

SWOT-based marketing strategy to improve competitiveness: A qualitative case study of Coffee Shop Maary in Manado City

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ABSTRACT

Intensifying competition among coffee shops in Manado City requires owners to strengthen their marketing strategies. Coffee Shop Maary offers quality products and a comfortable concept but faces suboptimal digital promotion and strong competition in the Wenang area, while prior SWOT studies have rarely examined micro-scale coffee shops within a dense local competitive cluster. This study analyzes Coffee Shop Maary's marketing strategy, identifies its internal and external SWOT factors, and formulates an appropriate strategy to increase competitiveness. A qualitative descriptive approach was used, with data from in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving five informants (the owner, manager, a barista, a regular customer, and a long-standing customer), validated through source and technique triangulation. Data were analyzed using the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix, External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix, and a qualitative SWOT Matrix. Results show an IFE score of 2.91 and an EFE score of 2.75, indicating fairly good internal and external conditions, with product quality and friendly, educative service as the main strengths and inconsistent digital promotion as the main weakness. The SWOT matrix produced four strategy alternatives (SO, WO, ST, and WT), with the SO strategy—combining product and concept advantages with digital promotion, community collaboration, and delivery-service optimization, identified as the priority. These findings extend the qualitative IFE-EFE-SWOT framework to the local coffee shop context and offer practical recommendations for Coffee Shop Maary and similar micro and small enterprises.

Keywords: coffee shop; competitiveness; marketing strategy; SWOT analysis

JEL Classification: M31; M10

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1. Introduction

The coffee industry has grown rapidly over the past few years, both globally and nationally. Coffee shops no longer function merely as places to enjoy coffee,

but have evolved into spaces for working, discussing, studying, and socializing. This shift in lifestyle has increased demand for coffee products and expanded the growth of coffee shop businesses across countries;

the International Coffee Organization (2023) reports that world coffee consumption continues to rise alongside the growing coffee-drinking culture, particularly in Asia, one of the fastest-growing markets.

This growth is also evident in Manado City, where the number of coffee shops keeps increasing and creates a highly competitive business environment. Coffee Shop Maary operates in an area with dense culinary activity and is surrounded by several competitors, such as Coffee Shop Lucha. Although Coffee Shop Maary offers quality coffee products and a comfortable concept, a comparison of social media performance shows that its follower count is markedly lower than that of its closest competitor, indicating that its digital promotion has not been optimized to build brand awareness and reach a wider consumer base. Limited seating capacity during peak hours further affects customer comfort, while brand identity and product differentiation are not yet strong enough to distinguish the business from other coffee shops in the Wenang area.

According to Kotler et al. (2022), marketing strategy is a set of decisions designed to create customer value through the selection of target markets, appropriate product offerings, and effective management of the marketing mix so that a company can obtain sustainable competitive advantage. To design an appropriate marketing strategy, a business needs to understand the internal and external conditions that affect its performance. David and David (2023) explain that SWOT analysis is a strategy-formulation tool used to identify and evaluate internal factors, strengths and weaknesses—as well as external factors, opportunities and threats, as the basis for developing strategy alternatives suited to an organization's actual condition.

Previous studies have shown that SWOT analysis is able to help business actors identify internal and external factors

as the basis for formulating a marketing strategy. Aqil et al. (2024) show that SWOT analysis can generate more focused business-development strategy alternatives, while Samadi et al. (2023) demonstrate that Kedai Delisha was able to respond well to opportunities and threats from its external environment through an IFE-EFE-SWOT approach. However, most prior studies focus on formulating strategies based on SWOT identification for different objects and have not specifically examined the competitive conditions of coffee shops in the Wenang area of Manado City, nor the internal condition of Coffee Shop Maary itself. This gap indicates the need for research capable of producing a more contextual marketing strategy, consistent with Coffee Shop Maary's internal condition and its surrounding competitive environment, so that the resulting recommendations can be applied more effectively. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no prior study has combined the IFE, EFE, and IE matrices with a qualitative SWOT analysis, grounded in the Resource-Based View, to examine a micro-scale coffee shop operating within a dense local competitive cluster such as the Wenang area of Manado City, which constitutes the novelty of the present study.

This study is therefore important to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Coffee Shop Maary through SWOT analysis, so that an appropriate marketing strategy can be formulated to increase its competitiveness. Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) analyze the marketing strategy implemented by Coffee Shop Maary Wenang Utara Manado in facing coffee shop competition in Manado City; (2) identify the SWOT factors that influence the competitive position of Coffee Shop Maary; and (3) formulate an appropriate marketing strategy based on the results of the SWOT analysis to increase the

competitiveness of Coffee Shop Maary Manado.

2. Literature review

Marketing management and marketing strategy

Kotler et al. (2022) define marketing management as the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers, and of building strong customer relationships to capture value in return. Marketing strategy itself is an integrated set of plans directing a company's products or services toward the most potential and profitable target market; Kotler and Keller (2016) describe it as the marketing logic through which a company creates customer value and profitable relationships, while Kotler and Armstrong (2021) emphasize that marketing strategy is a long-term planning process designed to build competitive advantage through an integrated marketing mix. In service industries such as coffee shops, the marketing mix extends beyond the traditional four elements, product, price, place, and promotion, to include people, process, and physical evidence (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2022). Because coffee shop customers increasingly purchase an experience rather than only a product (Pine and Gilmore, 2023), and because digital platforms play a vital role in reaching consumers more broadly and efficiently (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2022), marketing strategy in this study is examined qualitatively through the Segmentation-Targeting-Positioning (STP) framework and the 7P marketing mix.

Competitive advantage

Competitive advantage is a business's ability to deliver greater value to consumers than its competitors, enabling it to attract new customers, retain existing ones, and build long-term loyalty. Porter (2022) explains that competitive advantage can be achieved through three generic strategies: cost leadership, differentiation,

and focus. In the coffee shop industry, where products and services offered by different businesses are often similar, differentiation—through menu innovation, a distinctive concept, quality service, and a positive customer experience—is the strategy most commonly applied. Empirically, Syairi and Supriyanto (2023) find that product quality and pricing play an important role in creating competitive advantage in the coffee shop industry in Banjarmasin, while Septiani and Irsandi (2026) show that a strong brand identity, product uniqueness, good customer relationships, and a satisfying service experience further support the formation of competitive advantage among micro and small coffee enterprises.

SWOT analysis in marketing strategy

SWOT analysis is a strategic framework used to systematically evaluate a company's internal and external conditions. David and David (2023) define SWOT analysis as a strategy-formulation tool that integrates strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to produce the strategy alternatives most appropriate to an organization's actual condition. Wheelen et al. (2021) explain that SWOT analysis allows the formulation of four main strategy types: the SO strategy, which uses strengths to seize opportunities; the ST strategy, which uses strengths to counter threats; the WO strategy, which minimizes weaknesses by exploiting opportunities; and the WT strategy, which aims to reduce weaknesses while avoiding threats. These four strategy types are generated by matching the internal factors identified through the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix with the external factors identified through the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix, in which each factor is weighted and rated to indicate its relative influence on the business (David and David, 2023). Prior studies applying this framework to local food-and-beverage businesses, such as Rumengan et al.

(2023) on a financing product's marketing strategy and Amalia et al. (2023) on a café in Banjarmasin—confirm that the combined use of IFE, EFE, and the SWOT matrix is effective for producing contextual and applicable marketing-strategy recommendations, which forms the basis for the analytical framework used in this study.

Theoretical framework: The resource-based view

This study is anchored in the Resource-Based View (RBV), which posits that sustained competitive advantage originates from a firm's internal resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Within the RBV, an SWOT-based diagnosis functions as a mechanism for surfacing such resources: the strengths identified through the IFE Matrix represent the firm's internal resource base, while the ability to convert opportunities into performance—for instance, through consistent digital promotion or collaborative programs—reflects a dynamic capability, defined by Teece (2007) as a firm's capacity to sense opportunities, seize them, and reconfigure resources accordingly. Methodologically, SWOT analysis itself has been critiqued for its potential subjectivity and lack of prioritization when used in isolation (Helms and Nixon, 2010), and Phadermrod et al. (2019) recommend complementing it with weighting and matrix-based procedures such as IFE, EFE, and IE to increase analytical rigor. Accordingly, in this study the IFE-EFE-IE-SWOT procedure is used as the operational instrument through which RBV-consistent internal resources (strengths and weaknesses) are systematically weighed against the external environment (opportunities and threats) to formulate a marketing strategy that both exploits Coffee Shop Maary's distinctive resources and builds the dynamic capability needed

to remain competitive amid an increasingly saturated local market.

3. Research method

Research design

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, chosen because the research focus is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the marketing strategy implemented by Coffee Shop Maary Manado in increasing its competitiveness. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to capture the complexity of the phenomenon under study through the exploration of the perspectives of directly involved actors, yielding a richer and more contextual understanding (Sugiyono, 2022). Creswell and Creswell (2023) affirm that a qualitative descriptive method is appropriate when a researcher intends to describe and interpret a social phenomenon naturally, without manipulating variables.

Location, informants, and data sources

This study was conducted at Coffee Shop Maary Wenang Utara, Manado City, chosen as it is the business's main branch located in an area with highly competitive intensity and consumer mobility. Informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge of, experience with, and direct involvement in the marketing strategy and business condition of Coffee Shop Maary. Five informants were involved: one key informant (the owner), one main informant (the manager), and three supporting informants (a barista, a regular customer, and a long-standing customer). Data collection continued until data saturation was reached, that is, when no further new and relevant information emerged. The study uses primary data obtained directly through in-depth interviews and observation of the owner, employees, and customers, as well as secondary data obtained from business documentation, the coffee shop's social media platforms, textbooks, and scientific

journals related to marketing strategy, business competitiveness, and SWOT analysis.

Data collection and analysis technique

Data were collected through three main techniques: direct observation of marketing activities and competitive conditions, in-depth interviews with the owner, manager, and customers, and documentation in the form of photographs and operational records. The collected data were then analyzed using the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the business, the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix to evaluate opportunities and threats from the external environment, and the qualitative SWOT Matrix to formulate strategy alternatives by matching internal and external factors (David and David, 2023; Wheelen et al., 2021; Putri et al., 2023). Each internal and external factor was weighted and rated by the five informants to obtain a weighted score, following the analytical stages of data collection, data reduction, data display, SWOT-factor identification, SWOT-matrix formulation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2023). Data validity was examined through source triangulation, by cross-checking

information obtained from the owner, employees, and customers, and technique triangulation, by comparing the results of interviews, observation, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2022; Creswell and Creswell, 2023).

4. Result and discussion

Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix

Table 1 presents the results of the IFE analysis. Coffee Shop Maary obtained a total IFE score of 2.91, indicating that the business's internal condition is fairly good, with its strengths more dominant than its weaknesses. Product quality and friendly, educative service each obtained the highest score of 0.56, confirming that these two factors are Coffee Shop Maary's main advantages in providing customer satisfaction and a positive experience. Competitive pricing followed with a score of 0.44, while the variety of coffee beans and the distinctive coffee shop concept each scored 0.33. On the weakness side, the most prominent issue is inconsistent social media promotion activity, with a score of 0.11, followed by unstructured operational management, limited café capacity, and suboptimal brand-awareness efforts, each scoring 0.16, while limited parking availability scored 0.10.

Table 1. Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix of Coffee Shop Maary

Internal Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Strengths			
Product quality	0.14	4	0.56
Variety of coffee beans	0.11	3	0.33
Competitive pricing	0.11	4	0.44
Distinctive identity/concept	0.11	3	0.33
Friendly service with coffee education for customers	0.14	4	0.56
Subtotal	0.61	18	2.22
Weaknesses			
Operational management not yet well organized	0.08	2	0.16
Limited café capacity	0.08	2	0.16
Limited parking availability	0.05	2	0.10
Inconsistent social media promotion	0.11	1	0.11
Suboptimal brand-awareness efforts	0.08	2	0.16
Subtotal	0.40	9	0.69
Total	1.00	27	2.91

Source: Researcher's processed data (2026).

External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix

Table 2 presents the results of the EFE analysis. Coffee Shop Maary obtained a total EFE score of 2.75, indicating that the business is fairly capable of exploiting opportunities and responding to threats from its external environment. On the opportunity side, a location within a busy activity area is the largest opportunity, scoring 0.48, followed by the rising trend

of coffee consumption (0.36) and the growth of social media as a promotional medium (0.27). On the threat side, the proliferation of new coffee shops in Manado City is the greatest threat, scoring 0.36, followed by changing consumer trends and preferences, price competition, and rising raw-material prices, each scoring 0.27, while competitors increasingly developed digital promotion strategies scored 0.24.

Table 2. External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix of Coffee Shop Maary

External Factors	Weight	Rating	Score
Opportunities			
Rising trend of coffee consumption	0.12	3	0.36
Growth of social media as a promotional medium	0.09	3	0.27
Location in a busy community activity area	0.12	4	0.48
Collaboration opportunities with communities, schools, or institutions	0.07	2	0.14
Growing use of online delivery services	0.09	1	0.09
Subtotal	0.49	13	1.34
Threats			
Growing number of new coffee shops in Manado City	0.12	3	0.36
Changing consumer trends and preferences	0.09	3	0.27
Price competition with competitors	0.09	3	0.27
Rising raw-material prices	0.09	3	0.27
Competitors' increasingly developed digital promotion	0.12	2	0.24
Subtotal	0.51	14	1.41
Total	1.00	27	2.75

Source: Researcher's processed data (2026).

SWOT matrix and strategy formulation

Matching the internal and external factors identified through the IFE and EFE

matrices produces four alternative strategies, as summarized below.

Table 3. SWOT Matrix and strategy formulation for Coffee Shop Maary

Strategy Type	Formulated Strategy
SO (Strengths–Opportunities)	Maintaining product quality and the variety of coffee beans to meet the rising trend of coffee consumption; leveraging the coffee shop's distinctive concept and strategic location to attract more customers; organizing coffee-education activities or coffee classes in collaboration with communities, schools, or institutions to build brand awareness.
WO (Weaknesses–Opportunities)	Optimizing consistent promotion through Instagram, TikTok, and other social media to strengthen brand awareness; participating in community events, bazaars, and campus activities as promotional media; optimizing delivery services so that sales do not depend solely on limited seating capacity.
ST (Strengths–Threats)	Maintaining product quality at a competitive price to face the growing number of new coffee shops; developing coffee-bean-based menu variations and providing customer education to keep pace with changing consumption trends; offering competitive pricing without compromising quality so customers perceive greater value than with competitors.
WT (Weaknesses–Threats)	Establishing a planned digital-promotion standard and content calendar to compete with competitors' promotional strategies; improving café comfort by rearranging the seating layout and providing alternative parking information; evaluating operational management to design a marketing strategy that is more adaptive to changing consumer trends and needs.

Source: Researcher's processed data (2026).

The IFE score of 2.91 shows that Coffee Shop Maary's strengths, particularly product quality and friendly, educative service are more dominant than its weaknesses, consistent with Yusuf et al. (2025), who found that an appealing concept and good layout were key internal strengths supporting business development at Coffee Shop For Good Luck, and with Rumengan et al. (2023), who show that identifying internal factors is the basis for determining an appropriate strategy. The EFE score of 2.75 indicates that Coffee Shop Maary responds fairly well to external opportunities and threats, in line with Samadi et al. (2023) at Kedai Delisha, while the prominence of changing consumer preferences and competitors' digital promotion as threats echoes the findings of Amalia et al. (2023) at Cafe Bree Sweetandfreeze Banjarmasin. Because both the IFE and EFE scores fall

in the fairly good category with a relatively strong strength profile, the SO strategy, combining Coffee Shop Maary's product and concept advantages with available market opportunities through consistent digital promotion, community collaboration, and delivery-service optimization is identified as the priority strategy for increasing the business's competitiveness.

5. Conclusion

Coffee Shop Maary's internal strengths, product quality, competitive pricing, and friendly service accompanied by coffee education, outweigh its main weaknesses in operational management and inconsistent digital promotion, while externally the growing coffee-consumption trend, social media, and collaboration opportunities outweigh threats from new entrants and competitors' digital

promotion; with an IFE score of 2.91 and an EFE score of 2.75, both falling in the fairly good category with a relatively strong strength profile, the SWOT match points to an SO strategy of pairing existing product and concept strengths with digital promotion, community collaboration, and delivery-service optimization as the priority for increasing competitiveness. Theoretically, this demonstrates that a weighted, multi-informant IFE-EFE-SWOT procedure can be meaningfully anchored in the Resource-Based View even at the scale of a single micro-enterprise—the IFE-identified strengths function empirically as candidate RBV resources (Barney, 1991), and the SO strategy illustrates how such a business can begin converting them into a dynamic capability (Teece, 2007)—while practically, Coffee Shop Maary's management is advised to prioritize this SO strategy, design more structured marketing activities around a defined target segment, and maintain the identified strengths while progressively addressing operational and promotional weaknesses; these recommendations are most directly transferable to micro-enterprises with a broadly similar strengths-dominant IFE/EFE profile.

This study is nonetheless limited by its single-case design with five informants at one branch of Coffee Shop Maary, which constrains generalizability to coffee shops with a different internal–external profile; by the absence of a formal inter-rater reliability statistic for reconciling any divergence among the five informants' weight and rating judgments, which leaves some residual subjectivity despite the source and technique triangulation used; and by the qualitative SWOT evidence not yet being tested against the full VRIN criteria for the strengths identified. Future research is therefore encouraged to replicate this IFE-EFE-SWOT-RBV procedure across multiple coffee shops or a larger informant panel, incorporate a

formal inter-rater agreement statistic in the weighting and rating procedure, and empirically test whether the strengths identified here satisfy the full VRIN criteria over a longer observation period.

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