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| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Strategic Brand Positioning through Cultural Event Programming at Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park

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| **ABSTRACT**

This research explores how optimized cultural event programming can aid Garuda Wisnu Kencana ('GWK') Cultural Park in reinforcing its strategic brand positioning. With a mixed-methods framework, this study draws qualitative data from a four-parts semi-structures interview with primary key informants and quantitative data from a survey of 400 domestic visitors who have visited GWK between 2022-2025. The theoretical framework integrates Cai's destinations brand positioning model (symbolic, emotional, functional) together with McKercher and du Cros's cultural tourist typology, and the modern adaptation of Middleton's 12Ps of tourism marketing. Programming strategy is examined through the lens of Getz and Morrison's event programming model focused on active, participatory elements and those that are authentic, interactive, and emotionally appealing. Results suggest that GWK's brand is widely recognized but not yet perceived as a must-visit cultural destination. Its monumental symbolism overshadows its cultural elements, which visitors often view as static and non-differentiated. Survey data and stakeholder interviews also indicate misalignment between GWK's cultural mission and its commercial operations. The research proposes a repositioning strategy grounded in symbolic narrative, participatory programming, and improves segmentation. It recommends three priority actions: (1) integrating narrative-driven content across programs. (2) developing segmentation-based engagement formats informed by driven visitor profiles, and (3) institutionalizing programming innovation supported by internal collaboration. These actions are aimed at improving GWK's competitive advantage in the cultural tourism sector and within the Balinese tourism destinations landscape.

| **KEYWORDS**

Cultural Tourism, Brand Positioning, Programming Strategy, Visitor Engagement, Segmentation

| **ARTICLE INFORMATION**

## 1. Introduction

The Travel & Tourism (T&T) industry has long played a significant role in the global economy, contributing 10.4% of global GDP (approximately UD$9.6 trillion) and supporting over 330 million jobs before the COVID-19 pandemic (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). However, the unprecedented travel restrictions of 2020 led to a dramatic contraction, with the sector's global GDP contribution plunging by 50.4% (WTTC Economic Impact Report, 2021) and international tourist arrivals declining by 74%, representing one of the most severe collapses in the industry's modern history (UNWTO, 2021). The decline showed the vulnerabilities of the global tourism sector and pushed a reevaluation of resilience and adaptability across destinations.

By the end of 2024, international tourist arrival has recovered to 99% of pre-pandemic levels, indicating a full return to 2019 figures by early 2025 (UNWTO, 2025). Yet, alongside this quantitative rebound, a qualitative shift in traveler preferences has emerged. Post-pandemic tourists increasingly seek purposeful, immersive, and sustainability-oriented experiences, reflecting a broader societal transformation in how travel is valued. Visitors now prioritize authentic cultural engagement, community-based experiences and regenerative tourism models, approaches that aim to contribute positively to local communities and ecosystems

(WTTC, 2024). A 2024 report by Mckinsey and Company revealed that experiences have become powerful decision drivers. Authenticity of local customs and culture were among the top decision drivers for destination choice, underscoring the growing importance of emotional and cultural resonance in tourism. Within this global transformation, the Asia-Pacific region reasserted itself as a tourism growth hub, contributing 24% of global international tourist arrivals in 2024 (UNWTO, 2025). Countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia have aggressively repositioned their tourism offerings through experience-centric branding and infrastructure. Thailand's "Amazing Thailand: Your Storied Never End" 2024 campaigns helped attract over 35 million international tourists (Bangkok Post, 2025), while Vietnam's "Travel to Love" initiative focused on eco-heritage corridors, drawing around 17.5 million arrivals (VNAT, 2025). Similarly, Malaysia's "Truly Asia" cultural route strategy attracted around 25 million international visitors in the same period (Reuters, 2025). The examples reflect a clear regional pivot experience-based, narrative-driven tourism development. In this context, Indonesia must strategically differentiate itself, not merely through volume, but by elevating the cultural, emotional, and symbolic value of its tourism.
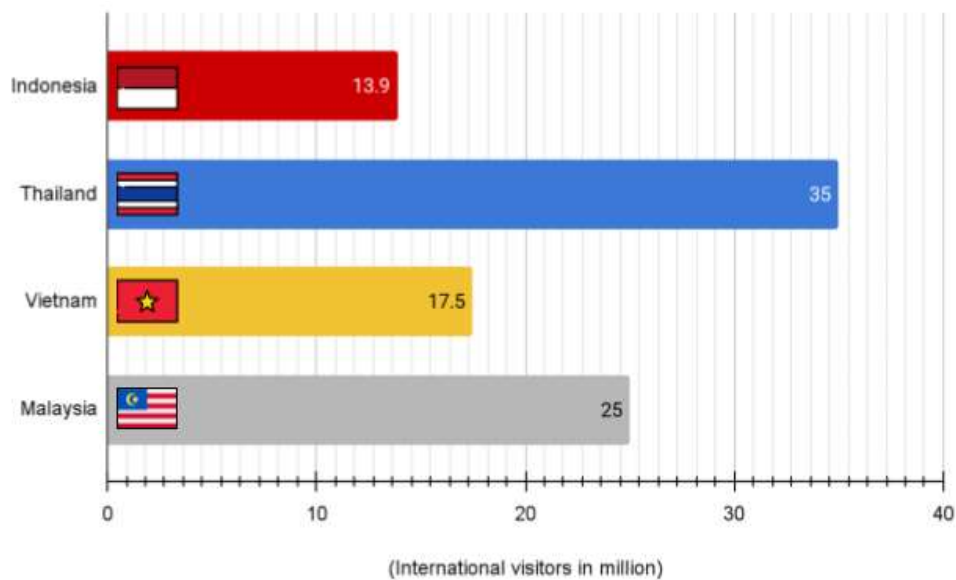


Source: Adapted by Author, 2025
Figure 1. Comparison of International Tourist Arrival in 2024

As global tourism preferences shift toward meaningful, transformative experiences, cultural and heritage tourism has emerged as one of the most resilient and high-potential segments. According to UNESCO (2023), cultural tourism represents 40% of all international travel, and is particularly popular among Millennials and Gen Z; segments that prioritize authenticity, storytelling and sustainability. They are not passive viewers but active participants, often seeking meaningful connections and experiences that reflect the identity of the place and its people. However, the sector must manage the risk of commodification, where traditions are oversimplified or re-staged solely for tourist consumption (Richards, 2021). Indonesia, and particularly Bali, remains one of the world's most sought-after destinations in 2024 (TripAdvisor, 2025). It welcomed approximately 6.3 million foreign visitors in 2024, a 20.1% increase from the previous year (Bali Tourism Board, 2024).

The island is globally renowned for its natural beauty, vibrant cultural heritage, and spiritual tourism appeal, making it a stronghold for both leisure and cultural tourism (TripAdvisor, 2023). Yet, Bali's success also reveals systemic strains. Overcrowding in popular areas such as Kuta, Seminyak, Ubud and the newly popular Canggu has led to infrastructure stress, environmental degradation and the commodification of cultural sites. Within this context, Garuda Wisnu Kencana ("GWK") Cultural Parks stands as one of Bali's most ambitious cultural infrastructure projects. Situated in Jimbaran, on the south of Bali Island, the park hosts the 121-meter GWK statue, traditional performance, and panoramic public spaces designed to become a symbol of Indonesia's national and in particular Bali's cultural identity. Conceptualized by Joop Ave and Nyoman Nuarta in the early 1990s, the park faced decades of delays due to the Asian Financial Crisis (1998) and managerial transitions. In 2012, PT Alam Sutera Realty ('ASRI') acquired GWK and its managing company, PT Garuda Adhimatra Indonesia ('GAIN'), reviving the stalled project. The impact of ASRI's involvement has been multidimensional. On a cultural level, the park now serves as a major venue for preserving and showcasing Balinese art and heritage. On a tourism level, GWK has become one of the most visited cultural sites in Bali, taking up 25.65% of the market share of Bali foreign visitors. Yet, despite its architectural grandeur and national symbolism, GWK still struggles to fully embed itself within the modern cultural tourism experience. Its digital

engagement remains limited, its programming largely static, and its value proposition beyond the visual spectacle unclear to many visitors.

The tourism industry is highly competitive in its nature, especially in Indonesia. With the government's effort to spread economic growth evenly around the country, through super-prioritized destinations, Bali may face threats of losing its position as top of the mind destination. A study by Verheijen and Putra (2019) emphasizes GWK's development reflects the complexities of Balinese cultural identity in the context of global tourism. The park's monumental statue and infrastructure symbolize national pride, yet they may not effectively convey the depth of Balinese culture to visitors. This gap between symbolic representation and cultural immersion contributes to the park's challenges in attracting visitors seeking authentic experiences. Furthermore, research by Tirtawati et al. (2019) indicated that while Indonesian tourists report high satisfaction levels with GWK's facilities and services, there is a notable deficiency in programming and cultural engagement. The study reveals that attributes such as the value of attraction relative to price and the provision of engineering cultural experiences require significant improvement. Moreover, the study highlights that only 18% of domestic tourists exhibit attitudinal loyalty, suggesting limited intention to recommend GWK to others or repeat visit intention. Continuing from the above, more than a decade under new management, the park has struggled to achieve its desired level of competitiveness and global awareness. The park's growth remained stagnant with visitor numbers fulfilling internal targets but didn't result in a bigger, than expected market share in the industry.

Table 1. GWK's Number of Visitor Period 2019-2024

| PERIOD | 2019 | 2020* | 2021* | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | 128,959 | 136,142 | 10,408 | 53,842 | 130,489 | 146,126 |
| February | 118,884 | 98,030 | 0 | 32,219 | 121,577 | 138,613 |
| March | 126,430 | 52,451 | 684 | 37,925 | 112,907 | 79,406 |
| April | 149,434 | 0 | 582 | 16,883 | 99,713 | 126,558 |
| May | 49,620 | 0 | 36 | 112,794 | 137,948 | 142,614 |
| June | 185,245 | 0 | 469 | 107,167 | 154,180 | 151,608 |
| July | 134,005 | 0 | 0 | 104,248 | 145,963 | 135,244 |
| August | 109,680 | 0 | 0 | 76,726 | 117,521 | 114,475 |
| September | 98,592 | 0 | 0 | 77,507 | 115,868 | 134,694 |
| October | 125,980 | 407 | 7,380 | 100,706 | 130,892 | 151,943 |
| November | 110,260 | 570 | 22,318 | 75,340 | 127,334 | 125,212 |
| December | 208,807 | 37,027 | 51,949 | 182,276 | 156,451 | 178,117 |
| Total | 1,545,895 | 324,628 | 93,826 | 977,632 | 1,550,844 | 1,624,610 |

Source: GAIN Internal Document, 2025

From the table above, the growth of the park from 2023 to 2024 was recorded at 4.76%, closely connected with Bali's broader post-COVID recovery trend from 2019-2025 (5.09%). However, when critically compared to other cultural tourist destination such as the ever-popular Tanah Lot (tiket.com, 2025), a destination that welcomed approximately 2.70 million visitors in 2024 which is a 33.48% increase from the previous year (Data Indonesia, 2024), a notable difference emerges. Despite having a larger physical area and more diverse facilities, GWK's visitor count remains significantly lower. The rationale for comparing these two sites stems from their shared visibility as flagship cultural landmarks within Bali's tourism narrative. Both are frequently featured in destination marketing materials and serve as symbolic gateways to Balinese identity for domestic and international audiences. However, their positioning logic differ as Tanah Lot's cultural gravity is derived from its religious sanctity and authentic ritual continuity, even with limited structured programming, whereas GWK offers a curated portfolio of performances, exhibitions, and monumental art within a privatized, purpose-built park environment.

This difference is strategically revealing. It illustrates that visitor motivation is not merely a function of the breadth of attractions, but rather of perceived authenticity, symbolic meaning, and emotional engagement. By benchmarking against Tanah Lot, this research surfaces the gap in differences that GWK as a cultural park must address by positioning from a recreational park into cultural destination with strong narrative and experiential appeal. The distribution of audience segments is relatively even so that the information obtained later from the survey questions can more or less represent each segment well. Among the multiple issues identified through the 12Ps framework, the main focus is narrowed on two interrelated but addressable challenges which were weak positioning as a cultural tourism destination and limited programming dynamism. Visitors commonly associate GWK

with its monumental statue but fail to perceive it as a rich cultural site. In addition, over half of repeat visitors reported stagnant programming, while only a minority were aware of many active cultural events included in the standard ticket. These two issues, positioning and programming, are strategically significant and can be addressed internally through targeted marketing interventions. Focusing the research on these areas will enable the formulation of more relevant, realistic and organization-driven recommendations.

To effectively address the business issues identified at Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park, particularly in the challenges surrounding brand positioning and visitor engagement, it is critical to first understand the landscape of internal and external stakeholders involved. In the context of GWK, both internal and external stakeholders play significant roles in influencing strategic decisions related to branding, cultural event programming, and visitor experience development. By understanding the environment of the stakeholders, the research will be provided with the foundation to align strategic initiatives with stakeholder expectation and need, which is necessary to enhance GWK's competitive positioning in the cultural tourism sector.

## 2. Literature Review
### 2.1 Cultural Tourism & Cultural Tourist
Cultural tourism has become a significant and dynamically growing segment in the global tourism industry, driven by travelers' desire for authentic cultural experiences. Defined by the UN Tourism General Assembly in 2017, it encompasses both tangible and intangible cultural features and includes contemporary expressions and everyday life, not just historical products (Richards, 2018; Csapó, 2012). Understanding the diversity among cultural tourists is crucial, as Mckercher and du Cros (2015) emphasize cultural tourism as a relational activity and propose a five-type typology based on travel motivation and depth of experience. This typology Purposeful, Sightseeing, Serendipitous, Casual, and Incidental Cultural Tourists is especially useful for destinations like Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) Cultural Park to design layered experiences tailored to varied interests. Smith et al. (2023) support this typology's relevance, noting that modern tourists often combine cultural and recreational motives, requiring flexible programming. However, maintaining cultural authenticity amidst tourism commodification remains a critical issue, with studies warning against superficial or mass-tourism-focused experiences (Mckercher & du Cros, 2002; Smith et al., 2023). GWK, rooted in Balinese mythology and artistry, presents a strategic case for applying these principles by curating immersive, segmented cultural experiences that balance authenticity with accessibility (Smith et al., 2023).

### 2.2 12 Ps of Tourism Marketing
Tourism marketing is a systematic process where tourism organizations identify, anticipate, and satisfy tourist demands to achieve organizational objectives (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Unlike physical products, tourism products are experiential, with quality only known after consumption, and are characterized by intangibility, inseparability, variability, and perishability, requiring a specific marketing mix (Middleton & Clarke, 2012; Kotler & Keller, 2016). The classic 4Ps model by McCarthy (1960) evolved into a 7Ps model by Booms & Bitner (1981) with the addition of People, Process, and Physical Evidence. Middleton & Clarke (2012) further extended this into the 12Ps model for tourism and travel services by adding Packaging, Programming, Partnerships, Publicity, and Personalization. Modern applications in cultural tourism have refined this model further by replacing Publicity and Personalization with Positioning and Perception to emphasize brand strategy and image management (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Pike, 2004). Morrison (2019) supports this shift, noting that competitive destinations must focus on brand identity and emotional connection, especially in cultural tourism where authenticity and symbolic meaning are key. This research adopts the enhanced 12Ps model to align with modern cultural tourism demands, particularly among younger tourists seeking authenticity through digital platforms, and uses it as the basis for interviews and surveys to improve Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park.

### 2.3 Brand Positioning Theory
Brand positioning is a marketing strategy aimed at establishing how a brand is perceived by its target audience compared to competitors by creating a distinctive and meaningful place in the consumer's mind (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Ries & Trout, 1981). In tourism, brand positioning includes both tangible and intangible attributes and requires a balance of functional, emotional, and symbolic dimensions to resonate with visitors (Cai, 2002). Functional positioning involves practical attributes like infrastructure and quality of service, which shape initial perceptions and visitor satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Pike, 2002). Emotional positioning appeals to visitors' feelings and memories, enhancing loyalty and advocacy, and is especially vital in cultural tourism for personal reflection and cultural appreciation (Aaker, 1996; Morgan et al., 2008). Symbolic positioning connects with deeper value and identity associations, representing pride and cultural meaning, essential for cultural destinations to affirm identity and provide meaningful experiences (Keller, 2003; Cai, 2002). For this research, the focus is on emotional and symbolic positioning based on preliminary survey results, while functional positioning, reflected by the "Physical Evidence" element in the 12Ps model, is not considered a business issue as it received positive feedback.

### 2.4 Programmed Activities and Event Programming in Tourism

Programmed activities have become a significant element in tourism destination management, especially in cultural tourism, by offering continuous cultural engagement that transforms static spaces into dynamic experiences (Getz, 1997, 2008). Defined by Morrison (2019) as structured and organized events designed to enhance visitor engagement and prolong stays, these activities contribute to emotional connections, repeat visitation, and destination branding. The UNWTO (2021) emphasizes their role as strategic cultural instruments supporting cultural branding, authenticity, and sustainability. While tourism programming once centered on large-scale events, current practices prioritize consistent cultural offerings like performances, storytelling, and thematic activities to sustain appeal (Getz & Page, 2016; Richards, 2018). Empirical studies by Kim, Lee, & Kim (2021) affirm that bundled cultural activities enhance branding, satisfaction, and loyalty. Strategically deployed activities include bundled experiences, thematic events, interactive workshops, and interpretive storytelling, all of which deepen engagement and cultural connection (Jepson & Stadler, 2017). At Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) Cultural Park, such programming is essential to maintain authenticity, increase visitor satisfaction, and strengthen brand positioning, with Morrison (2019) emphasizing that structured event programming differentiates destinations and enhances competitiveness.

### 2.5 Visitor Engagement

Visitor engagement in tourism is increasingly recognized as a critical outcome of effective tourism experiences and destination management strategies, referring to the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement visitors develop with a destination during and after their visit (So & King, 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Pine & Gilmore (1999) describe engagement as occurring when visitors are actively and emotionally immersed, co-creating value through interaction. In cultural tourism, it involves emotional connections, cognitive stimulation, and behaviors like loyalty and word-of-mouth. So et al. (2016) define engagement as a multidimensional construct including emotional (affective attachment), cognitive (mental attention), and behavioral (participation, advocacy, loyalty) engagement. Engaged visitors show higher satisfaction, revisit intentions, and contribute to destination branding (Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012). At GWK Cultural Park, engagement is vital as cultural experiences depend on emotional resonance, cognitive appreciation, and participation. According to Morgan et al. (2008), in a competitive tourism landscape, engagement is a strategic advantage. Synthesizing Pine & Gilmore (1999), So et al. (2016), and Brodie et al. (2010), visitor engagement is best understood through three interrelated dimensions, where emotional experiences stimulate cognitive interest, leading to loyalty behaviors. In this research, visitor engagement at GWK will be evaluated across these three dimensions to assess how programmed activities foster deeper connections, satisfaction, and loyalty, guiding improved programming and brand positioning.

### 2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework builds upon the theories introduced previously but reframed to applied logic that supports the strategic objective of Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) Cultural Park. It integrates four core components: (1) Cultural Tourist Typology, (2) Brand Positioning, (3) Programmed Activities, and (4) Visitor Engagement. Each element is positioned not merely as a theoretical construct but as a tool for guiding the design, implementation, and evaluation of GWK's brand and experience strategy.
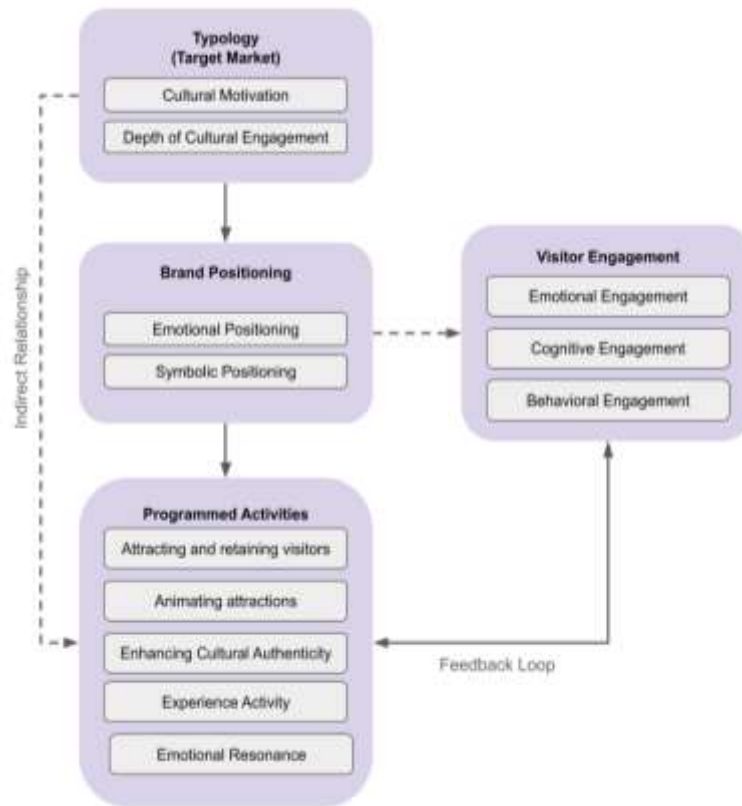
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual logic of this framework is moving from understanding the visitor to evaluating their responses, beginning with Cultural Tourist Typology, which informs Brand Positioning decisions. This positioning then guides the creation of Programmed Activities, designed to reflect brand values and appeal to identified visitor segments, while Visitor Engagement serves as a metric for evaluating the alignment and effectiveness of the prior components. The first framework, Cultural Tourist Typology, adapted from McKercher & du Cros (2002), is applied as both a descriptive tool and strategic segmentation model, enabling targeted positioning and product development. The second component, Brand Positioning, adopts principles from Liping Cai (2002), viewing GWK's brand identity as a composite of emotional and symbolic positioning, with functional positioning as support, aiming to evolve GWK into a space of cultural immersion and national storytelling. Programmed Activities act as the brand's delivery mechanism, integrating perspectives from Getz, Morrison, and Richards into five principles for GWK: attracting visitors, animating heritage, delivering community content, providing participatory experiences, and fostering emotional resonance. Visitor Engagement concludes the framework as the point of experiential validation, drawing on theories from Pine and Gilmore, So et al., and Brodie et al., and functions as feedback to refine programming and positioning. Each element is mutually reinforcing: Typology identifies the audience, Positioning defines strategic identity, Programming delivers that identity, and Engagement measures effectiveness.

## 3. Methodology
This study adopts a mixed-methods design, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in parallel before integration during interpretation to validate findings through triangulation and gain a deeper understanding of complex phenomena such as tourist motivation and organizational strategy in cultural tourism contexts. The research begins with identifying business issues through preliminary interviews and a diagnostic survey, followed by a literature review grounded in five key areas: cultural tourism, cultural tourist, brand positioning, programmed activities and event programming, and visitor engagement. Primary data are collected through semi-structured interviews with key internal stakeholders and structured surveys administered to GWK visitors. The qualitative method uses purposive sampling to capture in-depth insights from GWK's President Director, Operational Director, Head of Marketing and Communication, and Head of Attraction and Event, ensuring relevance to the organization's branding and programming. Interviews were conducted offline, transcribed verbatim, and prepared for analysis. For the quantitative part, structured questionnaires were distributed to visitors who visited GWK from 2022 to 2025, focusing on four constructs: motivation to visit, brand perception, expectations for events, and engagement preferences. Sampling was purposive, targeting recent visitors to ensure data relevance. A minimum sample size of 400 was calculated to support

multivariate analysis, and data were collected both on-site and online, filtered by a screening question to ensure participants had recent GWK experience.

The structured questions are closed-ended with about 3–5 questions per variable, using 5-point Likert scales to measure agreement or interest, a common format in tourism studies (Dolnicar & Grün, 2013), and demographic questions were included for segmentation. The questionnaire was developed based on validated constructs and theoretical dimensions from the literature review, with a matrix showing its structure including dimension, item code, attribute, statement, goals, and question type. It focused only on Emotional and Symbolic Brand Positioning, as preliminary surveys and interviews indicated satisfaction with physical aspects. The questionnaire included 10% reverse-coded items for reliability. Secondary data, as defined by Bowen (2009), were collected to support triangulation and provide strategic context, including internal records (e.g., visitor statistics, event archives, branding decks) and external sources (e.g., academic literature, policy documents, UNWTO, BPS reports). These helped benchmark GWK's position and identify shifts in visitor expectations. Data analysis follows a convergent mixed-methods strategy integrating qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys for triangulation (Yin, 2018; Veal, 2017). Qualitative data were analyzed using manual thematic analysis following Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase process, manually coded for deeper engagement and validated with internal documents for trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017). Quantitative analysis included Reliability Testing, Exploratory Factor Analysis, and K-Means Cluster Analysis to assess alignment between strategic intentions and visitor expectations. This research quantitative data analysis will be done through a structured multivariate approach designed to ensure both the validity of the measurement instrument and the strategic utility of findings, integrating psychometric validation methods through the reliability testing and construct validity with segmentation analytics (Dolnicar, 2003). The analysis begins with cleaning the survey data of 457 respondents comprising 35 Likert-scale items into a dataset processed through IBM SPSS Statistics. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha across four constructs Cultural Typology (CT), Brand Positioning (BP), Programmed Activities (PA), and Visitor Engagement (VE) with acceptable values generally above 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), though exploratory studies may accept 0.60–0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), and high values ($\alpha > 0.95$) may indicate redundancy (Streiner, 2003). Construct validity was tested through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Axis Factoring and Oblimin rotation, with criteria including KMO > 0.60 and a significant Bartlett's Test. EFA also helps mitigate item redundancy and identifies sub-dimensions. Factor scores were computed using SPSS regression-based scoring to reduce dimensionality and avoid multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019). Cluster analysis followed using a two-step approach: Ward's hierarchical clustering to determine the optimal number of clusters and K-means clustering to assign each case based on EFA-derived factor scores, a method favored for its efficiency and interpretability in tourism segmentation (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2021).
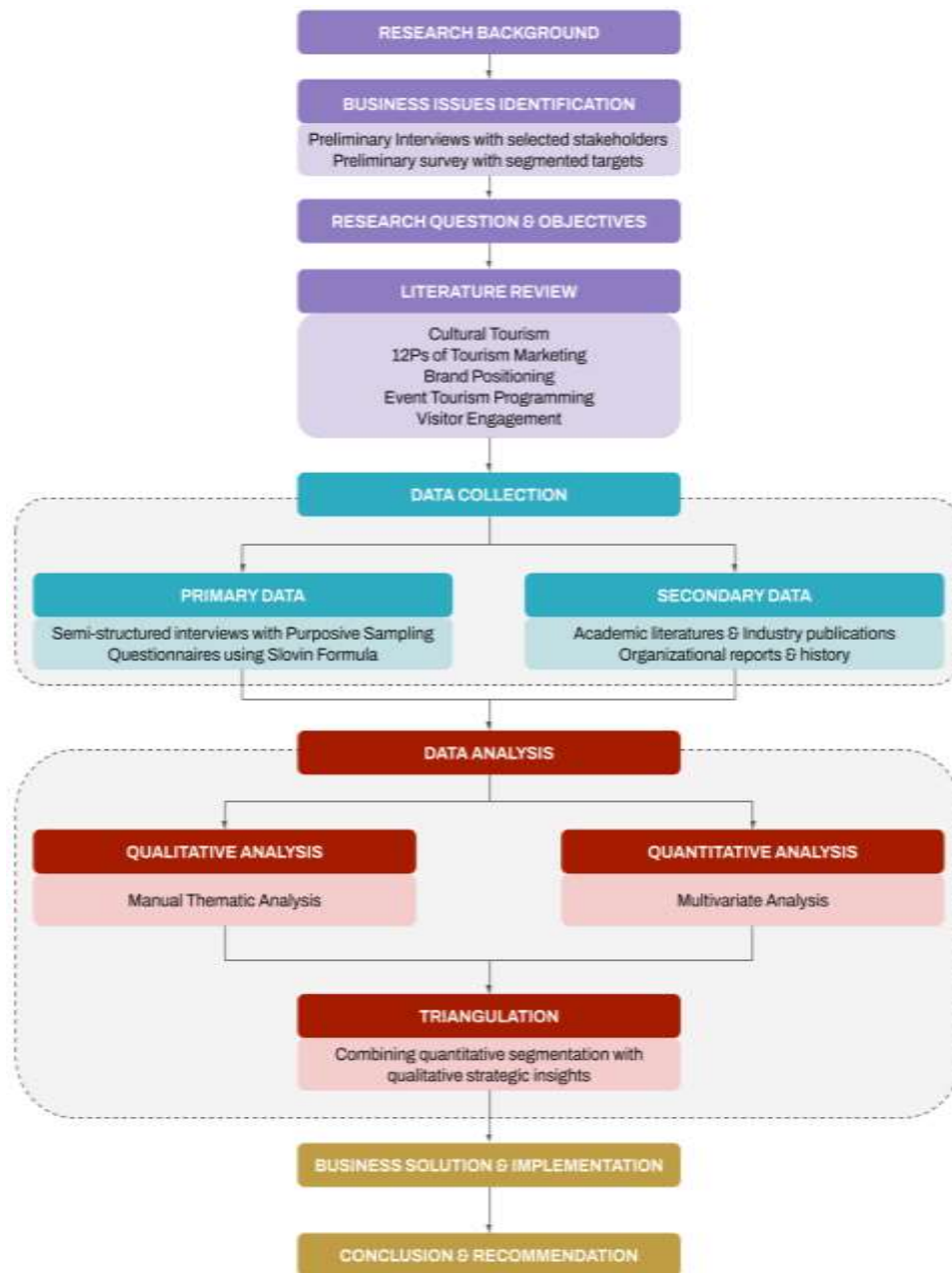
Figure 2. Research Design Framework

## 4. Results and Discussion

### *4.1 Qualitative Analysis – Internal Stakeholder Perspective*

This section focuses on exploring the internal view of GWK's strategic direction, especially as it relates to its brand identity, event programming, visitor experience, and organizational readiness. Through four in-depth interviews with key members of GWK's management team, the research aims to understand how leadership envisions the park's identity, how well that vision is executed, and the structural or cultural challenges that influence this process. By investigating stakeholder perspectives from both strategic and operational standpoints, this qualitative analysis provides the foundation for understanding internal coherence and identifying potential gaps between aspirations and implementation. To gain a well-rounded internal perspective, four individuals in leadership positions were selected to represent different levels and functions within the GWK Cultural Park management. The selection included senior executives responsible for overarching strategy and directors handling the execution of marketing and event programming.

President Director (HT) and Operational Director (RS) were selected to capture the macro-level and strategic viewpoints. They provide insight into long-term planning, the cultural vision of the park, and its alignment with broader organizational strategies.

As senior leaders with authority over corporate-level initiatives, their inputs reflect top-down priorities for brand development and institutional positioning.

In contrast, Head of Event and Attractions (AT) and Head of Marketing and Communications (AP) offer grounded, execution-oriented perspectives. They are responsible for translating the vision into daily experiences through events, marketing campaigns, and guest interactions. Their roles enable them to observe first-hand the visitor experience, cross-departmental coordination, and the practical limitations of executing strategic plans.

A noteworthy factor in this analysis is that both RS and AT had only recently assumed their positions approximately six months prior to the interview sessions. Their dual status as newcomers and former executives of GWK's holding company (ASRI) allows them to provide a unique external-internal perspective, comparing high-level expectations with the on-ground realities at GWK.

This combination of strategic and tactical perspectives offers a comprehensive and layered picture of how GWK's vision is perceived, interpreted, and enacted across various organizational layers. It also sets the stage for identifying misalignments between vision and action, and the challenges in building a unified institutional identity.

The qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using a hybrid thematic coding process, combining both deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approach relied on pre-defined categories derived from theoretical literature on brand positioning, cultural event programming, and emotional engagement in tourism. These served as analytical anchors, including themes such as "brand identity," "programming strategy," and "visitor experience." Meanwhile, the inductive approach allowed unexpected or emergent themes to surface organically based on participants' unique insights and recurring patterns in the data.

Each interview transcript was reviewed manually, with line-by-line coding conducted in Microsoft Word. Thematic patterns were identified, consolidated, and refined iteratively, resulting in nine overarching themes that capture the internal realities of GWK's programming and brand strategy.

The thematic analysis of GWK Cultural Park reveals nine interconnected themes that highlight the park's strategic challenges and aspirations. Theme 1 outlines a shared strategic vision among stakeholders to position GWK as a premier cultural destination that champions Balinese and Indonesian heritage, though AP notes the inconsistency in daily operations and brand touchpoints. Theme 2 identifies internal inefficiencies such as departmental silos, fragmented coordination, and the lack of integrated systems, echoing Nonaka & Takeuchi's (1995) concerns on knowledge fragmentation. Theme 3 focuses on inconsistent brand messaging and the misalignment between cultural values and public communication, supported by Loureiro et al. (2012) on the need for symbolic consistency. Theme 4 underscores the incomplete shift from passive sightseeing to immersive engagement, with references to Ali, Ryu, & Hussain (2016) stressing the role of emotional design in enhancing visitor satisfaction.

Theme 5 discusses the lack of a long-term content strategy in programming and the commercial versus cultural tension in event planning, though community partnerships like STT offer promise. Theme 6 emphasizes emotional branding through storytelling and rituals, yet current efforts are isolated rather than forming a cohesive narrative, supported by Loureiro et al. (2012) and Hosany et al. (2006). Theme 7 reveals a gap in formal market segmentation, limiting tailored programming despite internal awareness of diverse visitor motivations, referencing McKercher & du Cros (2002). Theme 8 highlights the symbolic power of the Garuda Wisnu Kencana statue, but stakeholders express concern over the lack of interpretive storytelling, with Singh et al. (2023) advocating for experiential integration. Lastly, Theme 9 addresses systemic operational barriers including staffing shortages, infrastructure limitations, and inconsistent communication, affirming Bornhorst et al. (2010) and Morrison (2019) on the inseparability of operational excellence and strategic branding.

### 4.2 Emergent Themes and Interpretation

The analysis reveals five emergent themes central to GWK's strategic and operational realities. Emergent Theme 1 identifies a shared strategic intent among stakeholders to establish GWK as a cultural destination rooted in Balinese identity and national symbolism. However, the execution remains siloed, with departments operating autonomously and lacking coordinated mechanisms, leading to fragmented messaging and diluted brand positioning. This reflects Morrison (2019) assertion that internal branding and integration are essential for consistent external branding. Emergent Theme 2 highlights the underutilized symbolic strength of the Garuda Wisnu Kencana statue, which, while visually impactful, lacks experiential integration and narrative embedding limiting its potential for deeper emotional and cultural engagement. This observation aligns with Chiang & Chen's (2023) insight that symbolic representation must be integrated into the visitor experience through storytelling and sensory design.

Emergent Theme 3 notes that although GWK offers emotionally rich programs, they are episodic and not curated into a cohesive journey, weakening their impact. Pine & Gilmore's (1999) "Experience Economy" and Loureiro et al. (2012) emphasize that emotional engagement must be deliberately designed across all touchpoints. Emergent Theme 4 reveals that while GWK has an intuitive understanding of audience preferences, it lacks formal segmentation strategies, psychographic profiling, or tailored marketing approaches, risking underperformance in key markets. This supports McKercher and du Cros's (2002) argument on the importance of understanding cultural tourist typologies. Finally, Emergent Theme 5 outlines critical operational constraints, including poor coordination, staffing shortages, and lack of SOPs, which hinder effective brand delivery. These issues, as noted by Bornhorst et al. (2010), indicate that visionary leadership must be matched with operational strength to achieve destination success.

### 4.3 Summary of Qualitative Findings

This section synthesizes qualitative data from internal stakeholder interviews into nine thematic categories that illuminate GWK's internal dynamics, brand identity issues, and programming constraints, setting the groundwork for external visitor comparisons and strategic planning. The first theme highlights strong strategic alignment around GWK's vision as a cultural symbol of Balinese and Indonesian identity, yet notes that this vision is aspirational due to gaps in cross-functional execution and planning. Organizational challenges include departmental silos, informal communication, HR shortages, and inconsistent training, which limit scalability and innovation. In branding, the park lacks centralized oversight and cohesive messaging, weakening emotional resonance and differentiation. Visitor engagement is sporadic and lacks structured guidance, making cultural immersion accidental rather than intentional. Event programming is driven by operational scheduling rather than cultural narratives, limiting educational and inspirational impact.

Table 2. Summary of 9 Core Thematic Themes

| No | Core Theme | Key Insight | Relation to RQs |
|----|-----------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Vision and Strategic Alignment | All stakeholders reaffirming the aspiration of GWK to become a leading cultural park rooted in Balinese and national identity. However there remains a gap between aspirational vision and consistent execution | RQ1 |
| 2 | Internal Organization Challenges | Fragmented coordination, lack of SOPs, and inconsistent internal communication were cited as major barriers. Staff shortages and system inefficiencies further constrained execution | RQ1 RQ2 |
| 3 | Brand Positioning and Communication | Despite an overarching identity as a "culture park", informants noted inconsistent brand narrative across platforms and a lack of unified visual and emotional messaging | RQ1 |
| 4 | Visitor Engagement | Although some interactive programming exists (e.g., GWK Menari dan Menabuh), the park lacks an integrated engagement model that encourages repeat visitation and emotional resonance | RQ2 |
| 5 | Programming Activities & Event Programming | Programming is split between daily and seasonal events, but lacks long-term content planning and cultural depth. Collaborative planning with local communities is seen as critical opportunity | RQ2 |
| 6 | Emotional Branding | All stakeholders emphasized the need to increase emotional connection. The current delivery is still perceived as transnational or performative | RQ1 RQ2 |
| 7 | Target Market Segmentation | Internal awareness of audience types exists but no formal segmentation guides programming or brand communication. This may make higher risks of message dilution | RQ1 |

| 8 | Symbolic Identity | GWK's iconic statue offers strong symbolic capital, yet the brand fails to fully translate this into immersive cultural identity or narrative depth | RQ1 |
| 9 | Operational Barriers | Challenges include limited infrastructure (e.g., heat exposure, accessibility), competition from state-subsidized venues, and talent retention. These constraints both brand experience and programming flexibility. | RQ2 |

Source: Developed by Author (2025)

Further themes emphasize the inconsistent application of emotional branding, with emotional touchpoints not structured into a coherent experiential arc, and the absence of formal market segmentation resulting in generalized offerings. The Garuda Wisnu Kencana statue, while symbolically powerful, remains underutilized due to insufficient interpretive content. Lastly, operational barriers including infrastructure gaps, manual systems, and weak HR emerge as critical impediments to delivering a consistent and emotionally resonant brand experience. These insights suggest that GWK must build alignment infrastructure, professionalize operations, and embed strategic frameworks across branding, programming, and audience engagement to fulfill its vision as a flagship cultural destination.

Table 3. SWOT Of Internal Perspective

| **Strengths** | |
| --- | --- |
| Iconic symbolic asset (GWK Statue) recognized as a national and cultural emblem | Theme 8, HT, AP |
| Shared vision and cultural mission across leadership and operational roles | Theme 1, HT, RS |
| Emotional resonance possible through rituals and interactive programming | Theme 6, AT, RS |
| Operational awareness of audience diversity | Theme 7, AT, RS |
| **Weaknesses** | |
| Brand narrative is fragmented across departments and touchpoints | Theme 3, AP |
| No content development roadmap or brand-aligned storytelling system | Theme 5, AT |
| Lack of formal SOPs, manual workflows and HR capacity | Theme 2 & 9, RS, AT |
| Limited segmentation and no audience profiling beyond nationality | Theme 7, HT, AP |
| **Opportunities** | |
| Integrate symbolic assets into guided narratives and spatial storytelling | Theme 8, supported by Chiang & Chen, 2023 |
| Formalize market segmentation strategies to guide differentiated programs and messages | Theme 7, supported by McKercher, 2002 |
| Develop thematic programming arcs (e.g., quarterly rituals, storytelling festivals) to extend cultural identity | Theme 5 |
| Use emotional touchpoints to build curated experience sequence | Theme 6; Pine & Gilmore, 1999 |
| **Threats** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Continued perception of GWK as 'just a statue' if experiential depth is not improved | Theme 3, RS |
| Fragmentation and manual coordination threaten brand consistency and scalability | Theme 2, AT |
| Other Balinese cultural destinations offer more curated and immersive engagement | External context, supported by AP |
| Over-reliance on individual initiative may collapse without institutional systems | Theme 9, RS, AT |

Source: Developed by Author (2025)

### 4.4 Qualitative Methodological Reflections and Limitations

The qualitative phase offered deeper insight into GWK's internal brand and program strategy. Nevertheless, several methodological limitations must be acknowledged, such as:

1) limited scope of interviewees which consisted of four high-level informants, although strategic, may exclude the perspectives of mid-level and front-level operational staff;
2) some stakeholders are new, as both RS ("Operational Director") and AT ("Head of Event and Attraction") had only been in their respective roles for approximately six months at the time of the interview, although coming from ASRI, both bring fresh perspectives and possible gaps in historical understanding;
3) as internal stakeholders, there are potential response bias as informants may be influenced by social desirability or institutional loyalty, potentially underreporting conflicts or negative perceptions; and
4) manual thematic analysis, though systematic, is inherently subjective. Although hybrid coding enhances validity, the interpretation of themes remains a product of the researcher's lens.

Despite these limitations, the qualitative findings provide a robust foundation for triangulation with visitor data and contribute a nuanced internal perspective to GWK's strategic branding and programming challenges.

### 4.5 Quantitative Analysis – Internal Stakeholder Perspective

This section introduces the quantitative findings derived from a structured survey of 400 visitors to Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park. The analysis focuses on capturing external perspectives regarding GWK's market positioning and programming effectiveness. It begins by profiling visitor demographics and classifying them according to cultural tourist typologies. The study then validates the measurement model using reliability and factor analysis, followed by segmenting the sample through cluster analysis. Finally, it examines discrepancies between visitor expectations and their actual experiences at GWK. Together, these quantitative insights complement the internal stakeholder findings, providing a comprehensive empirical foundation to guide focused and evidence-based strategic recommendations for GWK's development. This section presents a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics of the 400 visitors surveyed at Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park between 2022 and 2025. The majority of visitors are Millennials aged 29-44, who value authentic and immersive cultural experiences, followed closely by Gen Z travelers aged 19-28, known for seeking interactive and socially shareable experiences. The age groups 46-60 and under 18 represent smaller visitor segments. Gender distribution is nearly equal, indicating broad appeal across male and female visitors, with both groups motivated by cultural engagement. Repeat visitors make up almost half the sample, suggesting strong visitor satisfaction and emotional connection. Occupationally, visitors mainly come from private sector employment and entrepreneurship, with representation from students, civil servants, and homemakers, highlighting the need for diverse programming. Income data shows a predominantly middle-income audience, emphasizing the importance of tiered pricing strategies. Visitors primarily come for leisure and holidays, but cultural and educational interests present opportunities for growth. Most visitors attend with family or friends, underscoring the social nature of GWK experiences and the importance of group-oriented programming. Overall, GWK attracts working-age, middle-income domestic leisure travelers motivated by recreation, cultural enrichment, and social interaction.

Table 4. Summary of Construct Reliability

| No | Construct | Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Cultural Typology | CT1-CT5 | 0.911 | Excellent |
| 2 | Brand Positioning | BP1-BP6R | 0.880 | Good |
| 3 | Programmed Activities | PA1-PA6, PA7R, PA8-PA15 | 0.962 | Excellent, though possibly redundant |
| 4 | Visitor Engagement | VE1R-VE9 | 0.940 | Excellent |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

The reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated that all four constructs Cultural Typology, Brand Positioning, Programmed Activities, and Visitor Engagement exhibited high internal consistency, with alpha values exceeding 0.880. Cultural Typology and Visitor Engagement achieved excellent reliability ($\alpha$ = 0.911 and 0.940, respectively), while Brand Positioning showed good reliability ($\alpha$ = 0.880). Programmed Activities yielded a very high alpha ($\alpha$ = 0.962), indicating excellent consistency, though suggesting potential item redundancy.

These results validate the reliability of the measurement instruments used, and further dimensionality reduction was explored through Exploratory Factor Analysis and K-Means Clustering to address redundancy and uncover underlying factor structures. An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on all 35 Likert-scale items to assess the construct validity of the measurement model. Using Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin rotation, the analysis confirmed sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.985) and inter-item correlation (Bartlett's Test: $p < 0.001$). The overall EFA extracted two factors explaining a cumulative 69.5% of variance, with most items strongly loading on Factor 1, indicating a cohesive and holistic perception of GWK Cultural Park experiences. Three reverse-coded items (PA7R, BP6R, VE1R) loaded separately on Factor 2, consistent with known psychometric effects of negative item phrasing.

Table 5. Construct's Factor Name

| No | Construct | Factor Name |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | All Construct | FAC1_1 |
| 2 | Cultural Typology | FAC1_2 |
| 3 | Brand Positioning | FAC1_3 |
| 4 | Programmed Activities | FAC1_4 |
| 5 | Visitor Engagement | FAC1_5 |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

Subsequent EFA for each construct confirmed their unidimensionality, though reverse-coded items again showed low communalities and weak alignment. Based on these findings, regression-based factor scores for each construct were computed and retained for use in visitor segmentation, affirming the validity of the theoretical model and identifying a secondary dimension of critical or negatively perceived sentiment.

Ward's hierarchical clustering method was applied using squared Euclidean distance and four standardized factor scores (FAC1_2 to FAC1_5) to determine the optimal number of visitor segments. The agglomeration schedule and dendrogram suggested a three-cluster solution based on a significant coefficient jump between stages 398 and 399, supported visually through the elbow method. This result indicated that further merging would combine dissimilar groups and reduce interpretive value. Thus, a three-cluster model was selected as the most meaningful segmentation structure.

Table 6. Agglomeration Schedule Summary

| No. | Stage | Coefficient | Jump from Previous Stage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 395 → 396 | 142.777 | +60.7 |
| 2 | 396 → 397 | 187.438 | +44.6 |
| 3 | 397 → 398 | 235.290 | +47.9 |
| 4 | 398 → 399 | 517.321 | +282.0 ← big jump |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

Using the three-cluster solution identified via Ward's method, K-means clustering was conducted with the same four factor scores. The analysis produced three distinct clusters representing different visitor profiles: Cluster 1 (Disengaged Visitors, 7.3%) exhibited the lowest scores and minimal emotional or cultural connection; Cluster 2 (Neutral Visitors, 29.0%) showed below-average scores and potential for increased engagement; and Cluster 3 (Engaged Cultural Tourists, 63.8%) scored highest across all factors, indicating strong alignment with GWK's cultural and experiential offerings. Although a four-cluster model was tested, it added complexity with limited value, so the three-cluster structure was retained for final analysis and strategy development.

Table 7. Final Cluster Centers Summary

| Cluster | CT Cultural Typology | BP Brand Positioning | PA Programmed Activities | VE Visitor Engagement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | -2.76 | -2.98 | -2.77 | -2.79 |
| 2 | -0.41 | -0.34 | -0.51 | -0.49 |
| 3 | +0.50 | +0.49 | +0.55 | +0.54 |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

### 4.6 Discrepancy Analysis of Perception and Expectation

Following visitor segmentation into three clusters via K-means analysis, this discrepancy analysis examines how visitor perceptions align with or diverge from their expectations at GWK. While prior analysis validated constructs through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), confirmed reliability with Cronbach's Alpha, and segmented visitors via clustering, this step is crucial to understanding how each segment evaluates GWK's performance against expectations. The analysis focuses on key survey items requiring attention within each construct to inform strategic improvements.

The Cultural Typology items (CT1–CT5) assess visitor motivation and satisfaction with cultural experiences, covering both intentional and spontaneous engagement. Overall, visitors showed a generally positive orientation toward culture at GWK, with mean scores ranging from 4.14 to 4.30. However, cluster analysis reveals distinct differences: Cluster 1 (Disengaged) exhibits low cultural motivation and minimal engagement, likely representing incidental or leisure tourists. Cluster 2 (Neutral) shows moderate cultural interest but lacks sufficient activation to fully engage with the cultural offerings. Cluster 3 (Engaged) consists of visitors with strong intentional and spontaneous cultural motivation and engagement. These patterns align with McKercher & du Cros (2002), emphasizing the need for tailored strategies to deepen engagement. For GWK, this suggests focusing on Cluster 2 by enhancing symbolic narratives and interactive experiences that encourage cultural involvement even without prior cultural intent.

Table 8. Cultural Typology Items

| Item | Cluster 1 Disengaged | Cluster 2 Neutral | Cluster 3 Engaged | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CT1 -** Motivated by Balinese Culture | 1.79 | 3.76 | 4.67 | 4.20 |
| **CT2 -** Motivated by desire for cultural experience | 1.62 | 3.78 | 4.66 | 4.19 |
| **CT3 -** Seeks opportunity to learn | 1.93 | 4.00 | 4.70 | 4.30 |
| **CT4 -** Spiritual/Cultural Relevance | 1.86 | 3.97 | 4.72 | 4.29 |
| **CT5 -** National Identity | 1.66 | 3.78 | 4.58 | 4.14 |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

This section examines the emotional and symbolic dimensions of GWK's brand through visitor perceptions across three clusters. Overall, mean scores for brand items ranged from moderately high (e.g., pride in culture) to more neutral (e.g., unity), with significant inconsistency on whether GWK represents unity or shared cultural identity. Cluster 1 shows minimal emotional connection or pride in the brand, indicating a strong disconnect between visitor expectations and brand identity. Cluster 2 displays partial emotional attachment but hesitates regarding authenticity and symbolic representation, suggesting a need for clearer communication and trust-building. Cluster 3 shows the strongest emotional and symbolic alignment, reflecting effective brand engagement with culturally motivated visitors. These findings support destination branding theories emphasizing

emotional and symbolic resonance as critical for cultural destinations. To better engage the moderate cluster (Cluster 2), GWK should refine brand storytelling and integrate culturally representative visuals and narratives throughout the visitor experience.

Table 9. Brand Positioning Construct

| Item | Cluster 1 Disengaged | Cluster 2 Neutral | Cluster 3 Engaged | Total Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BP1 -** Sense of Pride | 1.59 | 4.21 | 4.92 | 4.41 |
| **BP2 -** Sense of Joy | 1.66 | 4.03 | 4.71 | 4.29 |
| **BP3 -** Sense of Trust | 1.90 | 3.97 | 4.78 | 4.34 |
| **BP4 -** Spiritual/Cultural Relevance | 1.59 | 3.87 | 4.73 | 4.25 |
| **BP5 -** National Identity | 1.62 | 4.01 | 4.73 | 4.29 |
| **BP6R -** Unity | 1.66 | 3.28 | 3.80 | 3.49 |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

Programmed Activities at GWK represent the tangible cultural experience and are evaluated on visitor attraction, authenticity, interactivity, and emotional resonance. Descriptive analysis reveals varied scores, with some visitors perceiving certain activities as commodified and less authentic, while others find the programming engaging and emotionally moving. Cluster 1 consistently shows low scores across all PA items, indicating low engagement, emotional connection, and perceived authenticity suggesting these visitors are not culturally motivated or engaged. Cluster 2 visitors show moderate appreciation for vitality and interactivity but remain skeptical about authenticity and cultural representation, pointing to a gap between motivation and experience. Cluster 3 visitors rate all indicators highly, feeling emotionally connected, energized, and culturally affirmed by the programming. This confirms that emotional inspiration is a key factor distinguishing engaged from disengaged visitors. The results recommend that GWK's programming not only maintain authenticity and participation but also prioritize evoking meaningful emotional responses to deepen visitor engagement.

Table 10. Programmed Activities Construct

| Item | Cluster 1 Disengaged | Cluster 2 Neutral | Cluster 3 Engaged | Total Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PA4 -** Animating attractions | 1.59 | 2.85 | 4.40 | 4.20 |
| **PA7R -** Enhancing Cultural Authenticity | 1.86 | 3.75 | 4.67 | 3.10 |
| **PA9 -** Enhancing Cultural Authenticity | 1.34 | 3.85 | 4.70 | 4.21 |
| **PA10 -** Experience Activity | 1.93 | 3.48 | 4.48 | 4.01 |
| **PA14 -** Emotional Resonance | 1.48 | 3.47 | 4.58 | 4.13 |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

Visitor engagement at GWK encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral immersion, which is crucial for heritage tourism where emotional connection and authenticity shape visitor experience and loyalty. Analysis of visitor responses across three clusters reveals distinct levels of engagement: Cluster 1 (Disengaged) shows deep emotional disconnection, minimal learning, passive participation, and very low intention to return, indicating a misalignment with GWK's cultural objectives; Cluster 2 (Neutral) demonstrates moderate emotional pride, openness to learning, some participation, and conditional loyalty, representing a key opportunity for targeted strategies to deepen emotional and behavioral engagement; meanwhile, Cluster 3 (Engaged) exhibits strong emotional resonance, significant cognitive impact, active participation, and high loyalty, reflecting the ideal visitor outcome that GWK aims to cultivate. These findings suggest that while GWK's programming successfully connects with highly engaged visitors, enhancing multi-dimensional engagement strategies to activate Cluster 2's latent potential will be critical to broadening the park's cultural impact and fostering sustained visitor loyalty.

Table 11. Visitor Engagement Construct

| Item | Cluster 1 Disengaged | Cluster 2 Neutral | Cluster 3 Engaged | Total Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **VE1R -** Emotional Engagement | 1.52 | 3.18 | 3.93 | 3.54 |
| **VE2 -** Emotional Engagement | 1.86 | 3.97 | 4.80 | 4.35 |
| **VE4** - Cognitive Engagement | 1.86 | 3.73 | 4.68 | 4.20 |
| **VE7-** Behavioral Engagement | 1.76 | 3.27 | 4.39 | 3.88 |
| **VE9 -** Behavioral Engagemen**t** | 1.69 | 3.90 | 4.73 | 4.27 |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

### *4.7 Summary of Quantitative Findings*

The quantitative analysis of GWK visitors, integrating reliability and validity testing with cluster segmentation, reveals distinct visitor profiles with varying levels of cultural motivation, brand perception, program activation, and engagement. Reliability testing confirmed strong internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.9) and Exploratory Factor Analysis supported construct validity. K-means clustering segmented visitors into three groups: Disengaged (Cluster 1), Neutral (Cluster 2), and Engaged Cultural Tourists (Cluster 3). Cluster 3 demonstrated strong emotional, symbolic, and cognitive alignment with GWK's cultural brand, reflected in high pride, authenticity, and loyalty scores, representing GWK's core audience. In contrast, Clusters 1 and 2 revealed weaknesses such as perceived commercialization, emotional detachment, and low program participation, with Cluster 1 being largely disengaged and Cluster 2 showing moderate motivation but insufficient emotional activation. Importantly, Cluster 2 represents a critical growth opportunity, as they display openness to deeper narrative engagement, cultural pride, and co-creation formats that could enhance loyalty and experiential connection. Threats are concentrated in Cluster 1 due to their emotional indifference and potential to erode brand identity if their share grows. Overall, the findings underscore the necessity for clearer symbolic messaging, emotionally resonant programming, and participatory experiences to bridge perception gaps, activate the neutral segment, and sustain GWK's position as a meaningful cultural destination. These insights directly inform strategic recommendations to strengthen visitor engagement and loyalty across all segments.

Table 12. Cluster Summary Table

| Cluster | CT | BP | PA | VE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cluster 1 Disengaged** | Low motivation, no cultural engagement | Reject symbolic meaning | Finds programs inauthentic, not interested to participate | Emotionally disconnected, no intent to return |
| **Cluster 2 Neutral** | Motivated but understimulated | Emotionally receptive but symbolic trust is lacking | Moderate energy but quite participative and needs more stimulation | Moderate eagerness in learning, could possibly be swayed in terms of loyalty |
| **Cluster 3 Engaged** | High intent on cultural engagement | Strong symbolic and emotional connection | Finds the offerings as authentic, inspiring and participative in the offerings | Fully engaged emotionally, cognitively and behaviorally |

Source: Developed by Author using IBM SPSS (2025)

The quantitative phase of this study, while methodologically rigorous, has several acknowledged limitations that contextualize the findings and guide future research. The survey instrument, though based on established constructs, faced challenges with reverse-coded items that showed inconsistent responses, possibly due to cognitive strain or bias. The sample, comprising primarily domestic visitors within a three-year timeframe, limits generalizability, especially lacking international perspectives and group-level insights from significant market segments like educational or corporate tours. Self-reported data may also reflect social desirability bias, particularly in culturally sensitive items. The chosen three-cluster segmentation, while interpretable, may not capture the full complexity of visitor psychographics, and construct validity could vary across different cultural backgrounds without deeper cross-cultural analysis. Despite these constraints, the quantitative approach effectively triangulated multiple analyses to provide valuable insights aligned with the research objectives.

### 4.8 Cross Analysis of Internal and External Perspectives with Internal Capabilities

This section presents a cross-analysis integrating internal stakeholder interviews, external visitor surveys, and secondary data to formulate strategic recommendations for repositioning GWK as a leading cultural tourism destination. By employing a convergent mixed-methods approach, the study compares internal aspirations such as achieving cultural icon status and fostering national pride with visitor expectations. Triangulation enhances the validity and credibility of findings by identifying both alignments and gaps between perspectives, while supporting literature provides context and benchmarks for cultural tourism branding, which hinges on both symbolic appeal and consistent organizational performance. Through analysis of internal qualitative data (stakeholder interviews) and external quantitative data (visitor surveys), this section triangulates findings with observed operational practices, open-ended visitor comments, and relevant recent academic literature. The purpose is to systematically identify strategic contradictions gaps between intention and perception, or between vision and execution and to uncover emerging opportunities that can guide the development of a more resonant positioning strategy and relevant program innovations. GWK Cultural Park aspires to offer immersive cultural experiences, yet survey data reveal a gap between intention and visitor perception, especially among Cluster 2 respondents who rated interactivity and emotional engagement as only moderate. While some participatory elements like gamelan tryouts exist, they are informal and poorly integrated. Literature highlights that participatory storytelling and co-creation enhance cultural engagement, suggesting that low-barrier, modular activities like workshops or interactive dance lessons could bridge this disconnect and elevate visitor involvement. GWK positions itself as a cultural icon of national pride, reinforced by its role in state events like the G20 and World Water Forum. However, ordinary visitors often fail to connect with this symbolism due to inconsistent narrative delivery across platforms and on-site experiences. Visitors report confusion and a lack of context about GWK's meaning, indicating a gap in brand storytelling. To address this, GWK must embed symbolic narratives across its physical and digital ecosystems and create coherent storytelling routes to unify brand identity and enhance emotional resonance. Despite GWK's wide variety of cultural programs, the approach lacks segmentation and depth, particularly for the sizable "Neutral" visitor segment (Cluster 2), which shows emotional openness but low engagement. Internal insights and visitor feedback emphasize the need for interactive and thematic programming. Literature supports that demand-driven, personalized experiences like mini workshops, thematic days, and narrative-based trails are more effective than broad static shows. Integrating such formats can turn passive tourists into engaged, loyal visitors by aligning content with their emotional and cultural expectations.

### 4.8.1 Strategic Implications of Misalignments

GWK's symbolic positioning as a national cultural icon is weakened by the lack of accessible, integrated storytelling across the visitor experience. Key symbolic elements such as the Viewing Gallery and 'Baraong' performance are placed behind paywalls, preventing widespread emotional engagement. This misalignment, especially for Cluster 2 visitors who demonstrate moderate symbolic connection, highlights that symbolic awareness alone does not ensure emotional investment. Without embedded narrative tools across touchpoints, GWK risks diluting its brand resonance and missing its goals of fostering cultural identity and visitor loyalty. While GWK offers numerous performances and events, their generic, stage-based format lacks the immersive and participatory qualities increasingly sought by modern cultural tourists. Survey data and open-ended responses reveal a significant demand for co-creative and hands-on activities, yet current programming remains volume-focused rather than value-driven. This restricts emotional engagement and discourages repeat visitation, particularly from Cluster 2. Strategically, GWK must evolve its offerings to meet segmented visitor needs through differentiated, meaningful programming to enhance visitor satisfaction and long-term loyalty. GWK's current segmentation approach limited to domestic versus international visitors fails to capture the psychographic and behavioral diversity of its audience. Without a robust visitor insight system, GWK cannot design targeted experiences or communications aligned with evolving motivations and expectations. This gap prevents the organization from capitalizing on the distinct engagement potential revealed by cluster analysis. Strategically, GWK must implement data-driven segmentation tools like motivational surveys and persona mapping to curate relevant programming and refine its brand storytelling across digital and physical platforms.

### 4.8.2 Identification of Priority Areas for Repositioning

GWK's most distinctive asset its symbolic and ceremonial role has yet to be effectively integrated into the visitor's core experience. Given that rich symbolic narratives like the Garuda Wisnu Kencana story and cultural performances already exist, enhancing interpretive elements in freely accessible areas is both impactful and highly feasible. By embedding this storytelling across touchpoints, GWK can reinforce its cultural brand positioning and foster deeper emotional engagement with minimal operational disruption. To ensure long-term strategic growth, GWK must move beyond basic demographic segmentation and adopt a visitor profiling framework that captures motivations and behaviors. While implementation may face feasibility challenges due to current limitations in data infrastructure and organizational readiness, segmentation is essential for aligning brand communication and programming with actual visitor needs. The cluster analysis from this study provides a viable starting point for building such a framework. Introducing participatory, culturally rooted programs offers a practical and impactful pathway to enhance visitor engagement. These hands-on activities not only respond to expressed visitor demand but also present opportunities for GWK to diversify experiences and build emotional resonance. Although not as immediately feasible as

symbolic integration, participatory formats can be piloted gradually and adapted to future audience segments, positioning GWK ahead of traditional, passive cultural attractions.

### 4.9 Business Solution

This subsection presents the results of the visitor market segmentation of GWK Cultural Park, derived from a quantitative cluster analysis. Using statistical patterns from respondents' cultural motivations, engagement preferences, and behavior, the analysis identified distinct visitor groups. This segmentation follows the STP (Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning) framework proposed by Kotler & Keller (2016) and serves as a strategic foundation for targeted cultural programming and marketing decisions. To create a more humanized approach in segmentation, a persona-based character is created based on EFA cluster variable and demographic data of the survey respondents.

According to the framework of McKercher & du Cros (2002), Persona of Cluster 1, Pak Wijono falls into the Incidental Cultural Tourist category. This typology is characterized by low cultural motivation, minimal desire for intellectual or emotional stimulation, and passive behavior throughout the visit. This segment reveals a need for clearer wayfinding, emotionally accessible storytelling, and low-effort cultural touchpoints that can engage passive visitors without requiring high commitment. Informational signage, ambient storytelling installations, and family-inclusive content may help convert passive presence into minimal yet meaningful interaction.

Persona of Cluster 2, Sara, fits into the Casual Cultural Tourist category, with a tendency toward the Serendipitous Tourist type. She does not actively seek cultural enrichment but is open to it if it is seamlessly integrated into her leisure activities, socially engaging, and cognitively light. To attract and retain this segment, GWK should focus on enhancing its experiential storytelling and curating cultural content that is visually immersive, emotionally light, and easily digestible. Integrating digital touchpoints (e.g., interactive maps, AR photo spots, or festival-themed programming) can bridge the gap between cultural identity and lifestyle appeal. Packaging cultural messages in creative, low-effort formats may increase Sara's likelihood to return and recommend GWK to her peers.

Mas Dimas, Persona of Cluster 3, is categorized as a Purposeful Cultural Tourist (McKercher & du Cros, 2002), whose primary travel motivation is to gain cultural knowledge and emotional enrichment. He seeks immersive, intellectually stimulating, and emotionally resonant cultural experiences. This segment reflects the highest cultural commitment and thus the greatest potential for brand advocacy and repeat visitation. To serve this group, GWK must develop coherent storytelling across its spatial design, improve programmatic integration, and provide interpretive services (e.g., guided tours, digital narration, thematic exhibitions). Dimas and similar personas serve as a benchmark for evaluating GWK's cultural delivery quality and should be treated as core stakeholders in repositioning efforts.

This section outlines GWK's targeting, positioning, and programming strategies to strengthen its brand as a dynamic cultural icon. GWK prioritizes Cluster 3 ("Purposeful Cultural" visitors) as its core target due to their deep cultural interest and potential for brand loyalty, with Cluster 2 ("Curious Leisure Seekers") as a secondary growth segment open to interactive and visual experiences. Cluster 1 ("Passive Escorts") is considered a non-target, requiring only basic facilities. The new positioning statement presents GWK as "Indonesia's living stage of culture," appealing to both committed and casual cultural tourists. Five brand message pillars support this: "Culture in Motion," "Icon of Myth & Nation," "Join the Journey," "Made for Everyone," and "Where Stories Come Alive," which together emphasize participation, emotional resonance, and symbolic identity. To bring this to life, GWK will optimize its cultural programming through four formats: symbolic narrative content, interactive experiences, digital engagement via MythLab, and curated, segment-specific experiences. A centralized storytelling space (Bali Gallery/Museum) is also proposed. These strategies aim to transition GWK from a passive site to an immersive cultural destination, enhancing engagement and long-term sustainability.

### 4.10 Implementation Plan & Justification

This section details the practical implementation strategy for GWK Cultural Park's new brand positioning and programming through a phased roadmap, stakeholder engagement framework, and monitoring metrics. The short-term phase focuses on integrating positioning goals into operations by consolidating brand identity, piloting narrative-based programming like the "Garuda Cultural Immersion Day," and building internal capacity through cross-division workshops. The mid-term phase institutionalizes programming with quarterly thematic cultural seasons, initiates the GWK Bali Gallery/Museum, and strengthens educational partnerships with universities and local arts communities. The long-term vision positions GWK as a nationally and regionally recognized cultural anchor by expanding exhibitions to include archipelagic cultures, developing a digital platform with AR guides and heritage archives, and pursuing cultural brand certification through a formal Curatorial Board.

### 4.10.1 Stakeholder Involvement Strategy

Effective strategic implementation requires active coordination among diverse stakeholders, including internal management, local communities, performers, visitors, and its parent company, ASRI. GWK's current stakeholder dynamics show both synergies and areas for improvement, such as siloed internal divisions and under-formalized engagement with local cultural communities. Visitors, especially domestic tourists, are also seeking more meaningful participation. GWK Cultural Park's implementation strategy involves a phased approach across short-term (0-12 months), mid-term (12-24 months), and long-term (24-36 months horizons). The short-term focuses on consolidating brand identity, launching pilot narrative-based programs like the "Garuda Cultural Immersion Day" for Cluster 3, and building internal capacity. The mid-term aims to institutionalize cultural programming through thematic calendars and initiate the "GWK Bali Gallery/Museum," while strengthening educational partnerships. The long-term vision positions GWK as a national cultural showcase, expanding its exhibition capabilities, launching a digital cultural app, and pursuing cultural brand certification. This entire strategy is underpinned by a robust stakeholder engagement plan to manage diverse interests and a comprehensive Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework that combines leading and lagging indicators, using both quantitative and qualitative KPIs, to ensure continuous progress, data-driven adjustments, and successful execution.

## 5. Conclusion

The research reveals that GWK's current brand positioning is hampered by fragmented symbolic storytelling and insufficient emotional engagement. While its monumental presence provides functional recognition, it lacks cultural impact in Bali's competitive tourism market. Stakeholder interviews consistently highlighted a need for integrated narrative. Survey data indicates that Cluster 3 ("Engaged Cultural Tourists," 63.7% of visitors) strongly connect with GWK's cultural values, showing high emotional and symbolic associations. Cluster 2 ("Neutral Visitors," 29.0%) represents a high-potential group with moderate emotional engagement but openness to cultural learning, suggesting they can be converted with appropriate emotional and symbolic triggers. Therefore, GWK must reposition its brand by activating symbolic storytelling across all touchpoints, deploying emotional branding to deepen connections, and segmenting messaging to target Cluster 2's readiness for cultural participation. Regarding programming, GWK currently offers numerous cultural events that are often passive, fragmented, and lack emotional depth, despite their quantity. Stakeholders noted the absence of a unifying strategic narrative. Survey data shows that while Cluster 3 rates programming authenticity and engagement highly, Cluster 2 reports only moderate engagement and a preference for more participatory programs. Consequently, GWK's management must optimize its programming by creating layered and participatory experiences, curating cluster-specific programs (entry-level for Cluster 2, deeper co-creation for Cluster 3), and integrating spiritual and mythological components to enhance symbolic coherence. These strategies aim to increase visitor engagement and strengthen GWK's brand positioning by meeting the diverse emotional and motivational needs of its visitor segments.

Five key recommendations are proposed to enhance GWK Cultural Park's brand positioning, cultural programming, and visitor involvement. GWK should reinterpret its brand identity around "The Living Soul of Balinese Culture,transforming its monumental symbolism into an emotionally appealing narrative through myth-based thematic trails, AR, QR codes, and multilingual signage. It should institutionalize visitor segmentation typology to guide programming and communication, specifically targeting Cluster 2 with emotionally oriented branding and entry-level activities. GWK must expand and diversify its participatory cultural programming with hands-on formats like craft workshops and interactive storytelling, developed into modular offerings. It should reorganize its spatial programming architecture to align with symbolic coherence by designating thematic zones and using time-based scheduling. Finally, GWK should formalize cultural co-creation practices by establishing a curatorial board comprising Sanggar leaders, Balinese art scholars, cultural elders, and GWK representatives to ensure content accuracy and promote sustainable collaboration with local creative communities.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.
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