

MAPPING IDEA & LITERATURE FORMAT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

SWOT Analysis for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency, Indonesia

Ruslan Mahfuddin¹, Muhammad Haekal Yunus², N. Nasruddin³

^{1,2,3} Magister of Management and Entrepreneurship, Universitas Andi Djemma Palopo, Palopo, Indonesia. Indonesia.

Email: ruslanmachfud@gmail.com¹

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: February 06, 2026

Revised: May 31, 2026

Accepted: June 12, 2026

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.52970/grmilf.v6i3.2099>

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the internal and external factors affecting the competitiveness of Gambung Cake Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Luwu Regency and formulate strategies for enhancing their competitiveness through a SWOT analysis approach. Gambung Cake is a traditional local culinary product with significant economic potential; however, it faces various challenges in an increasingly competitive market environment. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method, with data collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with SME owners, and documentary studies. Data were analyzed using the SWOT matrix to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as the Internal-External (IE) matrix and SWOT matrix to formulate strategic alternatives. The findings indicate that Gambung Cake SMEs possess notable strengths in terms of product uniqueness and distinctive local tastes. However, they face weaknesses related to marketing, management, and limited capital. Opportunities include the growing interest of tourists in local culinary products and support from local government initiatives, whereas the primary threats stem from competition with similar products and changing consumer preferences. The recommended strategies include strength–opportunity (SO) strategies to maximize the unique characteristics of the product in targeting tourism markets; weakness–opportunity (WO) strategies to improve human resource capacity and access to financing; strength–threat (ST) strategies to maintain product advantages amid increasing competition; and weakness–threat (WT) strategies to minimize internal weaknesses in responding to external threats. This study is expected to contribute to the development of Gambung Cake SMEs by helping business owners better understand their business conditions, formulate effective marketing strategies, enhance competitiveness, and plan business development more systematically in the Luwu Regency. The SWOT analysis results indicate that Gambung Cake SMEs are currently in a growth phase, supporting the implementation of aggressive growth strategies (Supporting Aggressive Strategies).

Keywords: SWOT Analysis, Competitiveness, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), Gambung Cake, Luwu Regency, Business Strategy.

I. Introduction

Amidst global economic uncertainty, Indonesia has managed to maintain relatively stable economic growth. In the first quarter of 2025, the Indonesian economy grew by 4.87 percent year-on-year (YoY). Overall,



the national economic performance was projected to grow within the range of 4.7–5.0 percent during the first half of 2025. This growth momentum was supported by the strong economic performance recorded in 2024, when Indonesia's economy expanded by 5.03 percent, driven primarily by robust domestic demand and government fiscal support through the State Budget (APBN). Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the Indonesian economy. SMEs are the largest source of employment, particularly for individuals with low-to middle-educational backgrounds. By absorbing a significant portion of the workforce, SMEs contribute substantially to reducing unemployment and improving the welfare of the community. Despite their importance, SMEs in Indonesia continue to face various challenges. One of the major obstacles is the limited access to capital. Many SME owners encounter difficulties in obtaining financing from formal financial institutions because of insufficient collateral and inadequate business administration systems. Additionally, limitations in human resources remain a significant concern. Many SME owners possess relatively low levels of education and managerial skills, which affect their ability to manage businesses professionally. Consequently, this condition leads to lower productivity and reduced competitiveness in domestic and international markets. Another challenge is the limited adoption of technology and innovations. In the digital era, information technology has become a critical factor in improving operational efficiency and expanding market reach of companies. However, many SMEs have not yet been able to utilize technology effectively because of limited knowledge and inadequate access to digital infrastructure.

To address these challenges, continuous efforts are required to develop and empower SMEs. The government plays a vital role in formulating policies that support SME growth, including facilitating access to financing, providing entrepreneurship training, and offering business mentoring. These capacity-building initiatives are expected to improve product quality and enhance the competitiveness of local enterprises in the region. The involvement of the private sector and educational institutions is equally important. Collaboration between SMEs and large corporations can create broader market opportunities, while educational institutions can contribute through knowledge transfer, research, and innovation that align with SME requirements. The utilization of digital technology is also an essential strategy for SME development. Through digital platforms, SMEs can expand their marketing reach, improve their operational efficiency, and establish stronger brand identities. SME digitalization is expected to accelerate economic transformation toward a modern and inclusive economy. The SME sector was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many SME employees were laid off, and numerous businesses ceased operations because of bankruptcy. One example is Hj. Naderah's Gambung Cake SME, established in 2016 and located along the Trans-Sulawesi Highway in Buntu Siapa Village, Suli District, Luwu Regency. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the enterprise employed approximately 25 workers; however, the number has since declined to fewer than 20 employees. Despite various challenges and limitations, Hj. Naderah's Gambung Cake SME successfully expanded its business by opening a new branch in Belopa City in 2024. This development highlights the importance of strategic business analysis, particularly SWOT analysis, in supporting business sustainability and growth. Based on the background described above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "SWOT Analysis for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency, Indonesia."

Table 1. Research Problem and Research Objective

Research Problem	Research Objective
Based on the background presented above, this study seeks to identify the internal and external issues faced by Gambung Cake SMEs. The main research question is as follows: What marketing strategies can be implemented by Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency from the perspective of SWOT analysis?	Based on the identified problem, this study aims to analyze and determine the marketing strategies of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency using a SWOT analysis perspective.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is a fundamental concept in business management that integrates the principles of strategy and marketing to achieve organizational goals. The term strategy originates from the Greek word *Strategos*, derived from *stratos* (army) and *ago* (leader), which refers to the art of directing resources and actions toward achieving specific goals. In the business context, strategy is generally understood as a comprehensive plan that guides organizational activities and resource allocation in response to environmental conditions and to achieve long-term objectives. Chandler defined strategy as the process of determining long-term goals and objectives and allocating the necessary resources to achieve them. Similarly, Pearce and Robinson (2013) describe strategy as a large-scale, future-oriented plan designed to accomplish organizational goals. Rangkuti (1998) further emphasized that strategy is a comprehensive master plan that explains how a business unit can achieve its objectives based on an established mission statement. Therefore, strategy serves as a roadmap that enables organizations to adapt to environmental changes while maintaining their competitive positions. In contrast, marketing refers to the overall process of creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging value for customers and stakeholders. According to Swastha and Sukotjo (1993), marketing is a system of business activities directed toward planning, pricing, promoting, and distributing goods and services to satisfy the needs and desires of both existing and potential customers. The concept of marketing has evolved from a product-oriented perspective to a broader approach that emphasizes customer value creation, relationship-building, and sustainable business development. The integration of strategic planning and marketing activities gives rise to marketing strategy. Kotler (2017) defined marketing strategy as the marketing logic through which a company seeks to achieve its marketing objectives. Marketing strategy encompasses decisions regarding target markets, product positioning, marketing mix elements, and allocation of marketing resources. Porter and Magretta (2014) argue that marketing strategy is a crucial instrument for creating sustainable competitive advantage through differentiation, cost leadership, or focus strategies aimed at specific market segments. In essence, a marketing strategy can be defined as a comprehensive plan designed to achieve marketing objectives through a deep understanding of market conditions, effective segmentation, appropriate targeting, strong positioning, and efficient implementation of marketing programs. A well-formulated marketing strategy enables organizations to respond effectively to market changes, satisfy customer needs, and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic business environment.

2.2. Income

According to Harahap and Lubis (2011), income is a gross increase in assets, a decrease in liabilities, or a combination of both during a specific accounting period resulting from investment activities, trading, the provision of goods and services, or other activities aimed at generating profit. The Indonesian Institute of Accountants (Ikatan Akuntan Indonesia/IAI), through the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (PSAK), defines income as the gross inflow of economic benefits arising from the ordinary activities of an entity during a particular period, where such inflows result in an increase in equity other than those relating to contributions from owners or investors. Fundamentally, income represents an inflow of economic resources generated from a company's primary operating activities that leads to an increase in equity, excluding contributions from capital owners. Income is an important indicator of a business's financial performance and sustainability. Income has several important characteristics. First, it is generally recurring and regular in nature, such as monthly salaries or weekly profits. Second, it can be measured in monetary terms, allowing for comparisons and financial analyses. Third, it is derived from productive activities or investments that create economic value for the country. Based on their source, income can be classified as active or passive. Active income is earned through direct work or business activities such as salaries, wages, and professional fees. In contrast, passive

income is generated from investments or assets, such as interest on deposits, dividends, royalties, or rental income from property. Based on regularity, income can be categorized as fixed or variable. Fixed income refers to earnings that remain relatively consistent over time, whereas variable income fluctuates depending on business performance, market conditions, or other economic factors.

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Approach

This study employed a quantitative research approach, as the findings were presented and analyzed using numerical data. This is consistent with Arikunto's (2006) view that quantitative research is a research approach that relies heavily on numerical data, beginning with data collection, data interpretation, and the presentation of research results. This study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design with hypothesis testing to obtain empirical evidence regarding the marketing strategies of Gambung Cake SMEs and their role in enhancing business competitiveness from the perspective of SWOT analysis.

3.2. Research Location and Period

This research was conducted at Hj. Naderah's Gambung Cake SME, located in Suli District, Luwu Regency, Indonesia. The study was conducted over a three-month period from September to November 2025.

3.3. Types and Sources of Data

The data used in this study consisted of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources.

a. Types of Data

The data used in this study were both qualitative and quantitative. According to Sugiyono (2016), qualitative data are non-numerical information presented in the form of words, sentences, body movements, facial expressions, diagrams, images, and photos. These data were used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external conditions affecting the business. In contrast, quantitative data are expressed in numerical form and are related to the research variables being investigated. Examples of quantitative data include respondent demographics, business performance indicators, and other measurable information relevant to this study. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data enabled the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing the competitiveness and marketing strategies of Gambung Cake SMEs in the Luwu Regency.

b. Sources of Data

Data sources refer to any source capable of providing information relevant to the research objectives. This study used both primary and secondary data sources. According to Sugiyono (2016), primary data are obtained directly from the original source by the researcher through firsthand interaction with research subjects or observations at the research site. In this study, primary data were collected through questionnaires, field surveys, and interviews with the owners and employees of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency. These data were used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting businesses. Secondary data were also used to complement and support the primary data. Sugiyono (2016) defines secondary data as data obtained indirectly from sources other than the original respondents, such as documents, reports, journals, books, websites, and other published materials. The secondary data used in this study were gathered from relevant institutions and various documented sources that were considered pertinent to the research objectives. These data include business information, supporting statistical records,

and other documentation related to the operations and development of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

a. Questionnaire Method

To obtain reliable and valid data, researchers must select appropriate data collection techniques that ensure the accuracy and credibility of the information gathered. In this study, data were collected primarily using a questionnaire. According to Arikunto (2006), a questionnaire is a set of written questions used to obtain information from respondents regarding their personal experiences, perceptions, or knowledge of the research topic. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on the factors affecting the competitiveness and marketing strategies of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency. Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements included in the questionnaire. After completion, the questionnaires were collected and processed for analysis. This study employed an interval scale ranging from one to four. According to Irianto (2021), an interval scale is a measurement scale in which the distances between categories are equal, although it does not have an absolute zero point. Such a scale allows for meaningful comparisons between categories because the intervals between values remain constant. The questionnaire consisted of both closed- and open-ended questions designed to obtain information regarding the conditions, perceptions, and experiences of the respondents. In the closed-ended format, respondents selected the most appropriate answer from a list of predetermined options. A four-point Likert scale was used to measure the research variables. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement using the following response categories:

- Strongly Agree (SA) = 4
- Agree (A) = 3
- Disagree (D) = 2
- Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

The questionnaire administration procedure consisted of the following steps.

1. Confirming that the respondents were customers or individuals associated with Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency.
2. Questionnaires were distributed to qualified respondents. For respondents who were unwilling or unable to complete the questionnaire independently, the researcher provided assistance by reading and recording their answers.
3. The completed questionnaires were collected from the respondents.
4. The collected data were coded, processed, analyzed, and interpreted to draw research conclusions.

b. Observation Method

Observation is a data collection technique that involves directly examining the conditions and environment of a research object. Through observation, researchers can obtain a clear and comprehensive understanding of the actual circumstances surrounding the subjects under investigation. This study employed non-participant observation, meaning that the researcher did not become directly involved in the activities of the observed subjects but instead acted as an independent observer. The observation focused on the owners, employees, and business operations of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency. This method enabled the researcher to gain first-hand insights into business practices, operational processes, and environmental conditions relevant to the study.

c. Interview Method

Interviews are a data collection method conducted through direct face-to-face communication between the researcher and the interviewees using a structured or semi-structured interview guide. This technique allows researchers to obtain detailed information, clarify responses, and explore issues that may not be captured by questionnaires alone. In this study, interviews were conducted with the owners and employees of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency. The interview method was expected to provide accurate and in-depth information regarding the internal and external factors influencing business competitiveness, marketing strategies, operational challenges, and business development opportunities. The information obtained through the interviews complemented the data collected through the questionnaires and observations, thereby enhancing the validity and comprehensiveness of the research findings.

3.5. Population and Sample

a. Population

According to Ferdinand (2016), a population is a collection of all elements, events, objects, or individuals that share similar characteristics and become the focus of a research. These elements constitute the universe of the research from which conclusions can be drawn. Similarly, Sugiyono (2016) defined a population as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that possess specific qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher for investigation and analysis. Based on these definitions, the population in this study consisted of the owners, employees, and customers of Hj. Naderah's Gambung Cake SME located in Suli District, Luwu Regency.

b. Sample

A sample is a subset of the population selected by the researcher for observation and analyses. Since a sample represents only a portion of the population, its size is generally smaller than that of the population while serving as a representative (Sugiyono, 2016). The sampling technique employed in this study was incidental sampling. According to Sugiyono (2016), incidental sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which respondents are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate at the time of the research. This technique is particularly useful when the exact number of potential respondents is unknown. Using the incidental sampling technique, 30 respondents were selected as the research sample. The sample consisted of the business owners, employees, and customers of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency.

3.6. Data Analysis Method

The data in this study were analyzed using a SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to identify and evaluate internal and external factors that influence business performance. It provides a comprehensive overview of an organization's current condition by examining its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Internal analysis focuses on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a business, whereas external analysis examines the opportunities and threats arising from the business environment. According to David and Rangkuti (2014), the SWOT analysis is an analytical framework that assists decision-makers in formulating strategic alternatives. It systematically identifies strategic factors affecting a business and provides a logical basis for developing strategies that maximize strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats. In the strategic decision-making process, it is essential to evaluate the current condition of a business by analyzing its internal and external environments. Through SWOT analysis, business organizations can gain a clearer understanding of their strategic position and formulate appropriate strategies to enhance their competitiveness and achieve their long-term objectives. Owing to its practicality and effectiveness, SWOT analysis has become one of the most widely used tools for strategic planning and business development.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

This study was designed using the SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis is a strategic tool used to describe the internal and external conditions of a business. Internal factors reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the enterprise, whereas external factors identify opportunities and threats that may influence business performance. The internal and external factors of Gambung Cake SMEs served as research variables and were transformed into questionnaire items. The questionnaires were distributed in several areas of Luwu Regency and the surrounding regions. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain respondents' opinions and perceptions regarding the statements. The responses collected from all the participants were subsequently processed and analyzed using the SWOT framework. The research findings are presented as follows:

a. Respondent Data Description

This section presents the results of the data collected. A total of 30 respondents participated in this study. Of these, 15 respondents represented internal stakeholders, consisting of the owner and employees of the Gambung Cake SME, while the remaining 15 respondents represented external stakeholders, consisting of customers and consumers of Gambung Cake products in the Luwu Regency.

b. Internal and External Environmental Analysis

Internal and external environmental analyses are important strategic steps for Gambung Cake SMEs to enhance their competitiveness. This analysis helps identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that influence business performance and development.

c. SWOT Analysis

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. According to David and Rangkuti (2014), SWOT analysis is an analytical tool that assists managers in developing strategic alternatives. SWOT analysis systematically identifies strategic factors affecting a business and provides a logical basis for formulating strategies that maximize strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats. Before formulating marketing strategies, it is essential to analyze a company's current strategic position by evaluating its internal and external factors. Consequently, SWOT analysis has become one of the most widely used approaches in strategic planning and marketing strategy formulation. The assessment of the internal and external factors of Gambung Cake SMEs generated total scores by multiplying the weight and rating assigned to each factor. The internal strategic factors produced a total score of 2.73, whereas the external strategic factors generated a total score of 3.04. These scores were subsequently plotted on the Internal-External (IE) Matrix to determine the current strategic position of the business.

Table 2. Internal-External (IE) Matrix of Gambung Cake SMEs

External Factors	Strong	Medium	Weak
High	Cell 1 Growth	Cell 2 Growth	Cell 3 Retrenchment
Medium	Cell 4 Stability	Cell 5 Growth	Cell 6 Retrenchment
Low	Cell 7 Growth	Cell 8 Growth	Cell 9 Retrenchment

The Internal-External (IE) Matrix indicates that Gambung Cake SMEs are positioned in Cell 2. Businesses in this position are generally encouraged to pursue growth strategies through vertical integration and expansion initiatives.

4.2. Discussion

The results of the SWOT analysis for Gambung Cake SMEs are as follows.

a. Internal Conditions

The findings indicate that the internal factor score was 2.73, derived from the weighted evaluation of strength and weakness indicators of internal factors. The scores were obtained by multiplying the assigned weights and ratings provided by the owners and management of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency. Overall, the internal conditions of the business can be categorized as relatively favorable because the average strength score exceeded the average weakness score. This suggests that the business possesses sufficient internal capabilities to support its competitiveness and its growth.

b. External Conditions

The external factor score was 3.04, which was calculated from the weighted evaluation of opportunity and threat indicators. These scores were based on assessments provided by the customers of Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency. The external environment can also be considered favorable because the average opportunity score was higher than the average threat score. This finding indicates that businesses operate in an environment that offers promising growth opportunities despite the presence of several external challenges.

c. SWOT Analysis Diagram

Based on the Internal Factors Analysis Summary (IFAS) Matrix, the score for strengths was 2.18, while the score for weaknesses was 0.55, resulting in a difference of 1.63. Similarly, the External Factors Analysis Summary (EFAS) Matrix produced an opportunity score of 2.21 and a threat score of 0.83, resulting in a difference of 1.38. In the SWOT analysis diagram, internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) are represented on the X-axis, while external factors (opportunities and threats) are represented on the Y-axis. The difference between strengths and weaknesses ($X = 1.63$) and the difference between opportunities and threats ($Y = 1.38$) generate the coordinate point (1.63, 1.38). This coordinate determines the strategic position of a business within the SWOT quadrant.

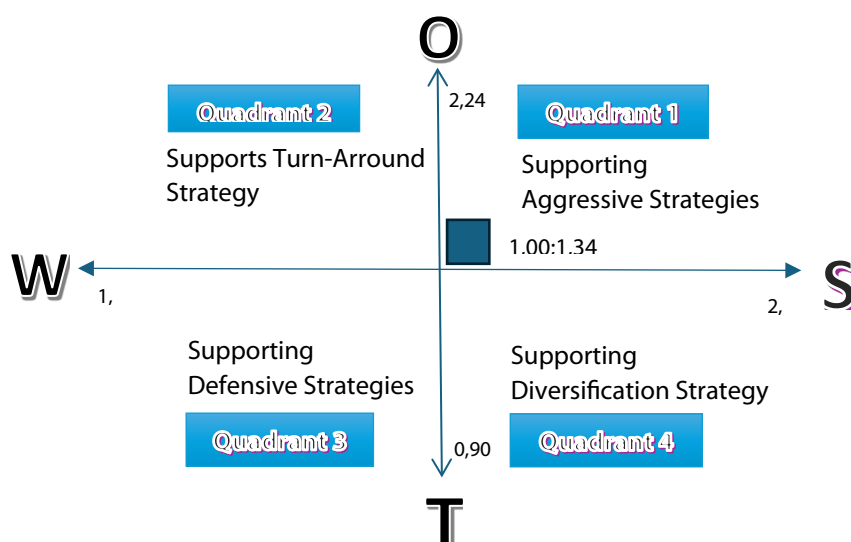


Figure 1. SWOT Analysis Diagram

The SWOT coordinate point (1.63, 1.38) places Gambung Cake SMEs in Quadrant I, indicating a favorable strategic position characterized by strong internal capabilities and attractive external opportunities.

This position supports the implementation of aggressive growth strategies aimed at maximizing strengths to capitalize on market opportunities. The combination of operational efficiency, which reduces production costs, and product differentiation, which increases product value, can create a sustainable competitive advantage for Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency. These strategies should be implemented simultaneously, considering the capacity and characteristics of the business. Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Lestari and Dwiridotjahjono (2023), who found that effective marketing strategies can significantly contribute to increasing sales volume among SMEs, as demonstrated in their study of Raja Impian Banana Cake SMEs in Tuban, Indonesia.

V. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that Gambung Cake SMEs in Luwu Regency possess favorable internal and external conditions that support their business growth and competitiveness. The SWOT analysis indicates that the business is positioned in Quadrant I, suggesting that an aggressive growth strategy is the most appropriate approach to maximize existing strengths and market opportunities. To enhance competitiveness, businesses should continuously adapt their products to customer needs and preferences by developing more flexible product offerings and customization options while maintaining production efficiency. In addition, efforts should be made to improve employee competencies through structured and continuous training programs covering technical skills, communication, leadership, and technology. The findings also reveal significant opportunities for product innovation; therefore, regular market research should be conducted to identify emerging consumer trends, unmet needs and changing preferences. Furthermore, investing in product development activities can strengthen a business's competitive position and support long-term growth. Although competitors may offer similar products at lower prices, Gambung Cake SMEs should focus on customer segments that prioritize product quality, authenticity, and value over price alone. By emphasizing product differentiation, maintaining consistent quality, and improving customer satisfaction, businesses can establish a sustainable competitive advantage. Overall, the most effective strategy for Gambung Cake SMEs is to integrate product adaptation, employee development, continuous innovation, and market differentiation in accordance with the characteristics of the local market and the business environment of Luwu Regency.

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