

ANALYZING THE TOURISM DESTINATION POTENTIAL OF KETEK BOATS IN PALEMBANG: 4A FRAMEWORK FOR RIVER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Indah Rizki Sabilah^{1*}, Rahmat Ingkadijaya², Sri Mariati³, Myrza Rahmanita⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Master's Program in Tourism, Trisakti Tourism Institute, Indonesia

Correspondence: indahsabilah@gmail.com

Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: Ketek boat, river tourism, destination potential, 4A frame work, musi river, Palembang, tourism development. Received: June 21, 2026 Approved: August 10, 2026 Published: September 30, 2026	The Ketek boat, a traditional motorized wooden vessel operating along the Musi River, represents an essential cultural identity of Palembang's riverside communities and has significant potential as a river-based tourism attraction. As tourist increasingly seek authentic and culturally immersive experiences, river tourism has emerged as a strategic development trend in Southeast Asia, with previous studies emphasizing the importance of integrated management, safety, comfort, and environmental sustainability in optimizing river-based attraction. However, existing research indicates that the tourism potential of Ketek boats has not been maximized due to limited facilities, the absence of standardized service procedures, and weak destination governance. This study aims to analyze the tourism potential of Ketek boats in Palembang using the 4A framework-Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, and Ancillary Services. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, involving primary data collection through observations and interviews, complemented by secondary data from relevant literature. The result reveal that attractions constitute the strongest component, highlighted by river cruising experiences, iconic Musi River landscapes, and diverse cultural routes. Accessibility is relatively adequate due to strategically located piers and multimodal transport connections, although constrained by limited tourist piers and multimodal transport connections, although constrained by limited tourist information and non-standardized infrastructure. Amenities remain insufficient, particularly regarding safety equipment, comfort, and service quality. Ancillary services demonstrate a need for stronger governance, formal regulations, and collaboration among stakeholders. Overall, the study concludes that Ketek boats possess substantial potential as a flagship river tourism product in Palembang however, improvements in service standardization, facility enhancement, and integrated destination management are crucial to strengthen competitiveness and ensure sustainable tourism development.

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INTRODUCTION

The Musi River has long been recognized as one of the most important elements of Palembang's urban landscape, serving as the center of economic, social, and cultural activities for riverside communities. For centuries, the river has functioned not only as a transportation corridor but also as a cultural space that shapes the identity of the city. Among the traditional modes of river transportation, the ketek boat remains an iconic symbol of Palembang's river culture. Beyond its role as a means of daily transportation, the ketek possesses considerable potential to be developed as a river-based tourism attractions that preserves local heritage while creating economic opportunities for surrounding communities (Baiquni, 2019; Putra & Pitana, 2020).

In recent years, river tourism has emerged as an important tourism development trend, particularly in Southeast Asia, where many historic cities have revitalized their waterfronts through cultural and nature-based tourism experiences. Contemporary tourist increasingly seek authentic, immersive and sustainable tourism experiences that connect them with local culture and everyday community life. Consequently, rivers are no longer viewed solely as transportation corridors but also as tourism resources that provide recreational, educational, and cultural experiences. Previous studies indicate that successful river tourism development depends on integrated destination management, environmental sustainability, visitor safety, and collaboration among multiple stakeholders (Hall, 2023). The tourism potential of a destination is commonly evaluated using the 4A framework, which consist of Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, and Ancillary Services. These four components provide a comprehensive framework for assessing destination readiness and competitiveness. However, the 4A framework primarily emphasizes destination attributes and does not fully explain how tourism resources are managed and sustained over time. In river tourism destinations, where tourism activities rely heavily on local communities and environmental resources destination quality depends not only on physical infrastructure but also on effective governance and stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, the principles of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) complement the 4A framework by emphasizing community participation, local ownership, equitable benefit distribution, and collaborative management. Integrating these two perspective enables a more comprehensive understanding of river tourism because destination attractiveness can only be sustained when supported by active community involvement and effective institutional coordination.

In Palembang, ketek boats have gradually become recognized as one of the city's tourism icons through experiences such as cruising along the Musi River, viewing the AMPERA Bridge, visiting Kampung Al-Munawar, Kampung Kapitan, and Kemaro Island. These attractions offer authentic cultural experiences that distinguish ketek tourism from conventional land-based tourism. These conditions suggest that the sustainability tourism of ketek boat tourism depends not only on the attractiveness of the tourism product but also on improvements in governance, service quality, and stakeholder collaboration.

Although previous studies have discussed river tourism development, waterfront revitalization, and community participation in tourism, relatively few studies have specifically

examined the tourist potential of ketek boats by integrating destination attributes with community-based governance. Existing studies generally evaluate tourism attractions or management aspects separately, resulting in limited understanding of how the components of the 4A framework interact with Community-Based Tourism principles in supporting sustainable river tourism. This research gap highlights the need for a more integrated analysis that considers both destination quality and governance capacity in the development of ketek boat tourism.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the tourism potential of ketek boats in Palembang using an integrated perspective that combines the 4A framework with Community-Based Tourism principles. The study contributes theoretically by linking destination attributes with community-based governance in the context of river tourism, thereby enriching the discussion of sustainable tourism development in river destinations. Practically, the findings are expected to provide recommendations for local government, tourism stakeholders, and ketek boat operators to strengthen destination competitiveness, improve service quality, and promote sustainable river tourism management planning.

METHODS

This study is a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the potential of *Ketek Boats* in Palembang using the 4A tourism destination framework (Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, and Ancillary Services). The research was conducted in the Musi River tourism area, particularly at major ketek boat operation points, including Benteng Kuto Besak Pier, Pasar 16 Ilir Pier, Kampung Al-Munawar, and Kemaro Island. Primary data were collected through direct field observations and semi-structured interviews, while secondary data were obtained from scientific journals, government reports, tourism statistic and other relevant literature related to river tourism and destination development.

Informant were selected using purposive sampling, considering their knowledge and involvement in ketek boat tourism activities. The study involved 10 key informants, consisting of four ketek boat operators, two representatives from the Palembang Tourism Office, two local community leaders from riverside tourism areas, and two ketek boat tourism managers. These informants were selected because they were able to provide comprehensive information regarding the potential, constraints, and development strategies for ketek boat tourism. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation were categorized based on the four components of the 4A framework to identify the main themes that describe the potential of ketek boat tourism in Palembang.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied data triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary sources. Source triangulations among different stakeholder groups was also conducted to enhance the credibility of the findings. In addition, member checking was carried out with several key information to verify the accuracy of the interpreted results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Skema Konseptual 4A



Figure 1. 4A Framework.
Source: Primary Data, 2026

Overview of Ketek Boat Tours in Palembang

The ketek boat is a traditional mode of water transportation that has become an integral part of life for the people of Palembang. The term “ketek” refers to a small, motorized wooden boat that produces a distinctive “tek-tek-tek” sound when in operation. This mode of transportation has been used for decades for trade, daily commuting, and travel between villages along the Musi River and its tributaries. Ketek boat tours typically operate from several main piers, such as Pier 16 Ilir, Benteng Kuto Besak Pier, Kampung Al-Munawar Pier, and Pulau Kemaro Pier. The route for these ketek boat tours starts at Ampera Bridge, then proceeds to Pulau Kemaro, Kampung Al-Munawar, Kampung Kapitan, and finally Benteng Kuto Besak Pier. The trip duration ranges from 10 to 50 minutes, depending on the tour package.

The Potential Attraction of Ketek Boat Tourism in Palembang

Observations of the Musi River area and a literature review indicate that the main attraction of the Ketek boats lies in a river-cruising-based tourism experience that highlights Palembang’s cultural identity as a river city. The attraction dimension represents the strongest component of ketek boat tourism because it combines natural scenery, cultural heritage, and authentic river based experiences. Within the 4A framework, attractions constitute the core element that motivates tourist to visit a destination (Cooper et al., 2008). However, from a Community Based Tourism (CBT) perspective, the attraction extends beyond physical landscape. The daily activities of riverside communities, traditional boat operations, and local narrative constitute living cultural assets created and maintained by the community itself. This

finding indicates that *ketek* tourism reflects the principles of CBT, where local residents are not merely tourism service providers but also custodians of cultural identity. Furthermore, river tourism literature emphasizes that authentic interactions between visitors and river communities enhance destination competitiveness and encourage sustainable tourism experiences.

Attractions considered to have high market value include views of the Musi River and city landmarks, where tourists can enjoy panoramic views of the AMPERA Bridge, Kuto Besak Fort, traditional houseboats, and the daily activities of riverside communities. Ketek boats offer routes that can be tailored to tourists' preferences, such as short tours around the AMPERA Bridge and Kuto Besak Fort, cultural and religious tours to Kampung Al-Munawar, Kapitan, Tuan Kentang, and Kemaro Island, as well as river cruises for photography. This diversity of attractions further strengthens the destination's potential. Research shows that visual and cultural appeal are key components in the development of the Musi River waterfront as a tourist destination (Gusma et al., 2023). One boat operator explained "Most tourist choose the *ketek* because they want to experience the atmosphere of the Musi River while viewing the AMPERA Bridge from the water." (Interview, boat operator 1, June 2025). This finding confirms Cooper et al. (2008), who argue that attractions constitute the primary motivation for tourist in selecting destinations. The authenticity of the river experience strengthens the conventional sightseeing products. Tourists will also enjoy an authentic travel experience aboard traditional motorized ketek boats, which offer a genuine and distinctive experience compared to modern river tours using motorized vessels. The authenticity of tourism products is one of the key indicators of a destination's appeal along the river (Gusma et al., 2023). Tourists are also offered a variety of tourism activities, such as river cruises (day cruises/night cruises), tours of Kemaro Island, cultural/heritage tours to riverside villages, and floating culinary tours. This diversity of activities aligns with the findings of Mulya & Yudana (2020), who noted that the development of the Musi River area requires diverse and non-monotonous attraction products. The ketek boat attraction has a core value centered on strengthening the river's identity. In the 4A theory, this attraction is a key strength; however, its appeal is only optimal when supported by good services and facilities. Compared to land-based destinations, the uniqueness of the ketek lies in its status as an experience-based attraction that is difficult to replicate.

The Potential Accessibility of Ketek Boat Tourism in Palembang

Accessibility in *ketek* tourism should be interpreted not only as physical connectivity but also as access to tourism information and destination services. Although the main piers are strategically located and connected with urban transportation, the absence of integrated signage, digital booking systems, and standardized fare information limits visitor convenience. From the perspective of river tourism, seamless mobility between land and water transportation is essential because the river function as an integrated tourism corridor rather than merely a transport route. In CBT, accessible transportation also determine the extent to which local communities can participate in tourism activities and distribute economic benefits across riverside settlements.

The accessibility potential for ketek tourism is considered quite good because the main piers are located in strategic areas, such as the Benteng Kuto Besak (BKB) pier, the 16 Ilir pier, the Seberang Ulu pier, and the Pulau Kemaro pier. These locations make it convenient for tourists because they are connected to the city's culinary hubs, traditional markets, and iconic areas. A study by Agumsari (2023) indicates that the 16 Ilir Market area holds strategic value as a river-based tourism hub. Furthermore, the potential for accessibility is already sufficient, as evidenced by the variety of land-based transportation modes that can reach ketek boat tourist destinations, such as online ride-hailing services, the LRT, city buses, and taxis. A tourist stated "The pier is easy to reach, but information about ticket prices and routes is still difficult to find." (Interview, tourist 3, June 2025). This finding supports Middlenton and Clarke (2001), who emphasize that accessibility involves not only physical access but also the availability of information that facilitates tourist movement. Ketek boats are not only a recreational vehicle but can also serve as transportation between destinations along the banks of the Musi River. This is a unique feature because tourists can move between locations without having to return to land. However, several challenges regarding accessibility include the fact that some docks lack tourist-friendly pedestrian paths, and information on tour routes and fares has not been widely disseminated, either digitally or in print. Accessibility for ketek boats is already fairly well-supported, but it has not yet been fully integrated into the transportation system and destination planning. The lack of signage, standardized piers, and on-site route information causes tourists to rely on boat operators rather than the destination system. This presents an opportunity for development through the integration of smart tourism and the digitization of services.

The Potential Amenities of Ketek Boat Tourism in Palembang

Amenities remain the weakest component in the 4A framework. While basic facilities are available, inconsistencies in boat conditions, safety equipment, waiting areas, and tourist information reduce service quality. According to destination management theory, amenities directly influence visitor satisfaction and revisit intention. From a CBT perspective, improving amenities should not eliminate the traditional characteristics of ketek boat. Instead, facility enhancement should preserve local identity while ensuring visitor comfort and safety. This balance between authenticity and service quality is widely recognized as a critical factor in sustainable river tourism development.

The potential for ketek tourism amenities and services—such as ketek boats—generally accommodates 4–12 passengers, is equipped with life jackets, and features a roof or shelter from the sun and rain. In this regard, boat quality remains inconsistent, and there are no official standards regarding tourism suitability. A boat operator mentioned "some boats already have life jackets, but not all operators provide the same facilities." (Interview, boat operator 2). The inconsistency of amenities indicates that service quality has not yet reached a standardized level. Cooper et al. (2008) explain that amenities significantly influence visitor satisfaction and repeat visitation. While the pier already has a simple waiting area, amenities such as a comfortable lounge, informational signage, and a tourist information center are still lacking; only public restrooms are currently available. Amenities supporting ketek tourism include culinary areas such as floating food stalls, the Riverside BKB restaurant, and 16 Ilir

culinary spots, as well as parking facilities, restrooms, and pedestrian areas. However, Pidadari and Nuryanti (2021) found that inadequate amenities were among the factors contributing to tourists' dissatisfaction with tourism products in the Musi River waterfront area. This finding is relevant to ketek boat destinations, where the availability, maintenance, and management of supporting facilities may influence visitors' comfort and overall tourism experience. From a destination management perspective, service quality is a key factor in the tourist experience. This weakness lies not in the potential availability of amenities, but in their quality and maintenance. If successfully improved, these amenities can add value to ketek tour packages.

The Potential Ancillary of Ketek Boat Tourism in Palembang

Governance, or ancillary aspects, relates to management systems, safety, and institutional frameworks. Management is community-based, involving ketek boat drivers organized into groups. This system exemplifies a community-based tourism (CBT) approach that provides direct benefits to the community. Additionally, there is support from the local government, which plays a role in providing access to docks, organizing festivals or tourism events on the Musi River, and promoting the city as a tourist destination. In this regard, formal coordination among the government, the ketek community, and private sector stakeholders still needs to be strengthened. Regarding safety and regulations, there are currently no standard guidelines regarding travel safety procedures, the roadworthiness of engines and boats, training for water tour guides, and a transparent ticketing system. The absence of these standards is one of the main constraints to destination development. In terms of strengthening institutional capacity, there is significant potential to establish a Musi River-based Destination Management Organization (DMO), develop safety standard operating procedures (SOPs), implement certification for water tour guides, and integrate ketek boats into official tourism packages—all of which will enhance the destination's competitiveness. An officer from the Tourism Office explained, "Currently there is no standardized SOP for ketek tourism operations." (Interview, Tourism Office). This reflects the absence of integrated governance. According to UNWTO (2019), sustainable tourism requires collaboration among government, local communities, and the private sector through effective destination management.

Ancillary services reflect the governance capacity supporting destination sustainability. The findings indicate that ketek tourism is largely managed through informal community networks, with limited institutional coordination among government agencies, tourism businesses, and local communities. This condition demonstrates that CBT has been implemented at the community level but has not yet been supported by a comprehensive governance framework. According to CBT principles, sustainable tourism requires collaborative decision making, equitable benefit distribution, and active participation of local stakeholders. Likewise, river tourism studies emphasize that institutional integration is essential because river destinations involve multiple sectors, including transportation, environmental management, cultural preservation, and tourism services. Therefore, establishing a Destination Management Organization (DMO), implementing standardized operating procedures, and strengthening stakeholder collaboration would improve both governance effectiveness and destination competitiveness.

Table 1. Table Analysis of Ketek Boat Tourism Potential Using the 4A Framework

Component	Field Findings	Theoretical Interpretation	Development Implication
Attraction	Scenic Musi River, AMPERA Bridge, Kemaro Island, heritage villages, authentic boat experience	According to Cooper et al. (2008), attractions are the core element influencing destination competitiveness.	High potential as flagship river tourism product.
Accessibility	Strategic piers, connected by LRT, online transport, buses	Accessibility determines tourist's ease of reaching destinations (Middleton & Clarke, 2001).	Improve signage, integrated ticketing, digital information.
Amenities	Boats available but facilities inconsistent, waiting areas still limited	Amenities influence tourist satisfaction and destination quality (Cooper et al., 2008)	Standardize boats, improve safety equipment and visitor facilities
Ancillary Services	Community management, limited regulations and SOP	Institutional support is essential for sustainable tourism governance (UNWTO, 2019).	Develop DMO, SOP, certification and stakeholder collaboration

Source: Primary Data, 2026

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the tourism potential of *ketek* boats is strongly associated with the four dimensions of the 4A framework proposed by Cooper et al., (2008). Among these dimensions, attraction represent the strongest component because the Musi River offers authentic cultural landscape, historical heritage, and experiential river cruising that differentiate *ketek* tourism from other urban attractions.

Accessibility has generally supported tourism activities through the availability of strategic piers and multimodal transportation. However, consistent with Middleton and Clarke (2001), accessibility should also encompass information systems, signage, and standardized tourist information reduces travel convenience and destination competitiveness.

Amenities remain the weakest aspect. Although basic facilities are available, inconsistencies in boat quality, safety equipment, and visitor services reduce overall destination quality. Previous studies have demonstrated that service quality directly influences tourist satisfaction, destination image, and revisit intention. (Cooper et al., 2008; Hall, 20023).

Regarding ancillary services, the finding indicate that *ketek* tourism continues to rely heavily on community initiatives rather than formal destination governance. This condition suggest the need to establish a Destination Management Organization (DMO), strengthen safety regulation, standardize operating procedures, and improve collaborating among local government, tourism stakeholders, and boat operator. Such institutional potential to become Palembang's flagship river tourism product. Nevertheless, sustainable development requires balanced improvements across all four dimensions rather than focusing solely on attractions.

Overall, the findings indicate that the four components of the 4A framework are closely interconnected. Attractions alone cannot sustain destination competitiveness without adequate accessibility, quality amenities, and effective ancillary services. From a CBT perspective, *keteki* boat tourism demonstrates considerable potential because local communities already play a central role in providing tourism services and preserving river culture. However, stronger institutional support is required to maximize community

participation and ensure equitable economic benefits. Moreover, river tourism should be understood as an integrated destination system in which environmental quality, transportation, cultural heritage, and stakeholder collaboration function simultaneously. Consequently, strengthening all four dimensions of the 4A framework will contribute to a more sustainable and competitive river tourism destination in Palembang.

Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the tourism literature by integrating the 4A destination framework with Community Based Tourism (CBT) principles in the context of river tourism development. While previous studies have generally examined destination competitiveness in river tourism depends not only on the quality of attractions, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services but also on effective governance and community involvement. The findings extend the application of the 4A framework by emphasizing that ancillary services should encompass collaborative governance, institutional capacity, and stakeholder participation as key determinants of sustainable river tourism. This integrated perspective enriches the theoretical particularly in developing countries where local communities play a central role in tourism management.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a limited number of informants; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all river tourism destinations in Indonesia. Second, the study focused exclusively on *ketek* boat tourism in Palembang, which may have different characteristics from other river tourism destinations. Third, the analysis primarily reflects the perspective of tourism stakeholders and operators, while tourist perceptions were only represented to a limited extent. Future research is recommended to employ mixed-method or qualitative approaches involving larger samples of tourist and local communities to validate the findings. Comparative studies across different river tourism destinations would also provide broader insight into sustainable river tourism development.

This contributes to the tourism literature by integrating the 4A destination framework with Community Based Tourism (CBT) principles in the context of river tourism development. While previous studies have generally examined destination attributes or community participation separately, this research demonstrates that destination competitiveness in river tourism depends not only on the quality of attractions, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services but also on effective governance and community involvement. The findings extend the application of the 4A framework by emphasizing that ancillary services should encompass collaborative governance, institutional capacity, and stakeholder participation as key determinants of sustainable river tourism. This integrated perspective enriches the theoretical understanding of river based tourism destinations, particularly in developing countries where local communities play a central role in tourism management.

This study analyzed the tourism potential of *ketek* boats in Palembang using the 4A framework integrated with Community Based Tourism (CBT) principles. The findings indicated that *ketek* boats possess considerable potential to become a flagship river tourism product

because they offer authentic cultural experiences, scenic river landscape, and strong historical identity associated with the Musi River.

Among the four destination components, attractions represent the strongest aspects, supported by the uniqueness of river cruising, heritage destinations, and local cultural experiences. Accessibility is relatively adequate due to the strategic location of the main piers and connection with urban transportation systems. However, amenities remain inadequate, particularly regarding safety equipment, visitor comfort, and service consistency. Likewise, ancillary services require significant improvement because destination governance, institutional coordination, and operational standardization are still limited.

Overall, the study concludes that the sustainable development of *ketek* boat tourism depends not only the attractiveness of the tourism product but also on strengthening governance, improving service quality, and enhancing collaboration among government institutions, local communities, and tourism stakeholders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several strategic recommendations can be proposed to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of *ketek* boat tourism in Palembang.

For the Local Government, the Palembang City Government and the South Sumatra Provincial Government, through the Tourism Office and related agencies, should establish standardized operational regulations for *ketek* boat tourism with the next two years. These regulations should include mandatory safety standards (100% of tourism boats equipped with certified life jackets, emergency equipment, and routing vessel inspections), standardized tourism fares, and official operating procedures (SOPs). In addition, the government should develop integrated tourism infrastructure by improving at least four major tourism piers with standardized signage, visitor information boards, ticketing facilities, accessible pedestrian pathways, and digital information systems connected to the city's tourism platform. Establishing a Musi River Destination Management Organization (DMO) is also recommended to coordinate government agencies, tourism operators, community organizations, and private stakeholders.

For local Communities and *Ketek* Boat Operators, community participation should be strengthened through continuous capacity building programs. At least one certified training program on tourism services, visitors safety, hospitality, interpretation, and environmental management should be conducted annually for *ketek* operators and local tourism communities. Operators should also organize themselves into formal cooperatives or associations to facilitate collective marketing, transparent pricing, service standardization, and equitable benefit distribution. Community based tourism programs should further encourage local residents to develop cultural attractions, traditional culinary experiences, and riverside storytelling activities that enhance authentic visitor experiences.

For the Private Sector, tourism businesses, travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, financial institutions, and technology companies should actively participate through public private partnerships. Private companies are encouraged to develop integrated tour packages combining *ketek* boat experiences with cultural villages, culinary tourism, and heritage attractions. Investment should also support digital booking platform, electronic payment

systems, destination promotion, and environmentally friend boat improvements. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs can contribute to upgranding waiting areas safety facilities, waste managementt systems, and tourism interpretation media along the Musi River. The successful implementation of these recommendations should be evaluated through measurable performance indicators, including: (1) 100% compliance with tourism safety standards among operating ketek boat; (2) Establishmeny of one operational Destination Management Organization (DMO); (3) Annual training participation by all registered ketek operators; (4) Development of at least five integrated river tourism packages; and (5) Increased tourist satisfaction and repeat visitation rates as measured through periodic visitor surveys. These collaborative efforts are expected to strengthen the long term sustainability, competitiveness, and cultural value of ketek boat tourism as a flagship river tourism destination in Palembang.

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AUTHOR PROFILE

Indah Rizki Sabilah, S.Tr.Par , M. Par. Is
student of Insitute Pariwisata Trisakti
in tourism department

Dr. Sri Mariati, S.Pi, M.Si
Lecture Magister of Insitute Pariwisata
Trisakti

Dr. Rahmat Ingkadijaya . MM,
Head of Doctoral Program in Tourism of
Institute Pariwisata Trisakti

Prof.Dr.Myrza Rahmanita, M.Sc
Lecture Magister of Institute Pariwisata
Trisakti