



## Strategy for Developing Asar Fish Business in Salahutu Sub-District

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to produce a strategy that can help maintain or even develop the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district, which is currently experiencing a decline. The types of data collected in this study are primary data and secondary data with questionnaire, observation and documentation methods. The sample in this study was determined using a purposive sampling technique with a sample size of 17 asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district. The data analysis method used in this study is the SWOT analysis. The results of the study showed that the condition of the asar fish business in the Salahutu sub-district falls within quadrant 1 of the SWOT analysis. This positioning suggests that the priority strategy for developing the asar fish business in this area should focus on leveraging and maximizing existing strengths while capitalizing on the most promising opportunities. By focusing on these aspects, the business can enhance its potential for growth and success in the region.

### INTRODUCTION

Fish, as a key fishery commodity, is a highly nutritious food ingredient rich in protein and is beneficial for daily consumption. However, fish is a perishable commodity that can quickly decline in quality. To address this issue, preservation and processing methods are essential to maintain the product's quality for an extended period and to increase its market value (Afrianto, 2008). In the Salahutu sub-district, one of the popular fish products is asar fish. According to Apituley (2017), asar fish is a traditional processed product, which involves salting and hot smoking. This processing technique gives the fish a golden-brown color and a delicious, distinctive smoked flavor, making it a favored food product among the local population.

Asar fish processing is a fishery business or enterprise that exists in several villages in Salahutu sub-district such as Tulehu, Tial, Liang, and Tengah – tengah, which are still operated on a small scale (household scale) and traditionally. The business or enterprise consists of various complex components that are interrelated and form the

business entity itself. To achieve maximum targets, it is necessary to formulate an appropriate business model that considers various aspects such as added value of products or services, marketing strategies, competitive advantages, and operational sustainability (**Triwibowo, 2023**).

The development of information and technology in the digital era has changed the business paradigm as a whole. The internet and digital platforms have enabled easier access to global markets, facilitated online transactions, and opened the door to faster and more efficient product innovation and creation. This shows that today's business has a wide reach, allowing participation from various levels of society to take part in creating added value and expanding economic opportunities (**Ermansyah, 2022**).

The asar fish processing business traditionally contributes to the economy of entrepreneurs and regional development. Hence, it can be stated that the fish processing business can also encourage regional economic development, but in Salahutu sub-district there are problems that cause the number of asar fish producers to decline.

Various problems arise as the cause of the decline in the number of asar fish producers in Salahutu sub-district, starting from limited capital, fluctuating and increasing raw material prices, technology that is still very simple so that it has an impact on product quality and ultimately limits marketing to the weak management capabilities of asar fish processors. In an effort to overcome the above problems, a study is needed that can produce a more realistic and more specific business strategy formulation so that it can be implemented properly in the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district.

The purpose of this study was to produce strategies that can help maintain or even develop the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Location and time of research**

This research was conducted in June – September 2024, with the research location in Salahutu sub-district, Central Maluku Regency.

### **Data collection method**

The types of data collected in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data are data obtained based on observations at the research location and direct interviews with asar fish business actors in Salahutu Sub-district using a list of questions (questionnaires) that have been prepared in advance. Secondary data are data obtained from agencies related to this research and literature related to the research.

The data sources collected in this study include various methods such as: questionnaires, observation and documentation.

The population in this study were asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district, and the sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique with the

consideration that they were asar fish business actors, knew the information needed in this study and were willing to be interviewed. The number of samples in this study was 17 asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district.

### **Data analysis methods**

The method used to analyze the data was the SWOT analysis method, which is further explained as follows:

### **SWOT analysis**

SWOT analysis is used to determine what strategy will be used after seeing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats owned by the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district. SWOT analysis is a management tool used to evaluate the internal and external of the organization so that it can provide information on the development of the asar fish business. SWOT analysis begins with the identification of positive aspects, namely strengths and negative aspects, namely weaknesses from the internal organization. While from the external organization, opportunities and threats are identified.

The tool used to develop strategy factors is the SWOT matrix. This matrix describes how the external opportunities and threats (EFAS) faced by asar fish business can be adjusted to the strengths and weaknesses (IFAS) it has.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Characteristics of asar fish processing in Salahutu Sub-district**

The process of processing asar fish in Salahutu sub-district begins with purchasing raw materials, weeding and washing, cutting and skewering and roughing, the explanation of which is as follows:

Purchasing raw materials is the initial stage of the asar fish processing process, where raw materials are purchased by managers from fishermen, markets and cool storage. The types of fish used as raw materials vary, where skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus Pelamis*) is the main raw material while tuna (*Thunnini SP*) and mackerel (*Euthynnus affinis*) are used as substitutes when there are no main raw materials.

The second stage is weeding and cleaning, fish are cleaned by removing their stomach contents, the asar fish processor will score the fish's stomach lengthwise using a knife, then remove the stomach contents (Picture 1a). The stomach wall is cleaned from the remaining skin that is still left in the stomach cavity. Then the fish is washed in a basin of water to clean the remaining dirt and blood that is still attached to the fish's body (Picture 1b). Fish that are not washed will make the appearance unattractive, and can

cause the fish to quickly experience a decline in quality. This is because it contains many microbes found in the dirt.

The next stage is cutting and stabbing. To prepare the fish for asar, the fish is first cut into several parts of its body to allow the smoke to penetrate the meat and ensure even cooking throughout. Typically, the cuts are made on the surface of the fish's belly. Additionally, processors sometimes divide the fish into two parts to increase production and cater to consumer preferences. After the fish is sliced, it is then skewered using bamboo, from the head to the tail. The purpose of this bamboo skewer is to prevent the fish from breaking or becoming damaged during the roughing process, ensuring the fish remains intact while being turned over during cooking.

The last stage of the asar fish processing process is roughing where the fish are put into a roughing place (Fig. 1d, e) and salted for 2-3 hours. The roughing process is carried out by placing the fish on a roughing place in a slanted position, so that it can reduce the water content in the asar fish product. The smoke produced from the roughing process comes from wood (Fig. 1g) or coconut shells that are burned and become embers; this is also what distinguishes asar fish from smoked fish where the smoked fish processing process tends to use coconut skin. During the roughing process, it is essential to ensure that the embers do not ignite into an open flame, as this can damage the asar fish product. Instead, the goal is to produce a controlled smoke that gently envelops the fish. As the fish is smoked, smoke particles adhere to its surface. These particles, which contain phenolic compounds and organic acids, play a critical role in enhancing the product's durability. The phenolic compounds act as antibacterials, while the organic acids function as antioxidants. The greater the amount of smoke particles that stick to the fish, the more durable the resulting asar fish product will be.



**Fig. 1.** (a) Fish weeding; (b) Fish cleaning; (c) Bamboo for skewering fish; (d) Roughing place (e); Roughing place; (f) Wood for roughing process; (g) Split asar fish product; (h) Whole asar fish product

## **2. Internal factors (Strengths and weaknesses)**

### ***2.1 Strengths of the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district***

From the results of filling out the questionnaire by asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district and field observations, it is known that the strengths possessed by asar fish businesses in Salahutu sub-district include the following:

#### **1. Raw materials are easy to obtain**

Raw materials themselves are the most important component in a production process. The production process can run if the raw materials are met. In the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district, the raw materials used in this case are fish, which are quite easy to obtain, where business actors can obtain them by buying from fishermen, cold storage and also markets.

#### **2. Production tools and materials are easy to obtain**

Production tools and materials are media for processing raw fish materials into finished products, namely asar fish with the help of workers. The tools and materials used in the asar fish business itself, such as a place for roughing, basins, bamboo clamps, water, wood, salt and coconut shells, are quite easy for business actors to obtain.

#### **3. Adequate marketing facilities and infrastructure**

Facilities are all equipment, materials, and furniture that are directly used in the marketing process of asar fish products in Salahutu sub-district. While, infrastructure is all basic equipment that indirectly supports the implementation of the marketing process. The facilities and infrastructure for marketing asar fish products in Salahutu sub-district are quite adequate where most business actors already have a marketing place and access to the marketing place is very good.

#### **4. Products are liked by the public**

Asar fish is a processed fish product that is very famous in Maluku including in Salahutu sub-district. Asar fish is also very popular with the community because it has a delicious and distinctive smoky taste.

#### **5. Affordable product prices**

The products sold in Salahutu sub-district have varying prices starting from IDR 10,000-IDR 30,000. These prices are relatively affordable for all consumer groups.

#### **6. Long lasting product**

Asar fish is a processed product that is quite durable. From the results of field observations, it is known that asar fish can last for 2-3 days.

## ***2.2 Weaknesses in the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district***

The weak conditions found in the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district include the following:

1. Close distance between producers in marketing products

The close distance between producers in marketing products will increase the risk of products not being sold out. This condition can still be found in the marketing of asar fish in Salahutu sub-district, especially in Tulehu Village.

2. Narrow marketing area coverage

The current marketing conditions for asar fish products in Salahutu sub-district are only focused on consumers in each village, where business actors do not think about selling their products more widely.

3. Fluctuating product prices

Fluctuating prices will affect consumer decisions in purchasing asar fish products in Salahutu sub-district. High prices tend to make consumers decide not to purchase the product.

4. Lack of product promotion

Promotion is the provision of information with the aim of attracting attention and subsequently influencing increased sales, however this is still very rarely done or even never done at all by asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district.

5. Capital limitations and financial records have not been carried out properly

Limited capital and lack of implementation and knowledge of financial records will make it difficult to develop a business. This problem is also faced by asar fish entrepreneurs in Salahutu sub-district.

6. The product quality is still low

Low product quality will have a direct impact on the durability of the asar fish products produced, in addition to this condition will also make it difficult for business actors to reach a wider market.

### 2.3 Internal factor analysis

**Table 1.** Internal factor analysis (IFAS) matrix for asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district

No	Internal factors	Weight	Rating	Score
<b>Strength</b>				
1	Raw materials are easy to obtain	0.16	4.00	0.62
2	Production tools and materials are easy to obtain	0.18	4.00	0.71
3	Adequate marketing facilities and infrastructure	0.14	3.41	0.47
4	Products are liked by the public	0.18	4.00	0.71
5	Affordable product prices	0.18	3.29	0.58
6	Long lasting product	0.18	3.88	0.69
<b>Total</b>		1		3.77
No	Internal factors	Weight	Rating	Score
<b>Weakness (Weekness)</b>				
1	Close distance between producers in marketing products	0.15	3.14	0.51
2	Narrow marketing area coverage	0.16	3.88	0.64
3	Fluctuating product prices	0.14	3.12	0.43
4	Lack of product promotion	0.18	4.00	0.73
5	Capital limitations and financial records have not been carried out properly	0.18	4.00	0.73
6	The product quality is still low	0.18	3.65	0.66
<b>Total</b>		1		3.71

Source: primary data processed 2024

From the analysis results in the IFAS Table (1), it is known that the total score for strength is 3.77. While, the total score for weakness is 3.71; this shows that the strength and weakness scores do not have a significant comparison, so it can be concluded that the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district has a weak internal position.

### 3. External Factors (Opportunities and threats)

#### 3.1 *Opportunities in the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district*

Opportunities are external situations of a business that have the potential to be profitable. In general, businesses will feel advantaged when faced with these external conditions. Identification of opportunities owned by asar fish businesses in Salahutu sub-district are as follows:

##### 1. Government assistance programs

Through the Government Assistance program, each group of asar fish businesses will be given assistance in the form of goods or processing tools and also marketing. The purpose of this assistance program is to increase income, product quantity, increase product added value, increase business production capacity, and be able to guarantee the quality of the products produced.

##### 2. Use of technology as a marketing tool

It can be said that the use of technology as a marketing tool or digital marketing is an effort to market or promote products or services through digital platforms or the internet. To survive and compete in the digital era, asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district must start following technological developments and digital marketing trends, where the use of technology as a marketing tool or digital marketing will provide various advantages in business sustainability, such as more affordable costs compared to conventional marketing, and wider market coverage without geographical limitations.

##### 3. Adequate transportation

Transportation plays an important role in the implementation of asar fish business activities in Salahutu sub-district, where transportation facilitates the movement of raw materials to the production location to marketing. At this time, transportation is an opportunity for asar fish business actors where it can be relied on as a marketing tool to reach wider consumers.

##### 4. Wide marketing potential

Asar fish processed products in Salahutu sub-district have broad marketing potential. This is reinforced by the wide geographical conditions and large population, so that it can be utilized by asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district in marketing their products.

##### 5. Attending training

Asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district is expected to be sustainable with training for business actors because it can increase their business productivity. Training is basically aimed at increasing productivity by improving skills in the production process and managerial improvements.

### **3.2 Threats to asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district**

#### **1. Lack of interest of the younger generation**

The phenomenon of declining interest and participation of the younger generation in the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district is a serious concern for business sustainability. This phenomenon has a serious impact on the sustainability of the business sector in the future. The low interest and participation of the younger generation causes no regeneration in the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district, thus it needs serious attention so that business sustainability can be maintained.

#### **2. Consumer saturation in consuming products**

The phenomenon where consumers decide to buy other products because they feel bored or fed up with consuming processed asar fish products in Salahutu sub-district; this can be knowledge for asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district so that it becomes a consideration for them to market their products more widely.

#### **3. Seasonal factors of fish that influence raw materials**

Raw materials in this case fish are very important in the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district where without raw materials, the production process cannot be carried out. Asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district often face fish season conditions, where the stock of fish marketed is very small, so that the availability of raw materials is often not met which of course will have an impact on the production process.

#### **4. Product not sold out**

The condition where the product is not sold out is still a common problem faced by asar fish businesses in Salahutu sub-district. This condition will make it difficult for business actors to gain profits from the sale of their products which will have an impact on the sustainability of their business.

### 3.3 External factor analysis

**Table 2.** External factor analysis (EFAS) matrix for asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district

No	External factors	Weight	Rating	Score
<b>Opportunities</b>				
1	Government assistance programs	0.20	2.71	0.54
2	Use of technology as a marketing tool	0.20	4.00	0.80
3	Adequate transportation	0.20	3.76	0.75
4	Wide marketing potential	0.20	4.00	0.80
5	Attending training	0.20	4.00	0.80
<b>Total</b>		1		3.69
No	External factors	Weight	Rating	Score
<b>Threat (Strength)</b>				
1	Lack of interest of the younger generation	0.26	3.59	0.93
2	Consumer saturation in consuming products	0.27	3.41	0.93
3	Seasonal factors of fish that influence raw materials	0.20	2.59	0.51
4	Product not sold out	0.27	3.18	0.87
<b>Total</b>		1		2.30

Source: primary data processed 2024

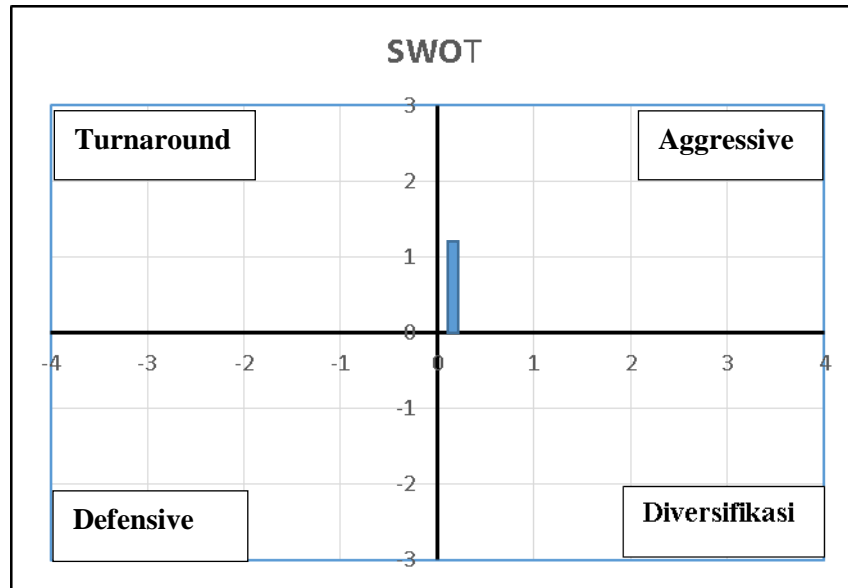
From the analysis results in Table (2), it is marked that the weight for opportunities is 3.69, while the weight of threats is 2.30. This indicates that the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district has great opportunities that can be utilized by business actors in maintaining or even developing their businesses.

Before determining the strategy formulation and IFAS and EFAS matrices, the difference in weighted scores for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats will be determined, namely:

$$SW = 3.77 - 3.71 = 0.06$$

$$OT = 3.69 - 2.30 = 1.39$$

Based on the calculation results above, a strategy formulation was carried out with a SWOT analysis diagram as follows:



**Fig. 2.** SWOT analysis diagram

Source: primary data processed 2024

Based on the image above, the strategy formulation using the SWOT analysis diagram shows that the SW value has a positive difference value of 0.06, while OT has a positive value of 1.39. Hence, it is known that the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district is in quadrant 1, which supports an aggressive strategy. According to **Rangkuti (2015)**, quadrant 1 is a very profitable situation because the company has opportunities and strengths so that it can take advantage of existing opportunities.

#### 4. SWOT matrix

Referring to the results of the identification of external and internal factors in the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district, a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats or SWOT analysis can be obtained. The SWOT analysis is entered into the SWOT matrix (Table 3) in order to create alternative strategies for the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district. Based on the analysis that has been carried out by the researcher, the SWOT matrix formulation for the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district can be seen as follows:

**Table 3.** SWOT analysis matrix for asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district

	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raw materials are easy to obtain</li> <li>2. Production tools and materials are easy to obtain</li> <li>3. Adequate marketing facilities and infrastructure</li> <li>4. Products are liked by the public</li> <li>5. Affordable product prices</li> <li>6. Long lasting product</li> </ol>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Close distance between producers in marketing products</li> <li>2. Narrow marketing area coverage</li> <li>3. Fluctuating product prices</li> <li>4. Lack of product promotion</li> <li>5. Capital limitations and financial records have not been implemented properly</li> <li>6. Low product quality</li> </ol>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Government assistance programs</li> <li>2. Use of technology as a marketing tool</li> <li>3. Adequate transportation</li> <li>4. Wide marketing potential</li> <li>5. Attending training</li> </ol>	<p><b>SO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taking advantage of the ease of producing products and also the public's liking for the product to maximize the potential of a wide market. (s1,s2,s4,s5,o4)</li> <li>2. Utilizing the use of technology and transportation as a means of product marketing. (s3,o2,o3)</li> <li>3. Taking advantage of government assistance and taking training to increase productivity and develop the business so that the product is more popular with the public. (s4,w1,w5)</li> </ol>	<p><b>WO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anticipate Close distance between producers in marketing products and narrow marketing area coverage (w1,w2,o2,o3)</li> <li>2. Utilizing technology as a product promotion medium (w4,o2)</li> <li>3. Avoid and overcome problems such as limited capital, poor financial records and low product quality by attending related training (w3,w5,w6,o5)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of interest of the younger generation</li> <li>2. Consumer saturation in consuming products</li> <li>3. Seasonal factors of fish that influence raw materials</li> <li>4. Product not sold out</li> </ol>	<p><b>ST</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. maintaining business sustainability (s1,s2,s3,s4,s5,s6,t1)</li> <li>2. Conducting marketing development for business sustainability (s3,t2,t4)</li> </ol>	<p><b>WT</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. develop the marketing sector to overcome the risk of product unsold and consumer saturation (w1,w2,w4,t2,t4)</li> <li>2. strengthening internal capabilities for business sustainability (w5,w6,t1)</li> </ol>

Using the analysis of internal and external factors as explained above, four strategies can be identified that are summarized in the SWOT matrix that can be used as considerations by business actors to be implemented. These strategies are strengths opportunity (SO), strengths threats (ST), weakness opportunity (WO) and weakness threats (WT) strategies. Based on the results of the analysis using the SWOT matrix, alternative strategies that can be carried out by asar fish business actors in Salahutu Sub-district are obtained as follows:

- Strength opportunity (SO) strategy

SO strategy, obtained by utilizing and maximizing the strengths possessed by the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district to seize existing opportunities:

- a. Taking advantage of the ease of producing products and also the public's liking for the product to maximize the potential of a wide market. Asar fish products are processed fish products whose production process is easy to carry out because the raw materials to the tools and materials for the production process are easy to obtain, in addition, processed asar fish products are also very popular with the wider community so that this can be a consideration for asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district to further expand the marketing potential of their products.
- b. Utilizing the use of technology and transportation as a means of marketing products. The facilities and infrastructure for marketing asar fish products in Salahutu Sub-district are quite adequate but not enough to develop the business so that business actors must start utilizing technology and transportation as a means of marketing their products.
- c. Utilizing government assistance and participating in training to increase productivity and develop businesses so that products are more popular with the public. With government assistance and training aimed at increasing income, product quantity, increasing product added value, increasing business production capacity, and being able to guarantee the quality of the products produced, it can be utilized by asar fish entrepreneurs in Salahutu Sub-district to develop their businesses and products will also be more popular with the public.

- Weakness opportunity (WO) strategy

Asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district can utilize the opportunity to overcome the weaknesses it has. The followings are recommended strategies that can be considered for implementation by asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district:

- a. Anticipate close distance between producers in marketing products and arrow marketing coverage. Close distance in marketing products and also

narrow marketing coverage are still problems that are often encountered in asar fish businesses in Salahutu sub-district which will have an impact on the unsold products being marketed, so that business actors must start utilizing technology and transportation as a means of marketing to expand the scope of marketing their products.

- b. Utilizing technology as a product promotion medium. Promotion of asar fish businesses in Salahutu sub-district is still very rare or even never done at all by business actors. The use of technology as a product promotion medium must be implemented by asar fish business actors in Salahutu sub-district, in order to attract wider consumers to buy their products.
  - c. Avoiding and overcoming problems such as limited capital and poor financial records to low product quality by participating in related training. Limited capital and poor financial records to minimal knowledge related to business development are serious weaknesses of the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district, one way to overcome this is by the participation of business actors in related training.
- Strength threats (ST) strategy

This strategy is a combination of internal factors (Strength) and external factors (Threat); this strategy uses the strengths of the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district to overcome all external threats:

- a. Maintaining business sustainability. Maintaining business sustainability is a threat to the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district because it is influenced by conditions such as the lack of interest of the younger generation in the business so that it needs to be overcome by strengthening business strengths starting from production to marketing which will later affect the perception of the next generation so that they want to continue the business.
  - b. Conducting marketing development for business sustainability. Asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district is faced with threats such as consumer saturation in consuming products until the products are not sold out, therefore asar fish business actors must start developing the marketing facilities and infrastructure used and must also be able to maintain conditions where the products are liked by the community.
- Weakness threats (WT) strategy

Asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district must minimize existing weaknesses and must avoid threats that occur at any time. The followings are recommended strategies that can be considered for application in asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district, including:

- a. Developing the marketing sector. Developing the marketing sector such as starting to use technology as a means of marketing and product promotion is something that must be done immediately by asar fish businesses in Salahutu sub-district to avoid threats such as consumer saturation in consuming products to products that are not sold out.
- b. Strengthening internal capabilities for business sustainability. Business weaknesses such as limited capital, financial records that have not been implemented properly, and low product quality must be immediately addressed by asar fish entrepreneurs in Salahutu sub-district so that their businesses remain sustainable.

## CONCLUSION

The condition of the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district is in quadrant 1 so that the priority strategy in developing the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district is to utilize and maximize existing strengths and to seize the greatest opportunities. Strategies that can be carried out are: utilizing the use of technology and transportation as a means of marketing products and utilizing government assistance and participating in training to increase productivity, quantity and quality of products and managerial skills to maintain or even develop the asar fish business in Salahutu sub-district.

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