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**BEYOND TRADITIONAL SWOT: A MULTI-METHOD STRATEGIC EVALUATION INTEGRATING IFE, EFE, AND AHP IN AN EMERGING MARKET CONTEXT**

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**Abstract**

*This study aims to analyze the strategic position of a consulting service firm in the construction supervision and licensing sector by integrating the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE), External Factor Evaluation (EFE), SWOT analysis, and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). A descriptive qualitative approach combined with quantitative strategic analysis was employed using a single case study design. The findings indicate that the firm has a moderately strong internal condition (IFE = 2.86) and an average external responsiveness (EFE = 2.80), placing it in the "hold and maintain" position within the IE matrix. However, the SWOT analysis reveals an aggressive strategic posture, suggesting significant growth potential through the alignment of internal strengths and external opportunities. The AHP validation confirms the consistency and reliability of factor weighting, with key priorities identified in legal certification, human resource competence, market growth, and partnership expansion. The study contributes to the strategic management literature by proposing an integrated analytical framework that enhances methodological rigor and provides a more comprehensive strategic assessment. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of digital transformation, organizational efficiency, and market expansion in strengthening competitiveness. This study offers valuable insights for consulting firms operating in dynamic and highly regulated environments*

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**MELAMPAUI SWOT TRADISIONAL: EVALUASI STRATEGIS MULTI-METODE DENGAN INTEGRASI IFE, EFE, DAN AHP DALAM KONTEKS PASAR BERKEMBANG**

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**Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis posisi strategis perusahaan jasa konsultasi di bidang pengawasan dan perizinan bangunan dengan mengintegrasikan matriks Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE), External Factor Evaluation (EFE), analisis SWOT, serta Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP).*

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*Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif yang dikombinasikan dengan analisis strategis kuantitatif melalui desain studi kasus tunggal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perusahaan memiliki kondisi internal yang cukup kuat (IFE = 2,86) dan kemampuan merespons lingkungan eksternal pada tingkat sedang (EFE = 2,80), sehingga berada pada posisi “hold and maintain” dalam matriks IE. Namun demikian, analisis SWOT menunjukkan posisi strategi agresif, yang mengindikasikan potensi pertumbuhan yang tinggi melalui pemanfaatan kekuatan internal dan peluang eksternal. Validasi menggunakan AHP menunjukkan konsistensi dan reliabilitas dalam pembobotan faktor, dengan prioritas utama pada legalitas usaha, kompetensi sumber daya manusia, pertumbuhan pasar, dan ekspansi kemitraan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi dengan menawarkan kerangka analisis strategis terintegrasi yang meningkatkan ketepatan metodologis dan kedalaman analisis. Secara praktis, hasil penelitian menekankan pentingnya transformasi digital, efisiensi organisasi, dan ekspansi pasar dalam meningkatkan daya saing perusahaan.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the consulting service industry particularly in construction supervision and licensing has experienced significant growth, driven by rapid infrastructure development and increasingly complex regulatory requirements. In emerging economies such as Indonesia, the acceleration of infrastructure projects and stricter regulatory frameworks have substantially increased the demand for professional consulting services. This trend is consistent with global patterns, where the expansion of construction activities and regulatory compliance requirements has intensified the role of consulting firms in ensuring project feasibility and legality (Hitt et al., 2021; Verhoef et al., 2021). However, the increasing demand is accompanied by intensified competition, requiring firms to continuously adapt their strategies to sustain competitive advantage.

Despite these favorable conditions, many consulting firms particularly small and medium-sized enterprises face challenges in aligning internal capabilities with external environmental dynamics. These challenges include limited digital adoption, inefficiencies in operational systems, and vulnerability to regulatory changes. Prior studies suggest that firms operating in dynamic environments must develop adaptive and integrative strategies to remain competitive (Teece, 2020). However, in practice, many firms struggle to transform their internal strengths into sustainable competitive advantages, especially in highly regulated industries.

From a theoretical perspective, strategic management emphasizes the importance of aligning internal resources with external opportunities to achieve superior performance. Analytical tools such as the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) matrix, External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrix, and SWOT analysis have been widely utilized to assess strategic positioning (Gurel & Tat, 2021). Nevertheless, existing studies often apply these tools separately, which limits their ability to provide a comprehensive and validated strategic assessment. Moreover, most empirical studies focus on large organizations, leaving a gap in understanding the strategic behavior of consulting firms in emerging markets (Parnell, 2021).

Another critical limitation in the literature relates to the subjectivity inherent in assigning weights and priorities to strategic factors. Many studies rely on managerial judgment without systematic validation, which may lead to inconsistent or biased

outcomes. Although the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) has been recognized as an effective tool for improving decision-making consistency, its integration with traditional strategic frameworks remains relatively underexplored (Saaty & Vargas, 2021). Recent research highlights the importance of combining multiple analytical approaches to enhance the robustness and reliability of strategic analysis (Kraus et al., 2021).

Based on these gaps, this study aims to provide a comprehensive strategic analysis of a consulting service firm by integrating IFE, EFE, SWOT, and AHP within a unified framework. Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) identify and evaluate internal strengths and weaknesses; (2) analyze external opportunities and threats; (3) determine the firm's strategic position using the IE matrix; and (4) formulate and validate strategic alternatives through the integration of SWOT and AHP approaches.

This study argues that the integration of multiple strategic analysis tools, supported by a structured validation method such as AHP, can produce a more accurate and reliable evaluation of a firm's strategic position. Furthermore, it is proposed that firms exhibiting moderate internal and external performance may still possess strong growth potential if their internal strengths are effectively leveraged to exploit external opportunities. This argument aligns with the dynamic capabilities perspective, which emphasizes the firm's ability to reconfigure resources in response to environmental changes (Warner & Wäger, 2019).

By examining this framework within the context of a consulting service firm in an emerging market, this study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it addresses the methodological gap by integrating multiple strategic analysis tools into a coherent framework. Second, it provides empirical evidence from a sector and regional context that remains underrepresented in the literature. Finally, it offers practical insights for managers seeking to enhance strategic decision-making in increasingly complex and competitive environments.

## **METHODS**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design combined with a quantitative strategic analysis approach to evaluate the internal and external conditions of the firm. The research integrates several strategic management tools, including the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) matrix, External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrix, SWOT analysis, and the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) for validation purposes. The study is structured as a single case study, focusing on PT Gembira Loka Profesional, a consulting firm operating in the construction supervision and licensing sector. This design allows for an in-depth examination of the firm's strategic position within its real-world business environment, enabling a contextualized understanding of both internal capabilities and external pressures.

### **2.2 Data Collection**

The data utilized in this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources to ensure comprehensive coverage of the firm's strategic conditions. Primary data were derived from internal company documents, including operational processes, service workflows, and organizational structures, as well as managerial assessments related to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These assessments were systematically compiled to reflect the firm's current strategic position. Secondary data were collected from regulatory documents related to construction permits, industry reports describing

market trends and growth patterns, and relevant academic literature in the field of strategic management. The combination of these data sources ensures that the analysis reflects both internal realities and external environmental dynamics.

### **2.3 Identification of Strategic Factors**

The identification of strategic factors was conducted through a structured evaluation of the firm's internal and external environments. Internal factors were categorized into strengths and weaknesses, reflecting key aspects such as human resource capabilities, operational efficiency, financial management systems, and organizational governance. External factors were categorized into opportunities and threats, encompassing elements such as market demand, competitive intensity, regulatory developments, and technological trends. Through this process, a total of fourteen internal factors and fourteen external factors were identified and deemed relevant for further analysis. These factors were selected based on their strategic significance and their potential impact on the firm's performance and competitiveness.

### **2.4 Construction of IFE and EFE Matrices**

The IFE and EFE matrices were constructed using a standardized and systematic procedure to ensure consistency and replicability. Each identified factor was first assigned a weight ranging from 0.00 to 1.00, reflecting its relative importance, with the total weight in each matrix summing to 1.00. Subsequently, a rating was assigned to each factor based on the firm's response to that factor. In the IFE matrix, ratings ranged from 1 (major weakness) to 4 (major strength), while in the EFE matrix, ratings ranged from 1 (poor response) to 4 (superior response). The weighted score for each factor was then calculated by multiplying the assigned weight by its corresponding rating. Finally, the total score for each matrix was obtained by summing all weighted scores, resulting in a value ranging from 1.0 to 4.0, where scores above 2.5 indicate a relatively strong position, scores equal to 2.5 indicate an average position, and scores below 2.5 indicate a weak position.

### **2.5 IE Matrix Analysis**

The Internal–External (IE) matrix was employed to determine the firm's overall strategic position by integrating the results of the IFE and EFE analyses. The IFE score was plotted along the horizontal axis, while the EFE score was plotted along the vertical axis. The matrix consists of nine quadrants, each representing different strategic implications, including growth, stability, or retrenchment strategies. Based on the calculated scores, the firm's position within the matrix was identified, providing guidance on the appropriate strategic orientation. This approach enables a holistic assessment of how internal capabilities interact with external environmental conditions.

### **2.6 SWOT Analysis**

The SWOT analysis was conducted by systematically integrating internal and external factors into a comprehensive strategic framework. The analysis combines strengths and weaknesses with opportunities and threats to generate strategic alternatives across four dimensions, namely strength–opportunity (SO), weakness–opportunity (WO), strength–threat (ST), and weakness–threat (WT). In addition to generating strategic alternatives, the firm's position within the SWOT quadrant was determined by calculating the difference between the total strength and weakness scores for the internal axis, and the difference between opportunity and threat scores for the external axis. These

coordinates were then used to identify the firm's strategic posture, whether aggressive, conservative, defensive, or competitive. The positioning of the firm within the SWOT quadrant was determined using the following calculations:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Internal Axis} &= \text{Strength Score} - \text{Weakness Score} \\ \text{External Axis} &= \text{Opportunity Score} - \text{Threat Score}\end{aligned}$$

The resulting coordinates were used to identify the firm's strategic posture

## 2.7 AHP Validation Procedure

To enhance the methodological rigor of the study, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was applied as a validation tool for the weighting of strategic factors. The AHP model was structured hierarchically, consisting of a primary goal at the top level, followed by criteria representing internal and external factors, and sub-criteria corresponding to individual strategic factors. Pairwise comparisons were conducted using Saaty's scale to evaluate the relative importance of each factor. The resulting comparison matrices were then used to calculate priority vectors through eigenvalue analysis. To ensure consistency in the judgments, the Consistency Index (CI) and Consistency Ratio (CR) were calculated, where a CR value below 0.10 indicates acceptable consistency. This validation process ensures that the weighting of factors is not only systematic but also reliable.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{CI} &= \frac{\lambda_{\max} - n}{n - 1} \\ \text{CR} &= \frac{\text{CI}}{\text{RI}}\end{aligned}$$

Where:

- CI = Consistency Index
- RI = Random Index

A CR value < 0.10 indicates acceptable consistency.

## 2.8 Reliability and Validity Assurance

The reliability and validity of the analysis were ensured through several methodological procedures. Weight normalization was applied to guarantee that the total weight in each matrix equals 1.00, ensuring proportional representation of all factors. The rating system followed established strategic management standards, providing consistency in evaluating the firm's responses. Furthermore, the use of AHP as a validation method ensured internal consistency in the weighting process, while cross-verification between the IFE, EFE, and SWOT results enhanced the overall robustness of the findings. These steps collectively contribute to the credibility and accuracy of the analysis.

## RESULT

### 3.1 Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Analysis

The Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) matrix was applied to assess the firm's internal strategic condition by systematically identifying its strengths and weaknesses. The analysis yielded a total weighted score of 2.86, indicating that the firm is positioned

slightly above the average benchmark (2.50), reflecting a moderately strong internal capability.

The firm’s key strengths are primarily associated with its professional human resources, legal certification (SBU), and efficient service processes, which enhance operational performance and client satisfaction. Among these, legal certification represents the most significant factor, highlighting the importance of regulatory compliance in the consulting services sector.

On the other hand, several internal weaknesses were identified, particularly in relation to limited digitalization, manual financial management systems, and the absence of structured performance evaluation mechanisms. These limitations indicate that while the firm has a solid operational base, it requires further development in organizational systems and technological integration. The detailed results of the IFE matrix are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix

Internal Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
<b>Strengths</b>			
Competent human resources	0.11	3	0.33
Efficient service process	0.06	4	0.24
Flexible payment system	0.09	3	0.27
Legal certification (SBU)	0.12	4	0.48
Strategic location	0.06	3	0.18
Strong business relations	0.05	3	0.15
Regulatory compliance	0.07	4	0.28
<b>Subtotal Strengths</b>	<b>0.56</b>		<b>1.93</b>
<b>Weaknesses</b>			
Limited digital marketing	0.04	3	0.12
Manual financial system	0.07	1	0.07
Limited workforce	0.08	3	0.24
Inefficient document management	0.05	3	0.15
Dependence on external experts	0.07	2	0.14
Lack of performance evaluation	0.09	1	0.09
Limited promotion	0.04	3	0.12
<b>Subtotal Weaknesses</b>	<b>0.44</b>		<b>0.93</b>
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2.86</b>

### 3.2 External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Analysis

The External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrix was utilized to examine the firm’s responsiveness to external opportunities and threats. The analysis resulted in a total weighted score of 2.80, indicating that the firm demonstrates an average level of effectiveness in responding to its external environment.

Significant opportunities include the rapid growth in demand for consulting services, expansion of client networks, and the firm’s competitive pricing strategy. These factors provide a strong foundation for future business expansion. Additionally, increased customer satisfaction and positive feedback contribute to enhanced market recognition. However, the firm also faces notable external threats, including intensifying competition, regulatory changes, and price competition from competitors. The increasing use of digital

marketing by competitors further amplifies these challenges. The detailed EFE matrix is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix

External Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
<b>Opportunities</b>			
Increasing market demand	0.08	4	0.32
Growth in client base	0.09	3	0.27
Expansion of partnerships	0.1	4	0.4
Market coverage expansion	0.07	3	0.21
Industry diversification	0.07	3	0.21
Competitive pricing	0.05	3	0.15
Positive customer feedback	0.09	4	0.36
<b>Subtotal Opportunities</b>	<b>0.55</b>		<b>1.92</b>
<b>Threats</b>			
Increasing competition	0.06	2	0.12
Regulatory changes	0.08	2	0.16
Limited geographic expansion	0.05	2	0.1
Contract expiration risks	0.08	1	0.08
Price competition	0.06	1	0.06
Competitors' digital marketing	0.05	3	0.15
Strategic competitor locations	0.07	3	0.21
<b>Subtotal Threats</b>	<b>0.45</b>		<b>0.88</b>
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2.8</b>

### 3.3 Internal–External (IE) Matrix Position

The positioning of the firm within the Internal–External (IE) Matrix provides a comprehensive overview of its overall strategic condition by integrating both internal capabilities and external responsiveness. Based on the calculated scores, namely an IFE value of 2.86 and an EFE value of 2.80, the firm is situated in Quadrant V, which is commonly interpreted as a “hold and maintain” strategic position.

This positioning reflects a moderate level of internal strength combined with a moderate ability to respond to external environmental dynamics. In practical terms, the firm demonstrates sufficient internal capabilities such as competent human resources, regulatory compliance, and efficient service processes to sustain its current operations. Simultaneously, its ability to respond to external opportunities and threats is adequate but not yet optimal, indicating that the firm is still in a consolidation phase rather than an expansionary or defensive posture.

From a strategic perspective, firms located in Quadrant V are generally advised to adopt strategies that emphasize stability and incremental improvement rather than radical transformation. In this context, the company should prioritize market penetration strategies, aiming to increase its share within existing markets by leveraging its established relationships and competitive pricing. This can be achieved through more intensive marketing efforts, improved customer engagement, and the strengthening of brand recognition.

In addition, the firm should focus on service development strategies, particularly by enhancing the quality, speed, and reliability of its consulting services. Given the nature of the industry, where trust and compliance are critical success factors, continuous

improvement in service delivery can significantly strengthen customer retention and satisfaction. Another critical implication of this position is the need to improve operational efficiency, especially in areas where weaknesses have been identified, such as financial management systems, document archiving, and performance evaluation mechanisms. Addressing these internal inefficiencies is essential to ensure that the firm can scale its operations effectively in response to increasing market demand.

Despite its relatively stable position, the firm has not yet achieved a strong competitive advantage, as indicated by the moderate range of both IFE and EFE scores. This suggests that while the firm is not in a vulnerable position, it also lacks distinctive capabilities that clearly differentiate it from competitors. Therefore, strategic efforts should be directed toward building such differentiation, for example through digital transformation, innovation in service offerings, or specialization in niche markets.

In summary, the firm’s placement in Quadrant V indicates a balanced but not yet optimal strategic condition, where the primary objective is to maintain current performance while gradually enhancing competitiveness. Continuous strategic refinement, particularly in strengthening internal systems and improving responsiveness to external changes, is essential for the firm to transition toward a more favorable strategic position in the future, such as Quadrant I (grow and build).

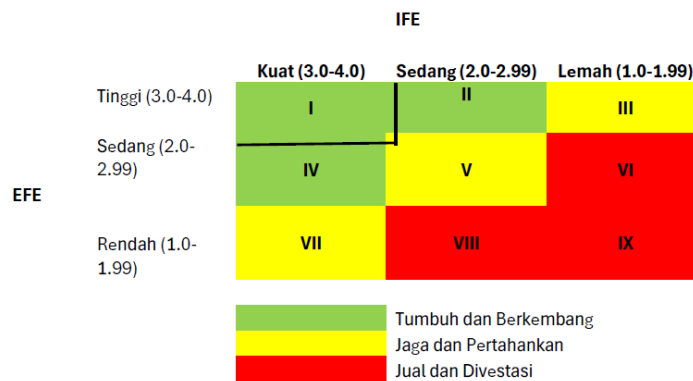


Figure.1 IFE & EFE Matrix according to (Rusydiana, 2018)

### 3.4 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis integrates both internal and external factors to formulate strategic alternatives that are aligned with the firm’s current condition. The findings reveal that the firm is positioned in Quadrant I, which corresponds to an aggressive strategic posture, indicating a strong alignment between internal strengths and external opportunities. This positioning suggests that the firm possesses sufficient internal capabilities to capitalize on favorable market conditions and pursue growth-oriented strategies.

In this context, the firm is well-positioned to expand its market presence by leveraging its core strengths, particularly its professional expertise and legal legitimacy, which serve as key drivers of trust and competitive advantage in the consulting industry. At the same time, opportunities such as increasing market demand and expanding client networks provide a solid foundation for strategic growth. However, despite this favorable alignment, the firm must address several internal limitations to fully realize its growth potential.

From a strategic standpoint, the implications of the SWOT analysis can be interpreted across four dimensions. First, strength–opportunity (SO) strategies emphasize the expansion of market reach and the strengthening of partnerships by utilizing the firm’s existing competencies and credibility. Second, weakness–opportunity (WO) strategies highlight the need to enhance digital marketing capabilities and increase human resource capacity to better capture emerging market opportunities. Third, strength–threat (ST) strategies focus on differentiating service offerings to sustain competitiveness in an increasingly saturated market environment. Finally, weakness–threat (WT) strategies underscore the importance of improving internal efficiency and strengthening promotional efforts to mitigate potential risks.

Overall, the SWOT analysis confirms that the firm is in a progressive and growth-oriented position, with significant potential to expand its operations. Nevertheless, the successful implementation of these strategies depends on the firm’s ability to systematically address its internal weaknesses, particularly in relation to digital transformation and organizational development.

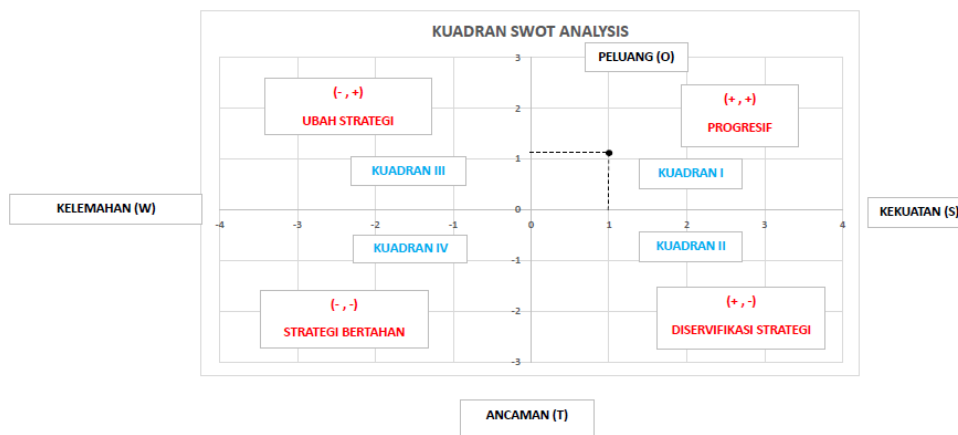


Figure 2. Kuadran SWOT Analysis

### 3.5 Validation of Weighting and Strategic Consistency

To ensure methodological rigor, the weighting and rating processes applied in the IFE and EFE matrices were systematically evaluated in terms of validity and consistency. The results demonstrate that all assigned weights satisfy the normalization requirement, with the total weight in each matrix equal to 1.00, thereby confirming a proportional and balanced distribution of strategic factors.

Furthermore, the rating assignments follow established strategic evaluation scales, ensuring logical coherence in assessing the firm’s response to both internal and external factors. The distribution of weighted scores also reveals a consistent pattern, in which strengths account for 67.5% of the total internal score, while opportunities contribute 68.6% of the total external score. This dominance of positive factors indicates that the firm’s strategic position is primarily driven by its internal capabilities and favorable external conditions.

Such consistency in weighting and scoring not only enhances the reliability of the analysis but also provides a solid foundation for strategic decision-making. It suggests that the evaluation process is free from significant bias and accurately reflects the firm’s strategic realities.

### 3.6 AHP-Based Validation

To further strengthen the robustness of the findings, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was employed as an additional validation method. The application of AHP allows for a more structured and systematic assessment of the relative importance of each strategic factor through pairwise comparisons.

The results indicate that, among internal factors, legal certification and human resource competence emerge as the most critical priorities, highlighting their central role in sustaining the firm's competitive advantage. On the external side, market growth and partnership expansion are identified as the most influential opportunities, reinforcing the firm's potential for future development. Importantly, the calculated Consistency Ratio (CR) is below the acceptable threshold of 0.10, indicating that the pairwise comparison judgments are consistent and reliable. This confirms that the prioritization process is methodologically sound and free from significant inconsistency.

Moreover, the weights derived from the AHP analysis are closely aligned with those obtained from the IFE and EFE matrices, suggesting a high degree of convergence between the two approaches. This alignment reinforces the credibility of the overall strategic evaluation and provides strong empirical support for the study's findings. Consequently, the integration of AHP into the analysis enhances both the methodological rigor and the practical relevance of the results, making them more robust for academic and managerial applications. Overall, the SWOT results confirm that the firm is in a progressive and growth-oriented position, provided that it can address its internal weaknesses.

## DICUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into the strategic positioning of consulting service firms operating in emerging markets. Based on the IFE and EFE analyses, the firm demonstrates a moderately strong internal capability (2.86) and an average level of external responsiveness (2.80), which collectively position it in Quadrant V of the IE matrix. This result indicates that the firm is in a relatively stable condition, yet requires continuous improvement to strengthen its competitive advantage.

This finding is consistent with prior studies emphasizing that firms in moderate strategic positions tend to rely on incremental strategies such as market penetration and service improvement rather than radical transformation (Rothaermel, 2021). However, the presence of strong internal factors—particularly professional expertise and regulatory compliance—suggests that the firm possesses valuable resources that can be leveraged to achieve sustained competitive advantage, as highlighted in the resource-based view (Barney et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the SWOT analysis reveals that the firm is positioned in Quadrant I (aggressive strategy), indicating a favorable alignment between internal strengths and external opportunities. This dual positioning—moderate in IE but aggressive in SWOT—suggests a latent strategic potential, where the firm has not yet fully capitalized on its strengths despite operating in a favorable environment. Such a condition has been identified in previous research as a transitional phase, where firms must enhance internal capabilities to effectively exploit market opportunities (Teece, 2020).

One of the key findings of this study is the identification of digital capability gaps as a major internal weakness. Despite having strong technical expertise and legal legitimacy, the firm exhibits limited adoption of digital systems, particularly in marketing, financial management, and document archiving. This finding aligns with

recent studies highlighting that digital transformation is a critical determinant of competitiveness in service industries (Kraus et al., 2021; Verhoef et al., 2021). Firms that fail to adopt digital technologies risk losing competitiveness, especially in markets where competitors increasingly leverage digital platforms for customer engagement.

In addition, the external analysis indicates that the firm operates in a growing but increasingly competitive market, characterized by rising demand alongside intensified competition and regulatory uncertainty. This supports the argument that dynamic capabilities—such as the ability to adapt to regulatory changes and market shifts—are essential for sustaining performance in uncertain environments (Warner & Wäger, 2019; Teece, 2020). The firm's current moderate EFE score suggests that while it can respond to external pressures, its adaptive capacity remains limited.

The integration of AHP in this study further strengthens the analysis by validating the prioritization of strategic factors. The identification of legal certification and human resource competence as key internal drivers, and market growth and partnership expansion as key external drivers, reinforces the importance of aligning internal capabilities with external opportunities. This finding is consistent with recent research emphasizing the role of structured decision-making tools in enhancing strategic clarity and reducing managerial bias (Saaty & Vargas, 2021).

This study offers several contributions to the strategic management literature. First, it demonstrates the integration of IFE, EFE, SWOT, and AHP into a unified analytical framework, providing a more robust and validated approach to strategic analysis. While previous studies often apply these tools independently, this research highlights the value of combining them to enhance methodological rigor and strategic insight. *Second*, the study introduces the concept of “dual strategic positioning”, where a firm simultaneously occupies a moderate position in the IE matrix and an aggressive position in the SWOT matrix. This finding contributes to the literature by suggesting that firms may possess untapped strategic potential that is not fully captured by a single analytical tool. *Third*, the study provides empirical evidence from a consulting service firm in an emerging market context, which remains underexplored in the strategic management literature. By focusing on a newly established firm, this research highlights the unique challenges and opportunities faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in navigating competitive and regulatory environments.

Based on the findings, several strategic recommendations can be proposed. First, the firm should prioritize digital transformation initiatives, including the implementation of integrated financial systems, digital document management, and data-driven marketing strategies. This will not only improve operational efficiency but also enhance competitiveness in an increasingly digital market environment.

Second, the firm should invest in human resource development, particularly by expanding its pool of professional experts and providing continuous training to improve service quality. Strengthening human capital is essential for maintaining credibility and delivering high-value consulting services.

Third, the firm should adopt a more proactive approach to market expansion and partnership development, leveraging its existing strengths to capture emerging opportunities. This includes expanding beyond its current geographic scope and strengthening collaborations with key stakeholders.

Finally, to sustain long-term growth, the firm should develop dynamic capabilities, enabling it to adapt more effectively to regulatory changes and competitive pressures. By aligning internal improvements with external opportunities, the firm can transition from

a “hold and maintain” position to a “grow and build” strategic posture, thereby achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to analyze the strategic position of a consulting service firm by integrating the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE), External Factor Evaluation (EFE), SWOT analysis, and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) within a unified framework. The findings reveal that the firm demonstrates a moderately strong internal condition (IFE = 2.86) and an average level of responsiveness to external factors (EFE = 2.80), placing it in Quadrant V of the IE matrix, which suggests a “hold and maintain” strategic posture. Despite this moderate positioning, the SWOT analysis indicates that the firm is located in Quadrant I (aggressive strategy), reflecting a favorable alignment between internal strengths and external opportunities, and highlighting its latent growth potential.

The results further indicate that the firm’s competitive advantage is primarily driven by professional expertise and regulatory compliance, while its main limitations lie in digital capability gaps, operational inefficiencies, and limited marketing reach. The integration of AHP validation strengthens the reliability of these findings, confirming that the prioritization of strategic factors is both consistent and methodologically robust. These findings suggest that the firm’s current strategic condition is stable but not yet optimal, requiring targeted improvements to fully capitalize on available market opportunities.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the strategic management literature by demonstrating the value of integrating multiple analytical tools (IFE, EFE, SWOT, and AHP) to produce a more comprehensive and validated strategic assessment. The study also introduces the notion of dual strategic positioning, where a firm may simultaneously exhibit a moderate position in the IE matrix and an aggressive posture in the SWOT matrix, indicating untapped strategic potential. This insight provides a nuanced understanding of how firms can transition from stability to growth by aligning internal capabilities with external opportunities.

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that firms in similar contexts should prioritize digital transformation, human resource development, and market expansion strategies to enhance competitiveness. Strengthening internal systems, particularly in financial management and performance evaluation, is essential for improving operational efficiency and scalability. Additionally, leveraging existing strengths such as expertise and regulatory compliance can support differentiation in increasingly competitive markets.

However, this study is not without limitations. As a single case study, the findings may not be generalizable across all industries or regions. Future research is therefore encouraged to apply this integrated framework across multiple firms or sectors, as well as to incorporate quantitative methods or longitudinal data to examine strategic dynamics over time.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that while firms may operate in relatively stable strategic positions, significant growth potential can be unlocked through the strategic alignment of internal capabilities and external opportunities. By adopting a structured and validated analytical approach, organizations can enhance the quality of strategic decision-making and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in dynamic business environments.

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