

SWOT Analysis for Business Strategies: A Case of Virage Awi in the Bamboo Craft Industries, Bandung, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

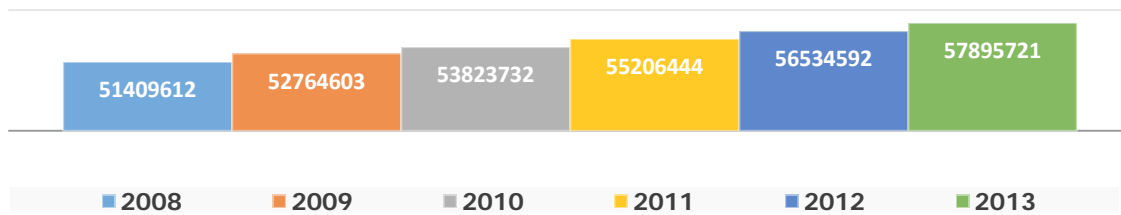
The city of Bandung was designated a creative city when it was selected as part of the Creative City Network by UNESCO. Many Bandung entrepreneurs uphold the value of creativity in their businesses. Handicraft is one type of business in the creative industry. In this subsector, bamboo craft is one type of business that can introduce Indonesia to foreign countries. Virage Awi is one such bamboo craft business. The market share of Virage Awi has expanded, and the production of modern musical instruments from bamboo results in product differentiation. This study aims to understand the business strategy of Virage Awi by using SWOT analysis. The SWOT matrix was used to determine the actions of Virage Awi to attain market share in foreign countries. In addition, this research was conducted with a qualitative method and an in-depth interview with the owner of Virage Awi. The research corroborates that Virage Awi conducts their business in a way that consumers consider its products rare by using a limited edition system.

Keywords: creative industry, handicraft, bamboo craft, SWOT analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a developing country in Southeast Asia, commonly undergoes economic turmoil from the world economy. In 1997, Indonesia experienced an economic crisis that resulted in various businesses filing for bankruptcy. The crisis occurred when the level of the Indonesian rupiah fell against the US dollar. Most businesses that went bankrupt were big companies that had been issued many capital loans. However, small companies or SMEs were not affected because they mostly used their own capital. The crisis resulted in Indonesian banks starting to shift their market to the SME sector. Rutherford (1999) corroborated that banks financing SMEs is widespread because post-crisis SMEs can survive and even continue to grow.

The OECD (2004) affirmed that SMEs are important in developing countries. The resilience of SMEs in facing economic crises allows them to strengthen a country's economy. In addition, the government is also highly supportive of SMEs; many programs from the government allow SMEs to be competitive. Such support further facilitates the development of SMEs in Indonesia. Below, we present data from the Central Bureau of Statistics as regards the development of the number of SMEs in Indonesia.

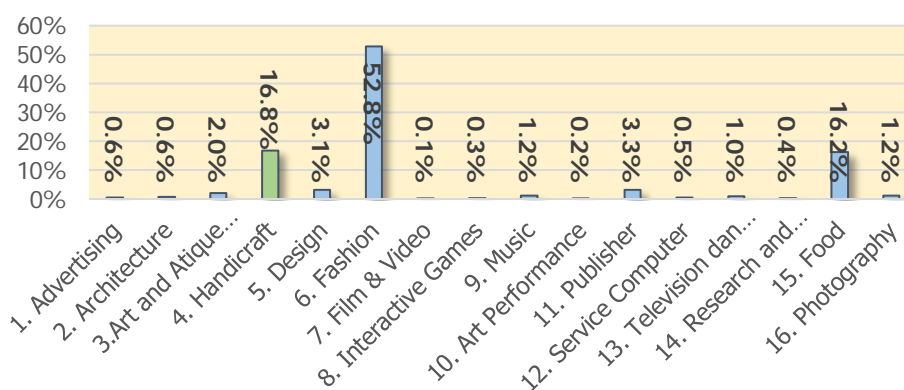
Figure 1. Number of SMEs in Indonesia

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2015)

The number of SMEs in Indonesia is consistently growing annually. One reason is the awareness of stakeholders from the government, companies and communities. These stakeholders know that SMEs are important for the domestic economic development. Thus, SMEs can easily finance their businesses, obtain permits and other matters concerning their legality.

Bandung is known as a creative city. The large number of SMEs in this city resulted in its being selected by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) as part of its creative city network. Another reason for its selection is the creative economy that has been built in this city. The creative economy can be understood as a dynamic process that undergoes innovation in technology, practices and marketing in businesses (UN, 2008). The creative economy itself is representative of a transaction process that happens in the creative industry (Howkins, 2007).

The uniqueness of business processes in the Indonesian creative industry has elicited considerable research attention. The Indonesian creative industry comprises 16 sub-sectors, namely, games, fashion, advertising, architecture, art and antique market, handicraft, design, music, performance, publishing, computer service, television and radio, research and development, food and photography.

Figure 2. Breakdown of the Indonesian Creative Industry Sub-Sectors

Source: Department of Culture and Tourism of Bandung (2016)

Handicraft is the second-most popular sub-sector in the creative industry after fashion. Handicraft produces unique products that can be exported, thereby making such innovation highly valuable. Bamboo craft is a further subcategory in handicraft. One of

the SMEs that makes bamboo craft known to other countries is Virage *Awi*, which makes modern musical instruments from bamboo, such as violins, guitars and drums. This unique material resulted in foreign consumer interest in Virage *Awi* products. Some products by Virage *Awi* adhere to international standards and have been patented.

Given the uniqueness of the Virage *Awi* products, we are interested in examining their business strategy deeply. Kraus et al. (2012) validated that the role of strategy can be studied by various academics and practitioners because it requires a rational decision such that strategic planning can be done on SMEs. Business strategies can be understood in more detail via SWOT analysis. The results of this study are expected to be useful for SMEs, such as Virage *Awi*, in developing business strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Small Medium Enterprises

Different definitions of SMEs emerge because the individual economic sizes of certain countries can affect the definition itself. Thus, SMEs indicate an economic rather than a legal meaning (Keskin and Senturk, 2010). In Indonesia, SMEs are the most common business group in the country. In Indonesia, SMEs possess the economic strength required to stabilize the economy. Most countries accept that the number of employees in SMEs is a common measurement for defining SMEs (Keskin and Senturk, 2010). Various opinions are used regarding the size of SME measurement criteria. In Indonesia, the criteria to measure SMEs are their assets and turnovers.

Table 1. SMEs Criteria

No.	Enterprises	Criteria	
		Asset (excluding land and building)	Turnover
1	Micro	<50 million IDR	<300 million IDR
2	Small	>50–500 million IDR	300 million–2,5 billion IDR
3	Medium	>500 million–10 billion IDR	2,5–50 billion IDR

Source: SME Law 20/2008, Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs

2.2 Strategy Concept

Level strategy in a firm or corporation represents a broad direction for firm growth and indicates stability or retrenchment in a competitive or business strategy, thereby enabling competitiveness within the industry (Parmell, 2010). The strategy itself can be created by internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats (Andrews, 1987; Kraus et al., 2011). The strategy is regarded as an important process for businesses (Bowman and Asch, 1987; Kumar, 2010; Thomson and Strickland, 2003; Chaimankong and Prasertsakul, 2012). Every company uses a strategy for their business operations. The distinction among the types of business strategies explains the reasons for differences in behaviour in companies that undergo the same situation (Kaskin and Senturk, 2010). External conditions and internal environmental factors are terms of strategic management in the relationship between a company and the environment (Yuksel, 2012).

2.3 SWOT Analysis

This research will use SWOT analysis, in which a SWOT matrix is used to determine the deep strategy conducted by Virage *Awi*. SWOT stands for strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (Rangkuti, 2000). SWOT can be described as a tool

for strategic planning into those categories (Glaister & Falshaw, 1999; Helms et al., 2011). The resource-based strategic paradigm is based on the tenets of SWOT analysis and represents a renewed interest in internal organization influences (Hoskisson, et al., 1999; Hajikhani & Jafari, 2013). Many researchers agree that using SWOT analysis to determine business strategies will provide the foundation for problem-solving (Ansoff, 1965; Andrews, 1987; Porter 1991; Helms & Nixon, 2010).

The SWOT matrix is a model for formulating alternative strategies that are combined with internal and external company data. The alternative strategies are (1) SO power strategy/ opportunity/ strategy; (2) WO strategies/ weaknesses/ opportunities/ strategies; (3) WT's strategy of weakness/ threat/strategy and (4) strategy of force-threat/strategy ST. The steps in developing the SWOT matrix are detailed below.

Table 2. SWOT Matrix

	<i>Strengths (S)</i>	<i>Weaknesses (W)</i>
<i>Opportunities (O)</i>	Strategy S-O	Strategy W-O
<i>Threats (T)</i>	Strategy S-T	Strategy W-T

Source: Rangkuti (2000)

3. METHOD

In this study, we use a qualitative method. Data are obtained via in-depth interviews with the owner of Virage Awi. The data are then interpreted on the basis of the theories related to this research topic. Qualitative research does not produce an epistemological paradigm (related to origin, trait and character) in particular but is a classical scientific process that comprises confronting predicted influences with observed phenomena in a holistic environment (totality). This method presents a startling new fact and allows us to rethink the theoretical framework. Qualitative research should present the latest facts and surprising findings (Dana and Teresa, 2005; Dana, 2015). Researchers use techniques for collecting data with observation and note-taking directly on the research object.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Internal and external environmental factors in this research will be identified on the basis of the findings in the field, thereby covering the potential factors.

4.1 External Environment Analysis

The analysis of the external environment in the development of bamboo handicrafts aims to evaluate trends and events that are beyond the control of crafters/entrepreneurs. The analysis of the external environment focuses on determining the key factors that become opportunities and challenges for Virage Awi. Thus, craftspeople can easily determine the strategy to use opportunities and overcome threats. The crafters can identify a series of factors and strategic factors that become decisive in the preparation of business development strategies. The analysis of the external environment is generally observed from several aspects, such as the political/policy aspects of the government and economic, social, cultural and technological aspects.

Political factors or government policy. One of the prominent and influential factors for the national bamboo industry is the existence of a national bamboo declaration issued in 2012. The government, by using several ministries, began to focus on the

potential of national bamboo. On October 23, 2012, a national bamboo declaration was published, which was called the “Development of National Bamboo Industry in order to Improve Sustainable Citizenship”. The declaration was signed by three ministries, namely, the Ministry of National Planning and Development (*BAPPENAS*), the Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Industry. The government is determined to explore the benefits of bamboo to become a national superior commodity such that the material possesses a high economic value for the people of Indonesia given that the national development has not been focused, integrated and optimal.

Economic factor. Indonesia is a potential market as the fourth largest population in the world with at least 237.6 million people (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Indonesia's economic growth rate in 2010–2011 reached 6.2–6.5%, whereas the greatest role of the driver of national economic growth is domestic demand for goods and services, which reached 70% of gross domestic product (GDP). The OECD, as the global organization that oversees the growth of the world economy, predicts the growth of bamboo. The material can be used in various products, such as in carved art, woven art and art concatenation (home and furniture). Bamboo is a source of wealth of Indonesian society. However, natural and socio-cultural resources have not been optimally utilized as assets.

Most Indonesians prefer imports more than their own (domestic) products. The biggest problem faced by the Indonesian people (up to the regions) is that they have not prioritized choosing domestic products as an option in shopping. They also tend to ignore bamboo handicrafts. A presumption that bamboo is identical with poverty remains in Indonesian society, especially in the Bandung regency. On the basis of the results of the identification of external factors in bamboo handicraft businesses, several factors are found to improve the sustainability of the Virage bamboo handicraft business as detailed below.

Table 3. External Environment Analysis

Item	Aspect	Factors	Opportunities/Threats
1	Politics, government policy, law	National bamboo declaration of 2012 as a starting point for various policies on national bamboo development	Opportunities
		International trade agreements, regional ACFTA. CAFTA	Threats
		Copyright management policy	Opportunities
2	Economy	Indonesia's large population (potential market)	Opportunities
		Increasing the economic level of the community (growth of the middle class)	Opportunities
		As a container for the development of youth creativity	Opportunities
3	Social, culture, demography	Diverse culture, especially the bamboo handicraft industry, which is Indonesia's third largest bamboo producer	Opportunities

Item	Aspect	Factors	Opportunities/Threats
	and community environment	Indonesian people prefer foreign products (abroad)	Threats
		Collaboration among artisans, the government and business world	Opportunities

Source: Survey results (2017)

4.2 Internal Environment Analysis

The analysis of the internal environment of the bamboo handicraft business in *Pasirjambu Village, Pasirjambu District, Bandung Regency* is used to determine the ability of artisans in developing the business such that that it can move forward. Internal environmental analysis is based on factors that are originally from within the company itself and can generally be controlled by the company. The internal environment is the process of identifying the factors that become the strengths and weaknesses of a company. The internal processes of the company are analysed by using a functional approach, that is, the analysis performed by each function within the company by reviewing the aspects of human resources, marketing, finance or accounting, production, innovation and utilization of information resources.

Three products are shown here because these three products are the mainstay of *Virage Awi*, which is unique to Indonesia and enjoys a large big market, especially by guitar enthusiasts worldwide.

Table 4. Virage Awi Products

			
	<i>Guitar</i>	<i>Violin</i>	<i>Drum</i>
Raw Material	Bamboo	Bamboo	Bamboo
Production Process	3 item per months	3 item per months	3 item per months
Market Target	Malaysia, Rmania, Taiwan, Philipines, Britain, US, France, Japan		
Order Process	Make to order & waiting list	Make to order & waiting list	Make to order & waiting list
Price	10-20 million	1,5-2 million	30 million

Source: Survey results (2017)

Table 4 shows that *Virage Awi* has successfully reached international markets starting from Malaysia, Romania, Taiwan, the Philippines, the UK, the US, France and

Japan. The uniqueness of the Virage *Awi* products results in their worldwide reknown especially for guitar enthusiasts.

In human resources, weaknesses are observed in Virage *Awi* which should be improved. In decision-making, business development remains dominated by the business owner. Professionalism is absent in the business process. Furthermore, workers commonly possess an educational attainment of elementary and junior high school. If Virage *Awi* can employ workers with high levels of education, new ideas and insights can be brought into the business. Thus, the industry can be open to existing business challenges. This finding in line with Kamarudin and Sajilan (2013) that stated talent pool is one of the critical success factor in creative industry

In marketing, Virage *Awi* is superior because it can reach the international market to date. However, a broad market target does not result in Virage *Awi* becoming highly interested to expand its business by producing more. By contrast, Virage *Awi* continues to make its product limited in the market, thereby increasing demands. Presently, Virage *Awi* continues to use its own capital without the help of institutions or banks. Thus, Virage *Awi* can implement limitations in accepting orders from customers.

Production by Virage *Awi* is included in the strength of the business; the raw materials of bamboo are easy to obtain, especially in Bandung. Thus, Virage *Awi* can minimise operational costs. Production made to order is considered a strength because the resulting product will always be sold, thereby eliminating the risk of loss due to unsold products. Timeliness in production according to customer agreements allows Virage *Awi* to survive.

Innovation by Virage *Awi* by producing the sound of modern musical instruments with bamboo raw materials is one of the advantages that will be difficult to be imitated by other businesses. In addition, the design of the product can be tailored to the tastes of consumers.

Table 5. Internal Environmental Analysis

Item	Aspect	Factors	Strengths/weaknesses
1	Human resources	Business development decision-making remains dominated by the crafters themselves, and the principle of professional business management is not used.	Weaknesses
		Most of the craftsmen possess elementary and junior high school education.	Weaknesses
2	Marketing	Overseas market target	Strengths
		The product is limited.	Strengths
3	Finance	Own capital is very limited.	Weaknesses
4	Production	Bamboo material remains easy to obtain.	Strengths
		Production by order	Strengths
		Accuracy in product completion	Strengths

Item	Aspect	Factors	Strengths/weaknesses
5	Innovation	Many innovations of modern bamboo-based musical instruments will be developed.	Strengths

Source: Survey results (2017)

4.3 SWOT Analysis

On the basis of the analysis of the external environment that has been proposed, we obtained external strategic factors for the development of Virage Awi, namely, opportunities and threats.

External factors that become opportunities are as follows: (1) the seriousness of the local government of Bandung Regency to improve the national competitiveness of bamboo as a follow-up of the national bamboo declaration; (2) West Java, specifically *Bandung Raya*, is a potential market, with a fairly high population; (3) the rise of the middle class; (4) cultural richness, diversity of woven and handicraft arts in Indonesia and (5) Indonesia is the world's third largest bamboo producer. The external strategic factors that are considered threats are the following: (1) world trade agreements and regional ACFTA, thereby resulting in an increase in cheap foreign products entering Indonesia as a competitors; (2) a culture of Indonesian society that is highly appreciative of foreign products; (3) the weakness of intellectual property rights for handicraft products and (4) ability to absorb information on national bamboo craft product development.

Internal factor evaluation produces several internal strategic factors in the strengths and weaknesses in the business of Virage Awi. Internal strategic factors that are strengths include the following: (1) the ability of the craftsmen to run the business, (2) experiences in selling products abroad and (3) bamboo raw materials that continue to be widely available and easily obtained. The internal strategic factors that are weaknesses are as follows: (1) decision-making that remains to be not based on professionalism, (2) old age and low educational level of crafters and (3) limited capital.

Table 6. SWOT Matrix

Internal factors	<p>Strengths (S) (1) the ability of the craftsmen to run the business, 2) experiences in selling products abroad and (3) bamboo raw materials that continue to be widely available and easily obtained.</p>	<p>Weaknesses (W) (1) decision-making that remains to be not based on professionalism, (2) old age and low educational level of crafters and (3) limited capital.</p>
External factors	<p>Strategy S-O (1) Opportunities of government's seriousness to improve the introduction of bamboo products should be used to delineate the Virage</p>	<p>Strategy W-O (1) Management by following government-provided SME programs; (2) use the provision of funding from the</p>
<p>Opportunities (O) (1) The seriousness of the local government of Bandung Regency to improve the national competitiveness of bamboo</p>		

as a follow-up of the national bamboo declaration; (2) West Java, specifically Bandung Raya, is a potential market, with a fairly high population; (3) the rise of the middle class; (4) cultural richness, diversity of woven and handicraft arts in Indonesia and (5) Indonesia is the world's third largest bamboo producer.	Awi product widely in foreign countries; (2) the product must be highly known by the people of Indonesia by using the bazaars provided by the government or artisan communities and (3) Indonesia with a high population can be a new target market.	institution or bank; (3) recruit graduates with high levels of education to gain an exchange of ideas in business development.
Threats (T) 1) World trade agreement and regional ACFTA that resulted an increase in the cheap foreign products entering Indonesia as a competitor; (2) a culture of Indonesian society that is highly appreciative of foreign products; (3) weakness of intellectual property rights for handicraft products and (4) ability to absorb information of national bamboo craft product development.	Strategy T-S (1) Encourage additional exports with countries cooperating with Indonesia; (2) business owner becoming a resource person to introduce wide Virage Awi products and (3) other Virage Awi products should be processed HAKI such that no duplication or imitation of the products occur.	Strategy W-T (1) The market should be open to outside investment to facilitate the market expansion and (2) the introduction of bamboo products for young people to be highly interested in working with SME companies, thereby promoting domestic products.

Source: Survey results (2017)

The SWOT matrix analysis indicates that various strategies can be used by Virage Awi to face external business and internal effort. Porter (1985) validated that these strategies are cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy.

A business that uses a cost leadership strategy must achieve competitive advantage in means that competitors cannot imitate or match. If a competitor can relatively easily or inexpensively imitate the leader's cost leadership method, then the leader's superiority will not last long enough to enable great results in the market. For the application of a cost advantage strategy, a business is required to gain a relatively large market share and a competitive advantage in cost efficiency. Good relationships must be cultivated by Virage Awi, such as partnering with the government. Virage Awi should expand the marketing area with the breadth of marketing strategy overseas with e-commerce-based methods. High-quality cost efficiency strategies can effectively attract consumers. By setting a competitive price, Virage Awi can gain a wide market share. However, when running a cost leadership strategy, a business must be careful not to resort to means such as too low a price because it can erode the company's competitive advantage.

In the differentiation strategy, intense competition in businesses at present demands various strategies to create products that are acceptable to consumers and are as competitive with other products. In product differentiation, potential customers know that the product is different from others. Consequently, product differentiation often incurs a huge cost. Differentiation will make a product profoundly embedded in the minds of consumers. However, conducting differentiation is different for each industry. The products of Virage *Awi* are distinct in their use of bamboo materials.

In the focus strategy, business actors focus on specific segments but effectively and efficiently meet the needs and wants of the segment. Businesses also succeed in optimally increasing satisfaction. The focus strategy will be highly effective when the consumer has a choice or certain requirements that can be fulfilled by the business actor and when the competitor does not attempt to specialize in the same consumer segment. Requirements for the implementation of this strategy are the existence of market size, good growth potential and a lack of attention by competitors (competitors are not interested in the niche). The focus strategy implemented by Virage *Awi* is in a certain market, that is, consumers worldwide derive satisfaction in the form of limited collections or limited edition products, thereby making Virage *Awi* instruments sought-after.

5. CONCLUSION

Virage *Awi* is an SME that has managed to reach the international market. The difficulty level of product creation and unique and creative product design rarely attracts consumers. However, the business owner of Virage *Awi* is highly prominent that, if they are no longer present in the company's operations, the business SME will be less trusted. Therefore, a reliable successor must conduct business operations.

Virage *Awi*'s ability to succeed in a niche market also results in the brand becoming known in foreign countries because only music enthusiasts will be interested in this product. In addition, Virage *Awi* must considerably focus on the domestic market such that the Indonesian people can appreciate the work of Indonesians themselves. Furthermore, this appreciation can create job opportunities for Indonesians, thereby improving the development of domestic products. Thus, Virage *Awi* will further recruit human resources in the country.

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