

Research Article

Marketing Strategy Based on Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) and Product Life Cycle (PLC) at Selangkah Trip in Malang City

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Abstract: The tourism industry is growing rapidly along with the increasing public interest in travel. Travel agencies (BPW) play a strategic role in providing quality services for tourists. Selangkah Trip, one of the BPWs in Malang City, faces fierce competition so it requires the right marketing strategy to remain competitive. This study aims to analyze the application of *Segmenting, Targeting, Positioning* (STP) and *Product Life Cycle* (PLC) strategies in improving Selangkah Trip's competitiveness. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, where data is collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The results of this study at the segmentation stage, the company focuses the market on schools and corporations, by customizing services for each segment, such as economical tour packages for schools and exclusive services for corporations. In the *targeting* stage, the company selects segments with stable and sustainable demand, with a direct and digital approach to expand market reach. In *positioning*, Selangkah Trip emphasizes competitive service quality, affordable prices, and unique experiences, such as the concept of camping in Bromo, to strengthen its image as a trusted travel service provider. This research also identifies the implementation of strategies at PLC, where at the introduction stage, the company focuses on introducing services through strategic partnerships and digital marketing. At the growth stage, demand increases through new service innovations, while at the maturity stage, the company strengthens its position with competitive prices and high-quality services. In the decline stage, the company adapts by offering flexible packages and expanding the market for individual travelers to maintain operational sustainability amid economic challenges.

Keywords: Segmenting, Targeting, Positioning, Product Life Cycle, Tourist Bureau

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the leading sectors in the Indonesian economy that continues to grow rapidly. Along with the increasing public interest in travel activities and exploration of new destinations, the tourism service business is expanding and competing in offering the best services.

The increase and development of the tourism sector is strongly influenced by various supporting factors that have an important role, such as the availability of facilities at tourist sites. These facilities include transportation, accommodation, dining, and entertainment

Received: March 14th, 2025

Revised: April 17th, 2025

Accepted: May 13th, 2025

Published: May 16th, 2025

Curr. Ver.: May 17th, 2025



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facilities. One of the most crucial factors in the tourism industry is the existence of a Tourist Travel Bureau (BPW). BPW is a form of business that organizes tourism activities and provides various travel-related services, both for domestic and foreign tourists. In the world of tourism, travel agencies have a strategic role because they function as a link between tourism service providers and consumers (Yunita and Musadad 2018). Basically, activities in travel agencies are highly dependent on the level of consumer trust. This is because potential customers generally make an initial payment in the hope of getting appropriate and satisfying services.

Table 1.1

District/City	Travel Bureau	travel agent	Total
Malang district	42	31	73
Malang City	79	52	131
Stone Town	17	0	17

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics of East Java Province. (2017)

From the data above, currently the number of travel agencies in Malang City has grown quite rapidly and more and more are emerging. One of the Travel Bureaus in Malang is Selangkah Trip, Selangkah Trip is one of the active and developing travel service business actors, especially in offering tour packages to popular destinations according to consumer demand. In, Selangkah Trip also has a number of supporting partners, such as bus transportation service providers, and provides various types of tour packages such as study tours, student trips, and honeymoon packages.

In facing dynamic market competition, tourism businesses are required have a marketing strategy that is appropriate, effective, and oriented to consumer needs. To be able to compete and remain relevant in the midst of the rise of similar service providers, Selangkah Trip needs to implement a targeted marketing strategy, one of which is the Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) approach.

Through market segmentation (segmenting), companies can understand the characteristics and needs of various groups of tourists. With targeting, Selangkah Trip can determine the most potential segments to be the main target market. Meanwhile, positioning strategies help companies build a strong image and differentiate themselves from competitors, so that they are more easily recognized and remembered by consumers.

In addition to the STP strategy, understanding the Product Life Cycle (PLC) is also very important in marketing management. By knowing which stage a product is in, whether introduction, growth, maturity, or decline. Step Trip can adjust promotional strategies, product innovation, and resource management to stay relevant and competitive.

The application of marketing strategies based on Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) and Product Life Cycle (PLC) allows companies not only understand the market better, but also to design tour packages that match trends, consumer needs, and product life cycles. A study of the application of these two strategies in Selangkah Trip's business is important to find out how effective marketing approaches can be applied in the service-based tourism industry.

This research aims to analyze the marketing strategy implemented by Selangkah Trip in Malang City through the Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) approach. This analysis is carried out to understand how companies identify potential market segments, determine appropriate targets, and form a strong and distinct position in the minds of consumers in the highly competitive tourism industry.

Addition, this research also aims to identify the product life cycle (PLC) stages of the travel services offered by Selangkah Trip. By understanding the position of travel services at each stage of the PLC, companies are expected to adjust marketing strategies and product innovations more precisely to maintain competitiveness and business sustainability.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Segmenting

According to (Santoso et al, 2024) Market segmentation is an important strategy for a successful marketing program. This strategy involves grouping heterogeneous markets into segments that have similar needs, wants, behaviors, and responses to marketing efforts.

Meanwhile, the purpose of segmenting is to secure a competitive advantage by concentrating on consumer groups (Sukirno, A. F & Kustini, K. 2024). Segmentation is a crucial stage in the business world, which plays a role in determining which market group will be the main target. This segmentation process involves grouping customers based on characteristics, needs, preferences, and other factors that are aligned with the company's strategic goals. With the right segmentation, companies can design more effective and efficient marketing strategies (Hendrawan 2021).

According to (Hendrawan 2021) One method of carrying out market segmentation is by distinguishing market segments based on 4 (four) categories including, *first*, geographic, Several geographic variables that can be used as a reference in the segmentation process include: a) Location, such as provinces, districts, sub-districts, or certain residential areas; b) Area, including categories such as elite, urban, slum, metropolitan, suburban, or rural areas; c) Population density level, which can be classified as densely populated areas, residential areas, or village settlements; d) Climatic conditions, including cold, tropical, and subtropical climates. *Second*, demographic, Demographic segmentation variables include various aspects such as age, gender, number of family members, stage in the family life cycle, income level, type of employment, education level, generation, ethnic background, nationality, religion, and social strata, and other influential factors. *Third*, psychographic, In this psychographic segmentation, consumers can be observed in social class (*social class*), *lifestyle (lifestyle)*, life values adopted (*value*), and personality (*personality*). *Fourth*, behavior, Behavioral segmentation is based on actual customer behavior patterns towards a product. Aspects that are considered in this segmentation include expected benefits, frequency of use, level of loyalty, etc.

2.2 Targeting

Targeting is the process of selecting one or more market segments to be reached by the company as well as strategies to optimize the market potential. In determining the target market, companies need to apply the principles of priority, variability, and flexibility to ensure the effectiveness of the marketing strategy implemented (Handayani and Moktar. B, 2023). The process of choosing which segment to target is called targeting. Target markets can also be defined as activities that contain and assess and select one or more market segments that a company will enter. According to (Kotler 2011) targeting is a process that involves evaluating and selecting the most suitable market segments based on the segmentation results that have been carried out.

2.3 Positioning

According to (Kotler 2016) Positioning is a strategy in designing the company's offerings and image so that it has its own uniqueness and position in the minds of consumers. The products offered will always be associated with the company that produces them, so an effective imaging strategy is needed to build positive perceptions and increase competitiveness, both for current and future marketing. Positioning relates to how to play communication so that in the minds of consumers a certain image is embedded. Positioning aims to define and build the image of a product in the market so that it has different characteristics from competing brands. This strategy allows the product to convey the main value to consumers, achieve the expected goals, and form customer trust and loyalty to the product (Oscardo, et al, 2021).

2.4 Product Life Cycle (PLC)

According to (Cindy 2013) Product Life Cycle (PLC) is a model that shows how the sales volume of a product can change over the life of the product. A product is believed to go through certain stages of life in the same way as a living organism. Where the product is first introduced in the market and customers will accept it if they feel product suits their needs, indirectly sales will increase rapidly (Prasad, R. K. et al, 2019). Then, everyone who needs the product will buy it and sales will reach a saturation point. At some stage, the need for the product is satisfactory to see its existence, or another solution to the need emerges. The following are the stages in PLC (Rodhiah, et al, 2024) including;

1. Introduction. This stage describes the company's strategy in introducing its products to consumers and the public so that the new product is widely recognized. Therefore, in this phase, products are generally designed with limited models to make it easier for consumers to recognize and understand product characteristics quickly and effectively.
2. Growth. At this stage of the strategy, market growth is divided into two categories, namely rapid growth and slow growth. In the rapid growth stage, there are several key indications, such as a significant spike in the company's sales figures. This increase occurs because the product has been well received and has a high demand in the market. However, not all new products can reach this stage, as many fail in the initial phase of market introduction. Meanwhile, in the slow growth stage, sales figures still show an increase, but with a declining growth rate. This happens because most of the market has been reached and the company's products are already widely used by consumers. In this phase, companies need to make various innovations and improvements to their products to maintain competitiveness and sales sustainability. Modifications can be made through design improvements or style improvements to strengthen the product's position in the market. In addition, at this stage as the uniqueness and attractiveness of the industry begins to wane, competition between companies is intensifying.
3. Maturity. This stage marks the peak achievement in the testing process conducted by the company. In general, there are two main strategies applied at the maturity stage of a product. The first strategy is a defensive strategy, which aims to maintain market share in the face of competition and protect products from the threat of substitute or alternative products. The main focus of this strategy is production cost efficiency and quality improvement by eliminating product weaknesses to remain competitive in the market. The second strategy is the development strategy (offensive strategy), which is oriented towards improving the product position through various innovations in order to achieve a better level. This approach is carried out by modifying the market, such as attracting new consumer groups who have not previously used the product, offering products to new segments, and capturing market share from competitors. Thus, this strategy focuses on product development and innovation to maintain competitiveness in the market.
4. Decline. The decline stage in the product life cycle is characterized by a decline in the company's sales figures over time. This decline is generally caused by various factors, such as changing market trends, the emergence of superior substitute products, or technological developments that shift consumer preferences. To deal with this decline phase, there are several marketing strategies that can be implemented. First, increase investment to strengthen your position in the market and dominate the competition. Second, modify the product or find new benefits to keep it attractive to consumers. Third, explore new market shares by looking for potential customer segments. Fourth, stay in the industry by waiting until market uncertainty can be overcome, for example by abandoning less profitable customer segments and allocating resources to segments that still provide profits.

3. Proposed Method

The method in this research uses a qualitative case study approach, which is a research approach applied to explore in-depth understanding of case studies. In a real and specific context. In case study qualitative research, researchers prioritize the analysis of one or more cases relevant to the research topic, which can be individuals, groups, organizations, events or certain situations (Dewi and Hidayah 2019). Data collection in this study was conducted through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted using a structured question guide to obtain information from relevant parties. This research conducted an interview with Faqih Multazim Bilhaq as the owner of *Selangkah Trip* which is located at Jl. Selat Sunda V No.50, Lesanpuro, Kec. Kedungkandang, Malang City, East Java 65138. In addition, observations of the subject's behavior and interactions were also made to gain a deeper understanding of the context and dynamics that occur in the field. The data collection process was conducted within one week, through direct interviews. All

interviews were recorded and transcribed and then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. This analysis involves identifying patterns and key themes from each informant's narrative relating to the *Segmenting, Targeting, Positioning* (STP) and *Product Life Cycle* (PLC) strategies used by *Selangkah Trip*. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation and member checking, where the transcript results were reconfirmed to the informants to ensure data accuracy.

4. Results and Discussion

Selangkah Trip which is located at Jl. Selat Sunda V No.50, Lesanpuro, Kec. Kedungkandang, Malang City, East Java 65138. Selangkah Trip was founded in June 2022 in the form of a CV by Faqih Multazim Bilhaq. The main focus of this business is to provide tour packages to Bromo with the main market of corporate and schools. Selangkah Trip also serves tours to other destinations such as Jogja, Bali, Bandung, Banyuwangi, Jakarta, and Pasuruan.

4.1 Segmenting

At the market segmentation stage, the company targets market segments that include corporate institutions as well as educational institutions, ranging from elementary schools, junior high schools, to high schools. In addition, services also remain available for the individual customer segment, including families and individual travelers, planning to visit Bromo tourist destination. Based on research and experience in the tourism industry, the largest market segment for Bromo comes from schools and corporate institutions. Educational institutions generally have an annual agenda for study tour programs, while companies often hold gathering or outing activities for their employees. However, the company still opens opportunities for family and individual tours who want to enjoy the tourist experience to Bromo. The service strategy applied is tailored to the characteristics of each market segment. For the school segment, tour packages are designed with more economical prices and simple facilities to suit the budget and needs of students. Meanwhile, for the corporate segment, the company offers more exclusive tour packages, including accommodation in star hotels and other premium services. With this approach, the company seeks to meet the preferences and travel needs of various customer segments, thereby increasing competitiveness and expanding market reach in the tourism industry.

This is in line with research by (Nurlena et al., 2018) because studies show the importance of adjusting marketing strategies based on specific market segmentation to increase marketing effectiveness and attractiveness of tourist destinations. In study, Rumah Dome Tourism Village implemented a segmentation strategy by targeting specific market segments, such as families, students, and domestic tourists, then adjusting tourism offerings ranging from facilities, prices, to forms of activities with the characteristics and needs of each segment. This is in line with the Bromo tour company's approach of designing economical tour packages for schools and exclusive packages for corporations, while still opening access for individual and family customers. These two approaches show that focusing on relevant market segmentation can help tourism industry players meet customer expectations, increase tourist satisfaction, and expand market reach effectively.

4.2 Targeting

Within the STP marketing strategy framework, Selangkah Trip clearly implements the targeting stage by selecting two main segments as its target market, namely educational institutions (elementary, junior high, high school) and companies or corporations. The selection of these two segments shows differentiated targeting strategy approach, in which the company develops customized offerings for each segment based on different needs and characteristics. The main reason for determining these segments as target markets is because of their stable and recurring demand every year. Schools routinely organize study tour activities as an annual program, while companies have a tradition of outings or employee gatherings that are also carried out regularly. This stability makes both segments a profitable and reliable target market. To reach these target segments, Selangkah Trip implemented a targeting strategy through personal approach and direct communication. They make presentations and pitches to school parties, such as teachers and principals, who act as

decision makers. As for the company segment, the approach is done by establishing relationships with HRD and event organizers who are responsible for company activities. In addition, the targeting strategy is also expanded through digital marketing channels, especially Instagram and Meta Ads, to increase visibility and attract customers from the target segment more broadly. With this targeted strategy, Selangkah Trip is able to customize its offerings to be more relevant and attractive to each target group, thereby increasing conversions and strengthening its position in the tourism services industry.

Selangkah Trip's targeting strategy is in line with research by (Syafii & Budiyo, 2022), which both apply differentiated targeting by selecting market segments that have stable and recurring demand. Both adjust the marketing approach based on the characteristics of the intended segment Selangkah Trip targets educational institutions and companies, while Skymansion Horizon targets young professionals and families. In addition, both combine a personal approach through direct communication with the utilization of digital marketing such as Meta Ads, Google Ads, and social media to effectively expand market reach.

4.3 Positioning

The company is committed to becoming a travel service provider known for its competitive prices, complete facilities, and high quality services. In an effort to achieve a competitive advantage, the company offers a variety of tour packages designed to provide a comfortable, affordable travel experience supported by professional services. As part of its innovation strategy, the company continuously develops its services by adding unique travel experiences. One of the innovations offered is the concept of camping tours, which allows customers to enjoy the natural beauty of Bromo in a more exclusive and authentic atmosphere. With a combination of competitive prices, adequate facilities, and innovation in tourist experiences, the company aims to strengthen its position as a trusted and superior travel service provider in the tourism industry. This is in line with research conducted by (Solihah et al., 2021) which concluded that product differentiation strategies and service innovation are able to increase business competitiveness in the tourism industry by creating added value and increasing customer satisfaction.

4.4 Introduction

Initially, the company identified that tours to Bromo were in high demand. To meet this market need, the company established partnerships with experienced partners in organizing trips to Bromo to design attractive tour packages that meet customer preferences. However, the main challenge faced was stiff competition from established and reputable travel businesses in the market. In facing this challenge, the company needed to build customer trust and prove that the services offered were of superior quality. To achieve these goals, the company implemented a digital marketing strategy by utilizing Meta Ads and Google Ads to attract the attention of a wider and more specific set of potential customers. In addition, the company also relies on a direct marketing strategy by approaching key market segments, such as schools and corporations, that have potential ongoing travel needs. Through a combination of Through digital and direct marketing strategies, the company seeks to expand its market reach and strengthen its competitive position in the Bromo tourism industry.

At the introduction stage in the product life cycle, an effective marketing strategy is essential to introduce a new product or service to the market. This is in line with research findings by (Widodo 2018) emphasizing that at the introduction stage, companies need to combine appropriate pricing with intensive promotional activities to attract consumer attention and build brand awareness. This strategy aims to introduce the product effectively and create initial demand in the market. In addition, research by (Rodhiah, Bravo, and Valentina 2024) also highlights that at the introduction stage, sales growth tends to be slow as new products are introduced to the market. Therefore, companies need to invest heavily in marketing activities to introduce the product and build brand awareness among consumers. Thus, the marketing strategies implemented by the company, such as the use of Meta Ads and Google Ads to reach potential customers broadly and specifically, as well as direct approaches to key market segments such as schools and companies, are in line with the

recommendations of these studies. These measures can help build customer trust and strengthen the company's competitive position in the market.

4.5 Growth

In the second year, the company began to experience a significant increase in demand, which was achieved after successfully establishing strategic collaborations with various partners who have strong connections with the Bromo tourist destination. This collaboration had a positive impact on the company's visibility and appeal in the tourism market. Initially, the company only provided jeep tour packages for tourists who wanted to visit Bromo. However, along with the increasing market demand, the company then expanded its services by adding shuttle services as well as a semi-camping concept that allows customers to enjoy Bromo views in a more exclusive and authentic way. These innovations aim to meet the diverse needs of customers and enhance the tourism experience offered. To support this growth, the company also strengthened its branding with the following expanding its cooperation network with various travel agents. In addition, the company optimized its digital marketing and word-of-mouth marketing strategies to increase brand awareness and expand market reach. Through these approaches, the company managed to increase its appeal in the Bromo tourism market, while strengthening its competitive position in the industry.

This is in line with research by (Rodhiah et al. 2024) that in the growth stage, companies need to improve product quality, expand product lines, and strengthen distribution to maintain rapid market growth. This strategy aims to build brand preference and expand market share. Thus, the steps taken by the company, such as introducing shuttle services and semi-camping concepts, and expanding cooperation networks with travel agents, reflect the strategies recommended in these studies. This approach not only increases the company's appeal in the Bromo tourism market but also strengthens its competitive position in the industry.

4.6 Maturity

The Company continuously strives to improve service quality by offering competitive prices, and focusing on providing the best customer experience. This strategy aims to create high customer satisfaction, which in turn will encourage repeat orders and build long-term loyalty. As part of the service innovation, the company offers the concept of camping in Bromo, which provides a unique and exclusive experience for tourists who want to enjoy the natural beauty of Bromo more authentically. In addition, for added customer convenience, the company also provides hotel pick-up services to facilitate access to tourist destinations, so that customers can experience convenience and efficiency in their travel. Through this approach, the company seeks to strengthen its reputation as a travel service provider that not only offers affordable prices, but also excellent service and memorable experiences.

At this stage, it is supported by research conducted by (Terani Virana Devi, Sanjaya, and Indah Kusuma Dewi 2021) at the maturity stage, the company is advised to apply defensive and offensive strategies. The defensive strategy aims to maintain market share through improving service quality and operational efficiency, while the attack strategy focuses on product innovation and market expansion to face intense competition. Research by (Evilia 2022) emphasizes the importance of product diversification and service innovation at the maturity stage. In the context of tourism, diversification can be in the form of adding services such as camping concepts in Bromo and pick-up services from hotels, which provide added value to customers and differentiate the company from competitors.

4.7 Decline

The Company experienced a slight decline in demand influenced by the budget efficiency adopted by the public, especially after the pandemic and volatile economic conditions. This decline reflects changes in consumption patterns and customers' more cautious spending priorities. To overcome these challenges, the company continues to innovate its services by offering more flexible and economical tour packages, while maintaining optimal service quality. This aims to meet the needs of customers who prioritize cost efficiency without sacrificing a quality travel experience. In , the company is also expanding its target market by

accommodating individual travelers and small communities. This approach aims to fill the void left by other market segments affected by economic changes. Through this strategy, the company seeks to enhance customer diversification and ensure operational sustainability despite the economic uncertainty.

Research conducted (Hardianto, Emelia, and Merry Chornelia W 2021) by Taman Dolan tourism management strategies during the pandemic. They noted that the tourism manager utilizes technology for online marketing and offers tour packages that suit pandemic conditions, such as more personalized and flexible services. Thus, focusing on service innovation, price adjustment, and market diversification to face challenges at the decline stage of the product life cycle, especially during the pandemic.

5. Conclusions

Selangkah Trip has successfully implemented effective segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies in the face of tourism market dynamics. In the segmentation stage, the company focuses the market on schools and corporations, by customizing services to meet the specific needs of each segment, such as economical tour packages for schools and exclusive services for corporations. In the targeting stage, the company selects segments with stable and sustainable demand, namely educational institutions and corporations, with a direct and digital approach to expand market reach. In the positioning aspect, Selangkah Trip emphasizes competitive service quality at affordable prices and unique experiences such as the concept of camping in Bromo to strengthen its image as a reliable travel provider. Along the Product Life Cycle (PLC), at the introduction stage, the company focuses on service introduction through strategic partnerships and digital marketing.

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