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Business Expansion Strategy Decision-Making at HR Photo

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Abstract. The emergence of digital transformation in the wedding photography industry in Indonesia has made it difficult for companies that are still relying on photograms and handmade albums to meet the needs of consumers who prefer to order their photos digitally. The purpose of this study is to suggest the best business growth strategy for HR Photo by considering and prioritising diversification options based on the company's internal resource and external business context. Four representatives from the senior level management were selected for qualitative case study approach through semi-structured interviews and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) questionnaires. Internal financial reports, organizational documents and secondary industry data were also used in the study. An integrated PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces, SWOT analysis and AHP were used to evaluate the environmental factors, organizational capabilities and strategic priorities. The results suggest that the general structural market decline of the conventional photo print shop does not necessarily negatively affect the competitive position of HR Photo as it maintains its competitive edge in terms of in-house craftsmen. Packaging and Hampers Production was found to be most feasible among the alternatives evaluated, based on the resource alignment, market growth potential, implementation feasibility and strategic fit. This study has showed that AHP can be used together with strategic management frameworks to give a systematic and evidence-based approach for making decisions about business expansion and to provide practical guidance for creative SMEs in adapting to the structural market change and digital disruption.

Keywords: Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP); Business Expansion Strategy; Decision-Making; HR Photo; SWOT Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

The creative economy is increasingly digital, driving a transformation in business models in many sectors, including wedding photography. Digital transformation has changed not only the product creation process, but also the consumer's expectation of value. The digitalization of photography products has started to replace traditional items like printed photographs and handmade wedding albums that form the backbone of any photography business. Such a transformation has posed challenges for firms that have been competitive in the past based on their physical production capacity (Palich, 2000) . This means that businesses involved in the wedding photography supply chain must rethink their strategies to secure the sustainability of their businesses (Aguilar, 1967).

Indonesia is among the biggest wedding markets in Southeast Asia, as every year the number of marriages keeps on climbing while the demand for wedding services keeps on increasing as well. Wedding photography has always been a big business, and there has been a strong demand for wedding photo printing, custom photo albums, and other tangible wedding memorabilia. But latest developments suggest that there has been a significant change in preferences of consumers (Kurt, 2021). With the advent of cheap, readily available cloud storage, the proliferation of smartphones, and social media dominating the lives of millions, people are less interested in possessing things and more interested in accessing them digitally.

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Today, more and more often, wedding photos aren't just printed and handed out but are also expected to be sent digitally, through Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and other platforms, where they can be seen immediately (Samy, 2024).

This change is especially noticeable in younger consumers, as they now make up the majority in the wedding business in Indonesia. Digital natives are more interested in convenience, instant sharing of information and online accessibility than print products. As a result, numerous professional photographers have changed the way they do business by selling these file-only packages as their top product (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). This trend has a profound impact on the demand for traditional photo printing services and eventually undermines the traditional value chain for photo printing businesses. This is not a fad trend, but a fundamental shift in consumer behavior as a result of technology and evolving consumer habits(Stokova, 2022); (Porter, 1989).

The impact of digital disruption does not just affect customer demand – it also has a strategic impact on the sustainability of companies in the physical photography production industry (Michael E. Dobbs, 2014); (R. Cooper, 1988) . The market of photo printing is subjected to mounting day-to-day challenges because of declining demand, high raw material prices and competition from digital-based service providers. In these circumstances, companies run the risk of being at a competitive disadvantage in the long run without adapting their business models. In this context, increasing the capability of diversification has emerged as a more viable strategic option for businesses aiming to sustain their growth in mature and declining markets (Dyson, 2004).

The theoretical limitation is especially applicable for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the creative economy in Indonesia. And the need of strategic analysis has been highlighted in supporting business decision making in the competitive environment has been emphasized in several previous studies. This is in line with the study by Michael E. Dobbs (2014) that suggests that Porter's Five Forces still proves to be a helpful tool for understanding the competitiveness of the industry and to find out the external pressures that impact the performance of the organisation. Similarly, Grundy (2006) proposes to adjust Porter's model for today's business world that is beset by high technology innovation and dynamic market competition, which means that competitive analysis should continually be updated with the transformation of industries (Augustine Lado, 1992).

Internally, SWOT analysis has been a well-acknowledged tool to assess all the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Helms (2010) have shown that SWOT is one of the most widely used strategic planning instruments due to its holistic

approach of internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Likewise, Dyson (2004) showed how SWOT analysis can be useful for strategic decision-making when it is part of an organized organizational planning process instead of being used simply as a descriptive analytical tool.

This study is theoretically and practically valuable for business expansion in the face of digital disruption in creative SMEs by integrating internal financial evidence, analysis of the environment and quantitative prioritization of business decisions. Hence, the aim of this research endeavour is to develop suitable business growth plan for HR Photo by selecting the most viable diversification option from the factors of internal organizational capacity, external environment, competition in the industry and the strategically prioritized factors. The results will help advance the strategic management discipline literature on capability-based diversification in the face of demand erosion and offer practical management implications for creative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the context of digitization in emerging markets.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature in strategic management strongly suggests that strategies for business growth should be developed, taking into account the dynamics of the external environment and internal capabilities of the organization. As businesses face the changing environment that has emerged with digital transformation, they need to continuously evolve their strategies to stay competitive over the long term. PESTEL analysis in this context is used to identify the macro-environmental factors that affect business performance such as political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal (Sammut-Bonnici & Galea, 2015). PESTEL is especially valuable in industries undergoing digital disruption to better understand the external factors that may pose strategic challenges and present new business opportunities.

In the industry level, Porter's 5 Forces model is still among the most popular tools used to assess the competitiveness of the industry and its attractiveness. Helms (2010) pointed out that the framework helps organizations to understand the competitive pressures that influence their strategic choices, and (Grundy, 2006) has also suggested that the use of the framework is relevant when applied to industries that are experiencing a fast pace of technological change. In addition to external analysis, SWOT Analysis combines the internal strengths and weaknesses of an organization with the external opportunities and threats to create alternative strategies.

Such frameworks have been used in several previous studies in isolation as means to aid business development and the formulation of competitive strategy. There are, however, limited studies that put together the PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, SWOT, and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) into a single decision making framework, especially for the creative industry SMEs which are experiencing a decline in demand for their activities in the structural aspect because of digital transformation. Therefore, the proposed study takes an integrated approach of these complementary techniques to assess HR Photo's strategic position and select business expansion options.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used was qualitative with case study approach as a method for determining the problems faced by the company and formulating a strategy for business expansion.This study used a qualitative case study approach to determine the problems faced by the company and design a strategy for the business to be expanded in terms of business photography printing and handmade album business in Bandung, Indonesia. To explore the strategic challenges in the company's real business context, a case study design was used (Cresswell, 2017). A total of four senior management representatives (in strategic management, finance, production and marketing) were interviewed using semi structured interviews, and a Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) questionnaire was used to gather primary data. Secondary data were used to explore the wedding photography industry and wedding packaging industry, including internal financial reports, organizational documents, production records and industry reports (Creswell, 2007).

The analysis was carried out in a series with the four complementary strategic frameworks. Industry macro-environmental factors were identified using PESTEL analysis and the industry competitiveness was assessed using Porter's Five Forces Analysis. A SWOT analysis was then used to combine all four factors to create strategic growth options using the TOWS matrix. Finally, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) method was used to prioritize the alternatives according to six evaluation criteria by making a pair wise comparison. Geometric mean method was used for aggregation of group judgments and Consistency Ratio ($CR \leq 0.10$) was used to check consistency. This holistic view helped to make a strategic decision on a course of business expansion based on evidence and systematic considerations (Saaty, 2013).

4. RESULTS AND DISCCUSION

External and Internal Strategic Analysis

The strategic assessment shows that HR Photo is taking place in a changing industry, where digitalization and consumer preferences are reshaping the industry's structure. This is not a temporary trend, but a change in the way weddings are captured, making wedding photography in Indonesia more competitive than ever before. This makes it difficult to sustain the business model that heavily relies on traditional photo printing (Rastogi & Trivedi, 2022).

Table 1. PESTLE Analysis.

Factor	Key Observations	Strategic Implication
Political	SME digitalization programs (KUR, BRI SME credit, LPDB revolving loans); government campaigns for Indonesian creative economy; stable political environment for SME operation; Bandung recognized in UNESCO Creative Cities Network (Design), with active municipal support via Creative Workspace (CWS) facilities across 30 kecamatan, Patrakomala creative-economy registration system, and Bandung Creative City Forum (BCCF) as coordinating body.	Enables access to capital and training for expansion; Bandung's creative ecosystem is directly accessible and structurally aligned with HR Photo's expansion trajectory.
Economic	Rising inflation (~3–4% p.a.); IDR depreciation increasing imported photo-paper cost (HPP shock 29–64% in 2026); rising consumer disposable income among urban middle class; e-commerce GMV growing at ~15% p.a.	Printing margins under structural compression; adjacent markets (packaging, gifting) benefiting from e-commerce and disposable income growth.
Social	File-only preference among 40–60% of Java photographers; corporate gifting culture (Lebaran, Christmas) growing steadily; wedding-culture spending shifting from physical prints toward experience/digital.	Core business demand eroding; packaging and gifting demand structurally rising; opportunity to redirect craft skills to gifting-adjacent markets.
Technological	Affordable cloud storage; prosumer printers narrowing gap with professional labs; Instagram and TikTok as low-cost B2B/B2C marketing channels; digital design tools (Canva, Adobe Express) reducing custom-design costs.	Substitution risk in printing; low-cost customer acquisition available for packaging via Instagram; scalable custom design possible without adding designers.
Environmental	Consumer preference for sustainable packaging (recyclable paperboard, biodegradable materials); regulatory momentum toward reducing single-use plastic in retail packaging.	Packaging alternative aligned with sustainability trend; opens premium positioning for eco-friendly boxes.

Legal	Consumer-protection law (UU Perlindungan Konsumen); e-commerce regulation (Permendag 31/2023 for cross-border); halal certification path for gift-box packaging targeting Muslim seasonal markets (Lebaran hampers).	Minor compliance friction; halal certification is a positive differentiator for gifting segments; no significant regulatory barrier to any of the three alternatives.

According to the PESTEL analysis, a number of external factors are at the same time creating opportunities and challenges for HR Photo. The political aspect of the government's support in the form of funding, digital transformation, and the development of the creative economy is good for the diversification of SMEs. That is, on the economic front, the rising print production costs due to imported photo-paper rates diminish the profitability of existing print businesses, on the other hand the rapid growth of e-commerce opens up new opportunities with quality packaging products.

Socially, there's been a massive change in preference towards digital instead of print wedding photos. Meanwhile, the need for a high-end gift packaging for religious occasions, corporate functions and delivery of products online can create a growing market outside the traditional photography industry. This is further hastened by technological advancements, which allow photographers to create prints with high quality standards and allow companies to sell handmade products successfully by utilizing digital channels like Instagram and TikTok. Environmental factors also enhance the popularity of packaging; with consumers now preferring packaging that is recyclable and environmentally friendly. The legal analysis shows that there are no major obstacles to diversification, and that an additional competitive edge for packaging products for Muslim consumers is the halal certification.

All these results indicate that external environmental shifts must not be viewed simply as challenges, but as opportunities for strategic change. A falling market isn't HR Photo's best friend; instead, it's a market that's ripe for repositioning with existing skill sets in those industries where HR Photo has long-term growth to pursue. In order to enhance the environmental analysis, Porter's Five Forces analysis was performed to evaluate the competitive status of the current market of photo printing and the three expansion options.

Table 2. Porter's Five Forces Anaysis.

Force	Photo Printing (Current)	Alt.1 Equip. Retail	Alt.2 Photo Booth	Alt.3 Packaging
New entrants	L–M	M	L–M	M–H (favorable)
Suppliers	**H**	**H**	L (favorable)	L–M (favorable)
Buyers	M–H	M–H	M	M
Substitutes	**Very H**	H	M	L–M (favorable)
Rivalry	H	H	M–H	M
Overall attractiveness	**Unattractive**	**Unattractive**	**Moderate**	**Attractive**

Significant differences are identified in the attractiveness of the different industries through the comparative analysis. The current photo printing business has undesirable structural features such as strong bargaining power of the supplier, strong bargaining power of the buyer, intense rivalries, and an extremely high threat of substitutes due to digital photography. Even if the operations can be improved, the profitability of the future is significantly reduced by these conditions. Purchasing equipment for photography is not a favorable industry, either. The established national distributors and their supplier relationships dominate the competition, with good recognition in the market. It would require a lot of investment on the part of the company to enter this market and opportunities to differentiate are also not that great.

The relatively good conditions are in Photo Booth Rental where the supplier power is relatively low, and the business is still closely intertwined with the wedding business. However, the competition is not that strong and there are still other services that are springing up via digital entertainment applications and event technology. Packaging and Hampers Production has the best competitive structure of all alternatives. The bargaining power of suppliers is relatively low because materials are plentiful in the country. Competitive rivalry is moderate as the premium handcrafted packaging market is a fragmented and underserved market. Also, the risk of replacing the orders is small because the customers who want to buy the best customized packaging prefer craftsmanship, uniqueness and product quality over the mass production.

The results suggested that diversification into premium packaging is not just supported by market growth, but also by the superior industry structure, which can be a source of sustainable competitive advantages. This is corroborated by the internal assessment. The following is the result of the SWOT analysis.

Table 3. SWOT Analysis.

Strengths (Internal)	Weaknesses (Internal)
• 15-craftsmen team with multi-year tacit skill in handcrafted production; already demonstrating cross-domain transferability (album → packaging) • 39-year brand equity in West Java; established B2B relationships with 2,320 photographers • 7-branch physical distribution network across West Java • Improving profitability (Net Profit +178% 2022–2025) providing internal cash for expansion • Instagram-based marketing capability already validated (December 2025 packaging revenue IDR 15–20 million with zero dedicated spend) • ProBox growth (+37.7%) demonstrating premium-craft market demand	• Revenue concentration in stagnating photo printing segment (~51% of gross sales) • Import dependency on photo paper creating supplier-driven margin risk (2026 HPP shock: −IDR 481 million estimated) • No dedicated marketing/sales function for non-photographer segments • Craftsmen capacity constrained during peak wedding seasons; recent inability to accept some packaging orders • Limited experience with corporate/B2B gifting customers and their procurement norms • No formal cost-accounting system for packaging line to support pricing decisions • W7 Conceptual-design capability gap: craftsmen have deep tactile execution skills but limited experience translating client brand identity into three-dimensional packaging design language required by premium corporate buyers
Opportunities (External)	Threats (External)
• Corporate gifting and hampers market expanding with rising middle-class spending and sustained Lebaran/Christmas seasonal demand • E-commerce GMV growth ~15% p.a. driving demand for premium packaging (jewelry, cosmetics, artisanal food) • Consumer preference for sustainable/handcrafted packaging supports premium pricing • Government SME digitalization and financing programs (KUR, LPDB) accessible for expansion capital • Halal certification pathway for Muslim seasonal gifting segments • MICE and event industry recovery in West Java post-pandemic	• File-only trend (40–60% of Java photographers) permanently reducing printing demand • 2026 HPP shock (29–64% increase) compressing printing-segment margins • Prosumer-grade printer improvements enabling in-house substitution by photographers • Existing photo booth competitors and dominant equipment retailers in adjacent markets • Currency (IDR/USD) volatility affecting imported inputs • Long-term risk of album (ProBox) demand declining in step with printing decline

Based on the SWOT analysis above, the TOWS matrix could be formulated below.

Table 4. TOWS Matrix.

	Opportunities (O)	**Threats (T)**
Strengths (S)	**SO — Aggressive expansion strategies** • Redirect craftsmen skill toward premium packaging & hampers market (S1 × O1, O2, O3) → **Alt.3 Packaging & Hampers Production** • Leverage 2,320-photographer network + branch infrastructure to distribute photography equipment (S2, S3 × O4) → **Alt.1 Photography Equipment Retail** • Convert 39-year brand equity into event-service authority via Photo Booth Rental (S2 × O6) → **Alt.2 Photo Booth Rental**	**ST — Defensive strategies** • Use profitability from ProBox to fund expansion before album demand follows printing decline (S4 × T6) • Deploy Instagram capability to reach non-photographer buyers, reducing dependence on the photographer channel (S5 × T1, T3) • Diversify craftsmen output across two revenue streams to buffer any single-segment decline (S1 × T6)
Weaknesses (W)	**WO — Rebuilding strategies** • Build a dedicated B2B sales function for gifting/packaging customers (W3	**WT — Retrenchment / cautious strategies** • Gradually rationalize photo paper working-capital

	× O1) • Access KUR/LPDB financing to expand craftsmen capacity and eliminate the seasonal bottleneck (W4 × O4) • Introduce halal-certified premium packaging line to capture Lebaran and Islamic-market segments (W5 × O5)	exposure by shifting revenue mix toward packaging (W1, W2 × T1, T2) • Introduce formal cost-accounting for packaging to defend margins under material-cost volatility (W6 × T5) • Maintain current photographer customer base as cash cow while new packaging line matures (W1 × T1)

Evaluation of Business Expansion Alternatives

After the strategic alternatives were identified, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was used to find the best expansion strategy. The evaluation was carried out taking into account the perspectives of four senior representatives of the management, representing strategic leadership, finance, production and marketing. The six evaluation criteria were Resource Alignment, Market Growth Potential, Competitive Intensity, Ecosystem Strength, Implementation Feasibility and Strategic Fit. Together, these criteria define the internal preparation of the organization as well as the attractiveness of the market. The following is the weight ranking of all the criteria.

Table 5. Weight Ranking of Criteria.

Criterion	Weight (w_i)	% Share	Rank
Resource Alignment	0.2839	28.39%	1
Market Growth Potential	0.2196	21.96%	2
Implementation Feasibility	0.2192	21.92%	3
Strategic Fit	0.1256	12.56%	4
Competitive Intensity	0.0897	8.97%	5
Ecosystem Strength	0.0620	6.20%	6
Total	**1.0000**	**100.00%**	

Resource Alignment was the most influential criterion as management felt that there was a need to ensure that the existing resources of the organization were utilized effectively to reduce the risk of investment. The management did not want to acquire completely new capabilities, but sought out diversification options that would leverage HR Photo's existing craftsmanship and production capacity, and organizational experience. Despite this, Strategic Fit and Implementation Feasibility also emerged as key points as management noted that while good markets are important, it is equally important that there is an organizational readiness and willingness to execute the chosen diversification strategy efficiently. Priority weights were calculated for all the criteria and the alternatives were evaluated. The following are the results.

Table 6. Aggregated Alternative Priorities.

Criterion	Alt.1 Equipment Retail	Alt.2 Photo Booth	Alt.3 Packaging & Hampers
Resource Alignment	0.1061	0.1929	**0.7010**
Market Growth Potential	0.2000	0.2000	**0.6000**
Competitive Intensity	0.1429	0.2857	**0.5714**
Ecosystem Strength	0.2500	0.2500	**0.5000**
Implementation Feasibility	0.1429	0.1429	**0.7143**
Strategic Fit	0.2297	0.1220	**0.6483**

Based on the above, the final ranking was obtained, which could be found as follows.

Table 7. Final Ranking.

Rank	Alternative	Weighted Total Score	% Share
1	**Alt.3 — Packaging & Hampers Production**	**0.6510**	**65.10%**
2	Alt.2 — Photo Booth Rental	0.1864	18.64%
3	Alt.1 — Photography Equipment Retail	0.1625	16.25%
Total		**1.0000**	**100.00%**

The weighted score of 65.10% for Packaging and Hampers Production was significantly higher than Photo Booth Rental (18.64%) and Photography Equipment Retail (16.25%). The significant performance difference suggests that there is a great deal of agreement in management about the advantages of this diversification plan. The domination of Packaging and Hampers Production in each assessment criteria is remarkable. The other proved to be the most effective in terms of resource alignment, as it is the most direct solution to the problem, while not necessarily restructuring the organization completely. It also had the highest implementation feasibility, could be gradually expanded by means of internal resource reallocation and did not require a large amount of investment.

Moreover, Packaging and Hampers Production is very much in tune with the present-day trend for customised superior packaging, sustainable packaging and corporate gifting. The packaging industry is more suited for HR Photo to distinguish itself from other national retailers in the country, as they have the opportunity to create their own brand with unique designs and customized packaging. Sensitivity analysis also showed that the final ranking was not sensitive to moderate changes in the decision weights. This result confirms the preference of Packaging and Hampers Production as strategic option in the different managerial priorities cases, supporting the final suggestion.

Discussion

Results show that successful business growth decisions are not made based on the attractiveness of the market alone but also on the capabilities of the organization in the chosen market as the key strategic resource. This view is in line with the Resource Based View (RBV) theory that suggests that sustainable competitive advantage stems from valuable, rare, inimitable, and organizationally embedded resources (Valentin, 2015). HR Photo's craftsmen are just such a strategic resource. They have the experience of making high-quality handcrafted photo albums and can directly transfer this experience to the production of premium packaging.They have the experience of creating high-quality handcrafted photo albums, and can transfer this experience to the production of premium packaging with only a few additional investments. The company does not sell its existing skills but rather moves them to a more favorable market niche (Rumelt, 1982).

The addition of PESTEL, Porter's 5 Forces, SWOT and AHP also illustrates the benefits of using qualitative strategic analysis supplemented by quantitative decision support techniques. PESTEL and Porter's Five Forces help to identify opportunities in the environment and competitive structures while SWOT helps to link external conditions with organizational capabilities. AHP then converts these subjective understandings into objective managerial priorities, minimizing subjective bias in decision making of the strategies. The study also builds on the emerging literature on capability-led diversification of creative SMEs. In contrast to diversification of creative SMEs. HR Photo's diversification is driven by the desire to leverage the skills and expertise of the organization into other sectors that are more promising for growth, rather than financial. This ability transfer helps companies maintain their identity and adjust to market structural shifts.

Managers of digital-disrupted creative SMEs are advised from the findings that capability-based diversification rather than fight for falling business segments should be considered as the most critical strategy in a digital disruptive situation. Legacy products often have more value over time than existing organizational strengths. As a result, it is important to re-direct existing capabilities into new opportunities in emerging markets. In sum, the proposed expansion strategy will give HR Photo a viable roadmap for growth in the future and maintain its core expertise in craftsmanship. The research also proves that structured multi-criteria decision-making techniques like the AHP can be a major facilitator in strategic planning through a combination of organizational knowledge and systematic analytical evaluation. It may thus be used as a useful template for other creative SMEs that are dealing with similar issues of technological disruption and changing consumer behaviour.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this study, a PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces, SWOT analysis, and Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) were combined to form a business expansion strategy for HR Photo by. The results show that the conventional photo printing business has been structurally affected by digital transformation in this way, and it is necessary to diversify the business by using the internal capabilities of the company. Based on the evaluated alternatives, Packaging and Hampers Production was concluded as the most viable alternative as it showed high resource alignment, market potential, feasibility of implementation and strategic fit. The study shows that capability-based diversification is a sustainable strategy for creative SMEs which experience structural market contraction. Additionally, by incorporating strategic analysis frameworks into AHP, a systematic model for decision-making was achieved, which is useful for strategic management literature and can be applied and used for providing recommendations for SMEs to face digital disruption and shifting consumer habits.

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