, human resource development, and continuous collaboration with the local community. This approach not only helps the resort adapt to industry dynamics but also reinforces its position as a premium tourism destination that emphasizes culture, sustainability, and harmony with nature.

# Analysis Results in Determining the Appropriate Management Strategy

Based on all the activities conducted, it can be concluded that The Royal Pita Maha Resort has made substantial efforts in managing its tourism assets effectively. This begins with careful planning of location and business activities, followed by the establishment of an appropriate organizational system to ensure efficient delegation of duties. The resort also focuses on mobilizing all employees to work synergistically in achieving organizational goals while maintaining control over all operational activities.

Based on the results of interviews, it was found that the most appropriate strategy to be implemented according to the SWOT analysis is the ST Strategy (Strength–Threat Strategy). This strategy aims to utilize the company's internal strengths to confront and overcome external threats that may hinder the achievement of organizational objectives. With its inherent strengths—such as unique architectural design, luxurious facilities, high-quality service, and a strong reputation as an accommodation that blends nature and Balinese culture—The Royal Pita Maha's management can adopt a proactive approach to address challenges arising from the dynamic tourism industry.

One of the main threats identified from the interviews is the high level of competition among similar accommodations in Bali, particularly those offering comparable concepts at more competitive prices. To address this issue, The Royal Pita Maha needs to emphasize its differentiation advantages, such as deep cultural collaboration with the local community, the distinctive natural landscape of Ubud, and the exclusive experiences that are difficult for competitors to replicate. Strengthening brand positioning as a resort that prioritizes environmental and cultural preservation can serve as a powerful shield in maintaining customer loyalty among both domestic and international markets.

Another major threat identified is the resort's dependency on international tourists, making it highly vulnerable to global conditions such as economic crises or pandemics. To mitigate this, The Royal Pita Maha can leverage its strong relationships and experience in managing diverse tourist markets to expand its segmentation. Intensifying promotional strategies targeting the domestic market and adapting tourism packages that cater to local preferences—such as staycations, wellness retreats, and spiritual tourism—represent concrete steps to address fluctuations in the international market.

On the other hand, issues related to sustainability and environmental conservation also present challenges that require careful responses. The management can capitalize on its strength in the eco-luxury approach by developing more structured environmental responsibility programs, such as eco-friendly waste management, renewable energy utilization, and empowerment of local farmers and artisans. These initiatives not only respond to sustainability concerns but also enhance the resort's appeal among environmentally and culturally conscious travelers.

Concerns related to potential cultural and social exploitation also require special attention. In this regard, strengthening cooperation with local communities through training programs, involvement in cultural performances, and the establishment of regular communication forums will help build more inclusive relationships. By leveraging its strong social relationships and positive public image, The Royal Pita Maha

can foster a mutually beneficial socio-economic system that reinforces community-based tourism sustainability.

The ST Strategy can also be applied through the strengthening of internal human resources. This includes organizing service training programs rooted in local culture, developing tourism crisis management capabilities, and implementing adaptive digital marketing strategies aligned with current trends. Skilled and adaptable human resources will enhance the company's operational resilience in facing external pressures, including technological challenges and changing tourist lifestyles.

Overall, the ST Strategy is highly suitable for The Royal Pita Maha Resort as it effectively addresses external challenges by optimizing the resort's well-established internal strengths. This approach is both progressive and pragmatic, acknowledging the dynamic and risk-prone nature of the tourism industry. By aligning its internal strengths with external threats, The Royal Pita Maha can maintain its position as a premium tourism destination that upholds cultural values, sustainability principles, and the uniqueness of authentic visitor experiences.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis and discussion presented above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Integrated Management Strategy:

The Royal Pita Maha implements an integrated management strategy using the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling) approach. In the planning stage, the management focuses on preserving local culture and environmental sustainability as core values. Digital marketing strategies and collaborations with travel agencies are also employed to reach both international and domestic markets. These strategies are realized through service enhancement, regular staff training, and the development of facilities that ensure guest comfort and exclusivity. All operational activities are carried out while maintaining service quality and local wisdom, making the stay experience part of the resort's cultural attraction.

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors:

The key supporting factors include the resort's strategic location with captivating natural views, strong brand image, and service excellence that embodies Balinese cultural values. The harmonious relationship between management and the local community also plays a crucial role in sustaining operations. However, several inhibiting factors exist, such as intense competition among luxury hotels in Ubud, fluctuations in tourist arrivals due to global conditions (e.g., pandemics, wars, and economic crises), and concerns that excessive commercialization may lead to cultural exploitation.

3. Strategic Implications and Sustainability:

The resort's management strategy focusing on culture- and nature-based tourism experiences has effectively increased visitor interest and satisfaction, directly impacting occupancy rates. By offering exclusivity, comfort, and cultural authenticity, The Royal Pita Maha aims to retain customer loyalty and attract new high-end market segments. The implementation of the ST Strategy enables

the resort to remain resilient and competitive within the hospitality industry. Practical measures such as strengthening brand positioning, diversifying services, and involving local communities contribute to long-term attractiveness and reputation maintenance amid the global tourism market dynamics.

From a managerial perspective, organizational restructuring and data-driven decision-making are required to improve operational efficiency. In marketing and branding, reinforcing the resort's exclusive image and utilizing digital media are key to expanding market reach. In service management, regular human resource training remains a priority to maintain guest satisfaction. Social and environmental implications emphasize the importance of synergy with local communities and eco-friendly operational principles. Furthermore, the strategic use of technology enhances service efficiency, digital marketing, and data management without compromising the cultural essence that serves as the resort's core strength.

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