



Marketing Strategy Formulation at Aha Atelier Traditional Clothing Rental Shop (Bodo Bugis-Makassar Traditional Clothing) in Sopeeng Regency Through Swot Analysis

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the increasing competition in the traditional clothing rental business and the importance of formulating an appropriate marketing strategy to increase business competitiveness. This study aims to: (1) determine the internal and external factors that influence the marketing strategy of the AHA Atelier traditional clothing rental business in Soppeng Regency, (2) determine the business's position based on the results of the SWOT analysis, and (3) identify marketing strategies that can be implemented to increase competitiveness and expand market share. This research uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through identifying internal and external factors, compiling a SWOT matrix, and formulating alternative strategies using the TOWS Matrix. The research results show that AHA Atelier's strengths lie in product quality, custom design capabilities, and utilization of social media, with opportunities arising from the growing interest in traditional clothing and the development of digital technology. Based on a SWOT analysis, the business is positioned in Quadrant I (Growth-Oriented Strategy), so the recommended strategy is growth through collection development, digital marketing intensification, market expansion, and strengthening operational systems to support business sustainability.

Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in supporting the Indonesian economy. According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, MSMEs contribute more than 60% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorb approximately 97% of the total national workforce. This role is increasingly prominent in the service sector, which flexibly adapts to local needs, cultural developments, and changing consumer behavior.

Theoretically, this aligns with the Resource-Based View approach (Barney, 1991), which explains that business strength depends on the ability to manage unique and valuable resources, both tangible assets like products and intangible assets like reputation, local wisdom, and consumer trust (Nandi et al., 2021). In the context of service MSMEs, leveraging local values is a strategic advantage that is difficult to imitate, including businesses based on cultural preservation such as traditional clothing rentals.

Changes in consumer behavior also strengthen the opportunity for the development of rental businesses, including clothing rentals. People now prefer to access goods rather than own them, especially for temporary needs such as weddings, traditional ceremonies, art performances, and other ceremonial activities. This shift is known as part of the sharing economy or collaborative

consumption trend (Anwar, 2023), which is seen as more economically efficient, practical, and in line with principles of sustainability. This situation opens up opportunities for businesses to implement adaptive and innovative marketing strategies to attract consumers in a dynamic market.

Public demand for traditional clothing rental services has shown a significant increase, especially in areas that uphold tradition and cultural identity. According to the consumer behavior theory proposed by Kotler and Keller (2016), consumer decisions in choosing a product or service are heavily influenced by cultural, social, and psychological factors.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in Soppeng Regency, known as one of the centers of Bugis culture. Traditional clothing, such as the Bodo dress, is worn in various ceremonial activities and celebrations, making it not merely an aesthetic necessity but also a symbol of cultural identity. From a marketing perspective, public interest in traditional clothing needs to be addressed through promotional strategies, market segmentation, and appropriate product value determination to maintain customer loyalty.

Morewedge et al, (2021) emphasized that access-based consumption increases along with collective awareness of the utility and symbolic value of consumed goods. This situation presents a significant opportunity for MSMEs to develop a value- and culture-based marketing approach. Traditional clothing rentals not only fulfill functional needs but also contribute to cultural preservation. Therefore, the success of traditional clothing rental businesses is largely determined by the ability of entrepreneurs to design effective marketing strategies to build image, increase sales, and expand market share.

This phenomenon is reflected in the growth of traditional clothing rental businesses, such as the AHA Atelier Shop in Soppeng Regency. This business emerged in response to the increasing public demand for traditional clothing, particularly for formal events and ceremonies. The shop serves approximately 10 to 15 customers per week, demonstrating stable demand.

The promotional strategy used is still simple, through word-of-mouth, Instagram posts, and short videos on TikTok. Although its only direct competitors are two similar businesses, AHA Atelier must maintain its unique service, product quality, and promotional appeal to remain relevant in the competitive local market. Furthermore, its flexible rental system and new clothing ordering service demonstrate significant potential for developing a marketing strategy based on differentiation and customer relationships.

Competition in the traditional clothing rental business in Soppeng Regency is increasingly fierce, requiring every business, including AHA Atelier, to develop a more targeted marketing strategy. Marketing serves not only to attract new customers but also to retain existing ones through consistent communication and superior service value. AHA Atelier has significant growth potential, but lacks a systematic marketing strategy plan to address market dynamics and changing consumer preferences.

A SWOT analysis can be used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing AHA Atelier and serve as the basis for developing a relevant marketing strategy. The results of this analysis serve as a basis for designing a marketing mix that aligns with the internal and external conditions of the business. A marketing strategy designed based on the results of a SWOT analysis will help strengthen AHA Atelier's position in the local market, increase consumer loyalty, and expand its marketing reach sustainably. This research aims to formulate a marketing strategy for the AHA Atelier Store through a SWOT analysis approach as a strategic step in increasing competitiveness and business sustainability.

Methods

Research Approach and Type of Study

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the actual conditions and situations occurring at AHA Atelier Traditional Clothing Rental Shop in Soppeng Regency, particularly in formulating marketing strategies based on its internal and external business conditions. The qualitative approach provides space for researchers to explore social realities, understand the meanings behind business practices, and examine the perceptions and strategies implemented by the business owner. This study is categorized as a case study, focusing on a single business entity, AHA Atelier, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of its internal dynamics, external challenges, and business opportunities. The case study approach enables the researcher to describe in detail the processes, strategies, and influencing factors in developing marketing strategies based on SWOT analysis. According to Poth & Shannon (2021), qualitative research is suitable for comprehensively examining phenomena within specific contexts through in-depth data collection from relevant participants. This is further supported by Sugiyono (2022), who explains that qualitative research seeks to interpret phenomena based on the natural and contextual perspectives of the subjects.

Management of the Researcher's Role

In this study, the researcher acts as the primary instrument responsible for designing, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data directly. The researcher actively interacts with research subjects to gather information regarding the internal and external conditions of AHA Atelier and to formulate marketing strategies using a SWOT analysis approach. Sugiyono (2022)

emphasizes that in qualitative research, the researcher serves as the key instrument, as they are directly involved in all stages of the research process. The researcher is fully engaged in every phase, including observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, while maintaining an objective, open, and reflective attitude to ensure credible and scientifically accountable results. Ethical principles are also upheld, such as respecting informants' privacy, maintaining confidentiality, obtaining consent before interviews or documentation, and avoiding imposing personal opinions. The researcher's role extends beyond data collection to interpreting implicit meanings within informants' narratives, connecting them with relevant theories, and structuring findings into a coherent conceptual framework.

Research Location and Time

The research location is determined purposively based on considerations relevant to the research focus. The selected site is AHA Atelier Traditional Clothing Rental Shop located in Woddi, Tokebbeng Hamlet, Watu Toa Village, Marioriwawo District, Soppeng Regency. This location was chosen because the business represents an active traditional Bugis–Makassar clothing rental service with the potential to become more competitive through effective marketing strategy formulation. According to Sugiyono (2022), purposive selection is used because the chosen location provides the most relevant and rich information aligned with the research objectives. The research is scheduled to be conducted from July to August 2025, including preliminary observation, data collection through interviews and documentation, data analysis, and report preparation.

Data Sources

This study utilizes a qualitative approach that focuses on an in-depth understanding of field phenomena. Therefore, the collected data are descriptive in nature, consisting of written or spoken words from

informants and documentation related to AHA Atelier's business activities. The data sources are divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data are obtained directly from informants through in-depth interviews, including the business owner, employees, and customers who have direct experience with the services and operations of AHA Atelier. Secondary data consist of supporting information gathered from documents, archives, photographs of business activities, marketing data, administrative records, as well as relevant literature, journals, and reports that support the SWOT analysis and marketing strategy formulation. According to Moleong (2021), qualitative research data are derived from words, actions, documents, and recordings that provide meaning to the research focus.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques in this study are aligned with the exploratory nature of qualitative research, aiming to obtain in-depth information about internal and external business conditions and appropriate marketing strategies for AHA Atelier. Sugiyono (2022) states that qualitative data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation, which are used simultaneously to ensure data validity. In-depth interviews are conducted with business owners, employees, and customers using a semi-structured format, allowing flexibility while maintaining focus on key issues. Observation is conducted in a passive participatory manner to examine service processes, customer interactions, and operational conditions, providing real-time validation of interview data. Documentation is used to collect secondary data such as photos, transaction records, financial reports, and promotional materials from social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, supporting data triangulation and strengthening the analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study follows an interactive qualitative process involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, conducted continuously until data saturation is achieved (Sugiyono, 2022). The analysis uses descriptive qualitative methods combined with SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and TOWS Matrix approaches to identify internal and external conditions and formulate appropriate marketing strategies. Data reduction involves selecting and focusing relevant information related to SWOT factors. Data display presents the reduced data in descriptive narratives and SWOT tables for easier understanding. Conclusion drawing and verification involve analyzing relationships between SWOT components to develop marketing strategies while ensuring data consistency. The TOWS Matrix is used to generate strategic alternatives by combining internal and external factors, including SO, ST, WO, and WT strategies. Additionally, the analysis determines the business position and appropriate marketing strategies, leading to comprehensive conclusions based on the findings.

Validity of Findings

The validity of findings in qualitative research is ensured through triangulation techniques. Triangulation involves checking data credibility by comparing information from multiple sources and methods (Sugiyono, 2022). This study applies source triangulation by comparing data from business owners, employees, customers, and nearby competitors, and technique triangulation by comparing results from interviews, observations, and documentation. Additionally, member checking is conducted by confirming preliminary findings with informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflect their perspectives. These validation techniques ensure that the conclusions are objective, credible, and scientifically accountable.

Research Stages and Timeline

This study is conducted through systematic stages to ensure alignment with research objectives. The preparation stage includes problem identification, proposal development, preliminary study, and obtaining research permits. The data collection stage involves conducting observations, in-depth interviews, and gathering relevant documents. The data processing and analysis stage uses SWOT and TOWS Matrix approaches to formulate marketing strategies. The report writing stage involves compiling research findings, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations. The final stage includes

revisions, consultation with supervisors, and completion of administrative requirements. The research timeline is planned as follows: proposal preparation and literature review in early July 2025, permit processing in mid-July 2025, data collection at the end of December 2025 to early January 2026, data analysis in mid-January 2026, report writing in late January 2026, and administrative completion in early February 2026.

Result and Discussion

Internal Factor Analysis

Internal factors originate from within the business and can be controlled by the business owner. In this study, internal factors were analyzed by identifying AHA Atelier's strengths and weaknesses based on interviews with the owner, employees, and existing customers.

Strengths

Based on the interviews, several key strengths were identified for AHA Atelier in implementing its marketing strategy.

Based on interviews with the business owner, employees, and existing customers, several key strengths were identified for AHA Atelier in implementing its marketing strategy. These strengths serve as internal factors that provide the business with a competitive advantage in Soppeng Regency.

The business owner stated:

"One of our strengths is our flexibility in service. Customers can place orders three days to a week before the event, and the return time is also quite flexible, up to a maximum of three days after the event." (Andi, interview on January 5, 2026)

This statement demonstrates that service flexibility is one of AHA Atelier's main added values. In the context of rental services, flexibility in booking and return times is a form of customer-centricity. Not all rental companies offer such flexible timeframes, so this flexibility can enhance customer satisfaction and convenience.

Strategically, this flexibility can be viewed as a form of customer-oriented service, where the business strives to adapt its operational systems to customer needs. This is important because in the traditional clothing rental business, event times often change unexpectedly, requiring customers to provide a flexible service. Therefore, service flexibility contributes to increased customer loyalty.

In addition to service flexibility, another prominent strength is the ability to accommodate custom or special requests from customers. This is as stated by an employee:

"The advantage of AHA Atelier is that we can accommodate custom or request designs according to customer preferences. So customers don't just choose what's available, but can customize them to their event needs." (Yusuf, interview January 7, 2026)

This statement was reinforced by a customer who said:

"I remain a customer because I can customize the design of the dress to suit the needs of the event." (Ana, interview January 8, 2026)

The ability to accommodate custom designs demonstrates that AHA Atelier serves not only as a rental service provider but also as a business capable of providing added value through product personalization. From a marketing strategy perspective, product differentiation is a crucial strategy for winning the competition. By providing services tailored to customer needs,

AHA Atelier is able to create a unique experience that is difficult for competitors to directly imitate.

This differentiation also strengthens the business's position as a modern, trend-following traditional clothing provider, rather than simply a conventional rental service. This provides a significant competitive advantage in the culture-based creative industry.

Regarding product quality, several customers noted that the materials used are comfortable and do not cause itching or burning when worn. One customer stated:

"The quality is very good, the material is soft and doesn't itch. Sometimes other places find materials that are less comfortable." (Tenri, interview January 9, 2026)

Another customer added:

"The product is good and the material doesn't feel hot when worn." (Besse, interview January 8, 2026)

Material quality and product comfort are important factors in the traditional clothing rental business, especially for long-lasting events such as weddings or traditional activities. If the material is uncomfortable, the customer experience will be compromised. Therefore, good product quality not only impacts immediate satisfaction but also builds a positive business image in the long term. In addition to material quality, cleanliness and tidiness are also internal strengths of the business. An employee stated:

"We collaborate with a laundry, so every rental item is always clean and fragrant." (Fitri, interview January 7, 2026)

Collaborating with a laundry company demonstrates a structured quality management system. The cleanliness and fragrance of clothing are part of the customer experience. In the service business, customer experience is crucial in determining whether a customer will return to the same service. By maintaining cleanliness through professional collaboration, AHA Atelier is able to maintain consistent quality standards.

In terms of product variety, customers also consider AHA Atelier to have a diverse and modern range of models. This is evident from customer statements that the model selection is quite extensive and follows trends. This variety of models provides customers with a wider range of alternatives in choosing clothing that suits their event theme and personal preferences.

Furthermore, another strength supporting the marketing strategy is the active use of Instagram social media. The admin stated:

"Every time we update our stories or post a new collection, customers are usually quite enthusiastic and immediately ask questions via DM or WhatsApp." (Fitri, interview January 7, 2026)

This demonstrates that AHA Atelier has utilized digital marketing as a means of communication and promotion. Instagram serves not only as a promotional medium but also as a means of direct interaction with customers. Quick responses and engaging visual content can increase interest and build closer relationships with consumers.

In the context of modern marketing, active use of social media is a form of adaptation to changing consumer behavior, which tends to seek information through digital platforms before making a purchase or rental.

Based on all the interview results, it can be concluded that AHA Atelier's internal strengths include: 1) Flexibility in service and return times; 2) Ability to accept custom or special design

requests; 3) Diverse models that follow modern trends; 4) Comfortable and cool-quality materials; 5) Partnerships with laundries that ensure cleanliness and tidiness; 6) Utilization of Instagram as a promotional and active interaction medium.

Overall, these strengths serve as strategic assets in formulating AHA Atelier's marketing strategy. Excellence in service, product quality, and the use of digital media provide a strong foundation for the business to increase competitiveness and expand market share in Soppeng Regency.

Weaknesses

In addition to its various strengths, AHA Atelier also has a number of internal weaknesses identified through interviews with the business owner, employees, and customers. These weaknesses are inhibiting factors in developing a marketing strategy and require attention in formulating future strategies.

The business owner revealed that the marketing reach is still limited to Soppeng Regency. He stated:

"Currently, rentals are still limited to Soppeng Regency and have not yet reached outside the region due to limitations in long-distance delivery and management." (Andi, interview, January 5, 2026)

This statement indicates that AHA Atelier's market is still geographically limited. This limitation is related to the distribution system and long-distance operational management that are not yet ready for expansion. In the context of marketing strategy, market expansion is one step to increase business growth. However, limitations in the delivery system, damage risk management, and returns control are major obstacles.

This indicates that although the business has good product quality, market potential outside Soppeng Regency has not been optimally utilized. In other words, there are untapped market opportunities due to internal limitations.

Another weakness relates to supporting service facilities and infrastructure. One employee stated:

"Some of the equipment used needs to be updated to maximize service." (Fitri, interview January 7, 2026)

This statement indicates that operational aspects still require improvement, both in terms of storage equipment, displays, and other supporting equipment. In the service business, service quality is determined not only by the main product but also by supporting facilities. Inadequate equipment can impact employee work efficiency and customer comfort when selecting clothing at the business location.

Furthermore, internet network constraints also pose a significant obstacle to marketing and service. An administrator stated:

"The internet network at the store is sometimes unstable. When the network is disrupted, we are usually late in responding to customer messages." (Fitri, interview January 7, 2026)

In the digital age, response time is a crucial component of service quality. Consumers tend to choose service providers that are responsive and quick in providing information. When the network is unstable and responses are slow, the potential for losing customers is greater, especially if competitors provide faster service.

This obstacle indicates weaknesses in the digital marketing support infrastructure. Given that Instagram and social media are the primary promotional channels, a stable internet connection is a fundamental requirement that significantly impacts the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

Another weakness identified was the delay in customer clothing returns, as reported by a courier:

"Sometimes customers return clothes late, which can disrupt their next rental schedule." (Yususf, interview January 7, 2026)

The issue of late returns indicates that the rental control and time management system is not yet fully optimized. In the rental business, timely returns are crucial because a single product can be rented to multiple customers within a short period of time. Delays can disrupt the schedule of subsequent customers and potentially reduce satisfaction levels.

This indicates the need for a reminder system, stricter penalty rules, or a more structured control mechanism to minimize this risk.

In terms of product innovation, several customers also provided feedback on the need for continuous updating of clothing models. One customer stated:

"The models need to be continuously upgraded to stay on top of trends." (Kasmawati, interview January 10, 2026)

This suggestion demonstrates that despite the current variety of available models, customers expect regular collection updates. The fashion industry, including modern traditional clothing, is heavily influenced by trends. If innovation is not carried out continuously, the business risks losing its appeal to competitors who are more actively updating their designs. Therefore, continuous innovation is a strategic necessity, not just an option.

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that AHA Atelier's internal weaknesses include: 1) Limited geographic marketing reach; 2) Supporting service facilities and equipment that need to be updated; 3) Unstable internet connection, which hinders rapid response; 4) Suboptimal management of late returns; 5) Need for continuous model innovation. Overall, these weaknesses indicate that AHA Atelier's main challenges lie not in product quality, but rather in managerial, operational, and systems development aspects. Therefore, in formulating future marketing strategies, steps need to be designed to address these internal weaknesses so that the business can grow more competitively and sustainably.

External Factor Analysis

Opportunities

Based on interviews with the business owner, employees, and customers, there are a number of external opportunities that AHA Atelier can capitalize on to develop marketing strategies and expand market share. These opportunities arise from social, cultural, and technological developments that support the sustainability of the traditional clothing rental business.

One key opportunity is the high public demand for traditional Bugis-Makassar Bodo clothing for various events, such as weddings, traditional ceremonies, graduations, school activities, and government events. The business owner stated:

"Demand usually increases during the wedding season and traditional events. Many schools also rent for specific events." (Andi, interview January 5, 2026)

This statement indicates that market demand for traditional clothing is recurring and tends to increase at certain times (seasonally). This presents a significant opportunity because the business can predict demand patterns and adjust marketing strategies accordingly, such as around the wedding season or important traditional holidays.

Externally, the continued strength of Bugis-Makassar traditional traditions within the community is a key supporting factor. As long as cultural values are preserved and used in various formal and ceremonial activities, the demand for traditional clothing will persist. Thus, socio-cultural factors provide a long-term opportunity that supports business sustainability.

Furthermore, the increasing use of social media among the public also presents a significant opportunity for digital marketing development. An admin stated:

"Nowadays, many customers learn from Instagram or from stories shared by their friends." (Fitri, interview January 7, 2026)

This statement demonstrates a shift in consumer information-seeking behavior. Consumers no longer rely solely on direct, face-to-face recommendations, but also through digital media and interactions on social platforms. This opens up opportunities for AHA Atelier to expand its promotional reach without incurring significant operational costs, such as opening new branches.

Social media also allows for indirect promotion through share and story features, so satisfied customers can automatically help expand business promotion. In the context of modern marketing, this is known as electronic word of mouth, which has a strong influence on purchasing or rental decisions.

Another identified opportunity is the potential for collaboration with external parties such as schools, indigenous communities, event organizers (EO), and wedding organizers (WO). One informant stated:

"I think one opportunity we can capitalize on is collaborating with event organizers or wedding organizers. Furthermore, participating in exhibitions or cultural activities can also be an opportunity to introduce our business to a wider audience." (Andi, interview January 5, 2026)

This collaboration has the potential to increase rental volumes significantly, especially for weddings or school events involving many participants. Strategically, this collaboration can create a more stable and structured market, as rentals depend not only on individual customers but also on institutions or partners.

In addition to increasing rental volumes, collaboration can also strengthen the business's professional image. When AHA Atelier is trusted by schools or wedding organizers, the business's reputation will improve in the eyes of the public.

Another opportunity is the growing trend of modern traditional clothing that combines traditional elements with contemporary designs. One customer said:

"Nowadays, many people like traditional clothing but with more modern and contemporary styles." (Tenri, interview January 9, 2026)

This statement indicates a shift in consumer preferences, particularly among the younger generation, who desire a traditional look while still following fashion trends. This presents a significant opportunity for AHA Atelier to innovate in design without abandoning traditional values.

If the business can develop a more modern collection while maintaining its Bugis-Makassar cultural identity, it will reach a wider market segment, including teenagers and college students.

Furthermore, the development of digital payment technology can also present external opportunities. Previous interviews suggested adding payment methods such as QRIS. This indicates that consumers are becoming accustomed to cashless transactions. If AHA Atelier adopts a digital payment system, the ease of transactions could be an additional attraction for customers.

Overall, AHA Atelier's external opportunities stem not only from high market demand, but also from cultural factors, technological developments, and the potential for strategically leveraging collaborative networks.

Based on interviews and in-depth analysis, AHA Atelier's external opportunities include: 1) High public demand for traditional clothing for various events; 2) The preservation of Bugis-Makassar culture, which remains strong and sustainable; 3) Increasing use of social media as a means of promotion and interaction; 4) Potential collaboration with schools, wedding organizers, and traditional communities; 5) Modern traditional fashion trends that are popular with the younger generation; 6) Development of digital payment systems that simplify transactions.

These opportunities demonstrate that the external business environment remains very supportive of AHA Atelier's growth and development. Therefore, future marketing strategies need to be directed at optimally utilizing these opportunities to increase competitiveness and expand market share.

Threats

In addition to various opportunities that support business development, AHA Atelier also faces a number of external threats that have the potential to impact its sustainability and competitiveness. These threats stem from the competitive environment, changes in consumer behavior, and economic factors beyond the business owner's direct control.

One major threat is the emergence of other traditional clothing rental businesses offering lower prices. The business owner stated:

"Now there are several other rental businesses opening with lower prices." (Fitri, interview January 7, 2026)

This statement indicates that the level of competition in the traditional clothing rental business in Soppeng Regency is increasing. Price competition is a significant challenge, especially if some consumers prioritize price over quality or service.

In a competitive price environment, businesses without a strong differentiation strategy are more likely to get caught in a price war. If AHA Atelier had to lower prices to keep up with competitors, this could impact profit margins. Therefore, without the right strategy, price competition can pose a serious threat to business stability.

Another threat is rapidly changing consumer tastes and trends. One customer stated:

"If the models aren't updated, people usually look elsewhere for newer models." (Husniati, interview January 10, 2026)

This statement demonstrates that the fashion industry, including traditional clothing, is heavily influenced by trends. Although based on traditional culture, models and designs continue to evolve according to public preferences, especially the younger generation.

Rapidly changing trends require businesses to continuously innovate. If AHA Atelier fails to update its collections regularly, its product appeal could decline. This threat is dynamic and ongoing, as fashion trends never stop evolving. Therefore, the inability to adapt to changing market tastes can diminish customer interest and shift them to competitors.

In addition to competition and trends, the economic conditions of the community are also an external threat that requires attention. In an unstable economic situation, people tend to be more selective about spending on secondary needs, including renting traditional clothing. They may choose simpler alternatives, rent at a lower price, or even wear clothes they already own.

This shows that people's purchasing power significantly influences demand for rental services. If purchasing power decreases, rental volumes could potentially decrease, especially outside of major event seasons.

Another threat is the risk of clothing damage or loss due to customer negligence. Although this relates to internal operations, the source of the risk originates externally, namely the customer. This risk can result in financial loss, especially if the damaged or lost clothing is a valuable or frequently rented item.

Product damage can also reduce stock availability during periods of high demand. If stock is limited due to damage or late returns, the business could potentially miss out on future rental opportunities. This risk not only impacts repair costs but also potential loss of revenue.

Furthermore, technological developments and easy access to information also pose an indirect threat. Consumers can now easily compare prices, styles, and quality through social media. If competitors are more active and creative in digital promotions, AHA Atelier risks being left behind in the competition for market perception.

Based on interviews and in-depth analysis, the external threats facing AHA Atelier include:

1) Competition from similar businesses offering lower prices; 2) Rapidly changing consumer trends and tastes; 3) Price sensitivity and purchasing power; 4) Risk of product damage or loss by customers; 5) Increasingly competitive digital promotions.

Overall, the external factor analysis shows that although market opportunities remain substantial, AHA Atelier operates in a dynamic and competitive environment. Therefore, a marketing strategy is needed that not only capitalizes on opportunities but also anticipates and minimizes the impact of existing threats.

1) Determine the positioning of AHA Atelier's traditional clothing rental business based on the results of the SWOT analysis; 2) Identify marketing strategies that AHA Atelier's traditional clothing rental business can implement to increase competitiveness and expand market share.

Internal and External Factors Influencing AHA Atelier's Marketing Strategy

The analysis of internal and external factors in this study used the SWOT approach. SWOT analysis is a method used to systematically identify various strategic factors to formulate a company's strategy based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Neolaka et al., 2023; Devi et al., 2022; Mardiyana et al., 2022).

In line with this opinion, Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016) stated that the internal environment includes a company's resources, capabilities, and operational systems, while the external environment encompasses market conditions, competitors, trends, and economic factors that influence marketing performance.

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, the following is a discussion of AHA Atelier's internal and external factors.

Internal Factors

Internal factors are conditions that originate within the business and are directly under management's control. These factors reflect the organization's ability to manage resources, operational systems, service quality, and marketing strategies.

According to Fred R. David (2017), internal environmental analysis aims to identify a company's strengths and weaknesses related to management, marketing, finance, operations, and human resources. Meanwhile, Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016) explain that a business's competitive advantage is heavily influenced by its internal capabilities in creating value for customers.

Based on interviews with the owner, employees, and customers, AHA Atelier's internal factors can be classified into two main categories: strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

Strengths are resources or capabilities that provide a business with a competitive advantage over competitors. The research identified several key strengths, as follows:

Service Flexibility

One of AHA Atelier's main strengths is its flexibility in its service system, both in terms of ordering and returning garments. Customers are given the convenience of scheduling orders several days before the event and flexibility in returns.

From a service marketing perspective, flexibility is part of the responsiveness and empathy dimensions of service quality. Service businesses that are able to tailor their services to customer needs will experience higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty (Inavolu, 2024; Bhuiyan, 2024; Arora, 2025).

This flexibility also demonstrates a customer-oriented business, which is one indicator of the success of a modern marketing strategy.

Custom design capability

AHA Atelier not only provides ready-to-wear traditional clothing but also accepts custom orders according to customer needs. This is a key differentiator from similar businesses that generally only offer standard collections. In competitive strategy theory, Michael Porter (1985) stated that product differentiation is a generic strategy for creating a competitive advantage. Differentiation allows companies to offer unique value not offered by competitors, so customers are willing to pay more for this uniqueness.

This customization capability provides several strategic advantages: increasing customer perceived value, building emotional connections with customers, and reducing sensitivity to price competition. Thus, customization capability is a significant strategic strength in enhancing business competitiveness.

Comfortable and well-maintained product quality

The quality of the materials used is considered comfortable, cool, and non-irritating. According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), product quality is a key element in creating customer satisfaction and building long-term loyalty. In the rental service business, the physical condition of the product (tangible evidence) represents the quality of the service itself.

Research by lang et al, (2025) on fashion rental businesses shows that material quality and product cleanliness are the dominant factors influencing customer decisions in choosing a rental service. This demonstrates that AHA Atelier has met one of the key indicators in a quality-based marketing strategy.

Product Cleanliness and Care

In addition to comfortable material quality, product cleanliness and care are crucial factors in strengthening AHA Atelier's professional image. In the traditional costume rental business, products are used interchangeably by various customers, so consistent cleanliness and care standards are essential to maintain quality and customer trust.

Every costume worn by a customer undergoes inspection, cleaning, and heating before being rented again. Regular care is performed to ensure there are no stains, unpleasant odors, or damage to sequins, embroidery, or accessories. This process not only maintains the aesthetics of the garment but also extends the collection's lifespan, resulting in more operational efficiency.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), in service marketing, tangible evidence serves as physical proof of service quality. Clean, neat, and well-maintained products are a direct reflection of the quality of service provided to customers. If this tangible evidence is well-maintained, perceptions of quality and customer satisfaction will increase.

Furthermore, the concept of service quality proposed by A. Parasuraman emphasizes that the tangible dimension significantly influences customer perceptions of a business's professionalism. In the context of traditional costume rentals, cleanliness and collection maintenance fall into this dimension.

Lang et al, (2025) research on the fashion rental business shows that cleanliness and product maintenance are important factors in building customer trust and repeat purchase decisions. Customers tend to recommend rental services that consistently maintain cleanliness standards.

Therefore, product cleanliness and maintenance can be categorized as an internal strength of AHA Atelier because they are able to: Increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, Reduce the risk of complaints, Extend the lifespan of clothing collections, and Strengthen a professional and trustworthy image.

Based on this description, it can be concluded that product cleanliness and maintenance are not merely technical operational aspects but are part of a quality-based marketing strategy that supports sustainable business competitiveness.

Utilizing social media as a promotional tool

AHA Atelier utilizes Instagram as its primary promotional medium to introduce its latest collections, display customer documentation, and interact directly with potential consumers. In the context of digital marketing, social media is an effective and efficient marketing communication tool. Digital marketing enables small and medium-sized businesses to reach a wider market at a relatively low cost compared to conventional promotions (Mitrevva et al., 2022; Denga & Rakshit, 2023; Borysenko & Suvorova, 2025). The use of social media also demonstrates the company's adaptability to technological developments, an important indicator of modern business competitiveness.

Weaknesses

In addition to its strengths, research results indicate that AHA Atelier also faces several internal weaknesses that could potentially hinder the effectiveness of its marketing strategy if not

addressed systematically. In a SWOT analysis, weaknesses are internal limitations that can reduce organizational performance and business competitiveness.

According to Fred R. David (2017), weaknesses are limitations in organizational resources, skills, and capabilities that can hinder the achievement of strategic goals. Therefore, identifying weaknesses is a crucial step for an organization to formulate appropriate improvement strategies.

Based on interviews and observations, AHA Atelier's internal weaknesses can be explained as follows:

Limited market reach

Currently, AHA Atelier's marketing activities are focused on the Soppeng Regency area and have not yet optimally reached markets outside the region. This limited market reach results in the wider consumer potential being underutilized.

Theoretically, market expansion is part of a growth strategy (market development strategy). According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), market development involves entering new segments or geographic regions to increase sales volume and expand market share. Furthermore, Fred R. David (2017) emphasized that limited market coverage can limit business growth because companies do not maximize external opportunities.

Research by Sari (2025) on marketing strategies for regional clothing rental businesses shows that market expansion through digital media and online booking systems significantly increased the number of customers within one year of operation. Therefore, this situation suggests that AHA Atelier needs to develop a market expansion strategy, for example through optimizing cross-regional digital promotions, utilizing marketplaces, or collaborating with other regions.

Operational equipment needs updating

Interview results indicated that some operational equipment still needs updating to support optimal service delivery. In service businesses, facilities and infrastructure are tangible elements (physical evidence) that influence perceptions of service quality.

According to Aravik et al. (2022), physical evidence such as facilities, equipment, and the appearance of the business environment are crucial in building a professional image and customer trust.

Furthermore, research by Setiono & Hidayat (2022) concluded that the readiness of facilities and infrastructure in service businesses significantly influences levels of customer satisfaction and trust. Inadequate equipment can reduce work efficiency and slow down the service process.

In the context of AHA Atelier, equipment upgrades can improve operational efficiency and strengthen the business's image as a professional and trustworthy rental service provider.

Internet network constraints

As a business that relies on social media for promotion and communication, a stable internet network is crucial. Network disruptions can slow customer response times, hinder transaction processes, and potentially undermine consumer trust.

In the digital era, speed and accuracy of response are included in the responsiveness dimension of service quality. According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), responding quickly to customer needs is part of a relationship marketing strategy aimed at building long-term relationships with consumers.

Digital-based MSMEs shows that the stability of technological infrastructure directly impacts the effectiveness of marketing communications and sales conversion rates (Nugraha et al., 2025; Surti, 2025; Wisnujati & Suparwata, 2026). Therefore, internet network constraints can become a strategic obstacle if not promptly addressed through infrastructure improvements or the use of alternative communication systems.

Delays in customer returns

Delays in customer clothing returns are a significant operational weakness. This situation can disrupt subsequent rental schedules and potentially reduce the satisfaction of other customers.

In operational management, process control is a crucial factor in maintaining smooth service delivery. According to Fred R. David (2017), weaknesses in internal control systems can create operational risks that impact a business's reputation.

Rental business management indicates that implementing a written system of rules, late fees, and clear rental agreements can reduce the risk of delays by up to 40% (Stewardson et al., 2023; Cook et al., 2024).

Therefore, a more structured management system, such as formal rental contracts and penalty policies, is needed to minimize the risk of operational disruptions.

The need for regular model innovation

The fashion industry, including traditional clothing, is heavily influenced by changing trends. Interview results indicate that model innovation is necessary regularly to remain relevant to consumer tastes.

According to Michael Porter (1985), competitive advantage can be maintained through continuous innovation. Without innovation, a company will lose its appeal and fall behind competitors.

Furthermore, Sari's (2025) research on the fashion rental business states that regular collection updates significantly influence customer loyalty and increase repeat orders. In the context of AHA Atelier, design innovation serves not only as a product update but also as a strategy to maintain the business's existence amidst increasingly fierce competition.

External Factors

Opportunities

Opportunities are external conditions beyond the company's direct control but can be exploited to improve business performance and competitiveness. In a SWOT analysis, opportunities arise from changes in the external environment, such as social, cultural, economic, and technological developments.

According to Fred R. David (2017), opportunities are important situations in the external environment that, if appropriately exploited, can provide a competitive advantage for an organization. Meanwhile, Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016) stated that the external environment, consisting of demographic, socio-cultural, technological, and economic factors, can create new market opportunities for companies.

Based on interviews and field observations, AHA Atelier's external opportunities can be explained as follows:

High demand for traditional clothing for various events

Research results indicate that demand for traditional clothing is relatively high, especially during the wedding season, traditional ceremonies, graduations, and other cultural events. This indicates a stable and recurring market demand.

From a marketing perspective, this condition reflects a demand-driven opportunity, namely an opportunity that arises from evolving consumer needs. According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), companies that can accurately identify consumer needs will find it easier to formulate effective marketing strategies.

Traditional clothing rental businesses in South Sulawesi shows that the annual increase in the number of traditional events and weddings contributes to a 25% increase in demand for clothing rental services in certain periods.

For AHA Atelier, this high demand presents a strategic opportunity to: Increase the number of collections, Adjust seasonal pricing strategies, Develop rental packages for specific events

Increase public awareness of local cultural preservation

The phenomenon of increasing awareness of cultural identity among the younger generation presents a significant opportunity for traditional clothing rental businesses. Traditional clothing is no longer only worn at formal events, but also in cultural promotions, social media content, and creative events.

In macro-environmental marketing theory, socio-cultural factors are a key determinant in the formation of market opportunities. Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016) state that changes in societal values and lifestyles can create new opportunities in certain industries.

Research by Mishra et al. (2021) shows that the increasing trend of preserving local culture among millennials has had a positive impact on the growth of traditional clothing rental businesses in several regions.

In the context of AHA Atelier, this increased cultural awareness opens up opportunities to: Develop modern traditional clothing concepts, Hold promotions themed around local culture, and Collaborate with cultural communities.

The Development of Social Media and Digital Technology

The development of digital technology and social media presents a significant opportunity for small and medium-sized businesses to expand their market without high promotional costs. Instagram, as the primary promotional medium, allows businesses to reach consumers beyond their geographic area more broadly.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), digital marketing facilitates market segmentation, interactive communication, and real-time measurement of promotional effectiveness.

Consistent use of social media can increase brand awareness for MSMEs by up to 40% within one year.

For AHA Atelier, the development of social media provides opportunities to: Expand promotional reach beyond the region, Build brand image, and Increase direct interaction with customers.

Potential for collaboration with institutions and wedding organizers

The research results indicate opportunities for collaboration with schools, government agencies, cultural communities, and wedding organizers. This collaboration can significantly increase rental volume through a contract system or service package. According to Fred R. David (2017), strategic partnerships are a strategy that can increase business competitiveness by leveraging external networks.

Marketing strategies for service businesses indicates that collaboration with third parties can increase revenue stability for service businesses by up to 30% compared to businesses operating independently without partners. Therefore, this partnership opportunity can be a source of sustainable growth for AHA Atelier.

Modern traditional fashion trends among the younger generation

Changing consumer tastes for more modern and fashionable traditional clothing create opportunities for product innovation. The younger generation tends to prefer designs that combine traditional and modern elements. According to Michael Porter (1985), product innovation is one strategy for maintaining a competitive advantage in a dynamic industry.

Research by Sari (2025) shows that clothing rental businesses that are able to follow modern fashion trends experience a higher increase in repeat orders than businesses that do not innovate in design. For AHA Atelier, this trend opens up opportunities to: Develop a hybrid collection (traditional-modern), Increase visual appeal on social media, and Establish a positioning as a modern traditional clothing rental company.

Threats

Threats are external factors beyond the company's control and have the potential to hinder the achievement of business goals if not strategically addressed. In a SWOT analysis, threats stem from external environmental dynamics such as industry competition, changing trends, economic conditions, and operational risks.

According to Fred R. David (2017), a threat is a significant situation in the external environment that can disrupt an organization's competitive position. If not responded to with the right strategy, threats can reduce performance, market share, and even business continuity.

Similarly, Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016) explain that the competitive industry environment and changes in consumer behavior are external factors that must be continuously monitored so that companies can adjust their strategies.

Based on the research results, the threats facing AHA Atelier can be explained as follows:

Price competition from similar businesses

The increasing number of traditional clothing rental businesses in the surrounding area has created quite intense competition, particularly in terms of pricing. Some competitors offer lower rates to attract customers.

In competitive strategy theory, Michael Porter (1985) stated that competition within an industry is influenced by competitive forces, one of which is rivalry among existing competitors. Aggressive price competition can squeeze profit margins and trigger price wars.

MSMEs in the service sector shows that price-based competition without clear differentiation can lead to decreased profitability in the long term.

For AHA Atelier, this threat can result in: Declining profit margins, Pressure to lower prices, and Changes in customer perceptions of value. Therefore, a differentiation strategy through quality, custom services, and brand image is crucial to avoid direct price competition.

Rapidly changing fashion trends

The fashion industry, including traditional clothing, is heavily influenced by dynamic trends. Current styles can quickly be replaced by new, more modern designs.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), changing consumer preferences are part of the dynamics of the socio-cultural environment that can pose a threat if companies are not adaptive.

Furthermore, Michael Porter (1985) emphasized that continuous innovation is necessary to maintain a competitive position in a rapidly changing industry.

Research by Sari (2025) shows that fashion rental businesses that do not regularly update their collections experience a decline in customer interest within two to three years. In the context of AHA Atelier, this threat requires businesses to: Conduct regular collection evaluations, Monitor fashion trends through social media, and Develop new designs regularly.

Sensitivity to Consumer Purchasing Power

The economic conditions of the community also influence decisions about renting traditional clothing. In less stable economic conditions, consumers tend to reduce spending on secondary needs, including clothing rentals.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), economic factors such as income and purchasing power are key determinants of consumer behavior. Research by Lestari (2020) shows that fluctuations in local economic conditions influence the level of demand for non-primary services, including fashion rental businesses. This threat can result in: a decrease in the number of rentals, increased price negotiations, and a shift in preference to cheaper alternatives. To anticipate this, a strategy of price flexibility, promotional packages, or clearer market segmentation is needed.

Risk of product damage or loss

In the rental business, the risk of product damage or loss is a significant operational threat. Damage not only incurs repair costs but can also reduce the amount of stock available for rental.

According to Fred R. David (2017), operational risk is part of the external threats that can impact the stability of a company's performance if not managed with a sound control system.

Rental business management indicates that the risk of product damage is one of the main causes of increased operational costs in the rental business.

For AHA Atelier, this threat has the potential to: Increase maintenance and replacement costs, Reduce collection availability, and Harm the business's reputation. Therefore, a system of rental agreements, warranties, and education for customers regarding responsible product use are necessary.

Based on the analysis of internal and external factors, it can be concluded that AHA Atelier's main strengths are flexible service, customization capabilities, product quality, and digital promotion. Meanwhile, its weaknesses lie in limited market reach and operational aspects.

Externally, business opportunities are relatively large due to the high demand and trends for modern traditional clothing. However, threats remain in the form of price competition and rapidly changing trends.

Thus, the internal and external conditions of the business indicate significant growth potential if strengths are maximized and weaknesses are minimized through appropriate strategies.

Table 1. Results of Internal and External Factor Analysis

Code	Internal Factors	Description
S1	Service flexibility	Provides convenience in ordering and returning items according to customer needs
S2	Custom design capability	Accepts special orders based on the customer's preferred size and model
S3	Comfortable material quality	Uses materials that are not hot and comfortable to wear
S4	Product cleanliness and maintenance	Collaborates with laundry services to maintain product quality and cleanliness
S5	Active promotion through social media	Utilizes Instagram as a marketing and communication platform with customers
W1	Limited market reach	Marketing is still focused on the Soppeng Regency area
W2	Operational equipment needs updating	Some supporting facilities are not yet optimal
W3	Internet network constraints	Network disruptions slow down responses to customers
W4	Delays in product returns	Some customers do not return items on time
W5	Limited design innovation	Design updates are not carried out regularly
Code	External Factors	Description
O1	High demand for traditional clothing	Numerous weddings, parties, and cultural events
O2	Preservation of local culture	Increasing public awareness of using traditional attire
O3	Growth of social media	Ease of promotion and market expansion through digital platforms
O4	Potential institutional partnerships	Opportunities to collaborate with schools, institutions, and wedding organizers
O5	Trend of modern traditional clothing	Increasing interest among younger generations in traditional-modern designs
T1	Price competition	Many similar businesses offer lower rental prices
T2	Rapid trend changes	Fashion models change quickly following market preferences
T3	Purchasing power sensitivity	Economic conditions influence rental decisions
T4	Risk of product damage	Possibility of damage or loss during rental use

Business Positioning Based on a SWOT Analysis

This positioning aims to understand the strategic condition of the business so that appropriate strategies can be formulated that align with both internal and external circumstances. a SWOT analysis not only serves to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats but also to determine the organization's position within the strategy quadrant matrix. This position illustrates the strategic policy direction that the company should implement.

Similarly, Fred R. David (2017) states that a SWOT analysis helps management match internal and external factors to determine the most appropriate strategic alternatives for the company's situation.

Internal Factor Balance Analysis

Based on the previously identified internal factors, AHA Atelier has five key strengths (S1–S5) and five weaknesses (W1–W5). However, interviews and observations revealed that the business's strengths outweigh its weaknesses.

Key strengths such as service flexibility (S1), custom design capabilities (S2), product quality (S3), and active promotion through social media (S5) provide significant added value in attracting and retaining customers.

In the theory of competitive advantage, Michael Porter (1985) asserts that companies with product differentiation and good service quality will be better able to compete in a competitive industry. This indicates that AHA Atelier's internal strengths have the potential to become a source of competitive advantage.

Meanwhile, existing weaknesses, such as limited market reach (W1) and the need for regular innovation (W5), can be addressed through market development strategies and product innovation. Therefore, the overall internal condition of the business is considered quite strong.

SWOT analysis in service businesses shows that if internal strengths outweigh weaknesses, the business has a strong foundation for expansion and developing a growth strategy.

External Factor Balance Analysis

Externally, AHA Atelier faces five main opportunities (O1–O5) and four threats (T1–T4). Based on the analysis, the available opportunities are relatively large and support business growth.

Opportunities such as the high demand for traditional clothing (O1), increasing awareness of cultural preservation (O2), and the development of social media (O3) indicate that the external environment provides ample room for business growth.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), companies that are able to capitalize on changes in the social and technological environment will more easily gain a competitive advantage over their competitors.

Existing threats, such as price competition (T1) and rapidly changing trends (T2), do require special attention. However, these threats can be anticipated through differentiation strategies and continuous innovation.

Small-scale service businesses, market opportunities often outweigh threats if the business is able to maintain product quality and innovation. Therefore, AHA Atelier's external conditions are categorized as quite supportive (favorable environment).

Determining SWOT Quadrant Position

In a SWOT analysis, a business's position can be determined using a four-quadrant matrix:

1) Quadrant I (SO Strategy / Growth-Oriented Strategy); 2) Quadrant II (WO Strategy / Turnaround Strategy); 3) Quadrant III (ST Strategy / Diversification Strategy); 4) Quadrant IV (WT Strategy / Defensive Strategy).

According to Freddy Ranguti (2016), Quadrant I indicates a company with significant internal strengths and extensive external opportunities, so a growth strategy is the appropriate strategy.

Based on the analysis of internal and external factors described previously, AHA Atelier exhibits the following characteristics: 1) Strengths outweigh weaknesses; 2) Opportunities

outweigh threats; 3) The external environment is relatively supportive; 4) The business has good differentiation and service quality

Considering these conditions, AHA Atelier is positioned in Quadrant I (Growth-Oriented Strategy).

Based on the SWOT analysis, AHA Atelier's business position is in Quadrant I (Growth-Oriented Strategy). This is indicated by the dominance of internal strengths and the significant external opportunities available. Given this position, the recommended strategy is a growth strategy through leveraging internal strengths to capture existing market opportunities. This positioning serves as the basis for formulating alternative strategies for the third problem statement using the TOWS Matrix.

Marketing Strategy Formulation

Once AHA Atelier's position is determined to be in Quadrant I (Growth-Oriented Strategy), the next step is to formulate an appropriate marketing strategy using the TOWS Matrix. According to Fred R. David (2017), the TOWS Matrix is an advanced SWOT analysis tool that matches internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) with external factors (opportunities and threats) to generate applicable strategic alternatives. This concept was first developed by Heinz Weihrich, who emphasized that effective strategies arise from the process of matching internal resources with external environmental conditions. Based on the results of the previous identification of internal and external factors, the TOWS Matrix is obtained as follows:

Table 1. TOWS Matrix

	Opportunities	Threats
Strengths	SO Strategies 1. Develop modern and premium custom traditional clothing collections to capture increasing market demand.2. Intensify digital marketing through social media and cultural branding content.3. Expand market reach beyond the regency through online ordering systems and collaboration with event organizers.	ST Strategies 1. Differentiate products based on quality and custom design to avoid price competition.2. Respond quickly to changing trends through continuous design innovation.
Weaknesses	WO Strategies 1. Expand market reach through digitalization and marketplace platforms.2. Regularly innovate collections to follow cultural trends.	WT Strategies 1. Improve operational efficiency and update work equipment.2. Implement management systems and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to minimize delays and operational irregularities.

Source: processed by researchers (2026)

SO (Strength-Opportunities) Strategy

The SO (Strength-Opportunities) strategy is a strategy designed to leverage all internal strengths to capture and optimize available external opportunities. Based on the previous SWOT analysis, AHA Atelier is in Quadrant I, indicating a strong business position and significant market opportunities. Therefore, the most appropriate strategy to implement is a growth-oriented strategy.

According to Fred R. David (2017), organizations in a strong position facing significant external opportunities should implement an aggressive expansion strategy through product development, market penetration, and market development. This aims to maximize growth potential before competitors seize existing opportunities.

In the context of AHA Atelier, the SO strategy focuses on three main areas: product development, strengthening digital marketing, and market expansion.

Development of a Modern and Premium Custom Traditional Clothing Collection

This strategy emerged from a combination of internal strengths such as custom design capabilities, high product quality, and flexible service, coupled with the growing demand for traditional clothing for various events such as weddings, graduations, and cultural events.

Strategic Analysis

Demand for traditional clothing is no longer limited to traditional events but has evolved into a lifestyle trend and cultural preservation. This presents a significant opportunity for traditional clothing rental businesses that are able to present modern designs while maintaining traditional values.

According to Michael Porter (1985), a differentiation strategy enables companies to create a competitive advantage through unique products that are difficult for competitors to imitate. This differentiation can take the form of design, material quality, service, or customer experience.

In the context of AHA Atelier, differentiation is realized through: Exclusive and elegant designs, Custom sizes and models to suit customer characteristics, More varied accessory details, Pre-rental consultation services.

This strategy is crucial to avoid price wars, as businesses compete not on the lowest price, but rather on value and quality.

Strategy Implementation

Collection development strategies can be implemented through:

Seasonal Collection Launch

Every certain period (for example, every six months), AHA Atelier can launch a new collection that follows the latest color and design trends.

Premium Traditional Wedding Package

A complete package that includes bridal attire, family attire, accessories, and styling services. This increases the transaction value per customer.

Custom Personal Design

Providing special design options according to customer preferences to create an emotional attachment to the brand.

Theoretically, this strategy also aligns with the innovation concept proposed by Joseph Schumpeter, who stated that product innovation is the key to long-term business sustainability and growth.

Intensifying Digital Marketing

The second strategy in the SO approach is maximizing the promotional power of social media to seize the opportunities of the increasingly rapid development of digital technology.

Strategic Analysis

Changes in consumer behavior, which are increasingly digital, mean that information searches, product comparisons, and purchasing decisions are increasingly conducted through social media.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), digital marketing has advantages in terms of broad reach, two-way interaction, and more specific market segmentation capabilities. Digital marketing enables even small businesses to compete effectively at a relatively lower cost than conventional promotions. Social media significantly increased purchasing interest in fashion-based service businesses.

Strategy Implementation

Intensifying digital marketing can be done through:

Cultural Educational Content

Explaining the meaning of traditional clothing, the philosophy of color, and its history. This content builds the business's image as a culturally conscious brand.

Customer Testimonials and Reviews

Testimonials increase the trust of potential customers.

Before-After Transformation Video

Visual content is highly engaging and increases engagement.

Paid Advertising (Ad Targeting)

Using targeting features to reach potential customers outside Soppeng Regency.

This strategy not only increases sales but also strengthens AHA Atelier's brand positioning as a provider of modern and professional traditional clothing.

Market Expansion Outside the Region

The third strategy is to expand market reach outside Soppeng Regency by leveraging service flexibility and the growing demand for traditional clothing.

Strategic Analysis

Currently, AHA Atelier's market is still focused on the local area. However, with the support of digital technology and a logistics delivery system, the business has the opportunity to reach customers in other areas.

According to Fred R. David (2017), a market development strategy involves introducing existing products to new market areas.

This strategy is important because it: 1) Expands market share; 2) Reduces dependence on local markets; 3) Increases transaction volume.

Sari's (2025) research shows that market expansion through digital platforms can increase MSME turnover by 30–40% within one year of operation.

Strategy Implementation

Concrete steps that can be taken: 1) Structured online ordering system; 2) Collaboration with trusted shipping services; 3) Collaboration with event organizers outside the region; 4) Reseller or partnership programs.

With this strategy, AHA Atelier will not only be a local business but also have the potential to develop into a regional brand.

WO (Weakness-Opportunities) Strategy

The WO (Weakness-Opportunities) strategy is a strategy designed to capitalize on external opportunities to overcome or minimize a business's internal weaknesses. Unlike the SO strategy, which is aggressive and expansive, the WO strategy emphasizes internal improvement by capitalizing on available opportunities.

According to Fred R. David (2017), a WO strategy is often referred to as a turnaround-oriented strategy, a strategy aimed at improving internal weaknesses so that the organization can optimally capitalize on external opportunities. In the context of AHA Atelier, the main weaknesses identified were limited market reach, the need for regular collection innovation, and the limitations of an operational system that has not yet been fully digitized.

Based on the TOWS Matrix results, there are two main strategies in the WO category: digitalization of the marketing system and regular product innovation.

Digitalization of the Marketing System

Strategic Analysis

One of AHA Atelier's main weaknesses is its limited market reach within Soppeng Regency. This situation means that potential customers outside the region remain untapped. On the other hand, there are external opportunities in the form of developments in digital technology and the increasing use of the internet and social media in business activities.

The development of digital technology has changed people's consumption patterns. Information searches, product selection, and even transactions are now largely conducted online. Therefore, digitalization is no longer an optional option but a strategic necessity.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), digital-based marketing enables businesses to reach a wider market at a relatively efficient cost and foster two-way communication with consumers. Digitalization also increases business visibility in search engines and social media platforms.

Sari's (2022) research shows that digitalization in small and medium-sized enterprises can significantly increase market access and transaction volume by expanding consumer reach without geographic boundaries. Therefore, opportunities for digital technology development can be utilized to overcome the weakness of limited market reach.

Strategy Implementation

The digitalization of the marketing system at AHA Atelier can be implemented through several strategic steps:

Creating an Official Business Website

The website serves as the main information center regarding fashion collections, prices, rental procedures, and service contacts. The website also enhances the credibility and professionalism of the business.

Utilizing Rental Marketplaces

Joining marketplace platforms or rental applications makes products more easily discovered by consumers from outside the region.

Optimizing Google Business Profiles

Registering and optimizing business profiles on Google helps businesses appear in local and regional searches. The customer review feature also increases the trust of potential customers.

Structured Online Ordering System

Using an online order form or integrating with WhatsApp Business can accelerate responses and improve service efficiency.

Through this strategy, the weakness of limited market share can be gradually reduced and even transformed into an opportunity for digital-based expansion.

Regular Product Innovation

Strategic Analysis

The next internal weakness is the need for regular fashion model updates. In the fashion industry, including traditional clothing, design trends, colors, and accessory details change over time. If businesses fail to innovate, their products will appear monotonous and potentially lose their appeal.

External opportunities that can be exploited include the growing public interest in traditional clothing for various formal and informal events. The growing trend of cultural preservation opens up space for design innovations that combine traditional and modern elements.

According to Joseph Schumpeter, innovation is a key factor in creating economic growth and business sustainability. Innovation encompasses not only new products but also improvements in design, quality, and service delivery.

Research by Xue et al. (2024) also shows that product innovation positively impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty in fashion-based service businesses. Therefore, regular product innovation is a strategic solution to address internal weaknesses while capitalizing on emerging cultural trends.

Strategy Implementation

Some concrete steps AHA Atelier can take to innovate products include:

Regular Collection Evaluation

Conducting a collection audit every six months to assess which models are still in demand and which need updating.

Launching New Models Based on Trends

Following the development of colors, motifs, and clothing details that are popular on social media and at traditional wedding events.

Collaborating with Local Tailors or Designers

This collaboration can produce more creative and exclusive designs.

Customer Satisfaction and Preference Surveys

Collecting customer feedback on desired designs for the development of the next collection.

Innovation in Support Services

Not only in clothing, but also in service packages such as styling, makeup recommendations, or thematic photo concepts.

Consistent innovation will create the perception that AHA Atelier is a dynamic, adaptive, and up-to-date business.

AHA Atelier's WO strategy focuses on transforming internal weaknesses into new strengths by exploiting external opportunities. Digitalization of the marketing system expands market access and enhances business professionalism, while regular product innovation maintains the relevance and attractiveness of collections.

This strategy is a growth-oriented internal improvement strategy. If the WO strategy is consistently implemented, weaknesses that previously hampered business development can be minimized, thus preparing AHA Atelier for a more aggressive expansion strategy as recommended in the SO strategy.

ST (Strength-Threats) Strategy

The ST (Strength-Threats) strategy is designed to leverage internal strengths to address and mitigate the impact of external threats. This strategy is important when a business possesses strong resources and capabilities but is faced with a competitive and dynamic external environment.

According to Fred R. David (2017), the ST strategy is used to leverage an organization's internal strengths to avoid or minimize the impact of external threats. This strategy is protective yet proactive, as the organization not only survives but also strengthens its competitive position.

In the context of AHA Atelier, the main threats faced include increasing competition from similar businesses, the potential for price wars, and rapidly changing traditional fashion trends. To address these threats, businesses need to maximize their strengths in terms of product quality, custom design capabilities, and service flexibility.

Differentiation to Avoid Price Warfare

Strategy Analysis

One common threat in the fashion rental industry is price competition. Many businesses tend to lower prices to attract customers, triggering a price war. This can reduce profit margins and impact service quality. To avoid low-price competition, AHA Atelier needs to emphasize its strengths in product quality and custom design services.

There are three generic strategies for achieving competitive advantage: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus strategy (Alnoor et al., 2022; Rubio et al., 2024; Alsharari, 2024). In the context of AHA Atelier, the most relevant strategy is differentiation, which involves offering unique and high-value products so that customers are willing to pay more for the quality and special features provided.

By focusing on differentiation, businesses need not compete on the lowest price, but rather on: Uniqueness of traditional fashion designs, Detail and quality of materials, Personalized consultation services, and a more exclusive customer experience.

Sari's (2022) research shows that product differentiation in the fashion rental business has a significant impact on customer loyalty because consumers prioritize quality and experience over price alone.

Strategy Implementation

Implementing a differentiation strategy to address the threat of price competition can be done through:

Establishing Premium Positioning

Building an image as a provider of high-quality traditional clothing with exclusive designs.

Improving Quality Standards

Using quality materials, proper clothing care, and maintaining the cleanliness and tidiness of the collection.

Personal Consultation Services

Providing consultations on models and colors that suit the customer's personality.

Value-Added Service Packages

Offering complete packages (clothing, accessories, styling) so that customers see added value that competitors don't offer.

With this strategy, AHA Atelier is able to maintain profit margins while building customer loyalty without getting caught up in low-price competition.

Flexibility to Face Changing Trends

Strategic Analysis

Another threat faced is the rapid changes in traditional clothing trends. The fashion industry is dynamic, where models, colors, and styles can change according to market tastes. If a business is unable to adapt, its collections will appear outdated and unpopular.

To address this threat, AHA Atelier possesses strengths in custom design capabilities and production flexibility. These strengths can be leveraged to quickly respond to changing trends.

According to Heinz Weihrich, an effective strategy is one that adapts to the organization's strengths and the dynamics of the external environment. Furthermore, strategic management theory emphasizes the importance of organizational flexibility in the face of market uncertainty. The ability to adapt to trends has a positive impact on the sustainability of fashion-based service businesses.

Strategy Implementation

Concrete steps that can be taken include:

Regular Trend Monitoring

Following trend developments through social media, traditional wedding events, and national fashion references.

Small-Scale Production for Market Testing

Before mass production, new models can be trialed in limited quantities to gauge market response.

Pre-Order System for New Designs

Reduce the risk of unused stock with a pre-order system based on customer demand.

Evaluate Less Popular Collections

Less popular models can be updated or modified to remain relevant.

This flexibility provides an adaptive advantage, enabling the business to survive in a rapidly changing environment.

AHA Atelier's ST strategy emphasizes leveraging internal strengths to protect the business from external threats. Product differentiation allows the business to avoid price wars, while design flexibility and innovation allow the business to remain relevant amid changing trends.

This strategy is both protective and competitive, as it not only mitigates the impact of threats but also strengthens the business's position in the market. By consistently implementing the ST strategy, AHA Atelier can maintain business stability while maintaining a long-term competitive advantage.

WT (Weakness-Threats) Strategy

The WT (Weakness-Threats) strategy is a defensive strategy aimed at minimizing internal weaknesses while avoiding or mitigating the impact of external threats. This strategy is generally implemented to maintain business stability when the organization faces internal risks and environmental pressures that could disrupt business continuity.

According to Fred R. David (2017), the WT strategy is designed to minimize the likelihood of an organization becoming vulnerable due to a combination of internal weaknesses and external threats. This strategy does not focus on aggressive expansion, but rather on strengthening internal foundations to ensure the business remains resilient and stable.

In the context of AHA Atelier, weaknesses such as operational system limitations, potential delays in clothing returns, and the need for equipment upgrades can become serious problems when faced with external threats such as intense competition and rapidly changing trends. Therefore, the WT strategy is crucial as a business security measure.

Operational efficiency

Strategic analysis

One of the identified weaknesses is the suboptimal operational system, including inventory management and rental scheduling. On the other hand, threats such as price competition and increasing customer expectations require the business to operate more efficiently. Operational efficiency is important because it: reduces wasteful costs, increases service speed, minimizes administrative errors, and enhances business professionalism.

According to Michael Porter (1985), internal efficiency plays a crucial role in maintaining competitiveness, especially in competitive industries. Although AHA Atelier does not focus on a low-cost strategy, efficiency is still necessary to control cost structures and maintain healthy profit margins. Research by Hidayat (2021) shows that operational system readiness in service businesses significantly influences customer satisfaction and business sustainability.

Strategy Implementation

Operational efficiency can be achieved through the following steps:

Developing Written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

SOPs are needed to regulate: 1) Ordering procedures; 2) Fitting and collection processes; 3) Returning and checking garments; 4) Handling customer complaints.

With SOPs, service becomes more structured and consistent.

Implementing a Late Fee System

Late returns of garments can disrupt the customer's next schedule. Therefore, a fee system needs to be clearly implemented in the rental agreement. This step also improves customer discipline.

More Systematic Inventory Management

Clothing inventory management is carried out through neat recording, both manually and digitally. Each garment is assigned a code to facilitate tracking of availability and condition.

Operational Cost Control

Regular evaluation of clothing maintenance costs, material purchases, and other expenses to maintain efficiency.

Through these steps, internal weaknesses can be minimized, thus making the business better prepared to face external pressures.

Risk Management and Periodic Evaluation

Strategic Analysis

External threats such as changing trends, increased competition, and economic uncertainty require businesses to have a sound risk management system. If internal weaknesses are not controlled, external threats can have a significant impact on business sustainability.

Risk management in small businesses is often overlooked, even though planning and evaluation are crucial for maintaining business stability. According to Heinz Weihrich, organizations need to periodically evaluate the alignment of their strategies with environmental conditions to avoid falling behind the competition. Evaluation is part of the strategic control process.

Sari's (2022) research shows that businesses that conduct regular performance evaluations have a higher level of sustainability than businesses that do not conduct routine evaluations.

Strategy Implementation

Some risk management steps that AHA Atelier can implement include:

Quarterly Evaluation (Every Three Months)

Evaluation covers: 1) Number of transactions; 2) Most popular fashion models; 3) Customer satisfaction level; 4) Promotion effectiveness.

Identification of Operational Risks, such as

1) Damaged fashion; 2) Delayed return; 3) Declining interest in certain models

Contingency Planning

Developing alternative plans in the event of a drastic decrease in demand or change in trends.

Human Resource Capacity Building

Training in customer service and administrative management to ensure a more professional work system.

With good risk management, a business is not only able to withstand threats but also becomes more adaptive to environmental changes.

AHA Atelier's WT strategy serves as the foundation for business stability. Operational efficiency strengthens internal systems, while risk management and regular evaluations ensure the business remains adaptive to market dynamics.

Although this strategy is defensive in nature, it plays a crucial role in maintaining long-term business sustainability. Without an efficient operational system and regular evaluation, the previously formulated growth strategy (SO) will struggle to run optimally. Therefore, the WT

strategy complements and strengthens the internal structure, enabling AHA Atelier to grow steadily, measurably, and sustainably.

Conclusion

Based on the SWOT analysis, AHA Atelier's internal strengths include product quality, custom design capabilities, service flexibility, and utilization of social media. Weaknesses include limited market reach, the need for regular collection innovation, and a less-than-optimal operational system. Externally, opportunities include increasing public interest in traditional clothing and the development of digital technology. Threats include competition from similar businesses, the potential for price wars, and rapidly changing fashion trends. Based on the calculations and mapping in the SWOT matrix, AHA Atelier is located in Quadrant I (Growth-Oriented Strategy). This position indicates that the business has significant internal strengths and broad external opportunities. Therefore, an aggressive growth strategy through product development and market expansion is appropriate. Based on the TOWS Matrix, the recommended strategy includes the SO strategy as the primary strategy, namely the development of a modern and premium traditional clothing collection, intensified digital marketing, and market expansion outside the region. WO, ST, and WT strategies act as supporting strategies through digitalization of marketing systems, regular product innovation, differentiation to avoid price wars, operational efficiency, and regular evaluations to maintain business sustainability.

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