



Business Expansion Strategy of a Beauty Clinic: An Integrated Strategic Analysis Case Study of Semarang Beauty Clinic, Cirebon

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Abstract

The beauty industry in Indonesia has grown significantly, driven by rising public awareness of personal care and aesthetic needs. This rapid growth has intensified competition among beauty clinics, including those in Cirebon City. Semarang Beauty Clinic, established in 2000, has strong operational experience and customer loyalty; however, it faces limitations to business expansion. This study aims to analyze an appropriate business expansion strategy using a comprehensive strategic analysis framework. The research employs a qualitative case study approach through interviews, observations, and documentation. External analysis uses PESTEL and Porter's Five Forces, while internal analysis applies MOST, Resource Audit, and the BCG Matrix. The results indicate that the clinic has a strong brand reputation and loyal customers, but is constrained by limited professional human resources and suboptimal digital marketing. Opportunities arise from rising market demand and technological advancements, while threats include intense competition and substitutes. The study concludes that expansion strategies should focus on strengthening management systems, optimizing digital marketing, developing technology-based services, and gradually opening new branches in high-potential markets.

Keywords: *Business Expansion, SWOT, PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, Beauty Clinic*

INTRODUCTION

The beauty industry has grown rapidly worldwide, driven by digitalization and shifting consumer behavior (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2021). The industry is no longer limited to cosmetics but has expanded to include medical-based beauty services, such as dermatology clinics. The beauty clinic industry is a rapidly growing service sector marked by high customer interaction, strong reliance on trust-based relationships, and rapidly changing consumer trends, making strategic adaptability essential for long-term sustainability (Aulia Miranda et al., 2023; Jabar Prov, 2023; Statista, 2023). Conversely, the industry faces significant threats from global economic pressures, increasingly complex regulations, and the proliferation of counterfeit products that undermine its reputation (Ferdinand & Ciptono, 2022).

The growing number of beauty clinics in urban areas, including Cirebon City, reflects strong market demand. Cirebon City is a growing secondary urban market in Indonesia, with rising demand for beauty and self-care services. However, strategic studies focusing on regional beauty clinics in emerging cities remain limited. Clinics such as Semarang Beauty (Seby), which has operated since 2000, demonstrate long-term sustainability supported by loyal customers and an established reputation. Despite its long operational history, the clinic still faces challenges in expanding its business compared to competitors with more aggressive growth strategies (Hellosehat, 2023). Despite operating for more than two decades and possessing a loyal customer base, Semarang Beauty Clinic has experienced relatively slow business expansion compared to competitors with shorter operational histories. Previous branch expansion decisions were primarily based on managerial intuition and personal experience rather than formal strategic analysis and market research. This condition indicates the need for a more systematic and

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integrated strategic framework to support sustainable business expansion.

Previous studies have highlighted that business expansion requires a comprehensive understanding of both internal and external environments. Strategic tools such as SWOT, PESTEL, and Porter's Five Forces are widely used to analyze competitive positioning, while internal frameworks like MOST and Resource Audit evaluate organizational readiness (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Porter, 2008; Zaid, 2018; Connor, 2011; Creately, 2024). However, many businesses fail to integrate these tools into a cohesive expansion strategy (Irawan, 2024).

Although prior studies have examined business expansion using SWOT or partial strategic tools, few integrate external environmental analysis (PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces) with internal capability frameworks (MOST, Resource Audit, BCG Matrix) in the context of local beauty clinics in emerging cities such as Cirebon. This creates a practical and theoretical gap in understanding how small-to-medium beauty clinics formulate sustainable expansion strategies.

This study contributes in three ways. First, it develops an integrated strategic framework for clinic expansion. Second, it provides empirical evidence from a regional Indonesian beauty clinic. Third, it offers practical recommendations for SMEs in service-based beauty healthcare industries. Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What internal strengths and weaknesses characterize Semarang Beauty Clinic? (2) What external opportunities and threats influence expansion decisions? (3) What strategic expansion model is most suitable for sustainable growth?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic management comprises the managerial decisions and actions that drive long-term organizational performance and competitive advantage (David & David, 2017; Wheelen & Hunger, 2018). A key strategic decision is business expansion, which entails broadening market coverage, increasing service capacity, or opening new branches to enhance organizational growth and competitiveness (Hill & Jones, 2012). However, successful expansion requires careful evaluation of both internal capabilities and external environmental conditions.

SWOT analysis is widely used to identify internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats (Helms & Nixon, 2010). This framework helps organizations formulate strategic alternatives by aligning internal resources with external market conditions. Nevertheless, SWOT analysis is often criticized for being overly subjective and static when not supported by more comprehensive analytical tools.

To complement SWOT analysis, this study applies PESTEL analysis and Porter's Five Forces for external environmental assessment. PESTEL analysis examines macro-environmental factors across political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal dimensions that may influence business sustainability (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Zaid, 2018). In the beauty clinic industry, sociocultural trends, digital technology, and changing consumer lifestyles significantly affect market demand and competitive dynamics.

Meanwhile, Porter's Five Forces evaluates industry competitiveness across five dimensions: rivalry among competitors, threat of new entrants, bargaining power of suppliers, bargaining power of buyers, and threat of substitute products (Porter, 2008). In the beauty clinic sector, competition is relatively intense due to low switching costs, the growing number of clinics, and the presence of substitute skincare products.

For internal analysis, this study uses MOST Analysis, Resource Audit, and the BCG Matrix. MOST Analysis examines organizational alignment through Mission, Objectives, Strategy, and Tactics (Creately, 2024). Resource Audit evaluates organizational resources and capabilities, including financial strength, human resources, operational systems, and marketing performance (Connor, 2011). This approach aligns with the Resource-Based View (RBV), which argues that

sustainable competitive advantage stems from valuable, difficult-to-imitate resources such as reputation, customer loyalty, and service quality (Barney, 1991; Kozlenkova et al., 2017).

In addition, the BCG Matrix classifies products or services into four categories—Stars, Cash Cows, Question Marks, and Dogs—based on market growth and relative market share (Henderson, 1970). This framework helps organizations allocate resources more effectively and prioritize high-performing services.

Integrating these strategic frameworks provides a more comprehensive understanding of both internal and external business conditions. Therefore, combining SWOT, PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, MOST, Resource Audit, and the BCG Matrix offers a stronger basis for formulating sustainable business expansion strategies in the beauty clinic industry.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research used a descriptive qualitative design (Creswell, 2016) to systematically describe and analyze strategic factors influencing business expansion. This approach enables a comprehensive exploration of internal and external variables that affect organizational performance and competitiveness. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources:

1. **Primary data** were gathered through in-depth interviews with clinic management, including key decision-makers, to understand business operations, strategic direction, and expansion challenges.
2. **Secondary data** included internal company documents (financial data, operational reports, and customer visit records) and external sources such as industry reports, government publications, and relevant literature.

This study employed a qualitative case study approach at Semarang Beauty Clinic (Seby) in Cirebon City. The case study approach was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of the clinic's business expansion strategy based on its actual internal and external conditions.

The informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, in which participants were intentionally chosen based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the operational and strategic decision-making processes of Semarang Beauty Clinic. The study involved five key stakeholders who were considered capable of providing comprehensive and relevant information, including the clinic owner, operational management staff, marketing personnel, medical personnel, and administrative/financial staff. The selection of these five informants was considered sufficient because the data obtained had reached a saturation point, where no significant new information emerged from additional interviews.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation review. The interviews were carried out using a semi-structured format guided by an interview protocol developed based on the components of PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces, MOST analysis, Resource Audit, Boston Box, and SWOT analysis. Each interview lasted approximately 30–60 minutes and was conducted face-to-face in Indonesian. With the consent of the participants, all interviews were recorded using digital devices, documented, and subsequently transcribed to facilitate data analysis.

In addition to primary data, this study also utilized secondary data obtained from operational reports, customer visit records, skincare product sales reports, and internal financial documents of the clinic. The data covered the period of 2023–2024 and were primarily used to identify trends in customer visits, service development, and overall business performance to support the business expansion strategy analysis.

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and

conclusion drawing. The findings were subsequently formulated into the IFAS and EFAS matrices to identify the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as the basis for formulating business expansion strategies for Semarang Beauty Clinic.

Data were analyzed using thematic coding, including data reduction, categorization, pattern matching, and strategic interpretation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing interviews, internal documents, and field observations. The analysis was conducted using an integrated strategic management framework consisting of both external and internal analyses:

3. External Analysis

- PESTEL Analysis to evaluate macro-environmental factors (political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal).
- Porter's Five Forces to assess industry competitiveness and market dynamics.

4. Internal Analysis

- MOST Analysis (Mission, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics) to examine organizational alignment and strategic direction.
- Resource Audit to evaluate internal capabilities, including human resources, financial strength, operational capacity, and marketing performance.
- **BCG Matrix** to analyze product portfolio performance based on market growth and market share.

5. SWOT Analysis

- The results from internal and external analyses were synthesized into a SWOT matrix to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- This matrix was used as the basis for formulating strategic alternatives for business expansion.

To ensure data validity, this study used triangulation by comparing findings from interviews, internal documents, and external sources (Miles, 2014). This approach enhances the reliability and credibility of the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Internal Analysis

The internal analysis reveals that Klinik Semarang Beauty possesses valuable, difficult-to-imitate resources, particularly customer loyalty, service quality, and relational capital. From a contemporary Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective, these intangible assets constitute strategic resources that can sustain competitive advantage when effectively leveraged and aligned with organizational capabilities (Kozlenkova et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2016).

Unlike many competitors that rely heavily on price promotions or technological differentiation, the clinic's strength lies in personalized, trust-based service delivery. This finding underscores that relational capital and customer experience are critical competitive drivers in service-based industries, consistent with recent studies emphasizing the role of customer relationships in long-term performance and value creation (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; Palmatier et al., 2020).

The findings presented in this study were supported by methodological triangulation, including in-depth interviews, internal operational documents, customer visit records, skincare sales reports, and direct field observations. The finding regarding high patient loyalty was supported by interviews with the clinic owner, operational manager, and marketing staff, who consistently reported recurring customer visits for treatments and skincare purchases. In addition,

customer visit records from 2023–2024 showed relatively stable revisit patterns, particularly for facial and acne treatment services. Repeat skincare purchases at approximately 1–2-month intervals also indicated recurring customer behavior. Furthermore, the statement regarding patient retention above 80% annually was derived from internal clinic monitoring and management evaluation based on recurring visit records and repeat purchase patterns, rather than from a formal statistical audit. The finding concerning strong local brand reputation was also supported by interview data and marketing observations, which showed that a substantial proportion of new customers originated from word-of-mouth referrals and recommendations from existing patients.

However, the analysis also identifies critical internal constraints. Limited adoption of advanced medical technology and uneven human resource development reveal gaps in dynamic capabilities. Recent strategic management literature emphasizes that firms must continuously adapt, integrate, and reconfigure their resources to remain competitive in rapidly changing environments (Teece, 2018; Schilke et al., 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015). Therefore, while the clinic possesses strong foundational resources, its capacity to scale remains constrained without technological upgrades and systematic talent development.

From a portfolio perspective, the BCG Matrix analysis offers additional strategic insight. “Star” services, such as medical facial and chemical peeling, serve as primary growth drivers, while skincare products classified as “Cash Cows” ensure stable revenue streams. However, “Question Mark” services remain underdeveloped due to limited promotion and market education, indicating missed growth opportunities. Recent studies suggest that effective portfolio management is essential for optimizing resource allocation and improving strategic decision-making in service organizations (Mendes et al., 2021). This reinforces the need for a more data-driven, strategically aligned approach to service development and expansion.

External Analysis

The external environment analysis indicates that Klinik Semarang Beauty operates within a market environment that is both favorable and highly competitive. Based on the PESTEL analysis, sociocultural trends, increasing public awareness of skincare and self-care, and the rapid growth of digital media have significantly influenced the demand for beauty services. Interview findings and field observations revealed that consumers, particularly women aged 20–35 years, increasingly seek facial treatments, acne care, anti-aging procedures, and skincare products influenced by social media trends, beauty influencers, and online educational content. This finding is consistent with contemporary marketing theory emphasizing the role of lifestyle transformation and digital communication in shaping consumer behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

From an economic perspective, the growth of the middle-class population and rising consumer spending on self-care and beauty services have created substantial market opportunities for the beauty clinic industry in Indonesia, including in Cirebon City (Statista, 2023; Jabar Prov, 2023). This finding is also supported by internal data from Semarang Beauty Clinic, which show relatively stable customer visit patterns throughout 2023–2024, with noticeable increases during festive periods and the year-end season. Furthermore, management interviews indicate that consumers are increasingly willing to allocate part of their income to preventive and aesthetic skincare treatments. However, fluctuations in purchasing power remain an important challenge, particularly for premium treatment services that require higher consumer spending.

Technological factors also play a significant role in shaping competition within the beauty industry. Rapid advances in digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp have transformed how clinics conduct marketing communications, promote services, and build customer engagement through educational content and digital interactions (Kotler et al., 2021;

Verhoef et al., 2021). Interview results with marketing personnel indicate that social media promotion and educational content have become key tools for attracting new customers and maintaining engagement. Nevertheless, the clinic's current digitalization system remains relatively limited, particularly in online customer management and integrated digital services.

Porter's Five Forces analysis indicates that the beauty clinic industry in Cirebon is marked by intense competitive rivalry, driven by the growing number of clinics offering similar treatments and skincare products. Interviews with management revealed that low switching costs allow customers to move easily between clinics based on price promotions, trending treatments, service convenience, and social media popularity. In addition, substitute products such as over-the-counter skincare, online skincare brands, and home-based beauty treatments further intensify market competition.

Despite these competitive pressures, Klinik Semarang Beauty maintains a relatively strong competitive position through personalized service, medically based consultations, and long-term customer relationships. Interview findings with management and marketing staff indicated that a substantial proportion of new customers came from word-of-mouth referrals and recommendations from existing patients. Repeat customer visits and recurring skincare purchases were also consistently observed in internal operational records. These findings support the argument that differentiation through customer experience, trust-based relationships, and service quality remains an important source of competitive advantage in service-based industries (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2022).

Overall, the external analysis suggests that the clinic operates in a growing market with substantial business opportunities; however, the intensifying competition and rapid market changes require stronger organizational adaptability, enhanced digital capabilities, and continuous service innovation to sustain long-term competitiveness and support future business expansion.

SWOT Integration and Strategic Position

Integrating internal and external analyses through SWOT yields a more comprehensive strategic understanding. The IFAS score (2.60) and EFAS score (2.72) indicate that the clinic is positioned in a relatively strong, opportunity-driven quadrant, commonly referred to as "Grow and Build" (David & David, 2017).

This position suggests that aggressive expansion strategies are feasible; however, they must be supported by strengthening internal capabilities. Unlike purely growth-oriented firms, Klinik Semarang Beauty must first address internal inefficiencies—particularly in digitalization, human resource capacity, and technology adoption—before scaling operations.

The SWOT matrix further highlights that the most promising strategies lie in SO (Strength–Opportunity) and WO (Weakness–Opportunity) approaches. Specifically, leveraging customer loyalty and brand reputation to capture growing market demand represents a key opportunity, while improving digital marketing and operational systems is essential to overcome internal limitations.

Importantly, this study demonstrates that SWOT analysis alone would not have been sufficient to generate these insights. Instead, integrating PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, MOST, Resource Audit, and BCG Matrix enables a more dynamic and actionable strategic formulation. This finding reinforces previous critiques that single-framework approaches often produce incomplete or overly simplified strategic recommendations (Helms & Nixon, 2010).

Table 1. IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary)

Internal Factors	Weight	Rating	Score	Remarks
Strengths				
High patient loyalty	0.15	4	0.60	Retention >80% annually
Personalized & educational service	0.12	4	0.48	Key competitive differentiation
Skincare products (cash cow)	0.15	3	0.45	Repeat purchase every 1–2 months
Strong local brand	0.08	3	0.24	Referrals drive new patients
Experienced & loyal staff	0.08	3	0.24	Therapists with >2 years experience
Weaknesses				
Non-data-driven expansion	0.12	2	0.24	Requires formal market research
Limited premium equipment	0.10	2	0.20	Basic tools, limited laser use
Uneven staff training	0.08	2	0.16	Limited external training participation
Suboptimal digitalization	0.07	2	0.14	Online system not implemented
Limited promotion	0.05	2	0.10	Mainly Instagram/WhatsApp
TOTAL IFAS	1.00		2.60	Strengths relatively balanced with weaknesses

Table 2. EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary)

External Factors	Weight	Rating	Score	Remarks
Opportunities				
Glowing & anti-aging trends	0.12	4	0.48	Increasing demand in adult segment
Supportive regulations & easy licensing	0.08	3	0.24	Favorable local government policy
Market potential (age 20–29 & >35)	0.10	4	0.40	Age segmentation
Effective digital marketing	0.10	3	0.30	Scalable local awareness
Skincare (OEM & online sales)	0.10	3	0.30	Revenue diversification potential
Threats				
High industry competition	0.12	2	0.24	Increasing number of clinics
OTC skincare substitutes	0.10	2	0.20	Trial of online products
Price-sensitive consumers	0.10	2	0.20	Price as a key decision factor
Fluctuating purchasing power	0.10	2	0.20	Affected by economic conditions

Table 3. SWOT Matrix

<p>SO (Strength–Opportunity)</p> <p>Leverages patient loyalty, personalized service, strong branding, and exclusive products to capture market trends and expand services.</p>	<p>ST (Strength–Threat)</p> <p>Uses trust, service quality, and brand reputation to compete and counter substitute products.</p>
<p>WO (Weakness–Opportunity)</p> <p>Improves limited technology, digital</p>	<p>WT (Weakness–Threat)</p> <p>Reduces internal limitations to face</p>

promotion, and expansion approach by utilizing market and digital opportunities.	competition and price sensitivity through better efficiency and service quality.
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The findings of this study make important contributions to the strategic management literature, particularly for small and medium-sized service enterprises. First, the results indicate that intangible assets, such as customer loyalty, reputation, and trust-based relationships, are key sources of competitive advantage. This aligns with recent perspectives on the Resource-Based View (RBV), which emphasize the role of intangible and relational resources in sustaining firm performance (Kozlenkova et al., 2017; Hitt et al., 2016). Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of relational capital in driving long-term organizational performance, particularly in service-based industries where customer experience is central (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; Palmatier et al., 2020).

However, unlike studies that emphasize resource ownership as the primary determinant of firm success, this study shows that merely possessing resources is insufficient to support business expansion. Limitations in technology adoption and uneven human resource development reveal gaps in dynamic capabilities, defined as the firm's ability to adapt, integrate, and reconfigure organizational competencies in response to rapidly changing environments (Teece, 2018; Schilke et al., 2018; Helfat & Peteraf, 2015). These findings suggest that sustainable expansion depends not only on resource availability but also on the firm's ability to continuously renew and reconfigure its capabilities.

From an external perspective, the study confirms that the beauty clinic industry is marked by high competitive intensity, low entry barriers, and strong substitution threats. These findings align with contemporary competitive strategy literature, which emphasizes the growing intensity of competition in service industries driven by low switching costs and rapid market entry (Bruijl, 2018; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2022). In addition, the influence of sociocultural trends and digital media on shaping consumer demand is consistent with recent marketing research highlighting the role of digital transformation and social influence in consumer behavior (Kotler et al., 2021; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Despite these competitive pressures, the findings indicate that differentiation through personalized service and medically based consultation remains an effective strategy. This aligns with recent studies suggesting that customer experience and service personalization are critical drivers of competitive advantage in service-based industries (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2022; Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). The results further demonstrate that competitive advantage is increasingly derived from relational and experiential value rather than purely technological or price-based competition.

A key contribution of this study is its integrative approach to strategic analysis. Unlike prior research that tends to apply individual frameworks in isolation, this study combines multiple strategic tools within a unified framework. This approach enables a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between internal capabilities and external environmental dynamics, supporting recent calls for multi-framework strategic integration in complex business environments (Kozlenkova et al., 2017; Schilke et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the inclusion of portfolio analysis strengthens the study's strategic implications by emphasizing the importance of resource prioritization. By identifying high-performing and underperforming services, the study highlights the need to allocate resources strategically to maximize growth potential. This aligns with recent research emphasizing the role of portfolio management in improving strategic decision-making and organizational performance (Mendes et al., 2021).

From a managerial perspective, the findings emphasize that business expansion should not

be pursued solely through physical growth, such as opening new branches. Instead, sustainable expansion requires strengthening internal capabilities, including digital transformation, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) implementation, and structured human resource development. This is consistent with recent studies highlighting the importance of digital capability and organizational alignment in supporting sustainable growth (Verhoef et al., 2021; Teece, 2018).

Finally, this study proposes a phased expansion strategy comprising foundation strengthening, service differentiation, and controlled expansion. This approach offers a balanced pathway that mitigates the risks of premature scaling and ensures long-term sustainability. Therefore, this study contributes not only to theoretical development by integrating contemporary strategic frameworks but also to practical guidance for service-based businesses seeking sustainable expansion strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Semarang Beauty Clinic has substantial strategic potential for business expansion, supported by strong customer loyalty, high-quality personalized service, and an established local brand reputation. However, the clinic also faces several internal limitations, particularly in digital transformation, professional human resource development, and data-driven expansion planning. From an external perspective, growing demand for beauty and self-care services presents significant market opportunities, although increasing competition, substitute skincare products, and rapidly changing consumer trends create considerable competitive pressure.

The integration of SWOT, PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, MOST Analysis, Resource Audit, and BCG Matrix indicates that the clinic is positioned in a "grow and build" strategic condition, suggesting that expansion remains feasible if supported by stronger organizational capabilities and strategic adaptation. The findings further suggest that sustainable expansion in the beauty clinic industry should not rely solely on physical growth but also on strengthening managerial systems, digital capabilities, customer relationship management, and service innovation.

This study contributes theoretically by providing an integrated strategic analysis framework for business expansion in service-based healthcare and beauty industries. Practically, the findings offer strategic recommendations for small-to-medium beauty clinics, particularly in emerging regional markets such as Cirebon, to formulate sustainable and competitive expansion strategies.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study is limited by its reliance on a single-case design and primarily qualitative strategic analysis, which may affect the generalizability and empirical validation of the findings. The use of SWOT and related tools, while useful for strategic mapping, does not fully capture performance measurement or causal relationships between strategy and outcomes. Therefore, future research should address these gaps by integrating additional frameworks, such as the Balanced Scorecard or Business Model Canvas, for more comprehensive analysis; expanding the study across multiple clinics in different regions to enhance comparative insights; and applying quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to empirically test the impact of formulated strategies on both financial and non-financial performance.

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