

SWOT-Based Development Strategies for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in Hutaraja Tinggi District

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Abstract: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute the backbone of Indonesia's economy—particularly in Hutaraja Tinggi District, Padang Lawas Regency—yet they face persistent constraints in access to capital, technology, market information, and skilled human resources. This study analyzes MSME development strategies using a qualitative SWOT approach to identify internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats, and to formulate actionable strategies tailored to local conditions. Data were gathered through literature review, observation, and in-depth interviews with four business owners and one official from the District Office of Cooperatives, Industry, and Trade, with proportional sampling across enterprise types. Findings indicate key strengths in the availability of local raw materials, entrepreneurial drive, and distinctive products; principal weaknesses in limited financing, insufficient product innovation, and suboptimal marketing; opportunities in local government support, rising consumer purchasing power, and digital technology diffusion; and threats from intense competition, raw material price volatility, and shifting consumer preferences. The study recommends strategies focused on product quality upgrading, product diversification, the systematic use of digital marketing, and the strengthening of inter-organizational networks. Compared with prior studies that often isolate a single dimension (e.g., marketing or finance), this research offers a comprehensive, context-sensitive strategy set by integrating internal and external analyses within the SWOT framework, including attention to local socio-religious dynamics in a predominantly Muslim community.

Keywords: SWOT Analysis, Hutaraja Tinggi MSMEs.

Abstrak: Usaha mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) merupakan pilar utama perekonomian Indonesia, khususnya di Kecamatan Hutaraja Tinggi, Kabupaten Padang Lawas, karena berperan vital dalam penciptaan lapangan kerja dan pertumbuhan ekonomi lokal. UMKM di wilayah ini sering dihadapkan pada kendala akses permodalan, teknologi, informasi pasar, dan sumber daya manusia yang kompeten. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi pengembangan UMKM berdasarkan analisis SWOT di Kecamatan Hutaraja Tinggi, Kabupaten Padang Lawas, serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor internal (kekuatan dan kelemahan) dan eksternal (peluang dan ancaman) yang mempengaruhi pengembangan UMKM, serta merumuskan strategi pengembangan UMKM yang efektif. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan fokus pada identifikasi elemen-elemen SWOT yang relevan dengan UMKM lokal. Data diperoleh melalui studi literatur, observasi, dan potensi wawancara mendalam untuk mengumpulkan perspektif dari pelaku. Populasi penelitian adalah empat orang pelaku usaha dan satu orang dinas koperindag di Kecamatan Hutaraja Tinggi Kabupaten Padang Lawas. Sampel yang di ambil secara proporsional dari berbagai jenis usaha. Berdasarkan perumusan masalah, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa UMKM di Kecamatan Hutaraja Tinggi memiliki kekuatan berupa ketersediaan

bahan baku lokal, semangat kewirausahaan, dan produk yang unik. Kelemahan utama meliputi keterbatasan modal, kurangnya inovasi produk, dan pemasaran yang belum optimal. Peluang yang dapat di manfaatkan adalah dukungan pemerintah daerah, peningkatan daya beli masyarakat, dan perkembangan teknologi digital. Ancaman yang di hadapi antara lain persaingan ketat, fluktuasi harga bahan baku, dan perubahan selera konsumen. Strategi pengembangan yang berfokus pada peningkatan kualitas produk, diversifikasi produk, pemanfaatan digital marketing, serta penguatan jejaring dengan berbagai pihak. Dibandingkan dengan penelitian terdahulu yang sering berfokus pada satu aspek pengembangan UMKM misalnya, pemasaran atau permodalan, penelitian ini menawarkan pendekatan komprehensif dengan mengintegrasikan analisis internal dan eksternal melalui kerangka SWOT. Penelitian sebelumnya mungkin belum secara spesifik membahas konteks UMKM dengan segala karakteristik loyalnya, termasuk potensi masyarakat mayoritas muslim. Penelitian ini memberikan rekomendasi strategi yang lebih terperinci dan disesuaikan dengan kondisi spesifik UMKM di Lokasi studi, yang seringkali belum ditemukan dalam studi kompratif umum.

Kata Kunci: Analisis SWOT, UMKM Hutaraja Tinggi.

Introduction

Recent studies highlight the crucial role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia's economic development, particularly in rural areas. SWOT analysis has been widely used to assess MSME challenges and opportunities (Azwar Anwar & Mohd Musa Bin Sarip, 2024; Ade Risna et al., 2023; Fitri Lestari & Ridlwan Muttaqin, 2024; Nurlatifa Khairun Nisa, 2024). Common strengths include local resource availability and community support, while weaknesses often involve limited technology integration and management skills (Nurlatifa Khairun Nisa, 2024; Ade Risna et al., 2023). Opportunities encompass growing markets for halal products and increasing demand for local goods, but threats include low awareness and global market fluctuations (Azwar Anwar & Mohd Musa Bin Sarip, 2024; Nurlatifa Khairun Nisa, 2024). Recommended strategies for MSME development include enhancing access to finance, improving technological adoption, product innovation, and strengthening collaborations with government and private sectors (Azwar Anwar & Mohd Musa Bin Sarip, 2024; Fitri Lestari & Ridlwan Muttaqin, 2024; Nurlatifa Khairun Nisa, 2024).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in Indonesia's economic structure, demonstrating resilience during economic crises and contributing significantly to national development (Nasrida et al., 2023). MSMEs account for 61.07% of GDP and employ 97% of the workforce, highlighting their importance in sustainable economic growth (Ramadani et al., 2025). Despite their strategic position, MSMEs face challenges in accessing capital, government policies, and digitalization (Ramadani et al., 2025). The sector's ability to absorb labor, increase household incomes, and reduce unemployment and poverty underscores its significance in building the nation's economy (Sarfiah et al., 2019). With Indonesia's entrepreneurship rate at only 3.47%, there is a substantial opportunity for growth in this sector (Wahyudi et al., 2024). Continuous government support and empowerment are essential to optimize MSMEs' role as a pillar of the national economy, necessitating a holistic approach involving cross-sector collaboration (Wahyudi et al., 2024; Sarfiah et al., 2019).

SWOT analysis is a valuable tool for developing marketing strategies and improving competitiveness in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia (Ronda Deli Sianturi, 2020; Ade Risna et al., 2023). It helps identify internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats, allowing businesses to maximize advantages and minimize risks (Syamruddin & Yunita, 2024). SWOT analysis can be used to formulate

strategies for product innovation, market expansion, and leveraging technology for promotion and sales (Ronda Deli Sianturi, 2020). Implementation of SWOT analysis has been shown to aid in developing marketing strategies, increasing sales, and fostering business growth (Liani & Jumaidi, 2024). The analysis typically results in the creation of SO, WO, ST, and WT strategies, which can be applied to address weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and mitigate threats (Syamruddin & Yunita, 2024; Liani & Jumaidi, 2024). Additionally, the use of social media in marketing can help expand market reach and recognition (Liani & Jumaidi, 2024).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in fostering local economic development and improving community welfare across various regions in Indonesia. These enterprises create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and reduce poverty (Takari et al., 2025). MSMEs contribute to community empowerment by providing opportunities for entrepreneurship and skill development (Ramadhani & Ikaningtyas, 2025). They effectively utilize local resources through strategies such as optimizing raw materials, developing value-added products, and enhancing skills through training (Wibowo et al., 2024). MSMEs have demonstrated resilience during economic crises and the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to increased earnings and well-being in local communities (Margono et al., 2024). However, challenges persist, including limited access to modern technology, capital, and broader markets (Wibowo et al., 2024). Continuous support from government and related institutions is necessary to overcome these obstacles and promote sustainable rural economic growth (Takari et al., 2025; Wibowo et al., 2024).

SWOT analysis is a valuable tool for developing strategies to enhance the competitiveness of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in rural areas. By identifying internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats, SWOT analysis provides insights for context-appropriate development strategies (M. Yusup & Triana Lidona Aprilani, 2021; Fitri Lestari & Ridlwan Muttaqin, 2024). Common strengths of MSMEs include availability of raw materials and labor, while weaknesses often involve limited access to technology and market information (Khabib Alia Akhmad et al., 2024; Langgeng Widodo et al., 2025). Opportunities may arise from government support and changing consumer trends, while threats typically include intense competition (M. Yusup & Triana Lidona Aprilani, 2021; Langgeng Widodo et al., 2025). Recommended strategies based on SWOT analysis include product diversification, quality improvement, and expansion of distribution networks to strengthen competitiveness in domestic and international markets (Fitri Lestari & Ridlwan Muttaqin, 2024; Khabib Alia Akhmad et al., 2024).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in economic development but face numerous challenges. These include limited managerial skills, lack of product innovation, and restricted access to financing (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2025). To enhance competitiveness, MSMEs must adopt adaptive strategies such as product diversification, digital transformation, and strategic partnerships (Erlangga et al., 2024). Continuous investment in managerial skills development is essential for MSME growth and resilience (Junaidi et al., 2025). Additionally, implementing sustainable practices that balance profit, people, and planet can generate benefits through lower costs, reduced risks, and new opportunities (Ruslaini, 2021). However, barriers to improvement persist, including financial constraints, lack of technological

knowledge, and resistance to change (Erlangga et al., 2024). To address these challenges, collaborative efforts between government, academia, and the private sector are recommended, focusing on managerial training, product innovation, and simplifying access to financing (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2025; Junaidi et al., 2025).

Key constraints include inadequate capital, limited business and managerial knowledge (including weaknesses in bookkeeping), uneven coaching and support from relevant agencies, and widespread reluctance to assume risks related to investment, product innovation, and technology adoption. As Rudjito observes, “MSMEs contribute significantly to Indonesia’s economy because they can create new jobs and increase state revenue through business taxes.” Government policy therefore plays a crucial enabling role in safeguarding the continuity and success of community enterprises.

In sum, rural MSME development—particularly in Hutaraja Tinggi—remains an important indicator of economic growth and unemployment reduction. The persistent challenges outlined above underscore the relevance of a SWOT-based approach to formulate effective, context-sensitive strategies for strengthening MSME competitiveness.

Method

This study employs a descriptive design with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is conducted in natural settings with the aim of interpreting phenomena and is carried out by employing multiple methods. It does not rely on statistics; rather, data are collected, analyzed, and subsequently interpreted (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). This approach is frequently used to explore the complexity of human experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as to understand the social contexts in which such phenomena occur. Every research activity requires an object or target of inquiry, which generally exists in large numbers. Data collection typically includes observation, interviews, and documentation (Sari & Puji, 2022). Observation, in particular, is a core scientific technique in the social sciences and is widely used in qualitative research for data collection (Sari, 2018).

Results and Discussion

Implementation of MSME Development Strategies in Hutaraja Tinggi District through a SWOT Analysis Approach

MSMEs in Hutaraja Tinggi District, Padang Lawas Regency, actively participate in market competition. To sustain growth and broaden their market presence across regions, these enterprises have implemented a range of development strategies. These efforts align with Amirullah’s view that strategy is a large-scale, future-oriented managerial plan for interacting with a competitive environment to achieve organizational goals. They are also reinforced by Freddy Rangkuti’s perspective that strategy functions as an instrument for attaining objectives. Over time, the strategy concept has continued to evolve; Chandler’s classic formulation frames strategy as the enterprise’s long-term goals and the utilization and allocation of critical resources necessary to achieve them. A sound grasp of strategy and related concepts is therefore pivotal to successful strategic design and execution.

In practice, MSMEs have expanded networks to widen marketing reach into multiple regions. Market strengthening is essential, but it must be accompanied by appropriate oversight so that

market mechanisms do not deviate and exacerbate inequality. This emphasis is consistent with findings by Bagja Waluyu, which indicate that low levels of education and skills significantly depress the quality of the labor force.

Community empowerment efforts to enhance human resources for business development should include competency-based training; activation of community learning centers (*sanggar kegiatan belajar*) with productive economic skills; stronger linkages between educational institutions and industry to improve the relevance of education; reinforcement of the cultural foundations of education as a form of cultural therapy; promotion of resilient small and medium enterprises; and stimulation of civic initiative within the community.

MSME Development Strategy

According to Joseph Schumpeter's theory of innovation and entrepreneurship, several key indicators are relevant to MSME development strategies. Schumpeter emphasizes that entrepreneurs are change agents who introduce innovations, thereby driving economic growth and the development of small and medium enterprises; he maintains that entrepreneurship is vital to economic development because entrepreneurs are willing to take risks and generate new ideas that can lead to growth. Economic development, in this view, proceeds through a series of boom-and-bust cycles propelled by waves of innovation and technological change. Schumpeter also underscores the role of the banking system in supplying the funds entrepreneurs need to undertake innovative activities. The principal indicators derived from Schumpeter's thinking include product innovation, process innovation, the opening of new markets, human resource development, the adoption of new technologies, access to financing, innovative marketing strategies, collaboration and networking, organizational reengineering, and improved risk management.

The application of SWOT in a company is intended to provide guidance that sharpens strategic focus, so that the analysis can serve as a comparative lens from multiple angles—strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats that may arise in the future. SWOT can thus be used as a model for analyzing both profit- and non-profit organizations, with the primary aim of understanding the organization's condition more comprehensively. According to Freddy Rangkuti, SWOT analysis is a systematic identification of factors for formulating corporate strategy (Pujiono & Setyawati, 2018).

Iskandar Wiryokusumo and J. Mandilika explain that “development strategy is a comprehensive effort requiring top-management support to enhance organizational effectiveness and health through the use of intervention techniques informed by the behavioral sciences. The strategy aims to integrate individuals' aspirations for growth and development with organizational goals.” James L. Gibson adds that “development strategy is a planned and sustained effort to apply behavioral science to system development by employing methods of reflection and self-analysis. This includes changes expected to develop and improve a company through short-, medium-, and long-term efforts.”

Rogers and Robert S. Zain advanced theoretical work on curriculum development strategies. Rogers proposes “stage-based curriculum development models, ranging from traditional approaches to those that are inclusive of educational technology.” Meanwhile, Zain outlines a democratic administrative model that engages teaching staff, school leaders, parents, and the wider community

in the curriculum development process.

The SWOT matrix is used to develop organisational or corporate strategies by clearly specifying the opportunities and threats an organisation faces and aligning them with its internal strengths and weaknesses. Within this framework, SO strategies leverage the organisation's strengths to maximise opportunities; ST strategies deploy strengths to counter external threats; WO strategies capitalise on available opportunities while minimising internal weaknesses; and WT strategies adopt a defensive posture aimed at reducing weaknesses and avoiding threats.

Nearly 80% of start-up companies in Indonesia fail within the first year. A similar view was expressed by Wirasawita, who stated that the mortality rate/failure rate of small businesses in Indonesia reaches 78%. This indicates that the failure rate for new businesses begins with a significant opportunity, but this is not balanced by sufficient financial resources and management teams, leading to an imbalance that amplifies uncertainty and risk factors.

Based on the discussion above, it highlights the importance of human resources in a business. Human resources always play an active and dominant role in every business activity, as they are the planners and decision-makers in achieving a business's objectives. Objectives will not be achieved without the active involvement of employees, even if the company possesses highly advanced tools.

Weaknesses in marketing management include targeting only one market, inadequate market research, overly lenient credit terms, selling products that do not match orders, exceeding agreed-upon deadlines, and selling only one type of product. Islam obligates every Muslim, especially those with dependents, to work. Work is one of the primary means by which humans can acquire wealth. As quoted by Mardani in 'Islamic Business Law' according to Dr. Yusuf Qardhawi, work is part of worship and jihad if the worker consistently adheres to Allah's regulations, has pure intentions, and does not forget Him. Through work, humans can fulfil their role as vicegerents, protect themselves from sin, and achieve great goals. Similarly, through work, individuals can meet their own needs, provide for their families, and do good deeds for their neighbours. All these blessed forms of religious practice can only be realised by possessing wealth and obtaining it through work. Allah states in Surah Al-Ahqaf:

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وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَتٍ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا وَلِيُؤْتِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

Meaning: "And for each of them is a degree according to what they have done, and so that Allah may suffice them for their deeds while they are busy. In this letter, Muslims are encouraged to use their days to obtain Allah's blessings and rewards. Likewise, in their endeavours, they are prohibited from committing fraud and consuming usury."

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) established a paradigm for sharia-compliant enterprise in which businesspeople, before commencing operations, formulate, establish, and implement a strategy grounded in Islamic ethics. This strategy rests on five core principles—honesty, sincerity, professionalism, silaturahmi (the cultivation of social and kinship ties), and pure intention and worship—together with the obligation to pay zakat, infaq, and sadaqah. Honesty engenders customer trust, trust fosters loyalty, and sustained loyalty underpins durable profitability; sincerity reorients entrepreneurial aims beyond material gain toward the pleasure of Allah (SWT); and professionalism, informed by honesty and sincerity, entails striving for excellence, persevering through difficulty, and facing risk with prudent courage. Silaturahmi functions as a relational bridge

linking entrepreneurs with all stakeholders, the broader environment, and ultimately the Creator, thereby grounding constructive relations not only with current customers and investors but also with prospective clients and even competitors. Finally, pure intention and worship affirm Islam's view that the telos of human existence is to worship Allah, which in practice means building motivation and strengthening resolve while deepening reliance (tawakkul) upon Him; in conducting their enterprises, believers place their trust in Allah and obey His commands, as reflected in their attitudes and operational practices.

SWOT Analysis

A strategic decision-making process typically concerns issues related to a firm's mission, objectives, strategies, and policies. For the strategic planner, it is essential to consider the various domains and factors that shape the analysis.

These factors can be grouped into four categories—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—collectively known as SWOT analysis. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats can be employed as a marketing-management tool to address changes in both the external and internal environment.

In marketing management, SWOT analysis is a leading technique for problem diagnosis. It proceeds in two stages: examining (i) the external environment to identify the opportunities and threats faced by MSME actors and (ii) the internal environment to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Understanding these internal and external elements provides a benchmark for MSMEs in formulating marketing plans to enhance competitiveness using the SWOT framework. Within this framework, Strength refers to the resources or capabilities controlled by a company that render it relatively superior to competitors in meeting customer needs—arising from available resources and competencies; Weakness denotes limitations or shortcomings in one or more resources or capabilities compared with competitors, which impede effective service to consumers; Opportunity signifies a significantly advantageous position in the business environment, stemming from major trends, previously overlooked market niches, shifts in competitive or regulatory conditions, technological change, or improved buyer-supplier relationships; and Threat describes unfavorable scenarios—such as new entrants, slow market growth, stronger bargaining power of large buyers or suppliers, technological advances, and revised regulations—that create barriers to the company's attainment of its desired outcomes.

Concept of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in Indonesia's economy. The concept of MSMEs encompasses not only economic dimensions but also social and cultural aspects. The following is an in-depth explanation of the MSME concept relevant to business development. MSMEs are defined as enterprises owned by individuals or groups on a small scale, both in terms of capital and number of workers. MSMEs make a major contribution by creating jobs, distributing economic activity more evenly, and improving community well-being. With the presence of MSMEs, people in the regions can access the goods and services they need without having to rely on large corporations (Yaqin, 2022).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can be classified into three types. Micro enterprises are those whose business capital does not exceed Rp 5,000,000,000, excluding land and the building used for the business. Small enterprises are those with annual sales between Rp 300,000,000 and Rp 2,500,000,000. Medium enterprises record annual sales of more than Rp 2,500,000,000 up to Rp 50,000,000,000.

In general, MSMEs exhibit several features. The type of goods or commodities they produce is not always fixed and can change at any time. Their business locations are also not always permanent and may shift. Many have not yet implemented even simple financial administration and do not separate household and business finances; in addition, the human resources (entrepreneurs) often lack a sufficient entrepreneurial mindset. The average level of formal education tends to be relatively low. Most have not yet accessed banking services, although some have engaged with non-bank financial institutions. They also commonly lack business permits or other legal requirements, including NPW.

Further characteristics include non-standardized quality, largely because most MSMEs have limited technological capacity. Their products are typically handmade, resulting in varied quality standards. Product design tends to be limited due to constraints in knowledge and experience; the majority work on a make-to-order basis and are not yet ready to experiment with new designs. Product lines are narrow—most MSMEs produce only a few types of goods—and when new models are requested, they find it difficult to fulfill them or require a long lead time. Both production capacity and price lists are limited, which can create difficulties for consumers. Raw materials are not well standardized because they are sourced from diverse suppliers. Finally, product continuity is not guaranteed and is often imperfect; since production remains irregular, the goods produced are frequently delivered “as is” (Zahra, 2022).

Conclusion

MSMEs in Hutaraja Tinggi District play a strategic and significant role as the backbone of the local economy, contributing to job creation and regional economic growth. Nevertheless, MSMEs in this area still face various challenges, including limited access to capital, technology, market information, and competent human resources.

A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) indicates that MSMEs in Hutaraja Tinggi District possess strong internal potential (Strengths) and external opportunities (Opportunities) that can be leveraged for development. However, there are also internal weaknesses (Weaknesses) and external threats (Threats) that must be addressed for MSME development to proceed optimally.

The development of MSMEs in Hutaraja Tinggi District requires a comprehensive approach, encompassing improvements in product quality and innovation, the use of digital platforms for marketing, and the strengthening of networks among MSME actors and relevant stakeholders. Structured and continuous training programs—particularly in production, digital marketing, financial management, and business licensing—are crucial for enhancing MSME capacity.

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