

Received: 10-11-2022 | Revised in Revision: 10-02-2023 | Accepted: 14-02-2023



## Creating an environmentally responsible business: Evaluating, designing, and prioritizing strategies

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22219/jibe.v6i02.24355>

### Abstract

Business organizations are constantly seeking ways to gain a competitive edge, and one approach is to develop effective strategies. To this end, this study aimed to identify internal and external factors that affect a company's performance and to formulate alternative strategies that could ensure its sustainability. The research focused on PT. Kastara Group Indonesia operates in the wholesale trade of coconut, coffee, and fish. To analyze the company's current position, the researchers employed Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE), External Factor Evaluation (EFE), Internal-External (IE) Matrix, SWOT Matrix, and Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) in a case study. Based on the IE Matrix analysis results, the company requires a strategy for growth and development. The QSPM method was used to evaluate and compare alternative strategies. The results suggest that the company's strength lies in its ability to transform its business model digitally by creating dedicated platforms for wholesalers, which can reduce the length of the supply chain and expand the market.

*Keywords: Competitive advantage, entrepreneurial strategy, sustainable strategy*

### Introduction

Business organizations always struggle to gain a competitive advantage, one of which is efficiency to reduce costs and increase profits (Pantano, Priporas, and Dennis, 2018; Kumar et al., 2020). One strategy that can be done to reduce costs so that efficiency can be achieved is to master the supply chain (Hasan et al., 2019). Supply chain control must be carried out from upstream to downstream, ensuring the entire chain can run properly and efficiently (Davis-Sramek et al., 2020). Supply chain control can make companies defend consumers from competitors with weak supply chain systems (Siagian, Tarigan, and Jie, 2021). Regarding the issue of business sustainability, current business competition is about supply chain efficiency competition (Putra, Tarigan, and Siagian, 2020).

PT. Kastara Group Indonesia was officially incorporated in February 2022. However, the company had previously been operating even though it was not a legal entity. Establishing a legal entity in Kastara Group Indonesia must be done because of the growing trading activities. As a large trading company, mastering the supplier and buyer relationship approach is crucial (Shah and Ahmad, 2019). The competitiveness of distribution companies lies in the ability to condition supply chain efficiency (Tian et al., 2021). The conditions of intense business competition pressure companies to create the right strategy as value to achieve competitive advantage (David and David, 2017; Rashidirad and Salimian, 2020).

Research on competitive strategies for companies engaged in wholesale trade has been widely carried out. Research shows various suggestions for increasing profitability through supply chain

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efficiency, such as controlling warehouses and cutting distribution channels (Yu, Ra-zon, and Tan, 2020; Shin and Park, 2019). However, no research specifically examines the process of analyzing the internal and external environment for formulating strategies, especially for companies that have just become legal entities during the new normal.

This study was structured using a qualitative approach with a holistic case study analysis at PT. Kastara Group Indonesia. The company trades wholesale, particularly agricultural products, including coconut and its derivatives, coffee, cloves, and fish. The company's income reached Rp. 500,000,000 until May 2022. The company experienced problems in determining long-term priorities and goals, so this study will describe the process in detail, starting from the analysis of internal conditions, analysis of external conditions, and formulation of alternative strategies with the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) and then weighted to determine strategic priorities.

## Literature Review

Edwards et al. (2023) examine the connection between entrepreneurial strategy-making, corporate entrepreneurship readiness, and sales actions in the context of improving B2B sales performance. The authors suggest that a well-constructed entrepreneurial strategy can prepare a company for corporate entrepreneurship, resulting in improved sales performance. The study adds to the existing literature on entrepreneurship and sales by emphasizing the significance of strategic preparation for favorable business outcomes.

Pakizer, Fischer, and Lieberherr (2022a, 2022b) concentrate on creating entrepreneurial strategies to transform sustainable urban water systems. This research analyzes the impact of entrepreneurial strategies on driving change and sustainability in the urban water sector. They stress the importance of considering economic and environmental aspects while formulating these strategies and provide practical examples of their findings in the context of grassroots movements. Van Ewijk and Weber (2021) examine the relationship between goal hierarchy and entrepreneurial intentions. Understanding the goals is essential for entrepreneurial success. This research also illustrates that a hierarchical structure of plans leads to more focused and effective entrepreneurial intentions.

In the business world, companies must focus on their innovations' sustainability to gain a competitive advantage (Smith & Jambulingam, 2018). A sustainable strategy should be carefully prepared to ensure the innovations have a long-lasting impact. This process can be achieved by analyzing internal and external factors affecting the company, developing alternative strategies using the SWOT matrix, and setting priorities with the help of the QSPM method (David and David, 2017). Despite the numerous studies that have been conducted on the impact of business strategy on corporate success (Edwards et al., 2023; Pakizer et al., 2022a, 2022b; van Ewijk & Weber, 2021), there is still a gap in research on the process of formulating a sustainable strategy.

Formulating a sustainable strategy is essential to ensuring a firm's long-term success and competitiveness. As the business world becomes increasingly fast-paced and ever-changing, companies must have a clear and well-thought-out strategy to help them effectively navigate and succeed in this dynamic environment. In this regard, focusing on the sustainability of innovations can be a critical factor in gaining a sustainable competitive advantage. According to Smith and Jambulingam (2018), businesses need to prioritize their innovations' sustainability to maintain their market position. This can be achieved through the analysis of both internal and external conditions, which can help identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results of this analysis can then be used to prepare alternative strategies (David and David, 2017).

Formulating a sustainable strategy also involves considering the rapidly changing business environment. In this context, having a clear and well-thought-out plan can help a firm to effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities that arise (Gallego et al., 2020). Furthermore, research has shown that adequately making entrepreneurial strategies can lead to better corporate entrepreneurship preparedness and improved sales performance (Edwards et al., 2023). In conclusion, a sustainable system is essential for a firm to thrive and stay ahead of the competition in today's fast-paced and constantly evolving business world. By prioritizing the sustainability of innovations and considering both internal and external conditions, businesses can develop strategies that are well-equipped to handle the challenges and opportunities of the future.

This research aims to fill the gap in the literature by examining the process of formulating a sustainable strategy in entrepreneurial companies. Using case studies, the research seeks to reveal the relevance of the strategy formulation theory to the theoretical perspective of entrepreneurship. The research subjects were chosen specifically because they were established during the new average period, where there has been limited research on the development of sustainable strategies.

## Research Method

### Research Design

This research begins by compiling a qualitative research method protocol to explore information on PT. Kastara Group Indonesia. This is followed by determining key and supporting informants to obtain company strategic information. Furthermore, preliminary research was conducted by conducting initial observations and entrepreneurial strategic literacy.

The main research activity is carried out by further observation and in-depth interviews with predetermined information. Furthermore, the transcription process was carried out, and the data saturation was analyzed using the triangulation process as a validation method. Extracting the essence of information becomes the basis for analyzing the company's internal and external conditions to prepare an Internal External (IE) Matrix. Based on the position in the IE Matrix, an alternative strategy with a SWOT approach is developed. The next researcher held a Focus Group Discussion with the PT. Kastara Group Indonesia gives weight to each alternative plan, known as the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) method. So this research can show the best plan for PT. Kastara Group Indonesia. The research design in this study can be seen in the following fishbone in Fig. 1.

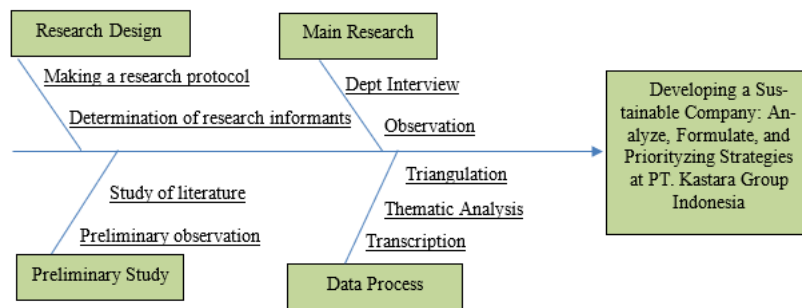


Figure 1. Research Design

### Research Informants

Informants in this study were divided into two categories: key informants and supporting informants. In qualitative research, especially holistic single case studies, there is no minimum limit on the number of informants, provided that the case is unique and the informant is a strategic position holder (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The criteria for informants in this study were strategic position holders at PT. Kastara Group Indonesia with details as follows Table 1.

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Name	Position/ Condition	Status
1	Mr. Rizqullah Akbar	CEO PT. Kastara Group Indonesia	Key Informant
2	Mr. Muhammad Nur Hidayatullah Adzani	Komisaris PT. Kastara Group Indonesia	Supporting Informant
3	Mr. Erlan Loanel	COO Kastara Project	Supporting Informant
4	Mr. Fisra Belian Keliwawa	CTO Kastara Project	Supporting Informant

### Research Instruments

This study uses an interpretivism paradigm that leads to an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the complexity of a case (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Based on this paradigm, the researcher uses a qualitative approach with a single holistic case study design (Yin, 2018). Data collection methods used various sources: field observations, where we will visit the office to see how this company works, and in-depth interviews with informants who are the decision makers of the company's strategy. We interviewed four informants who were the decision-makers of the company's strategy. Qualitative research with case studies allows researchers to determine relevant informants in providing in-depth information related to cases and is not limited to the number of informants (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Data collection was also carried out using document studies, in which researchers looked at internal company documents

such as financial reports, blueprints, and grand designs.

Document studies provide an overview of how companies develop strategies and can be used as a reference in improving the sustainable strategy development process—data collection using various instruments at PT. Kastara Group Indonesia is a feature of qualitative research to achieve data saturation (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

### Data Validity

The validity of the qualitative research was carried out on the data that had been obtained by measuring the level of data saturation as the basis for accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). Testing the validity of the finding data is carried out in the following stages as follows Figure 2.

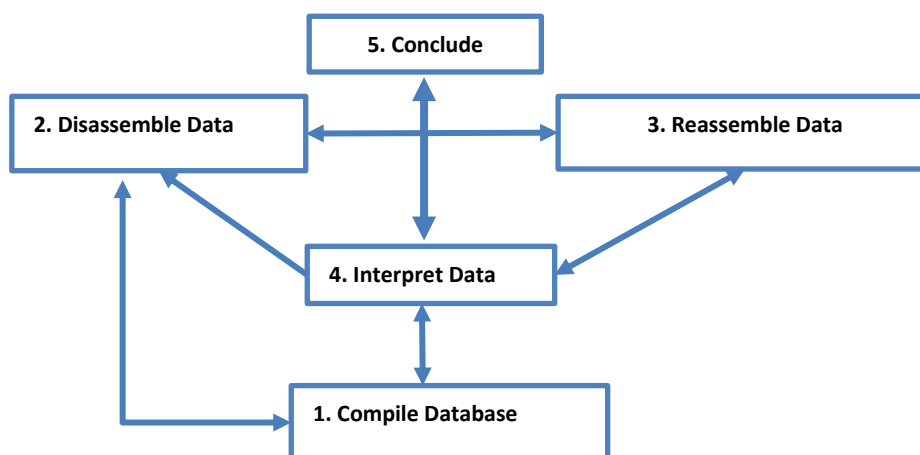


Figure 2. Data Analyze Technique

Obtaining saturated data begins with gathering information through various instruments (in-depth interviews, field observations, and company document studies). Then check the data that has been obtained. Information provided by informants during the interview process was filtered, and essential information was obtained. Then the critical information will be compared with data from observations and document studies. Disassembling and re-assembling data are done many times to get saturated data. Then an interpretation is carried out on the data obtained to get an overview of the situation in the research subject. The final phase ensures that the data obtained is saturated data relevant to the research subject in the context of the factors involved in the company's strategy formulation process.

## Result and Discussion

### Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE)

Based on observations and in-depth interviews with all informants, the following data on internal factors at PT. Kastara Group Indonesia following Table 2. Based on IFE data, it can be seen that the total points on the company's Strengths reach 2.04 with a score scale given as 1-4. The informants who filled in the score were informants, with KI being Key Informants and SI being Supporting Informants. In terms of weaknesses, the company's total points are 1.67, where the need for digitalization in the supply chain has the greatest impact and requires further attention. The total score for internal factors is 3.72 on a scale of 1-4; this is a large number and shows the company focuses on internal aspects that must be strengthened. The IFE matrix must be compared with the External Factors Evaluation (EFE) to determine the position of the IE Matrix.

### External Factor Evaluation (EFE)

Based on observations and in-depth interviews with all informants, the following data are external factors at PT. Kastara Group Indonesia, as seen in Table 3. Based on EFE data, it can be seen that the total points on Opportunity reach 1.99 with a score scale given 1-4. This shows that there are great opportunities that can be pursued by the company, of course, by strengthening the company's internal factors first. Next, on the Threats side, the total points are 1.04 on a scale of 1-4. This means that the company does not feel the impact of the existing external constraints. The total of the EFE Matrix is 3.61. The value of external factors is more minor than internal factors, indicating the company's potential to adapt quickly and flexibly

to external factors to achieve existing opportunities. Furthermore, based on IFE and EFE, an IE Matrix will be compiled to determine the company's quadrant position to give strategic recommendations.

**Table 2. Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE)**

No	STRENGTHS	KI	SI1	SI2	SI3	Total Value	Weight	Rating	W x R
1	Have experienced experts (product quality control)	4	4	4	4	16	0,14	4	0,54
2	Have a strong capital so it's easy to get goods	4	4	4	4	16	0,14	4	0,54
3	Have an extensive network	3	4	4	3	14	0,12	3,5	0,42
4	Have a legal entity	4	4	4	4	16	0,14	4	0,54
<b>Sub Total</b>						<b>62</b>	<b>0,53</b>	<b>15,5</b>	<b>2,04</b>
<b>WEAKNESSES</b>									
1	Don't have client priority based on data	4	4	3	3	14	0,12	3,5	0,42
2	Difficulty determining project priorities	3	3	4	3	13	0,11	3,25	0,36
3	Branding is still weak	3	3	4	3	13	0,11	3,25	0,36
4	Digitizing the company, especially on the supply chain side	4	4	4	4	16	0,14	4	0,54
<b>Sub Total</b>						<b>56</b>	<b>0,47</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,67</b>
<b>Total</b>						<b>118</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3,72</b>

**Table 3. External Factor Evaluation**

No	OPPORTUNITY	KI	SI1	SI2	SI3	Total Value	Weight	Rating	W x R
1	Project export of Indonesian natural products (Coffee, cloves, coconut, rice husks)	4	4	4	4	16	0,16	4	0,65
2	Digitizing the supply chain	4	4	4	4	16	0,16	4	0,65
3	Partnership with upstream to maintain stock stability	4	4	4	4	16	0,16	4	0,65
4	Partnering with cargo services to accelerate product downstream	4	3	3	3	13	0,13	3,25	0,43
<b>Sub Total</b>						<b>61</b>	<b>0,62</b>	<b>15,25</b>	<b>2,37</b>
<b>THREATS</b>									
1	Export regulation	4	3	3	4	14	0,14	3,5	0,49
2	Competitors who book farmers' harvests are faster	2	3	3	2	10	0,10	2,5	0,25
3	Limited suppliers (farmers) who can be trusted in terms of quality	4	3	4	3	14	0,14	3,5	0,49
<b>Sub Total</b>						<b>38</b>	<b>0,38</b>	<b>9,5</b>	<b>1,24</b>
<b>Total</b>						<b>99</b>	<b>1,00</b>	<b>24,75</b>	<b>3,61</b>

**Internal External (IE) Matrix**

The IE matrix is based on two main dimensions: IFE and EFE. The position of the quadrant will determine the basis for alternative strategies that will be raised. It can be seen in Figure 3 that the part of PT. Kastara Group Indonesia is in quadrant 1, where the recommended strategy is Grow and Develop. High scores on IFE and EFE indicate the company has good internal capabilities to achieve existing opportunities. Strategic recommendations in this quadrant include business integration, market penetration, and product development. The company is currently in a superior position and requires the right alternative

strategy to maintain its competitive advantage. Next, an alternative method will be developed using a SWOT approach with a foundation of points on the IFE and EFE Matrix.

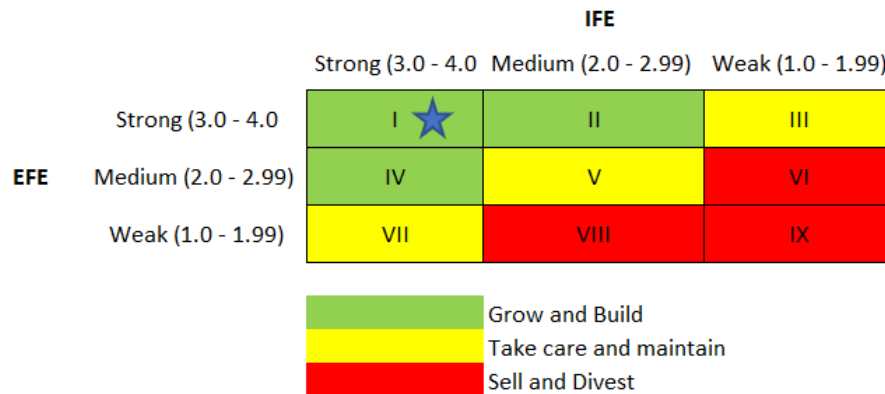


Figure 3. IE Matrix PT. Kastara Group Indonesia

### Strategy Recommendation

Following the results obtained in the IFE and EFE Matrix, the company is currently in a superior position. Furthermore, FGD was conducted with the resource persons to develop alternative strategies using the SWOT approach. The recommended alternative method based on the results of the FGD can be seen in Table 4. The SO strategy alternative is a Product development platform marketplace specifically for natural product trading with the B2B concept so that it can reach a broader and faster market. It is undeniable that the digitalization of business today is essential. Changing the digital business model can give companies a more comprehensive and quicker call to reach it. Since the company already has several projects whose implementation is still using conventional schemes, they want to build a unique marketplace for natural products in the future. This marketplace will be B2B in the first stage because of PT. Kastara Group Indonesia is a company engaged in the scope of large trading.

The ST strategy alternative is fostering supplier farmers to create loyalty and creating programs with farmers who have been partners with the company. So that emotional closeness can also be built, not just a transactional relationship. This is considered essential to maintaining the loyalty of suppliers so that the stock of goods in the company can be held in quality and quantity.

The WO strategy alternative is preparing the client database so that the pattern of the leading market segments can be seen and maintained. The company should conduct further analysis based on existing data to obtain client clustering. It is essential to determine the priority of consumers served based on specific categories. In addition, companies can find out the perspective of consumers towards the company in terms of product specialization capabilities, branding, to service satisfaction. This can be the basis for the company to develop the target market.

An alternative to the WT strategy is to create and show the company's project portfolio to increase trust in every stakeholder. To strengthen branding and faith in stakeholders, PT. Kastara Group Indonesia should display the projects on one platform (website). Thus, companies can increase the trust of consumers.

Table 4. Strategy Recommendation based on SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>SO Strategy</b> Product development platform marketplace specifically for natural product trading with the B2B concept, so that it can reach a wider and faster market	<b>WO Strategy</b> Preparation of the client database so that the pattern of the main market segments can be seen that must be maintained
<b>Threat</b>	<b>ST Strategy</b> Fostering supplier farmers to create loyalty	<b>WT Strategy</b> Create and show the company's project portfolio so that it can increase trust in every stakeholder

### Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM)

Furthermore, another FGD was carried out with the informants to give weight to each of the existing alternative strategies. The Table 5 are the results of the calculation for the Total Alternative Strategy (TAS). Based on an assessment of the existing alternative strategies, all informants as strategic decision makers of the company see that business digitization by building a marketplace platform is a priority thing to do. Business competition by emphasizing sustainability lies in the ability to control the supply chain (Alzahrani, 2019). In addition, business digitization is also something that must be paid great attention to expand market reach (Purnomo et al., 2020). PT. Kastara Group Indonesia prioritizes this strategy as a bridge to achieve the company's profitability goals, transaction processing speed, and market expansion. The second alternative strategy is to determine the current client database, this is also considered important to determine the level of marketplace development. Meanwhile, the third alternative is to build good branding based on reviews of the projects that have been done and the last alternative is the assisted farmer program to condition the stability of the quantity and quality of supply.

**Table 5. Priority-based on QSPM**

No	QSPM Sorts TAS from Highest to Lowest	Total Score (IFE + EFE)
1	Product development platform marketplace specifically for natural product trading with the B2B concept, so that it can reach a wider and faster market	6,96
2	Preparation of the client database so that the pattern of the main market segments can be seen that must be maintained	6,37
3	Create and show the company's project portfolio so that it can increase trust in every stakeholder	5,73
4	Fostering supplier farmers to create loyalty	4,3

### Conclusions, Suggestions, and Limitations

Strategic management is critical for an entrepreneur to achieve prosperity most efficiently. The configuration of strategic management is to reduce costs to achieve maximum profit. Three stages are carried out in the strategic management process: the input stage analyzes the company's internal and external factors. The matching stage is performed by formulating alternative strategies based on the IE matrix and SWOT analysis. The last step is choosing the right plan, Where each alternative that appears is weighted using the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) method.

Based on the strategic management process carried out at PT. Kastara Group Indonesia is known that IFE has a score of 3.72, meaning the company has a strong internal position. Furthermore, it is known that the EFE score is 3.61, which means the company has solid opportunities and threats to respond to. The results of IFE and EFE are used to determine the position in the IE Matrix quadrant. Based on the value obtained, PT. Kastara Group Indonesia is in quadrant 1, where strategic recommendations are given to grow and build. Derivatives from the scope of this strategy are business integration, market development, market penetration, and product development. Based on this condition, four alternative methods emerged with a SWOT analysis approach, namely: digitizing business processes by building a marketplace platform specifically for wholesalers (Business to Business) with Indonesian natural products, empowerment programs and fostering partner farmers to increase loyalty, compiling and analyzing existing consumer databases so that companies can focus on potential customers, and build company branding through existing website platforms.

This research has theoretical and practical implications, where theoretically, this research proves the process of implementing analysis and strategy formulation to achieve company sustainability. Furthermore, from a valuable point of view, this research can be used as a reference for the entrepreneur in analyzing internal and external conditions, knowing a competitive position, formulating alternative strategies, and determining priorities. Further researchers can conduct research up to the stage of evaluating the implementation of alternative methods involving several industries or increasing the criteria of the object of the research case.

### Acknowledgments

This work was supported by Bina Nusantara University as a part of research entitled "Developing a Sustainable Company: Analyze, Formulate, and Prioritizing Strategies at PT. Kastara Group Indonesia

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