



## Tourist Kelong Bintan Black Coral Business Strategy During COVID-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

The fast-mutating COVID-19 virus requires business actors in Indonesia to adapt quickly, not least for business actors in the tourism industry such as Bintan Black Coral which is located in Bintan Regency, Riau Islands Province. This study aims to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by Bintan Black Coral and formulate strategies that can be implemented while operating during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study adopted a qualitative method using interviews and observations as data collection techniques. The data were then analyzed using the IFE, EFE, and SWOT analysis matrixes. The results show that Bintan Black Coral is in relatively good condition internally and is relatively able to take advantage of opportunities and minimize the threats it faces. The results of the SWOT analysis reveal strategies that can be adopted by Bintan Black Coral during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as strategies that can be implemented continuously.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia since the beginning of 2020 has become a catalyst for change in running a business. The fast-mutating COVID-19 virus also requires business actors in Indonesia to adapt quickly, including business actors in the tourism industry. Government policies such as Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), Work from Home (WFH), and the "stay at home" appeal limit human movement, causing a decrease in the number of tourists visiting an area during the COVID-19 pandemic (Nugraha, 2021; Suprihatin, 2020).

The decline in the number of tourists, especially foreign tourists, also occurred in the Riau Islands Province and all regencies/cities included in it, including Bintan Regency. The location of the Riau Islands Province and Bintan Regency which borders Malaysia and Singapore makes the Riau Islands Province and Bintan Regency attractive tourist destinations for foreign tourists. However, government policies in preventing the spread of COVID-19 have caused the number of foreign tourists to decline in Riau Islands Province in general, and Bintan Regency in particular.

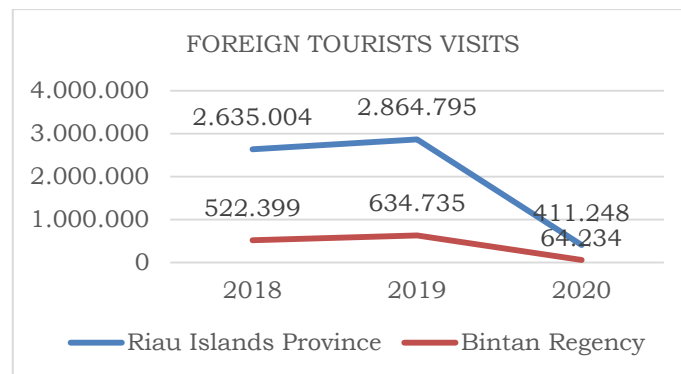


Figure 1. Foreign Tourists Visits to Riau Islands Province and Bintan Regency

Figure 1 represents data from [Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Kepulauan Riau, \(2022\)](#). It can be seen that the number of foreign tourists entering the Riau Islands decreased drastically from 2,864,795 people in 2019 to 411,248 people in 2020. The same thing happened in Bintan Regency, which experienced a decrease in foreign tourist visits from 634,735 people in 2019 to 64,234 people in 2020. This is certainly a threat for tourism players, including Bintan Black Coral which is a kelong-shaped lodging business operating in Bintan Regency, Riau Islands Province. Bintan Black Coral offers lodging facilities above the sea (kelong) and tourists can also do snorkeling, fishing, diving, canoeing and other activities.

The decline in foreign tourists caused by COVID-19 raises the need for identification and implementation of different strategies for companies engaged in tourism such as Bintan Black Coral. The strategy in dealing with the COVID-19 situation is important considering the need for special actions to anticipate the decline in income for business actors during the pandemic ([Anugraheni & Astutiningsih, 2021](#)). Therefore, the research entitled *Bintan Black Coral tourism business strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic: A SWOT analysis approach* was carried out with the aim of identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by Bintan Black Coral and formulating strategies that can be implemented when operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted with qualitative research methods. The data in this study were collected through interview and observation methods. Sampling method adopted in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was used because there is criteria that needs to be fulfilled by informants in this study so that the aim of this study can be reached ([Saunders et al., 2016](#)). Besides the owner of the business, participants must fulfill a criterion in which they had visited Bintan Black Coral in the last 1 year. Thus, 1 owner of Bintan Black Coral, and 3 tourists who had visited Bintan Black Coral in the last 1 year became the informants in this study.

The data obtained was then categorized into strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats that can be narrowed down into 2 (two) different themes related to the environment a company operates in, namely the internal environment and the external environment ([Abdul Rahman et al., 2021](#)). After being categorized, the data is then analyzed using the IFE (Internal Factor Evaluation) matrix, the EFE (External Factor Evaluation) matrix. The IFE matrix was formed to evaluate the company's strength internally, while the EFE matrix was formed to review the company's response to the external factors faced ([David & David, 2017](#)). The factors obtained were then analyzed

using the SWOT analysis technique. SWOT analysis is a strategy formation tool that utilizes information on the strengths, weaknesses of an organization, as well as information on opportunities and threats faced by an organization (Rizki et al., 2021). Results from a SWOT analysis hopefully may provide valuable insights into the selection of a firm's strategies (Hitt et al., 2017).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the results of interviews and observations made by the research team, there are 4 (four) strengths, 2 (two) weaknesses, 5 (five) opportunities, and 4 (four) threats that are owned and faced by Bintan Black Coral which can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1. SWOT Identification

Strengths	
1	The only tourist kelong that has a land fleet (car) to pick up guests to Bintan Black Coral or touring around Bintan.
2	The only tourist kelong that has a large speed boat fleet with a capacity of 20-30 people.
3	Bintan Black Coral can issue diving certification.
4	Bintan Black Coral provide guests with fresh food cooked in the kelong.
Weaknesses	
1	Bintan Black Coral location is difficult to reach by guests/visitors.
2	Bintan Black Coral facilities and premises are difficult to maintain.
Opportunities	
1	Staycation trend among youth during pandemic.
2	Diverse target market.
3	There are few similar business competitors.
4	The rapid spread of information through social media.
5	The increasing number of vaccinations.
Threats	
1	Bad weather such as heavy rain or strong wind.
2	High waves.
3	The declining numbers of foreign tourists.
4	The spreading of COVID-19 virus that continues to mutate.

Then, the strengths and weaknesses which are internal factors are analyzed using the IFE matrix. According to David & David (2017), the number of weights in the IFE matrix must be equal to 1, and the rating given can vary from 1 (major weakness) to 4 (major strength). The weights are then multiplied by the rating to obtain a weighted score. The weighted scores are then summed to get the total weighted score. A total weighted score of more than 2.5 means the company has a strong internal position.

Table 2. IFE Matrix

No	Internal Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
Kekuatan ( <i>Strength</i> )				
1	The only tourist kelong that has a land fleet (car) to pick up guests to Bintan Black Coral or touring around Bintan.	0,15	4	0,60
2	The only tourist kelong that has a large	0,20	3	0,60

No	Internal Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
	speed boat fleet with a capacity of 20-30 people.			
3	Bintan Black Coral can issue diving certification.	0,20	4	0,80
4	Bintan Black Coral provide guests with fresh food cooked in the kelong	0,10	3	0,30
<i>Kelemahan (Weakness)</i>				
1	Bintan Black Coral location is difficult to reach by guests/visitors.	0,15	2	0,30
2	Bintan Black Coral facilities and premises are difficult to maintain.	0,20	2	0,40
Total		1.00		3,00

From table 2 it can be seen that Bintan Black Coral got a total weighted score of 3.00 for the IFE matrix, which means that the position of Bintan Black Coral is internally strong. This means that Bintan Black Coral is relatively capable of exploiting its strengths and minimizing its weaknesses.

Furthermore, opportunities and threats which are external factors are analyzed using the EFE matrix. Similar to the IFE matrix, the sum of the weights on the EFE must also be equal to 1. However, the ratings on the EFE matrix represent how the company responds to the factors identified with a rating of 1 (very poor response) to 4 (very good response). A total weighted score of more than 2.5 on the EFE matrix means that the company responds very well to the external factors it faces (David & David, 2017).

Table 3. EFE Matrix

No	External Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
<i>Peluang (Opportunities)</i>				
1	Staycation trend among youth during pandemic.	0.10	4	0.40
2	Diverse target market.	0.12	3	0.36
3	There are few similar business competitors.	0.15	4	0.60
4	The rapid spread of information through social media	0.13	3	0.39
5	The increasing number of vaccinations	0.10	3	0.30
<i>Ancaman (Threats)</i>				
1	Bad weather such as heavy rain or strong wind.	0.10	3	0.30
2	High waves.	.0.08	3	0.24
3	The declining numbers of foreign tourists.	0.12	2	0.24
4	The spreading of COVID-19 virus that continues to mutate.	0.10	2	0.20
Total Skor		1.00		3.03

Based on table 3, it can be seen that the total weighted score obtained by Bintan Black Coral is 3.03, which means that Bintan Black Coral has reacted well to the opportunities and threats it faces.

Then, to determine the strategies that can be adopted by Bintan Black Coral during the COVID-19 pandemic, the internal factors and external factors that have been identified are analyzed using the SWOT matrix as follows:

Table 4. SWOT Matrix

	IFE	<b>Strengths :</b> 1. The only tourist kelong that has a land fleet (car) to pick up guests to Bintan Black Coral or touring around Bintan. 2. The only tourist kelong that has a large speed boat fleet with a capacity of 20-30 people. 3. Bintan Black Coral can issue diving certification. 4. Bintan Black Coral provide guests with fresh food cooked in the kelong.	<b>Weaknesses</b> 1. Bintan Black Coral location is difficult to reach by guests/visitors. 2. Bintan Black Coral facilities and premises are difficult to maintain.
EFE			
	<b>Opportunities</b> 1. Staycation trend among youth during pandemic 2. Diverse target market. 3. There are few similar business competitors. 4. The rapid spread of information through social media. 5. The increasing number of vaccinations.	<b>SO Strategies</b> 1. S1, S2, S4-O1, O2, O3, O5: Provide a choice of vacation packages during the pandemic while still paying attention to physical distancing such as special family packages, lunch/dinner packages at kelong, or stay promos for those who have been vaccinated. 2. S3-O2,O3,O4: Promote through social media regarding diving training and certification during the pandemic	<b>WO Strategies</b> 1. W1-O1, O2, O5: Provide a choice of vacation packages during the pandemic while still paying attention to physical distancing such as special family packages, lunch/dinner packages at Kelong, or stay promos for those who have been vaccinated 2. W2-O1, O2, O4: Promoting through social media intensively so that it can cover the cost of maintaining the place and kelong facilities
	<b>Threats</b> 1. Bad weather such as heavy rain or strong wind. 2. High waves. 3. The declining numbers of foreign tourists. 4. The spreading of COVID-19 virus that continues to mutate	<b>ST Strategies</b> 1. S3-T1, T2, T3, T4: Emphasize operations on diving training and certification for local tourists 2. S1-T3, T4: Provide a shuttle for local tourists by paying attention to physical distancing and sterilization of the fleet	<b>WT Strategies</b> 1. W1-T3, T4: Promoting safe holidays during the pandemic 2. W2-T1, T2: Carry out regular maintenance of kelong facilities

Based on table 4 above, it can be seen that the SWOT analysis on Bintan Black Coral resulted in strategies that can be categorized into specific strategies to be applied during a pandemic as well as general strategies that can be applied sustainably if the pandemic is declared over, similar with what has been found by Rizki et al. (2021).

The specific strategies that can be applied during the COVID-19 pandemic are as follows:

1. Provide a choice of vacation packages during the pandemic while still paying attention to physical distancing such as special family packages, lunch/dinner packages at Kelong, or stay promos for those who have been vaccinated;
2. Promote through social media regarding diving training and certification during the pandemic;

3. Emphasize operations on diving training and certification for local tourists;
4. Provide a shuttle for local tourists by paying attention to physical distancing and sterilization of the fleet;
5. Promoting safe holidays during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, strategies that can be applied sustainably by Bintan Black Coral are as follows:

1. Promoting through social media intensively so that it can cover the cost of maintaining the place and kelong facilities;
2. Carry out regular maintenance of kelong facilities.

Some of the strategies obtained are in line with several previous studies with lodging objects. For example, the strategy of promoting through social media intensively and the strategy of promoting safe holidays during the pandemic are in line with the results of research conducted by (Syarifudin et al., 2021) which states that hotels must be more active in carrying out various promotions, both with online promotions, through online travel agents, social media or through organizations, influencers, and the government. Promotion through social media is believed to have a significant impact on business actors, therefore, it is important for business actors to develop promotion plans through social media appropriately to be used with other promotional efforts (Hisrich et al., 2017). One of the social media that can be used in promoting business is Tiktok. Promotion by using Tiktok is one of the strategies that were advised by Astini & Suyuthie (2021) to be applied by Hotel Four Points by Sheraton Jakarta in their research by uploading promotional content that is entertaining yet informative, accompanied by fun music, and attractive visualizations. Other social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube also can be considered since Bintan Black Coral has a diverse target market that needs to be reached by using various platforms. Whether or not Bintan Black Coral is facing hard times such as COVID-19 pandemic, optimizing business promotion through social media by using the right platform is important as stated by Nourlette & Hati (2017).

Another strategy, which is provide choices of vacation packages during the pandemic while still paying attention to physical distancing such as special family packages, lunch/dinner packages at kelong, or stay promos for those who have been vaccinated is also similar with what Djakaria et al. (2022) have suggested. In the study, it was suggested that hotel needs to offer packages that attract guests to stay with special prices and special facilities, especially during COVID-19 pandemic. Local tourists might be more attracted to visit and stay in Bintan Black Coral with special packages offered, especially if the packages can be modified based on their needs.

Meanwhile, other emerging strategies are unique strategies due to Bintan Black Coral's internal factors. For example, the strategy of focusing operations on diving training and certification for local tourists emerged because Bintan Black Coral was able to issue diving/diving certificates. Utilization of the uniqueness possessed by Bintan Black Coral is also in line with research conducted by Masatip et al. (2020) who researched Hotel Inna Parapat who suggested Hotel Inna which has a unique Kedai Teras bakery product to optimize the product so that income does not depend on room occupancy

The strategies obtained from the analysis carried out can be applied by Bintan Black Coral during the COVID-19 pandemic by considering the urgency and costs/benefits in more detail. In addition, existing strategies also need to be monitored and evaluated on a regular and ongoing basis considering that changes, especially from external factors, occur very quickly.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the IFE and EFE matrices, it can be concluded that Bintan Black Coral is relatively strong internally and is quite able to take advantage of opportunities and minimize threats it faces. Then, the SWOT analysis conducted on Bintan Black Coral resulted in several strategies that can be adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as strategies that can be carried out sustainably when the COVID-19 pandemic is declared over.

The strategies formed are specific strategies that can be implemented by Bintan Black Coral due to the analysis of the internal and external environment carried out specifically to the environment where Bintan Black Coral operates. Further research can be carried out to help Bintan Black Coral formulate a transition strategy from the COVID-19 pandemic to normal times which of course requires different strategies.

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