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## **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF MESIKHAT CLOTH UMKM IN KUTA CANE AREA, SOUTHEAST ACEH**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the development of Mesikhat cloth MSMEs in Kuta Cane, Southeast Aceh. Mesikhat is a traditional motif typical of the Alas Tribe with five main colors: red, yellow, white, green, and black, which has high cultural value. The study analyzes the internal and external conditions of MSMEs and development strategies that include creating a conducive business climate, integrated information management, developing an effective marketing system, as well as improving technical capabilities and adapting to modern market needs. In addition, this study highlights the importance of synergy between the government, academics, business actors, and the community in supporting the sustainability and increasing the competitiveness of Mesikhat cloth MSMEs. The results of the study are expected to be strategic recommendations for sustainable business development and oriented towards preserving local culture.

**Keywords:** Meshichat Cloth, MSMEs, Marketing System

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is a developing country. Economic development is crucial for a country, aiming to distribute economic development and its results equitably across all communities, increase economic growth, increase employment opportunities, ensure income equality, reduce disparities in capabilities between regions, and achieve a balanced economic structure. Overall, economic development in Indonesia aims to improve the quality of life and well-being of the community in an inclusive and sustainable manner. This involves increasing per capita income, equitable income distribution, job creation, human resource development, and infrastructure and technology development that support national economic progress. It is undeniable that a nation's prosperity can only be measured by its ability to create a growing economy. Indonesia, as a developing country, is not immune to this situation, and many communities, especially the government, are targeting the creation of a mature economy (Ivonia Auxiliadora Freitas Marcal et al., 2024).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in economic development, as they can expand employment opportunities and provide economic services to the wider community. MSMEs can adapt to constantly changing market conditions, making them less susceptible to external changes and capable of accommodating a wide variety of opportunities for the workforce (Ernawati, 2021).

The role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in advancing the Indonesian economy is vital. MSMEs play a significant role in absorbing labor, contributing foreign exchange, and contributing to GDP. MSMEs also utilize various potential natural resources in regions that have not yet been commercially developed. This contributes significantly to regional and national income in Indonesia (Munthe et al., 2023). MSMEs are not only a key pillar in creating jobs but also serve as an effective solution in absorbing labor, thereby helping reduce unemployment rates in the community. According to Soetjipto (in Churiyah, Dewi & Lestari, 2020), the role of MSMEs is very strategic for national economic development (Natalia et al., 2024).

The development of Mesikhat cloth MSMEs in Southeast Aceh contributes significantly to improving the regional economy through job creation, increasing business incomes, preserving local culture, and strengthening the tourism sector. Government support and increased marketing capacity will further optimize the contribution of these MSMEs to the Southeast Aceh economy. MSME development in Southeast Aceh is a crucial pillar in driving regional economic growth. With government support through training, facilitating access to capital, and product promotion, MSMEs are able to absorb labor, increase community income, and strengthen the local economic structure. Sustainable MSME empowerment efforts will accelerate the improvement of the welfare of the people of Southeast Aceh and create an inclusive and resilient economy. A total of 133 MSMEs in Southeast Aceh received capital assistance from the government through the social services. The government acts as both a regulator and a controller with regulations and responsibilities in developing businesses. This involves all types of activities such as planning, implementation, monitoring, control, promotion, licensing, financial allocation, programs, laws, development and knowledge, public innovation policies, and support for innovation networks (Marpaung et al., 2021).

The latest data on the Aceh government's budget support for the MSME sector in 2025 shows that the Aceh Cooperatives, Small, and Medium Enterprises Office (Diskop UKM) allocated IDR 17.5 billion for business equipment assistance for MSMEs and cooperatives in Aceh. This budget was used to procure various business equipment for MSME groups in various districts/cities, such as sewing machines, coffee equipment, catering equipment, and printing machines. Despite criticism regarding the transparency and equitable distribution of this assistance, the Aceh government, through the 2025 Regional Budget (APBA), approved a total budget of IDR 11.07 trillion, a portion of which was allocated for the development and empowerment of economic sectors, including MSMEs (Diskop\_ukm\_aceh3. n.d.).

MSME empowerment is crucial for reducing economic inequality and improving the welfare of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) community in Southeast Aceh Regency. Most of the MSMEs are Islamic-based and operate in various sectors such as trade, services, agriculture, mining, crossbreeding, and animal husbandry. Some examples include shops, banana chips, grocery wholesalers, coffee shops, fabric, garment materials, and gold sales. Data from the Aceh Cooperatives and MSMEs Office shows that there are 74,810 business units, with 1,245 of them in Southeast Aceh Regency. The number of MSMEs in Southeast Aceh has reached 38,490, spanning various business types. MSMEs in Aceh Regency: MSME products from Southeast Aceh include Kutacane's signature palm sugar, coffee, snacks, and handicrafts, such as mesikhat cloth (Abdillah et al., 2022).

Mesikhat comes from the Alas language, "tesikhat," which means applying a decorative motif from one's mind to wood or cloth and then applying it to an object. Mesikhat is spontaneously applied according to the pattern in one's mind without using a sketch (Kafri et al., 2023). Alas community leader Imam Nawawi explained that "mesikhat only exist in Southeast Aceh and belong to the Alas tribe, which is different from other regions and tribes." This indicates that the Alas people consider anything outside the typical Alas motif not to be called mesikhat. However, for the Alas people, mesikhat is not only a regional motif but also a symbol of the Alas tribe's identity. Mesikhat is the term given by the Alas people to carved motifs in Southeast Aceh.

Mesikhat holds a special value in the lives of the Alas people. The aesthetic values and meanings of these objects are seen in their shape, lines, colors, and surfaces. The messages and meanings of mesikhat motifs vary widely, ranging from social, moral, and spiritual messages, depending on the motif. Thalib Akbar, in his book "Adat Siempat Perkara," explains that the forms of mesikhat motifs are derived from plants, animals, clouds, social life, and chessboards. Initially, mesikhat motifs consisted of eight motifs with different names. One micro-enterprise that needs to be developed and become a business opportunity for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is mesikhat clothing. Alas Mesikhat clothing is one of the most sought-after and sought-after souvenirs by tourists visiting Southeast Aceh Regency. This is because Mesikhat clothing with Alas motifs, such as traditional Alas clothes, robes, wallets, umbrellas, hats, cengkuk, and sashes, are not only beautiful but also relatively affordable, making it an alternative souvenir typical of Alas that tourists will buy as souvenirs when returning to Agara Regency. Mesikhat clothing is authentic Alas traditional clothing that is always worn by the local community during processions such as wedding receptions and circumcisions (Fitryani et al., 2020).

Sufirmansyah, Head of the Research Division of the Aceh Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), stated that the challenges faced by MSMEs in Southeast Aceh Regency include the lack of online systems, the relatively limited availability of skilled and professional workers, the use of traditional tools, limited business capital, unrepresentative business premises, and a lack of government support.

Mesikhat cloth MSMEs face various challenges. One of the main obstacles is the traditional production process, which requires a long time to produce a quality product, and limited access to a wider market. Craftsmen often struggle to market their products, both locally and nationally, resulting in suboptimal income. Furthermore, despite high demand for Mesikhat cloth, particularly from tourists and local communities, business development is still hampered by limited capital, design innovation, and a lack of synergistic support from various stakeholders. A strategy for developing Mesikhat cloth MSMEs is crucial for increasing product competitiveness, expanding market share, and strengthening the role of MSMEs in preserving regional culture and the economy.

By optimizing local potential, strengthening collaboration between the government, business actors, academics, and the community, and utilizing digital technology for marketing, it is hoped that Mesikhat cloth MSMEs can develop more rapidly and sustainably. This strategic effort will not only improve the welfare of artisans but also preserve the existence of Mesikhat cloth as a cultural heritage of Southeast Aceh amidst the currents of modernization and global competition.

According to Stephanie K. Marrus, strategy is the process of identifying a focused business plan with a long-term vision for a business, while simultaneously developing methods or efforts to achieve goals. Strategy is a comprehensive set of methods related to the implementation of a plan idea over a specific period (Harahap & Nawawi, 2022).

Meanwhile, business development, according to Marrus, is the responsibility of every business owner, who has a direction for the future, motivational drive, and creative nature. Meanwhile, Armstrong (in Febrianti & Fikriyah, 2023) defines strategy formulation as the process of setting goals (strategic objectives) and allocating/aligning resources with opportunities (resource-based strategy) to achieve effective alignment. Strategy implementation depends on the organization's strategic capabilities, which include the ability not only to formulate strategic objectives but also to develop and implement strategic plans through the strategic management process.

Based on the Islamic perspective, business development strategy is also interpreted as building a business life based on sharia economics, as practiced during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions. Business development methods include having good intentions, good morals, believing in destiny and God's blessing, being grateful, always considering work as worship, adhering to sharia rules, being humble and not arrogant, and having a punctual work attitude at all times. The importance of the Muslim population in Indonesia, especially in Aceh, has the potential to be active consumers and be oriented towards sharia principles. This creates extraordinary opportunities for sharia companies and financial institutions to achieve success in the domestic market (Millah et al., 2025).

In the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rad, verse 11, Allah says:

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ (سورة الرعد: ١١)

“Indeed, Allah will not change the fate of a people until they change what is within themselves.” (QS. Ar-Ra’d: 11)

This verse teaches that meaningful change can only occur if it begins with personal effort and change. In the context of developing the Mesikhat cloth MSME, this emphasizes the importance of the active role of entrepreneurs in continuously innovating and increasing their capacity to transform their economic and social conditions. With a spirit of change from within, MSMEs are expected to be able to face challenges and seize opportunities to improve welfare and preserve local culture.

According to Iskandar Wiryokusumo, development is an educational effort, both formal and non-formal, carried out consciously, planned, directed, organized, and responsible, to introduce, cultivate, guide, and develop a balanced, complete, and harmonious personality foundation, knowledge, and skills in accordance with talents, desires, and abilities, as a provision for further, on one's own initiative, to enhance, improve, and develop oneself, others, and one's environment toward achieving optimal human dignity, quality, and capabilities, and personal independence.

A development strategy is a method or strategy used by a company or organization to implement planned change, requiring the support of all parties, including management and employees. These changes are expected to develop and improve a company, requiring short-, medium-, and long-term efforts to address future changes (Septianingsih, 2024).

Therefore, from this definition of business strategy and development, researchers conclude that a business development strategy is a step or stage designed according to a plan to achieve long-term goals by an entrepreneur who has a vision for the future of the business. From an Islamic perspective, this business development strategy is related to good intentions and morals, faith in Allah SWT, gratitude, hard work and punctuality, and conducting business based on applicable Sharia principles.

Several previous studies have focused more on Mesikhat cloth motifs as a cultural heritage of the Alas community. (Ulfa Yolanda, 2021) states that these motifs have strong aesthetic value and social significance. However, studies on the development of Mesikhat cloth MSMEs are very limited. Several general studies on traditional craft MSMEs highlight constraints such as limited capital, marketing, and production technology (Ernawati, 2021). Therefore, this study fills this gap by examining the development strategy of Mesikhat Cloth MSMEs that integrates local cultural and economic aspects. Micro-enterprises can be the answer to creating jobs for lower-class communities because the MSME sector can absorb a large workforce, which directly reduces unemployment and poverty. MSMEs, also known as Micro, Small, and Medium

Enterprises, can be defined as businesses that generate profits, where the owner or entrepreneur of these MSMEs is a sole proprietorship (Soemitra et al., 2022).

According to Law Number 20, 2008 concerning Small, Micro, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), these three types of businesses are clearly defined. Micro-enterprises are productive businesses owned by individuals or sole proprietorships that meet the criteria for a Micro-enterprise. Small-enterprises, on the other hand, are independent, productive economic enterprises not affiliated with medium-sized or large businesses, either directly or indirectly. Meanwhile, Medium-sized Enterprises are productive economic enterprises that stand alone and are not affiliated with small or large businesses, either directly or indirectly, with net assets or annual sales revenue that meet the criteria for a Medium-sized Enterprise (Reniwati Lubis et al., 2024).

Mesikhat is the name given to the decorative ornaments of the Alas people. Mesikhat ornaments consist of several motifs, such as floral motifs, animal motifs, putekh tali motifs, dew bekhangkat motifs, pucuk khebung motifs, and pak huh enggang motifs. In addition to the above, other motifs may be used on Mesikhat cloth, depending on the region and local traditions. Generally, these motifs are decorated with five colors with symbolic meaning: red, yellow, white, green, and black.

Saniman Andi Kafri stated that Southeast Aceh is known for its diverse population, consisting of the Alas, Gayo, Toba Batak, Acehnese, Singkil, Karo, Minangkabau, Mandailing, Pakpak, Javanese, and even Nias tribes. Most of the indigenous population of Southeast Aceh is from the Alas tribe, while the other tribes are immigrants who have long lived in Southeast Aceh. Southeast Aceh is better known as Kutacane, an area rich in traditional art and architecture. The majority of Southeast Aceh's population is of the Alas ethnic group, while other ethnic groups are immigrants who have long resided in Southeast Aceh. Due to its diverse population, the region naturally possesses a rich artistic and cultural heritage. One such richness is the diverse carving motifs. The Alas people call these motifs mesikhat (Kafri et al., 2023).

Mesikhat cloth, once worn only by kings, has now become traditional attire worn by the wider community, particularly during important moments and cultural celebrations. The government and cultural communities continue to encourage the preservation of Mesikhat motifs through exhibitions, cultural festivals, and the development of craft products to maintain the sustainability of this cultural heritage. Mesikhat cloth in Southeast Aceh is a textile art work rich in philosophical and social meaning, as well as a symbol of the Alas people's cultural identity, which continues to be preserved and developed as part of the rich cultural heritage of the archipelago (Utomo & Tanzil, 2023).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to describe in depth the development strategy of Mesikhat cloth

MSMEs in Aceh Regency, including challenges, opportunities, and strategic efforts undertaken by MSME actors in developing their businesses. Data sources were obtained from primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from interviews and secondary data were obtained from journals and books. The location of the study was carried out in Southeast Aceh Regency, specifically in areas that are centers of production and development of Mesikhat cloth. The location selection was based on the concentration of Mesikhat cloth MSME actors and the potential for business development in the region. This study also used the SWOT analysis method, a method used to formulate a company strategy by considering internal and external environmental conditions. This method evaluates the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization, as well as opportunities and threats from the external environment. Internal analysis focuses on identifying an organization's resources, capabilities, and competitive advantages, while external analysis examines market opportunities and threats based on competitor, industry, and general environmental conditions (Candra Gudiato & Eko Sedyono, 2022). Wulandari (2020) explains the four SWOT elements as the basis for formulating an effective strategy: strengths serve as competitive advantages, weaknesses as internal obstacles to be overcome, opportunities as conditions that can enhance growth, and threats as external factors that have the potential to disrupt business continuity.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. History of Mesikhat Cloth**

Mesikhat cloth from Southeast Aceh demonstrates that Mesikhat is a distinctive decorative motif of the Alas people, first recognized around 1910. Initially, Mesikhat was used in traditional houses, but over time, this motif evolved and was applied to various other objects, such as traditional clothing, bags, wallets, and accessories. Etymologically, the word "Mesikhat" comes from the Alas language, "tesikhat," which means applying a decorative motif from one's mind without first sketching it. This motif is applied spontaneously to various objects. In the past, Mesikhat was worn only by kings, signifying a certain social status. However, today, Mesikhat traditional clothing is also worn by the general Alas people, especially at traditional events such as weddings, where there are different motifs and accessories for the groom and bride.

An interview with the Head of the Cultural Division of the Southeast Aceh Regency Education and Culture Office revealed that: Each color in Mesikhat has its own meaning. Red symbolizes courage, green fertility, yellow glory or splendor, white purity, and black leadership. Andin stated that Mesikhat is an artwork inspired by the natural landscape of Southeast Aceh. This motif symbolizes the life of the local people. This depiction is expressed through motifs, without diminishing the aesthetic value or beauty of the fabric, nor the meaning of the object (Nuridah S.Pd, 2024).

The development of Mesikhat motifs continues with the addition of flora and fauna motifs and traditional stories embroidered on the fabric and umbrellas. This includes the use of modern embroidery technology from the 1970s to computerization in 2015, which enabled the mass production and preservation of these motifs. Mesikhat cloth is more than just traditional clothing. It also reflects a value system, outlook on life, and harmony between humans and the environment. Within each stitch and motif, there are historical stories, ancestral heritage, and moral teachings that are continuously preserved by the community.

With the increasingly rapid flow of globalization, the preservation of traditional clothing like Mesikhat is crucial. This can be achieved through cultural education, arts activities, and local government support in promoting local culture. The role of the younger generation is crucial to ensuring this heritage is not lost over time. The younger generation can make a real impact by supporting the growth and exposure of micro, small, and medium enterprises and strengthening their involvement in advancing the local economy. The role of the younger generation is crucial to ensuring this heritage is not lost o 2. The Potential and Uniqueness of Mesikhat Cloth

Based on information received, Mesikhat cloth has great potential as a cultural product, possessing not only high aesthetic and philosophical value but also as a source of economic development and cultural preservation for the people of Southeast Aceh. Based on journal reviews and related sources, Mesikhat cloth has a unique, distinctive decorative motif unique to the Alas Tribe in Southeast Aceh. This motif is applied spontaneously without prior sketching, reflecting high levels of creativity and local wisdom. The color combinations used are very bright and contrasting, unlike other traditional clothing in Sumatra, which tends to be dominated by red and gold. The colors of Mesikhat, such as red, green, yellow, white, and black, each have profound symbolic meanings, such as courage, fertility, glory, purity, and leadership (interview with Andin, 2024).

Mesikhat cloth products have significant economic potential, particularly as typical souvenirs and gifts, which are highly sought after by both local and international tourists. Traditional Alas Mesikhat clothing, such as women's gamis (dresses), koko shirts, men's shirts, and Mesikhat umbrellas, are highly sought-after products among tourists visiting Southeast Aceh. Prices vary from Rp 250,000 to Rp 1,500,000 per garment, with sales reaching a minimum of Rp 5,000,000 per month for certain artisans.

Mesikhat cloth has been recognized as an intangible cultural heritage of Indonesia since 2017, adding to the prestige and attractiveness of this product in both local and national markets. This recognition opens up opportunities for the development of creative businesses and a cultural economy based on this traditional product.



Mesikhat products provide economic opportunities for MSMEs and local artisans in Southeast Aceh, increasing community income and welfare. However, challenges such as the decline in traditional artisans and dependence on imported raw materials need to be addressed to maintain business sustainability. Mesikhat cloth can serve as a promotional icon for Southeast Aceh tourism, supporting the development of creative tourism that integrates local arts and culture with tourism activities. This has the potential to increase tourist visits and strengthen the regional economy through distinctive cultural products (interview results, Julkifli 2024).

### 3. Obstacles and Challenges Faced by MSMEs

Based on information from the second interview with Mr. Hasan, a Mesikhat cloth craftsman in Southeast Aceh Regency, he stated that Mesikhat cloth MSMEs face difficulties in accessing capital, which is often complicated and difficult to obtain. Many entrepreneurs struggle to obtain sufficient funds for business development, raw material purchases, and product innovation. This is a major obstacle to increasing production capacity and the quality of Mesikhat products (Interview results, Hasan, 2025).ver time (Ramdhani & Agung Rashif Madani, 2024).

Marketing strategies for Mesikhat cloth products largely rely on conventional methods, such as direct sales in local markets or through limited networks. A lack of innovation in marketing and promotion makes it difficult for products to compete in the broader market, especially in today's digital age. The limited use of online platforms and social media hinders national and international market penetration. This also impacts low sales volume and revenue for MSMEs, especially in the current digital era, where online and social media marketing has become crucial. This lack of innovation in marketing and promotion makes Mesikhat products less well-known outside the local community, thus under-capitalizing their potential in the national and international markets (Hasan, 2025).

Craftsmen often experience difficulties marketing their products, both locally and nationally, resulting in suboptimal income. Furthermore, despite the high demand for Mesikhat cloth, particularly from tourists and local communities, the development of this business remains hampered by limited capital, design innovation, and a lack of synergistic support from various stakeholders.

This lack of government support also poses a barrier to Mesikhat cloth MSMEs. Some MSMEs still feel they lack adequate technical assistance, marketing assistance, and access to permits. This contributes to development disparities between businesses and regions. Furthermore, capital assistance and training programs often fail to optimally reach all Mesikhat cloth MSMEs, as reported in the interview (interview results, Sanah, 2025).

Mr. Hasan stated that his hope for the future is for the government to guide Mesikhat cloth MSMEs and provide capital assistance for productive economic ventures to MSMEs in various sub-districts, including those operating in the Mesikhat cloth industry. Government-organized training and technical guidance programs remain limited in scope. Many Mesikhat cloth entrepreneurs feel they lack technical assistance, particularly in terms of product quality improvement, design innovation, and modern marketing.

This hampers the ability of MSMEs to compete in the broader market. The government has also not been optimal in assisting Mesikhat textile MSMEs in accessing a wider market, particularly through digital marketing and organized promotions. As a result, products are still largely sold traditionally and limited to the local market (interview, Hasan 2025).

#### 4. Linking Strategy to Islamic Economic Principles

The strategy for developing Mesikhat cloth MSMEs in Southeast Aceh is not only oriented towards economic growth but also aligns with Islamic economic principles. The MSME empowerment approach, which involves synergy between the government, business actors, and the community, reflects the value of ta'awun (mutual assistance), which is one of the foundations of Islamic economics for realizing the common good. Furthermore, preserving Mesikhat cloth as a local cultural heritage supports the maqasid al-shariah (obligatory objectives) of maintaining religion and social welfare. Developing MSMEs through technological innovation and ethical marketing systems illustrates the application of the principles of justice and honesty in Islamic economic activities. Thus, strengthening Mesikhat cloth MSMEs not only provides economic benefits but also ensures social and spiritual sustainability in accordance with Islamic values. This strengthens the role of MSMEs as pillars of a just and sustainable inclusive economy in Southeast Aceh. The use of technology and innovation to improve product quality and marketing must remain grounded in Islamic business ethics, such as honesty and the prohibition of usury. Government support and ongoing training strengthen the capacity of MSMEs, thereby creating job opportunities and equitable income distribution, in accordance with the objectives of the Maqasid al-Shariah (objectives of sharia) in Islamic economics. Therefore, the development strategy for Mesikhat cloth MSMEs not only improves the regional economy but also implements Islamic economic principles that prioritize balance between worldly and spiritual values.

#### 5. SWOT Analysis in Determining Mesikhat Cloth MSME Development Strategy

##### Internal and External Environmental Analysis

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## 1. Strengths

The strengths of Mesikhat cloth business owners include:

- a. Products: Mesikhat cloth products have distinctive traditional motifs that reflect cultural philosophy.
- b. Technology: Opportunities in digitalization via marketplaces and e-commerce.
- c. Legality: Mesikhat cloth products are legally recognized as official cultural heritage.
- d. Human Resources: Expert craftsmen passed down through generations.
- e. Operations: The selection of products sold is diverse and multi-functional, such as bags, wallets, traditional clothing, chopsticks, umbrellas, scarves, and songkok (traditional Indonesian songkok).

## 2. Weaknesses

Weaknesses faced by the Mesikhat Cloth business owner include:

- a. Product: The design of Mesikhat Cloth products lacks modern innovation.
- b. Technology: Lack of digital marketing and digital literacy, resulting in a suboptimal marketing process.
- c. Legality: The product does not meet commercial/premium standards and certifications, so it cannot be officially marketed in the premium segment, which typically requires such certification.
- d. Human Resources: Lack of trend research and market-based innovation, making it difficult to compete with other, more modern or varied textile products.
- e. Operations: Operations are dependent on raw materials. If the supply of raw materials from outside the region is disrupted, the business owner must manage inventory and seek alternative raw materials that remain in line with cultural values and product quality.

## 3. Opportunities

- a. Global Fashion Modes: The trend of sharia and modest clothing continues to grow, promising mesikhat as a halal fashion product with high cultural value.
- b. Product Diversification: Adapting Mesikhat Fabric to modern lifestyle segments such as bags, tablecloths, and accessories.

- c. Technology: Ecommerce and Digital Exports: Traditional textile MSMEs are supported in exporting through Shopee and global marketplaces through Go Digital and Go Global training.
- d. Legality: Halal and SNI Certification: Mesikhat products can obtain certification for the global halal market and access to institutional/government procurement.
- e. Sustainable and Technical Textiles: Adopting environmentally friendly materials increases sales value and global competitiveness.

#### 4. Threats

- a. Product: Imported products/modern designs erode local market share.
- b. Technology: Competitors with established digital strategies.
- c. Legality: Difficulty accessing formal markets and exports.
- d. Human Resources: The younger generation is reluctant to continue traditional techniques.
- e. Operations: Economic fluctuations, import regulations, and expensive raw materials.

Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) Matrix for Mesikhat Fabric MSMEs in Southeast Aceh

After a business's internal strategic factors are identified, an Internal Factor Analysis Summary (IFAS) table is prepared to formulate these internal strategic factors within the company's strengths and weaknesses framework.

**Table 1. IFAS Matrix**

NO	INTERNAL FACTORS	WEIGHT	RATING	SCORE
<b>Strenght</b>				
1.	Distinctive traditional motifs, strong cultural philosophy.	0,114	5	0,57078
2.	Digitalization opportunities via marketplace & e-commerce	0,105	4,6	0,48311
3.	Official cultural heritage, product added value (mesikhat umbrella)	0,1	4,4	0,44201
4.	Expert craftsmen, inherited techniques	0,105	4,6	0,48311
5.	Multifunctional products (clothing, souvenirs); preserved culture	0,1	5	0,50228
<b>TOTAL</b>		0,525	23,6	2,48128
<b>Weakness</b>				
1.	National design lacks modern innovation	0,105	4,6	0,48311
2.	Minimal digital marketing & digital literacy	0,1	4,4	0,44201
3.	Does not meet commercial standards and	0,096	4,2	0,40274

	certification			
4.	Lack of market-based trend research & innovation	0,091	4	0,3653
5.	Dependence on raw materials	0,082	3,6	0,29589
<b>TOTAL</b>		0,475	20,8	1,98904
<b>TOTAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES</b>		1	44,4	4,47032

*Source: Data processed by the author, July 2025*

Based on the research results above, it can be seen that the strength value is 2.48128, and the weakness value is 1.98904 so that the difference between the strength and weakness values is 0.49224. From these results, it indicates that the internal factors in the Mesikhat Cloth business in Southeast Aceh are very strong, because Mesikhat Cloth has unique cultural motifs, quality fabrics, and multifunctional products.

#### **Matrix EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary) of Mesikhat Cloth MSMEs in Southeast Aceh)**

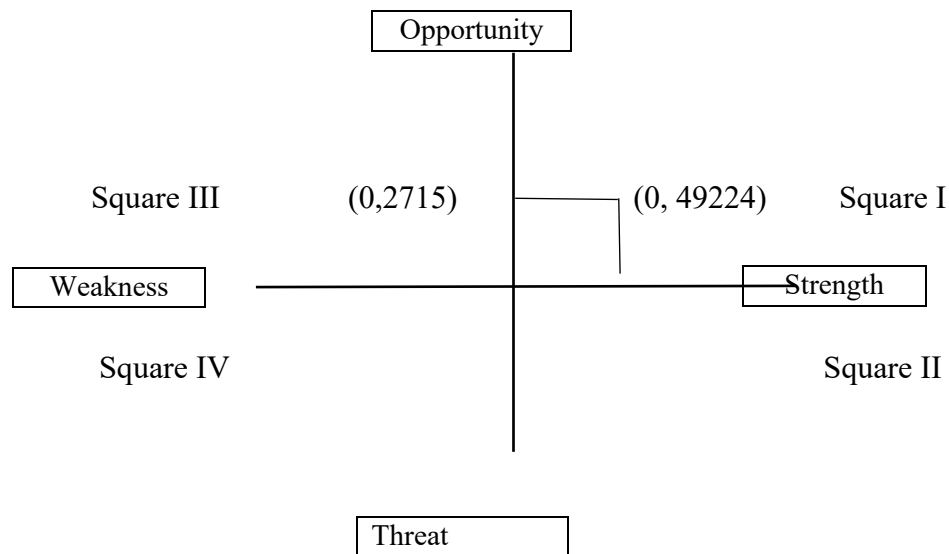
**Table 2. EFAS Matrix**

NO	EXTERNAL FACTORS	WEIGHT	RATING	SCORE
<b>opportunity</b>				
1.	Modest fashion global	0,093	4	0,37383
2.	Product diversification	0,103	4	0,41121
3.	E-commerce and digital exports	0,107	4,2	0,4514
4.	Halal and SNI certification	0,117	4,2	0,49065
5.	Cultural regeneration	0,107	4,6	0,49439
6.	Sustainable dan technical textiles	0,107	4,6	0,49439
<b>TOTAL</b>		0,528	21	2,2215
<b>threats</b>				
1.	Imported products/modern designs erode local market share	0,1	4,2	0,412
2.	Competitors with established digital strategies	0,1	4,2	0,432
3.	Difficulty accessing formal markets and exports	0,1	4,2	0,412
4.	The younger generation is reluctant to continue traditional techniques	0,08	3,6	0,303
5.	Economic fluctuations, import regulations, and expensive raw materials	0,09	4,4	0,391
<b>TOTAL</b>		0,47	20,6	1,95
<b>TOTAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS</b>		1	41,6	4,161

*Source: data processed by the author, July 2025*

The research results above show an opportunity value of 2.2215 and a threat value of 1.95, resulting in a difference of 0.272. These results indicate that Kain Mesikhat's business is responding to existing opportunities quite well and avoiding threats from

competitors and unexpected situations. The identification of these factors can be illustrated in the SWOT diagram below.:



**Figure 1. SWOT analysis diagram of the results of processing internal and external data on the mesikhat cloth business.**

The results of the analysis indicate that square position I is the position that suits the conditions found in the Mesikhat Cloth business. The strategy that can be used is an aggressive strategy. This indicates that the Mesikhat Cloth business has internal strengths that can increase cloth sales to consumers. Square position I indicates a very favorable situation. The Mesikhat Cloth MSME has strengths and many opportunities so it can take advantage of existing opportunities. The strategy that should be used in this condition is to support an aggressive growth policy. The strategy is further carried out using a SWOT Matrix that includes IFAS and EFAS indicators, as follows:

**Table 3.**  
 Swot Matriks

S	Strength (S)	Weakness (W)
	1. Distinctive traditional motifs, cultural philosophy 2. Opportunities for digitalization via marketplaces and e-commerce 3. Official cultural heritage, added product value (mesikhat umbrellas) 4. Expert craftsmen,	1. National design lacks modern innovation 2. Minimal digital marketing and digital literacy 3. Does not meet commercial standards and certifications 4. Lack of trend research and market-based innovation 5. Dependence on raw

	inherited techniques 5. Multifunctional products (clothing, souvenirs); preserved culturega	materials
<b>Opportunity</b> 1. Global fashion trends, adapting mesikhat fabric to the modern lifestyle segment 2. Utilizing e-commerce and digital exports through training on going digital and going global 3. Opportunities within the CEPA to open access to large markets with low tariffs 4. Training young people in modern design – the art of ensuring the sustainability of heritage values. 5. Adopting environmentally friendly materials increases sales value and global competitiveness.	<b>Strategy S-O</b> 1. Developing halal cultural and fashion products with high aesthetic value, as well as various modern lifestyle products that provide added cultural value and economic opportunities in Southeast Aceh. 2. Utilizing marketplaces and e-commerce can expand market share and improve business efficiency. 3. Becoming a cultural symbol of the Alas tribe and having the potential to become a creative economy product with premium selling value, particularly in the souvenir, traditional fashion, and traditional ceremony markets. 4. Opening opportunities for training and skills transfer, empowering local communities, and creating strong added value for product development and cultural preservation. 5. Increasing commercial appeal	<b>Strategy W-O</b> 1. Encourage industry players to create more attractive and competitive products in the market, thereby increasing national competitiveness. This provides an opportunity for the government to strengthen support for research, training, and the innovation ecosystem to make national design more adaptable and competitive. 2. Make digital literacy a key driver of transformation for MSMEs and the creative industry to be more adaptive to global digital consumption trends. Enhance the skills and knowledge of business actors through digital marketing training and utilize online marketplaces for effective product promotion at a lower cost than conventional

	<p>through a combination of functionality and cultural value, supporting sustainable cultural preservation through product use in everyday life, and opening up marketing to the growing fashion and tourism industries. Thus, multifunctional products strengthen cultural sustainability while enhancing economic potential.</p>	<p>methods.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Develop product certification as an added value that increases consumer trust and opens access to international markets. Collaborate with the government and certification bodies to accelerate the legality process and improve product quality, thereby enhancing competitiveness. Improved quality and production standards through training and technical assistance can encourage the professionalization of artisans and business actors.</li> <li>4. Open opportunities for collaboration between designers and researchers to integrate creative innovation without diminishing the cultural values and philosophy of the indigenous Mesikhat. Leverage digital technology and market data to ensure more targeted product development.</li> <li>5. Development of local raw material sources such as cotton that grows abundantly in Southeast Aceh to increase production independence and reduce dependence</li> </ol>
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		<p>on imported materials, strengthen the value of mesikhat products as environmentally friendly cultural products, dependence on raw materials opens up opportunities to strengthen local resource-based production, cultural preservation, and sustainable economic development in Southeast Aceh.</p>
<p><b>Threat</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Imported products/modern designs erode local market share.</li> <li>2. Competitors with established digital strategies.</li> <li>3. Difficulty accessing formal and export markets.</li> <li>4. Younger generations are reluctant to continue traditional techniques.</li> <li>5. Economic fluctuations, import regulations, and expensive raw materials..</li> </ol>	<p><b>Strategy S-T</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The greatest threat to the traditional Mesikhat motif is modernization and social change, which can erode its authenticity, philosophical values, and the traditional media from which it emerged, such as traditional houses. This also poses a potential loss of the regeneration of those who preserve this cultural art.</li> <li>2. Digitalization through marketplaces and e-commerce opens significant opportunities for the development of Mesikhat fabric, but this must be balanced with cultural protection strategies and the empowerment of artisans to ensure its philosophical value</li> </ol>	<p><b>Strategy W-T</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The main threat is being trapped in design conservatism without modern innovation, which leads to reduced market appeal, weakened economic positions for artisans, and the risk of missing opportunities to preserve a dynamic and evolving culture.</li> <li>2. The lack of digital marketing and digital literacy threatens the sustainability and competitiveness of traditional products such as Mesikhat cloth in the modern market, hinders the increase in artisan income, and drives economic inequality between digitally literate and non-digital entrepreneurs. Efforts to improve digital education and technological assistance are crucial to address this threat.</li> <li>3. The lack of commercial</li> </ol>

	<p>and authenticity are maintained and local communities can obtain equitable economic benefits.</p> <p>3. Threats to the Mesikhat Umbrella as a cultural heritage and value-added product lie in the modernization of production processes that erode traditional values, the loss of indigenous artisans, the risk of exploitation without legal protection, and the diminished function and meaning within the traditional and social contexts of the Alas community.</p> <p>4. Modernization of production techniques, the decline in the regeneration of traditional skilled artisans, and dependence on raw materials from outside the region are the main threats to the continuity of the Mesikhat-making technique, passed down from generation to generation, and the preservation of its cultural values.</p> <p>5. Transformation of cultural functions leading to trivialization, loss of sacred meaning, and shifting of the original cultural identity of the Meshichat cloth due to mass functionalization of the product.1 dan komersial.</p>	<p>standards and certification poses a significant threat that could limit the development of Mesikhat products in terms of market share, quality, legal protection, and long-term economic sustainability.</p> <p>4. The lack of trend research and market-based innovation threatens the sustainability of Mesikhat products, risking loss of competitiveness, declining sales value, and hampering the development of local culture-based businesses.</p> <p>5. The dependence of Mesikhat raw materials on external supplies poses a strategic threat to the sustainability of local production, quality, cultural purity, and economic independence of the Alas artisan community.</p>
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Source: Author's Processing (2025)

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## **SWOT Analysis Results and Discussion**

Based on the analysis of internal and external environmental factors, the strategic conditions of Mesikhat Cloth Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are assessed through strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The development strategy for Mesikhat Cloth MSMEs is as follows:

### **1. SO (Strengths-Opportunities) Strategy:**

Optimize the unique culture and skills of artisans by utilizing digital marketing and e-commerce platforms. Collaborate with modern designers to present product innovations that respect traditional philosophies. Utilize government support for certification and cultural preservation, while simultaneously expanding the market.

### **2. WO (Weaknesses-Opportunities) Strategy:**

Improve digital literacy and design innovation training for artisans, and strive for product certification to compete in domestic and international markets. Diversify raw materials to reduce dependence on imports and develop local raw material businesses.

### **3. Strengths-Threats (ST) Strategy:**

Strengthen IPR protection and cultural awareness campaigns to protect original Mesikhat motifs and products from plagiarism and exploitation. Maintain the product's authenticity and philosophy when developing derivative products.

### **4. Weaknesses-Threats (WT) Strategy:**

Anticipate threats by increasing production capacity with technology that prioritizes artistic value, as well as a regeneration approach for skilled craftsmen to ensure the continued transfer of knowledge and cultural values.

## **Discussion**

In general, the most common businesses run by Indonesians are micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs are a business sector with significant potential and contribute to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), national exports, and national investment. The welfare of MSMEs can be seen from the growth and development of MSMEs in certain regions, where MSME activities can stimulate economic growth in those areas. To play a role in economic development, MSMEs need strategies to develop and increase their competitiveness. MSMEs face many obstacles, including difficulties in obtaining capital and the lack of financial reports that show their financial position.

Based on research, the Mesikhat cloth MSME in Southeast Aceh has great potential as a unique and economically valuable cultural product. Mesikhat cloth became known around 1910 in Southeast Aceh as part of the culture of the Alas Tribe. Initially,

Mesikhat motifs were applied to traditional houses, but later evolved into various objects such as traditional clothing, bags, wallets, and other accessories. The word "Mesikhat" comes from the Alas Tribe language, "tesikhat," which means applying decorative motifs spontaneously without prior sketching. These motifs are decorated with five colors with symbolic meaning: red, yellow, and white. Overall, Mesikhat cloth is a cultural heritage rich in meaning and symbolism. It serves not only as traditional clothing but also as a medium for preserving the cultural values and identity of the Alas Tribe in Southeast Aceh.

Mesikhat cloth has great potential as a distinctive cultural product of the Alas Tribe in Southeast Aceh, rich in aesthetic and philosophical value. The economic potential of Mesikhat cloth is also quite high because it is a typical souvenir that is much sought after by tourists, as well as a symbol of cultural identity that continues to be preserved through various traditional ceremonies of the Alas people.

However, product development requires support with marketing innovation and increased production capacity to ensure the continued growth of the cultural and economic value of Mesikhat cloth and its widespread benefits for the people of Southeast Aceh.

One major obstacle is the production process, which remains highly traditional and time-consuming, resulting in limited production capacity and difficulty meeting market demand on a regular basis. This impacts the ability of MSMEs to compete in the broader market. Uneven and suboptimal government support also poses a barrier, particularly in terms of access to capital, training, licensing facilitation, and technical assistance.

The SWOT analysis results show that Mesikhat MSMEs in Southeast Aceh are thriving, demonstrating the importance of an SO strategy to leverage strengths and opportunities to effectively compete and grow. Therefore, implementing a Strength-Opportunity (SO) strategy is crucial to optimize local advantages and market opportunities, such as developing design innovations, digitalizing marketing, and actively collaborating with the government, businesses, and the community. Through an appropriate SO strategy, Mesikhat MSMEs are expected to increase competitiveness, expand their market share, and contribute significantly to cultural preservation and sustainable regional economic strengthening. It is hoped that through these steps, the Mesikhat textile MSME will continue to grow, become more recognized nationally, and become a leading creative economy sector in Southeast Aceh.

The development of Mesikhat textile MSMEs in Southeast Aceh has demonstrated a significant contribution to improving the local economy through job creation and increasing community income. Mesikhat textile products, including traditional clothing, accessories, and souvenirs, have successfully provided added economic value with competitive selling prices, despite still facing marketing and capital challenges.

Government support and synergy between stakeholders are key factors in encouraging the sustainability and development of these MSMEs, which ultimately improves community welfare and strengthens regional economic resilience.

To strengthen the theoretical foundation and analysis of this research, several previous studies relevant to the development of Mesikhat textile MSMEs and business development strategies are discussed below. For example, Kafri et al. (2023) discusses the importance of strengthening an integrated marketing system and adapting to market needs and advances in digital technology. This implies that the digitalization of Mesikhat motifs is not only about cultural preservation, but also about increasing competitiveness and developing a locally-based creative economy through the use of technology and collaboration between stakeholders. Furthermore, (Munthe et al., 2023) highlighted the role of MSMEs in absorbing labor and increasing regional income, which is in line with the contribution of Mesikhat cloth MSMEs in Southeast Aceh. (Millah et al., 2025) also emphasized business development strategies based on sharia economic principles as an opportunity for MSMEs in Aceh, including Mesikhat cloth MSMEs. However, this study has similarities with previous studies, namely both emphasizing the importance of preserving Mesikhat cloth culture as a local identity as well as challenges in capital, marketing, and the need for government support. Both studies agree that Mesikhat cloth MSMEs have great potential in empowering the local economy and developing tourism. Thus, this study complements previous research and provides practical strategy recommendations tailored to current local conditions to support the sustainable development of Mesikhat cloth MSMEs.

Empirical data shows that Mesikhat textile MSMEs are able to create jobs in specialized skills, such as sewing, which improves the economic well-being of the surrounding community. Furthermore, despite facing marketing challenges, Mesikhat textile products continue to provide significant added economic value and play a role in strengthening local economic resilience. Government support and training to improve the capacity of MSMEs also provide empirical evidence of the success of this MSME development as a driver of the regional economy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, we can present conclusions describing the condition and prospects of Mesikhat cloth MSMEs in Southeast Aceh, namely:

### **1. Strengths**

Mesikhat cloth MSMEs possess distinctive motifs and strong cultural philosophies, supported by skilled craftsmen using traditional techniques. The products sold are diverse and multifunctional, including clothing and souvenirs. The development of digitalization through marketplaces opens up broader marketing opportunities. Legalization as an official cultural heritage adds to the product's selling value.

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## 2. Weaknesses

Mesikhat products lack modern design innovation, and digital marketing remains very limited. The products also do not meet commercial/premium certification standards, making them less competitive in the high-end market. Dependence on imported raw materials poses an operational constraint, while market research and product innovation are lacking.

## 3. Opportunities

Global trends in sharia and modest fashion are opening up a large new market for Mesikhat, which offers cultural and aesthetic value. Product diversification into modern lifestyles, along with the use of e-commerce and digital exports, are pathways to creative economic development. Halal and SNI certification expand access to national and international markets. The adoption of environmentally friendly materials further enhances product competitiveness.

## 4. Threats

Competition from imported products and modern designs threatens the market share of Mesikhat cloth. Competitors with more mature digital strategies risk eroding the local market. Difficulties in accessing formal markets and exports complicate development. Younger generations reluctant to continue traditional techniques could potentially diminish inherited skills. Economic fluctuations and high raw material prices also pose threats.

From the SWOT analysis in the thesis journal above, the most suitable strategy for developing Mesikhat cloth is the SO (Strengths-Opportunities) strategy, maximizing the strengths of traditional motifs and artisan skills, while also capitalizing on digital market opportunities through marketplaces and e-commerce. Collaboration with modern designers and government support for product certification and cultural preservation are also crucial to ensure product innovation and sustainability. By combining internal strengths and external opportunities, Mesikhat cloth MSMEs can develop optimally and maintain local cultural values.

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