


## Crafting a competitive business development strategy for Java Aroma Essential: An MSME in the essential oil industry

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### ABSTRACT

Java Aroma Essential (JAE), a Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) in an essential oil industry that urgently needs a robust development strategy to ensure business continuity. This study employs the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) method, gathering data through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with both customers and company management. The Internal-External (IE) matrix places JAE in Quadrant I (Growth and Build), indicating a focus on intensive strategies such as market penetration, market development, and product development. The QSPM matrix further identifies the priority strategy as recruiting employees proficient in digital marketing

This research contributes significantly to the literature on MSME business strategy development, especially within the essential oil sector. The key recommendation is to enhance JAE's market presence by hiring digital marketing experts. Few studies provide strategic insights for MSMEs in this industry, making this paper a valuable resource that offers a comprehensive development strategy and actionable steps for implementation. While the findings are tailored to MSMEs similar to JAE, future research should investigate broader applications across diverse MSME contexts.

**Keywords:** Industry 4.0, SWOT, QSPM, Digital marketing, Agribusiness.

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## INTRODUCTION

The landscape of business development is evolving rapidly, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has accelerated the adoption of online business models. Advancements in Industry 4.0 have made modern information technology more accessible, providing crucial competitive advantages. These technological advancements enable seamless interactions between consumers and producers, significantly enhancing business sustainability (Alvarez-Meaza et al., 2020).

Java Aroma Essential (JAE), established in 2017, operates as a Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) in the essential oil industry, with its production facilities located in Kediri and its marketing office in Bekasi. Indonesia's crucial oil exports, including products derived from patchouli, vetiver, nutmeg, cloves, citronella, ylang-ylang, eucalyptus, sandalwood, pepper, and cinnamon, play a vital role in the country's agribusiness sector (Kurniawan et al., 2020). The quality of these essential oils is influenced by various factors, such as distillation methods and the condition of raw materials (Sari et al., 2018).

Despite being a relatively young company, JAE has exhibited promising growth, as evidenced by a significant increase in sales from May to July 2020. To maintain this growth trajectory, JAE needs an effective marketing strategy that leverages its internal strengths and capitalizes on external opportunities while mitigating threats. This study aims to formulate such a strategy through comprehensive internal and external analyses, utilizing the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) approach (Hadrian et al., 2021).

Focusing on digital marketing is essential for JAE to expand its market reach and enhance its competitive position. An online presence is crucial for business performance and competitiveness (Lorente-Páramo et al., 2021). This research seeks to identify the most effective strategies to boost JAE's market presence and ensure its long-term sustainability.

## HISTORY OF JAVA AROMA ESSENTIAL (JAE)

### ESTABLISHMENT AND EARLY YEARS

Java Aroma Essential (JAE) was established in 2017 in Indonesia as a Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) focused on the essential oil industry. The company's production facilities are located in Kediri, while its marketing office is situated in Bekasi. From its inception, JAE aimed to leverage Indonesia's rich resources in essential oils, which are known for their high quality and diverse applications (Alvarez-Meaza et al. 2020)



## INITIAL CHALLENGES AND GROWTH:

Despite being a relatively young company, JAE faced numerous challenges typical for MSMEs, including limited resources, market competition, and the need for a robust marketing strategy. However, the company quickly gained traction due to the rising demand for essential oils driven by lifestyle changes and an increasing focus on natural and organic products. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the shift towards online business models, which JAE adapted to by enhancing its digital marketing efforts.

## STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

JAE's growth strategy involved a comprehensive analysis of its internal strengths and external opportunities. The company utilized strategic tools such as the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) and the SWOT analysis to identify key areas for improvement and expansion. This approach highlighted the importance of digital marketing and the need to recruit skilled employees to maximize the company's market presence (Ratnasari et al. 2019).

## KEY MILESTONES

**Market Penetration and Expansion:** JAE focused on increasing product sales through social media promotions and endorsements by public figures. This helped in enhancing brand visibility and customer engagement (Cunha, 2019).

**Reseller Network:** The company expanded its reseller network across major cities in Indonesia and provided marketing training to resellers, facilitating easier sales and distribution of essential oil products.

**Product Quality and Customer Relationships:** Maintaining high product quality and fostering strong customer relationships became a cornerstone of JAE's business strategy, ensuring customer loyalty and satisfaction.

**Digital Marketing Expertise:** Recognizing the critical role of digital marketing in today's business landscape, JAE prioritized hiring experts in this field. This strategic move significantly boosted the company's sales and competitive positioning.

## CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

Today, Java Aroma Essential continues to grow, driven by a well-rounded business development strategy that leverages digital marketing, strong customer relationships, and a broad reseller network. The company is poised for sustained success in the competitive essential oil market by continually adapting to market trends and consumer preferences (David & David, 2019).



## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Designing an effective business strategy involves three critical stages: the input stage, the matching stage, and the decision stage.

**Input Stage:** The input stage focuses on collecting and summarizing essential information needed for strategy formulation. This stage involves identifying internal and external factors through the creation of EFE (External Factor Evaluation) and IFE (Internal Factor Evaluation) matrices, which are crucial for enhancing MSME marketing strategies (Hidayatullah et al., 2020). The integrated design of these matrices significantly boosts business competitiveness (Pazouki et al., 2017).

**Matching Stage:** In the matching stage, internal strengths and weaknesses are aligned with external opportunities and threats. Techniques such as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and the IE (Internal-External) matrix are employed to develop viable strategic alternatives. These methods provide a comprehensive evaluation of both internal and external business factors (Wang & Wang, 2020; Astuti & Ratnawati, 2020). The objective is to determine the company's position and generate practical alternative strategies rather than identifying a single optimal solution.

**Decision Stage:** The final stage, the decision stage, utilizes the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) to objectively prioritize the strategic alternatives identified in the matching stage.

QSPM is a robust tool for determining the most effective business development strategies, offering a systematic approach to evaluate and rank these alternatives based on their relative attractiveness (Chandra & Kumar, 2021).

By thoroughly analyzing internal and external factors and systematically prioritizing strategies, businesses can create well-rounded and effective development plans. This structured approach ensures that all relevant aspects are considered, ultimately leading to improved strategic decision-making and enhanced business performance (Zebua & Sunaryanto, 2021).

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study aims to comprehensively assess the internal and external environmental conditions of Java Aroma Essential (JAE) and evaluate the company's potential to compete effectively in the market (Nugraha & Murniawaty, 2018).

The primary objective is to develop a tailored business development strategy that leverages JAE's current strengths and opportunities while addressing its weaknesses and external threats (Santoso, 2020).



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This quantitative research was conducted using a multi-method approach that included direct observation, interviews, and a literature review to gather comprehensive data (Nascimento Cunha et al, 2019) The process involved several key steps:

### Direct Observation:

Operations: Observations were made on-site to understand JAE's operational processes, workflow, and production methods.

Financial Statements: Financial documents were reviewed to assess the company's financial health, including revenue, expenses, and profitability.

Equipment: The equipment used in production was inspected to evaluate its condition, efficiency, and contribution to product quality (Marfina et al., 2019).

### Interviews:

Management Team: In-depth interviews were conducted with the Chief Director and the Sales and Marketing Manager to gain insights into the strategic direction, challenges, and opportunities perceived by the leadership.

Customers: Interviews with customers provided valuable feedback on their experiences, satisfaction levels, and perceptions of the product quality and service (Dearlove et al, 2021).

### Questionnaires:

To supplement the interviews, questionnaires were distributed to both management and customers. These questionnaires were designed to assess the importance of various factors in the SWOT analysis, helping to quantify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Dearlove et al, 2021).

### Literature Review:

Relevant literature was reviewed to provide a theoretical framework and context for the study, drawing on existing research related to MSME business strategies, essential oil industry trends, and strategic planning methods ((Nugraha & Murniawaty, 2018).

### IE Matrix Construction:

The Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) and External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS) scores were derived from the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) and External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrices, respectively. These scores were used to construct the IE matrix, which helps in categorizing the company's strategic position.

The IFE matrix focused on internal aspects, identifying strengths and weaknesses within the company.

The EFE matrix analyzed external factors, highlighting opportunities and threats in the market environment.

### SWOT Matrix Development:

Using the data from the IFE and EFE matrices, a SWOT matrix was developed. This matrix provided a structured analysis of internal and external factors, enabling the identification of key strategic priorities.

The SWOT matrix served as a foundation for developing actionable strategies by matching internal capabilities with external possibilities and challenges

Through this rigorous and structured approach, the study aimed to provide a clear and detailed understanding of JAE's internal and external environments, ultimately guiding the formulation of an effective business development strategy tailored to the company's specific needs and market context.



## RESULTS

### IE MATRIX (INTERNAL-EXTERNAL)

The identification of factors for the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) and External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrices was derived from empirical field research. Internal and external factors were determined through interviews with customers (buyers) and discussions with key management personnel, including directors and managers, who play significant roles in the sales and marketing operations of Java Aroma Essential.

Based on these interviews, the internal strengths and weaknesses of Java Aroma Essential were identified. Subsequently, the determination of weights and ratings for these factors was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaire allowed respondents to rate each IFE factor on a scale from 1 to 4, ranging from "disagree" to "strongly agree" (David & David, 2019).

The processed data from the IFE and EFE matrices, including the weight values and ratings for each internal factor attribute, are presented in Table 1. The total IFE score is 3.47, and the total EFE score is 3.41. These scores facilitate the construction of the IE matrix, as depicted in Figure 1.

Table 1: IFE-EFE Matrix

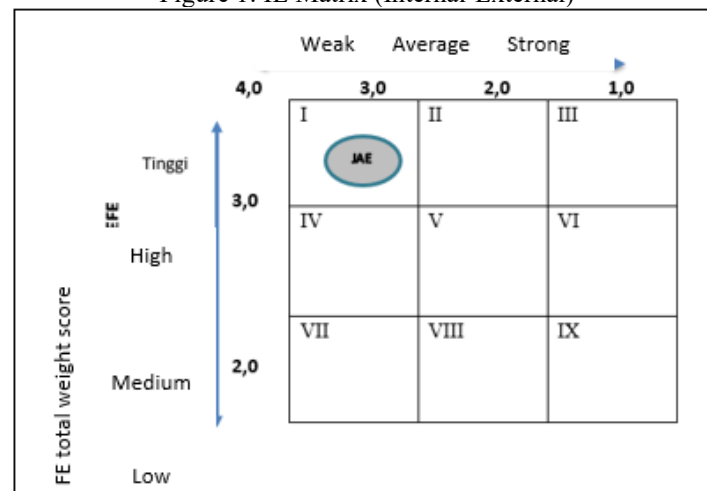
No	Strength	Quantity	Rate	Weight %	Weight x Rate
S1	The location of the marketing office is strategic.	36	3.60	0.095	0.34
S2	The quality of after-sales service is excellent.	36	3.60	0.095	0.34
S3	It has a competitive selling price and quality of essential oils that are guaranteed purity	34	3.40	0.090	0.31
S4	Many Purchase Package Promotions are offered	35	3.50	0.092	0.32
S5	Have good <i>reviews</i> from buyers.	36	3.60	0.095	0.34
S6	24-hour <i>customer care on-call</i> facility available	36	3.60	0.095	0.34
	<b>Weakness</b>				
W1	They haven't a permanent employee yet.	34	3.40	0.090	0.31
W2	Promotional media and online shopping are still few.	35	3.50	0.090	0.32
W3	The number of resellers and content updates is still small.	35	3.50	0.092	0.32
W4	BPOM licensing is still running.	37	3.70	0.98	0.36
W5	The volume size variant of <i>essential oils</i> is only one type.	25	2.50	0.066	0.16
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>379</b>		<b>1.00</b>	<b>3.47</b>

	Opportunity	Quantity	Rate	Weight %	Weight x Rate
O1	The vast market potential of the FMCG industry in Indonesia	37	3.70	0.109	0.40
O2	The market segment in city dwellers who tend to be consumptive	35	3.50	0.103	0.36
O3	Increased activity of city dwellers and high congestion rates	34	3.40	0.100	0.34
O4	The increasing number of online shopping application users	34	3.40	0.100	0.34
O5	Indonesia's vast geographical area and the cultivation of diverse varieties of essential plants	36	3.60	0.106	0.38

	<b>Threats</b>				
T1	Many new competitors have sprung up for similar products	35	3.50	0.103	0.36
T2	The price of product packages at lower prices than competitors	35	3.50	0.103	0.36
T3	Creative content ads for product promotion from more competitors	29	2.90	0.086	0.25
T4	Various types of <i>essential oil</i> products are sold online.	31	3.10	0.091	0.28
T5	Lack of consumer knowledge about the benefits of the product and how to use it.	33	3.30	0.097	0.32
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>339</b>		<b>1.00</b>	<b>3.41</b>

Source: Research results, 2023

Figure 1: IE Matrix (Internal-External)



Source: Research results, 2023

## SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT matrix comprises four alternative strategies, each designed to leverage or address different combinations of internal and external factors (Kotler, 2019; Ali et al., 2021). These strategies are:

**SO Strategy (Strengths - Opportunities):** Leveraging the company's strengths to capitalize on external opportunities.

**WO Strategy (Weaknesses - Opportunities):** Addressing the company's weaknesses while taking advantage of external opportunities.

**ST Strategy (Strengths - Threats):** Using the company's strengths to mitigate or counteract external threats.

**WT Strategy (Weaknesses - Threats):** Reducing the company's weaknesses to defend against external threats. Table 2 provides a detailed overview of these four alternative strategies.

Table 2: SWOT Matrix Results

INTERNAL EXTERNAL	STRENGTH (S)	WEAKNESSES (W)
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The location of the marketing office is very strategic.</li> <li>2. The quality of after-sales service is excellent.</li> <li>3. Has a competitive selling price and quality of essential oils that are guaranteed purity</li> <li>4. Many Purchase Package Promotions are offered.</li> <li>5. Have good reviews from buyers.</li> <li>6. 24-hour customer care on-call facility available</li> </ol>
OPPORTUNITIES (O)	STRATEGY (1) S-O	STRATEGY (2) W-O
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The vast market potential of the FMCG industry in Indonesia</li> <li>2. The market segment in city dwellers who tend to be consumptive</li> <li>3. Increased activity of city dwellers and high congestion rates</li> <li>4. The increasing number of online shopping application users</li> <li>5. Indonesia's vast geographical area and the cultivation of diverse varieties of essential plants</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase promotional activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reseller network addition.</li> </ul>
THREATS (T)	STRATEGY (3) S-T	STRATEGY (4) W-T
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Many new competitors have sprung up for similar products</li> <li>2. The price of product packages at lower prices than competitors</li> <li>3. Creative content ads for product promotion from more competitors</li> <li>4. Various types of essential oil products are sold online.</li> <li>5. Lack of consumer knowledge of product benefits and how to use it.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish good relationships with customers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiting employees who are experts in the field of digital marketing.</li> </ul>

Source: Research results, 2023

### QUANTITATIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING MATRIX (QSPM)

Following the input and matching stages, several alternative strategies were generated from the results of the SWOT analysis. The IFE (Internal Factor Evaluation), EFE (External Factor Evaluation), and QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) are strategic tools employed to identify threats, opportunities, weaknesses, and strengths as internal and external business factors (Zulkarnain et al., 2018). Each alternative strategy is objectively assessed using the QSPM method, which evaluates the company's internal and external environmental conditions.

The QSPM method uses internal and external data to select the most effective strategy (Mallick et al., 2020). Data collection for QSPM is conducted through a rating questionnaire, where respondents assign values from 1 to 4 (not prioritized, somewhat preferred, preferred, highly



preferred) to each attribute of internal and external factors against four alternative strategies from the SWOT matrix. These alternative strategies are then analyzed in the QSPM to determine the most effective course of action (Ali et al., 2021).

Ten respondents from Java Aroma Essential MSMEs rated each alternative strategy, and the total QSPM value was calculated by multiplying the rating by the weight of each factor from the IFE and EFE matrices. Understanding consumer perception, an essential external factor, is crucial for designing business development strategies (Ratnasari et al., 2019). The alternative strategy with the highest total value is deemed the most suitable for the company's conditions. The value of each alternative strategy is detailed in Table 3. The prioritized alternative strategies, as determined by the QSPM Matrix calculation, are presented in Table 4.

Table 3: QSPM Matrix Calculation

NO	ATTRIBUTE	WEIGHT	STRATEGY 1		STRATEGY 2		STRATEGY 3		STRATEGY 4	
			AS	TAS	AS	TAS	AS	TAS	AS	TAS
<b>STRENGTH</b>										
1	The location of the marketing office is very strategic.	0.095	3.60	0.34	2.70	0.26	2.60	0.25	3.40	0.32
2	The quality of after-sales service is excellent.	0.095	3.00	0.29	3.30	0.31	3.10	0.29	3.20	0.30
3	It has a competitive selling price and quality of essential oils that are guaranteed purity	0.090	2.50	0.23	3.00	0.27	3.30	0.30	3.60	0.32
4	Many Purchase Package Promotions are offered.	0.092	3.50	0.32	3.20	0.29	3.50	0.32	3.30	0.30
5	Have good reviews from buyers.	0.095	2.80	0.27	3.40	0.32	3.20	0.30	3.70	0.35
6	24-hour customer care on-call facility available	0.095	2.60	0.25	2.80	0.27	3.00	0.29	3.40	0.32
<b>WEAKNESS</b>										
1	They haven't a permanent employee yet.	0.090	2.70	0.24	2.70	0.24	3.30	0.30	3.70	0.33
2	Promotional media and online shopping are still few.	0.092	3.30	0.30	3.20	0.29	3.60	0.33	3.70	0.34
3	The number of resellers and content updates is still small.	0.092	3.20	0.29	3.40	0.31	3.10	0.29	3.30	0.30
4	BPOM licensing is still running.	0.98	3.30	0.32	3.40	0.33	3.40	0.33	3.60	0.35
5	The volume size variant of essential oils is only one type.	0.066	2.90	0.19	2.00	0.13	3.10	0.20	3.50	0.23
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>										
1	The vast market potential of the FMCG industry in Indonesia	0.109	3.60	0.39	2.80	0.31	3.40	0.37	3.40	0.37
2	The market segment in city dwellers who tend to be consumptive	0.103	3.30	0.34	3.40	0.35	3.50	0.36	3.60	0.37
3	Increased activity of city dwellers and high congestion rates	0.100	2.90	0.29	2.50	0.25	3.50	0.35	2.60	0.26
4	The increasing number of online shopping application users	0.100	3.20	0.32	3.30	0.33	3.40	0.34	3.10	0.31
5	Indonesia's vast geographical area and the cultivation of diverse varieties of essential plants	0.106	3.30	0.35	3.30	0.35	3.40	0.36	3.20	0.34

NO	ATTRIBUTE	WEIGHT	STRATEGY 1		STRATEGY 2		STRATEGY 3		STRATEGY 4	
			AS	TAS	AS	TAS	AS	TAS	AS	TAS
	<b>THREATS</b>									
1	Many new competitors have sprung up for similar products	0.103	3.10	0.32	3.10	0.32	3.70	0.38	3.10	0.32
2	The price of product packages at lower prices than competitors	0.103	3.30	0.34	3.30	0.34	3.60	0.37	3.70	0.38
3	Creative content ads for product promotion from more competitors	0.086	3.10	0.27	3.00	0.26	3.30	0.28	3.10	0.27
4	Various types of <i>essential oil</i> products are sold online.	0.091	3.30	0.30	3.30	0.30	2.60	0.24	3.30	0.30
5	Lack of consumer knowledge about the benefits of the product and how to use it.	0.097	2.60	0.25	3.40	0.33	2.90	0.28	3.30	0.32
				<b>6.21</b>		<b>6.17</b>		<b>6.54</b>		<b>6.73</b>

Source: Research results, 2023

Table 4: The Results of QSPM Matrix Calculation

Alternative Strategy	Score Total
Increase product sales promotion activities	6.21
Reseller network enhancement	6.17
Establish good relationships with customers	6.54
Recruiting employees who master digital marketing	6.73

Source: Research results, 2023

## DISCUSSION

The results show that strategy 4 is to recruit employees who have mastered digital marketing. Digital mastery can be directed to achieve customer satisfaction that ensures sustainable business (Hasibuan, 2020). Recruitment of employees who master information technology, especially digital marketing, is the initial and strategic stage to implement the next strategy (strategies 1, 2, and 3), namely increasing promotional activities, adding reseller networks, and maintaining product quality. Technology use greatly affects an enterprise's competitiveness (Tkachuk et al., 2020). The implementation of a strategy must pay attention to the company's resource capabilities and external conditions (Varelas & Apostolopoulos, 2020).

The implementation of the strategy of recruiting employees who are experts in mastering digital marketing can be done with various approaches such as collaborating with external parties (*outsourcing*), holding regular training, and inviting digital marketing experts to provide capacity building for employees. In the era of digital transformation, human resources who master digital technology are needed for company competition. (Putri et al., 2021). The effectiveness of publishing a business and its products digitally greatly affects the sustainability of a sustainable business (Gusdini et al., n.d.). Increasing the digital business capacity of a company will increase the



company's competitiveness (Stryzhak et al., 2021). The transformation from doing business conventionally to modern based on digital technology is a big agenda that must be understood by all employees and stakeholders of *Java Aroma Essential* MSMEs. The use of digital technology today helps companies in business competition (Febriyantoro & Arisandi, 2018).

Recruitment of employees who master digital must be immediately optimized in other activities such as marketing, maintaining product quality, establishing cooperation, and adding *reseller* networks. The strategy of strengthening digital capabilities determines the ability to compete in the technology-based business era (Voskresenskaya et al., 2020). The digital ability of employees must be equipped with good mastery of business processes, To increase the competitiveness of the company it is very necessary to be equipped with digital technology (Lorente-Páramo et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The essential oil industry is experiencing rapid growth, driven by the evolving lifestyles of consumers who increasingly use essential oils to enhance room comfort. This rising demand is particularly fueled by individuals with sufficient purchasing power. *Java Aroma Essential*, an MSME within this industry, has significantly benefited from this trend.

To navigate this growth and sustain its competitive edge, *Java Aroma Essential* has developed four alternative strategies through the SWOT Matrix:

### Increase Product Sales Promotion Activities:

Utilize official social media accounts and online shop applications to promote products.

Endorse essential oil products through social media influencers and public figures.

### Expand Reseller Network:

Establish reseller networks in major cities across Indonesia.

Provide marketing training and updated promotional content to resellers to facilitate sales

### Maintain Product Quality and Customer Relationships:

Ensure high product quality and build strong customer relationships to foster loyalty.

Develop creative and competitive pricing strategies.

### Recruit Digital Marketing Experts:

Hire employees with expertise in digital marketing to boost sales.

Collaborate with companies and institutions to streamline the procurement of goods and licensing services.

The most effective strategy identified for *Java Aroma Essential* is to recruit digital marketing experts. This approach is crucial for maximizing sales and responding to the high demand in the digital economy. Strengthening the business through technology transfer and innovation, as well as



fostering collaborations for efficient transactions and licensing, is essential for long-term sustainability (Ibidunni et al., 2020; Al-Subaie et al., 2021).

To ensure the sustainability of this rapidly growing business, it is vital to adopt a well-crafted business development strategy. The study's findings highlight the necessity for Java Aroma Essential to embrace digital marketing expertise. This strategy aligns with the current high demand and digital trends. Adapting to these changes through effective change management is critical for business resilience and growth (Havlovska et al., 2020).

By implementing these strategic initiatives, Java Aroma Essential can continue to thrive in the competitive essential oil market and achieve sustained business success.



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