

Strategic Mentorship as a Catalyst for Skincare Industry Growth in Malaysia: A Study on RichWorks Consulting Group and Its Entrepreneurial Impact

Abstract: This study explores the role of RichWorks Consulting Group (RCG) in accelerating entrepreneurial growth within Malaysia's skincare industry by enabling non-business founders to transform science-based formulations into scalable, brand-led enterprises. As the clean beauty sector becomes increasingly competitive, strategic mentorship and systematic growth frameworks have emerged as critical levers of differentiation (St-Jean & Audet, 2012; SME Corp Malaysia, 2023). Guided by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, the research analyses how RCG embeds reflective practice, iterative learning, and applied knowledge within its mentorship programs to equip founders with entrepreneurial competence (Kolb, 1984). Complementing this, the TAM-SAM-SOM market sizing framework is employed to illustrate how entrepreneurs, under mentorship, progress from recognising broad demand to prioritising actionable market opportunities (Blank & Dorf, 2012; Maurya, 2012).

A focal case, *The Raw.*, demonstrates how a pharmacist-led venture evolved under RCG's guidance from early stagnation to nationwide retail distribution, achieving RM31.9 million in revenue. Findings underscore the importance of mentorship in bridging technical expertise with strategic capability, showing how RCG enables entrepreneurs to develop adaptive learning cycles, align business models with market realities, and scale effectively. This study contributes to the literature on mentorship-led entrepreneurship, highlighting RCG's role as a strategic enabler in Malaysia's SME landscape (Hashim, 2012; World Bank, 2020).

Keywords: Strategic mentorship, Experiential learning, TAM-SAM-SOM, Clean beauty, Skincare business, RichWorks Consulting Group, Malaysian SMEs

1. Introduction

Skincare refers to the range of practices and products designed to maintain and improve the health, function, and appearance of the skin. It has evolved into a major segment of the global beauty and wellness industry, encompassing not only cosmetic appeal but also preventive health and lifestyle value (Euromonitor International, 2023). In recent years, the sector has expanded beyond traditional beauty products to include functional, science-based formulations that emphasize safety, efficacy, and consumer education (Mintel, 2022).

In Malaysia, skincare is a rapidly growing industry, but one that has faced persistent issues with inconsistent product quality, unregulated production, and entrepreneurs failing to comply with proper Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (SME Corp Malaysia, 2023). Instances of low-quality or unsafe products have historically undermined consumer trust. However, as awareness rises—driven by social media, regulatory enforcement, and a more educated customer base—Malaysian consumers increasingly demand transparency, clinical credibility, and ethical standards from skincare brands (Statista, 2024; Euromonitor International, 2023).

This shift has created both opportunities and challenges for local entrepreneurs. On one hand, the market potential is significant; on the other, founders must now compete on more than just product formulation. They are required to demonstrate brand trustworthiness, regulatory compliance, and strong customer relationships (World Bank, 2020). To address these challenges, Malaysia has seen the rise of various business education and entrepreneurship programs designed to equip founders with the necessary knowledge to scale sustainably (Abdul Razak & Abdullah, 2021). Yet, many entrepreneurs—particularly those from technical or scientific backgrounds such as pharmacy or dermatology—still struggle to bridge the gap between product expertise and business execution (Hashim, 2012).

RichWorks Consulting Group (RCG) has emerged as one of the few consulting organisations in Malaysia providing structured mentorship interventions targeted at SMEs. Unlike informal support networks, RCG's tiered programs (e.g., SPIRE, Titan Circle) embed systematic frameworks in marketing, operations, leadership, and compliance. For skincare founders, this represents a crucial mechanism to bridge the gap between scientific expertise and commercial capability — a gap that remains underexplored in Malaysian SME scholarship (St-Jean & Audet, 2012; SME Corp Malaysia, 2023). Their model blends mindset transformation, systems thinking, and emotional branding—positioning them not only as consultants, but as catalysts for brand-led growth.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- Examine RCG's role in accelerating Malaysian skincare entrepreneurs through strategic mentorship.
- Apply Experiential Learning Theory to show how non-business founders evolve into capable leaders under RCG guidance.
- Evaluate the use of TAM–SAM–SOM analysis in helping entrepreneurs identify, prioritise, and scale target markets.
- Demonstrate these dynamics through *The Raw.*, highlighting mentorship impact on brand growth, retail expansion, and revenue.

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, exploratory case study design to examine RCG's influence on entrepreneurship in Malaysia's skincare sector. RCG serves as the primary unit of analysis, while *The Raw.* functions as a focal case that exemplifies the application of strategic mentorship, experiential learning, and market-sizing tools in driving entrepreneurial outcomes (Yin, 2018).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategic Mentorship in Entrepreneurship

Mentorship has long been recognised as a key driver of entrepreneurial success, particularly in contexts where founders lack prior business training. Studies differentiate between informal mentorship (family, peers, business networks) and structured mentorship (formal programs with guided frameworks and accountability systems). St-Jean and Audet (2012) highlight that structured mentorship enhances not only business knowledge but also founder confidence and resilience. Similarly, Scillitoe and Chakrabarti (2010) argue that mentorship serves as a bridge between technical expertise and market application, especially critical for entrepreneurs entering industries outside their original domain.

In Malaysia, SMEs often face systemic challenges such as limited financial literacy, talent retention, and lack of digitalisation (SME Corp Malaysia, 2023). Structured mentorship models, such as those pioneered by consulting firms like RCG, provide clarity by introducing performance systems, market entry strategies, and business scaling frameworks (Hashim, 2012; Abdul Razak & Abdullah, 2021). Despite global evidence, limited empirical work has been conducted on how structured mentorship impacts Malaysian SMEs in niche consumer industries such as skincare.

2.2 Experiential Learning Theory by Kolb

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) conceptualises learning as a cyclical process where knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984). The model consists of four interrelated stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, and Active Experimentation. Learners continuously move through these stages, applying new insights and refining their understanding in practice (Kayes, 2002).

In entrepreneurship, this cycle provides a strong lens to explain how founders develop business acumen. For instance, many entrepreneurs in the skincare sector begin with Concrete Experience rooted in product formulation or clinical practice. Through mentorship, they engage in Reflective Observation, analysing challenges such as customer acquisition or branding. This

reflection then supports Abstract Conceptualisation, where guidance from mentors helps translate experience into structured strategies. Finally, Active Experimentation occurs when entrepreneurs apply these strategies in real-world settings, testing new sales channels, marketing approaches, or operational systems (Kolb & Kolb, 2009).

This iterative cycle is particularly valuable for “technical founders” such as pharmacists or chemists who may lack formal business training. Mentorship accelerates their movement through the cycle by shortening trial-and-error periods, introducing proven frameworks, and encouraging reflection that leads to faster capability-building (Kayes, 2002). In Malaysia’s SME landscape, where many entrepreneurs are first-generation and often enter business by necessity rather than design, Kolb’s ELT provides a powerful foundation to understand how structured learning interventions drive transformation (World Bank, 2020).

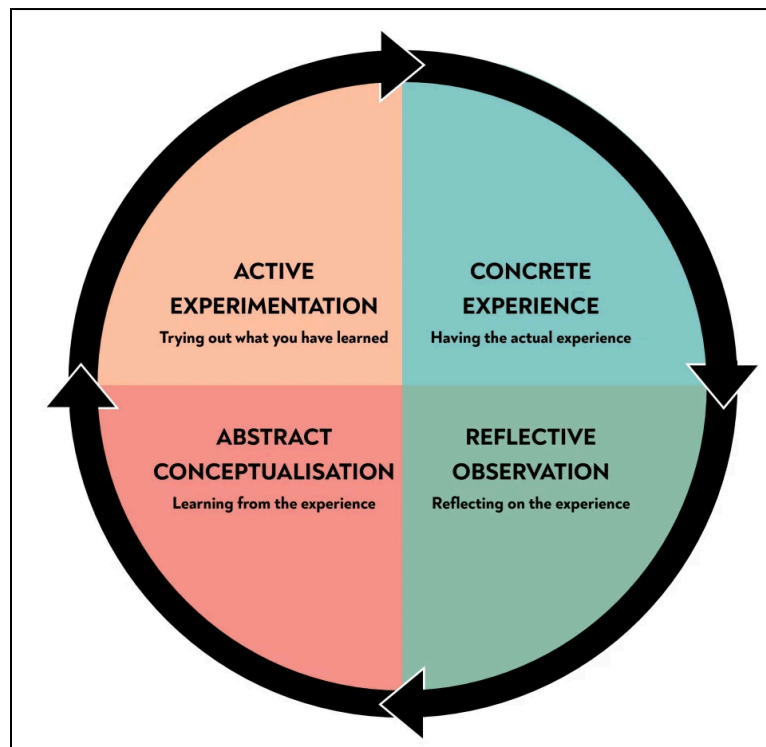


Figure 1: Kolb's Experiential Learning Model – Four Stages of the Learning Cycle

2.3 TAM-SAM-SOM Market Analysis

The TAM-SAM-SOM framework is widely used in entrepreneurial planning to assess market opportunities (Blank & Dorf, 2012; Maurya, 2012).

- **Total Addressable Market (TAM):** the broadest universe of potential demand.

- **Serviceable Available Market (SAM):** the segment realistically reachable by the business model.
- **Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM):** the proportion the company can capture given resources and strategy.

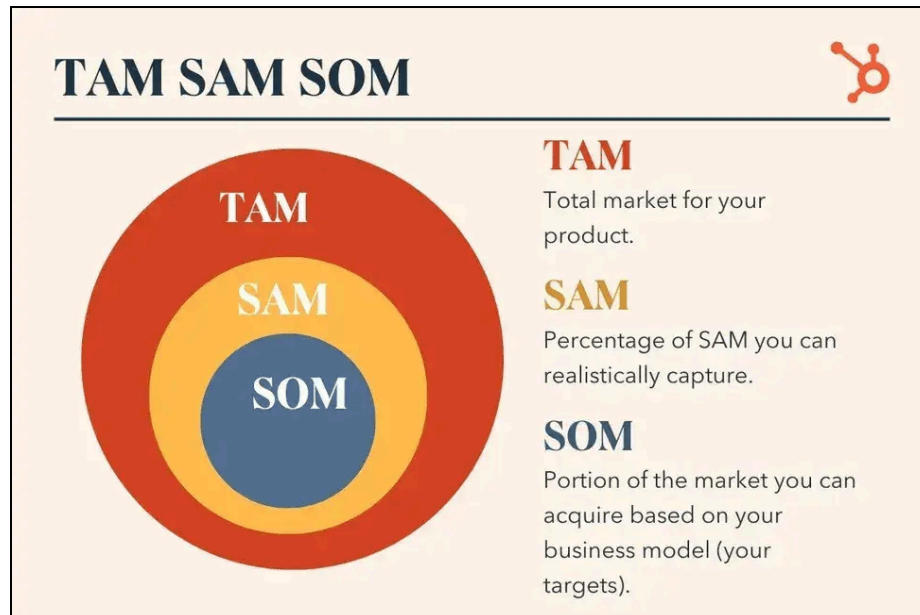


Figure 2: TAM–SAM–SOM framework applied to Malaysia’s skincare industry, highlighting how mentorship narrows broad opportunities into achievable market segments.

This framework is valuable in preventing entrepreneurs from overestimating opportunities by focusing attention on the attainable segment. However, it is often criticised for being applied superficially, with inflated TAM figures used to impress investors rather than to design actionable strategies (Maurya, 2012).

In practice, structured mentorship programs such as RCG’s encourage SME founders to approach TAM-SAM-SOM analysis pragmatically. For skincare brands like *The Raw.*, the TAM may encompass the entire Malaysian clean beauty market, SAM may focus on urban female consumers aged 20–40 with disposable income, and SOM may represent a realistic market share attainable through retail penetration in outlets such as Guardian and AEON Wellness (Euromonitor International, 2023; Statista, 2024).

2.4 RichWorks Consulting Group Mentorship Ecosystem

RichWorks Consulting Group (RCG) has developed a structured ecosystem of entrepreneurial mentorship designed to accelerate business growth through staged programs, specialized coaching, and community-based support. The model emphasizes progression, where

entrepreneurs are systematically guided from early-stage survival toward scalable and sustainable growth (Abdul Razak & Abdullah, 2021).

SPIRE represents the entry-level pathway, typically designed for entrepreneurs who have operated their businesses for at least six months and generate average monthly sales of RM30,000 or more. As a 12-month fast-track initiative, SPIRE provides participants with comprehensive exposure to marketing, sales, operations, leadership, systems development, accounting, and compliance. The key outcome targeted is to enable participants to achieve RM1 million in annual revenue within six to twelve months.

Building on this foundation, The Titan Program is positioned as RCG's flagship platform for established entrepreneurs with monthly revenues of RM100,000 or more. This program offers direct strategic mentorship under Prof. Datuk Wira Dr. Azizan Osman, integrating leadership development, business reviews, decision-making support, and market expansion strategies. A distinctive element is its emphasis on peer learning through Inner Circle Meetings, one-on-one coaching sessions, and performance accountability structures facilitated by a dedicated Client Account Manager (CAM) (RCG, 2022).

3. Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative, exploratory single-case design** to investigate the entrepreneurial growth and strategic transformation of *The Raw.*, a Malaysian skincare brand mentored under RichWorks Consulting Group (RCG). The case study approach enables in-depth contextual analysis of how structured mentorship, systemisation, and strategic branding guided the company's trajectory from inception to retail expansion (Yin, 2018).

Data Collection

Primary data was obtained through **semi-structured interviews** with the founder of *The Raw.*, providing first-hand perspectives on leadership decisions, product development, and the role of RCG's mentorship. Secondary data sources included:

- Internal financial performance reports (2021–2024)
- RCG mentorship materials and program documentation
- Company branding and marketing collateral
- Retail distribution records (e.g., AEON Wellness, Guardian)
- Social media engagement metrics

To enhance validity, **supplementary desk research** was conducted on the Malaysian skincare industry and mentorship-driven entrepreneurship. This contextual review provided broader

insights into sectoral dynamics and enabled triangulation of findings within the industry landscape (Creswell & Poth, 2018; SME Corp Malaysia, 2023).

Sampling

A **purposive sampling** strategy was employed, focusing on the founder of *The Raw.*, who played the central role in the business transformation. The single-case design was chosen due to the brand's rapid growth trajectory and its direct association with structured mentorship programs (Hashim, 2012).

Data Analysis

A dual approach combining **trend analysis** and **thematic interpretation** was applied.

- **Quantitative financial data** was examined to assess revenue growth and market expansion and is presented in charts and tables in the Findings section. Distribution growth, particularly entry into retail outlets, is presented as milestone-based timelines.
- **Qualitative interview data** was coded thematically to extract insights on entrepreneurial learning, leadership adaptability, and brand identity development.

These findings were triangulated with company reports and RCG mentorship frameworks to ensure consistency, reliability, and construct validity (St-Jean & Audet, 2012).

Theoretical Frameworks

This study is anchored in two theoretical perspectives:

- **Experiential Learning Theory (ELT):** to analyze how the founder's iterative learning process, supported by RCG guidance, contributed to personal and organizational growth (Kolb, 1984; Kayes, 2002).
- **TAM-SAM-SOM Market Framework:** to evaluate how *The Raw.* defined its addressable market, expanded its served market, and captured a significant share through branding, retail entry, and digital marketing strategies (Blank & Dorf, 2012; Maurya, 2012).

Ethical Considerations

All data utilized in this study was collected with **informed consent**. The founder of *The Raw.* voluntarily provided company reports and personal insights for academic purposes. Data from RCG mentorship frameworks and comparative cases have been referenced with discretion, ensuring no breach of confidentiality or third-party disclosure.

4. Findings

4.1 Strategic Mentorship and Program Engagement

The Raw.'s transformation is directly tied to structured mentorship under RichWorks Consulting Group (RCG). Founder Adibah Mazlan began her entrepreneurial journey in 2020 by enrolling in the **SPIRE Mentoring Program**, a 12-month fast-track initiative designed for entrepreneurs generating a minimum of RM30,000 in monthly sales. Mentorship programs such as SPIRE provide systematic guidance in **marketing, sales, leadership, operations, and compliance**, which are critical success factors for SMEs (St-Jean & Audet, 2012).

Within three months of joining SPIRE, The Raw. achieved a breakthrough, recording more than RM500,000 in cumulative sales. By the seventh month, the company surpassed RM1 million in revenue, providing early evidence of the firm's scalability potential. Similar outcomes have been observed in research, where structured entrepreneurial mentorship accelerates revenue growth and improves decision-making (Crisp & Cruz, 2009).

Encouraged by this achievement, Adibah transitioned in 2021 into **The Titan Program**, a more advanced 12-month program reserved for entrepreneurs with annual sales exceeding RM1 million. The Titan Program offered direct mentorship from Prof. Datuk Wira Dr. Azizan Osman, along with structured strategy reviews, one-on-one coaching, and continuous support from a Client Account Manager (CAM). Such mentorship intensity has been shown to enhance **entrepreneurial confidence, growth strategy formulation, and organizational performance** (Scillitoe & Chakrabarti, 2010).

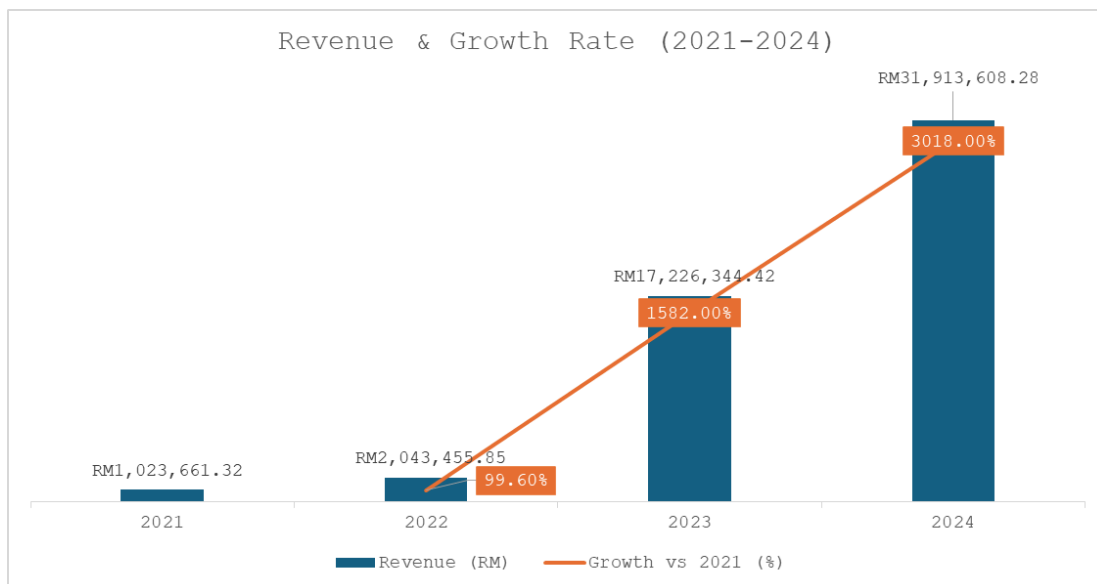


Figure 3: Revenue Growth of The Raw. (2021–2024)

- 2021: RM1,023,661.32
- 2022: RM2,043,455.85
- 2023: RM17,226,344.42
- 2024: RM31,913,608.28

This exponential growth illustrates how sustained mentorship produced **cumulative effects across program stages**. SPIRE equipped the founder with operational and marketing fundamentals, while The Titan facilitated **strategic scaling, professional leadership development, and retail expansion into Guardian and AEON Wellness by 2023**.

4.2 Experiential Learning in Entrepreneurial Growth

The founder's development aligns with **Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)**, which frames learning as a cyclical process of experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Under RCG programs, Adibah's entrepreneurial learning followed this structured pathway:

- **Concrete Experience:** Initial struggles of building a skincare brand without formal systems created the foundation of her lived experiences.
- **Reflective Observation:** Through SPIRE workshops and The Titan strategy reviews, she critically reflected on prior missteps such as inconsistent marketing and weak operational structures.
- **Abstract Conceptualisation:** Guided by RCG frameworks, Adibah absorbed tested strategies—from SOP creation to customer journey mapping—integrating them into a clearer growth roadmap.
- **Active Experimentation:** Supported by continuous coaching and CAM oversight, she implemented these strategies in real-time, improving live selling, branding, and ultimately achieving retail partnerships.

Iterating through this cycle enabled Adibah to evolve from an individual founder into a professional entrepreneur capable of managing multimillion-ringgit revenues. Prior studies confirm that mentorship-structured learning accelerates entrepreneurial adaptability and leadership development (Cope, 2005).

4.3 Market Sizing and Growth Potential (TAM–SAM–SOM)

The Raw.'s strategic journey can also be examined through the **TAM–SAM–SOM market framework**, commonly applied to entrepreneurial growth strategies (Maurya, 2012).

- **Total Addressable Market (TAM):** Malaysia's skincare industry is valued at over RM5 billion, driven by consumer health consciousness and demand for halal-certified products (Euromonitor International, 2023). This represented the full market opportunity

available to The Raw. nationally and regionally.

- **Serviceable Available Market (SAM):** Within this space, The Raw. positioned itself in the **premium-yet-affordable pharmacist-led skincare segment**, aligning with consumer trends favoring science-backed, transparent formulations (McKinsey & Company, 2021). RCG mentorship guided this positioning to balance affordability with credibility.
- **Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM):** Through SPIRE and The Titan mentoring, The Raw. expanded from niche online sales to **mass-market accessibility**, leveraging digital channels and securing physical presence in Guardian and AEON Wellness by 2023. This progression reflects how mentorship enables entrepreneurs to capture measurable market share within competitive retail landscapes (Blank & Dorf, 2012).

4.4 Brand Visibility and Engagement

The Raw.’s growth also manifested in **enhanced visibility and consumer engagement**, driven by its dual retail-digital strategy:

Dimension	Indicators	Outcome
Retail Presence	Guardian (400 outlets), AEON Wellness (59 stores)	Achieved nationwide retail distribution in 2023
Digital Channels	Shopee marketplace, Instagram, live educational streams	Sustained multi-channel sales presence
Brand Identity	Pharmacist-formulated, science-based, clean label	Enhanced trust and differentiation in skincare
Social Media Reach	Facebook: 3k followers; Instagram: 15.6k; TikTok: 341k	Strong community engagement, especially TikTok

Table 1: Brand Visibility and Engagement Metrics

RCG’s mentorship not only facilitated revenue growth but also encouraged Adibah to adopt **multi-channel storytelling and digital engagement strategies**. Research indicates that digital platforms such as TikTok have become essential for brand visibility among younger demographics in Asia (Statista, 2023). By leveraging both retail partnerships and digital platforms, The Raw. achieved brand amplification, credibility, and consumer trust.

4.5 Summary Interpretation

Overall, the case of *The Raw.* illustrates how a pharmacist-founded skincare brand achieved sustained national growth through a synergistic application of **structured mentorship, experiential learning, and strategic market positioning**.

The findings suggest:

- A resilient hybrid growth model combining online platforms, live selling, and offline retail distribution
- Strong leadership and entrepreneurial development under structured mentorship (SPIRE and The Titan programs)
- Strategic use of digital branding, storytelling, and pharmacist-led credibility to build consumer trust
- Ability to expand market space by targeting mid-tier skincare consumers with safe, pharmacist-formulated products, evaluated through the **TAM–SAM–SOM market framework** (Maurya, 2012)

This case presents a replicable model for other Malaysian beauty and wellness SMEs, particularly those seeking to **scale beyond online channels and enter national retail distribution** without competing solely on price.

Initial Challenges:

- Operating in a crowded skincare market with established multinational competitors
- Inconsistent early marketing and lack of structured operational systems
- Limited brand visibility and reach beyond niche online communities

Key Milestones:

- 2021: Surpassed RM1 million in revenue through SPIRE mentorship
- 2022: Doubled revenue to RM2 million, strengthening systems and operations
- 2023: Entered national retail distribution through Guardian and AEON Wellness while achieving RM17.2 million in sales
- 2024: Reached RM31.9 million in revenue with significant digital presence, including 341k TikTok followers, positioning the brand for potential regional expansion

This progression illustrates how *The Raw.* applied **Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory** (Kolb, 1984) to continuously transform entrepreneurial experience into organizational growth, while strategically sizing and capturing markets through the **TAM–SAM–SOM framework** (Maurya, 2012). Together, these perspectives highlight how structured mentorship, reflective learning,

and market-focused execution can collectively drive SME scalability in Malaysia's competitive skincare industry.

5. Growth Trajectory and Business Transformation

The Raw.'s journey reflects how structured mentorship under RichWorks Consulting Group (RCG) facilitated both entrepreneurial learning and market expansion. Its growth can be divided into four phases, understood through the lenses of **Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984)** and the **TAM-SAM-SOM framework (Maurya, 2012)**.

5.1 Phase 1: Foundation and Learning Cycle (2020–2021)

Adibah Mazlan entered the SPIRE Mentoring Program in 2020, marking the start of her structured entrepreneurial learning process. Her early challenges—limited systems, inconsistent marketing, and the uncertainty of scaling a pharmacist-founded skincare line—formed the **Concrete Experience**. Guided by workshops and peer reflections, she engaged in **Reflective Observation**, identifying gaps in branding and operations.

With mentorship, she transitioned into **Abstract Conceptualisation**, applying frameworks for SOPs, compliance, and customer journey mapping. Finally, through **Active Experimentation**, she implemented digital marketing and live selling strategies. This cycle enabled The Raw. to surpass RM1 million in revenue by 2021, validating the business model.

5.2 Phase 2: Market Penetration (2022)

In 2022, The Raw. shifted from small-scale online sales toward broader visibility. Mentorship under The Titan Program encouraged deeper experimentation—especially in live selling, Instagram campaigns, and TikTok branding.

This stage reflects **experiential iteration**, as Adibah refined strategies based on feedback and data. Simultaneously, The Raw. began strategically aligning within its serviceable available market (**SAM**): the mid-tier, pharmacist-formulated skincare segment. By narrowing focus against both mass-market and premium brands, The Raw. created a distinctive competitive position.

5.3 Phase 3: Revenue Acceleration and Retail Expansion (2023)

2023 marked exponential growth, with revenue surging to RM17.2 million. Entry into **Guardian and AEON Wellness** demonstrated a successful leap into the **Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM)**, capturing national shelf presence while maintaining a strong digital-first identity.

Through ELT, this phase reflected higher-order learning: The Raw. refined its digital engagement (341k TikTok followers) while testing retail distribution strategies. The mentorship environment allowed Adibah to consolidate lessons from earlier phases and scale effectively.

5.4 Phase 4: Consolidation and Scaling (2024)

By 2024, The Raw. achieved RM31.9 million in revenue, illustrating the compounding effect of mentorship and iterative learning. At this stage, ELT enabled Adibah to transition from entrepreneur to strategic leader, capable of managing multimillion-ringgit operations.

From a market-sizing perspective, The Raw. had effectively mapped its trajectory:

- **TAM:** Malaysia's multi-billion skincare industry.
- **SAM:** Premium yet affordable, pharmacist-formulated skincare niche.
- **SOM:** Expanded share through online communities, live selling, and nationwide retail partnerships.

This dual lens—**ELT guiding entrepreneurial capability** and **TAM–SAM–SOM clarifying growth opportunities**—shows how The Raw. transformed from a small digital brand into a nationally recognized skincare player with regional potential.

6. Discussion

The findings highlight three core contributions of RichWorks' mentorship model.

First, mentorship bridges the skill gap between technical expertise and entrepreneurial capability. In contexts such as skincare, where many founders originate from pharmacy or dermatology, technical mastery does not guarantee business success (Scillitoe & Chakrabarti, 2010). RCG's frameworks addressed the capability gap between technical expertise and business execution, validating global evidence that structured mentorship enhances entrepreneurial performance (St-Jean & Audet, 2012).

Second, experiential learning cycles accelerate entrepreneurial resilience. By embedding reflection, conceptualisation, and experimentation into program structures, RCG shortened the learning curve for participants. This echoes Kolb's (1984) proposition that transformative learning occurs when experience is systematically integrated into knowledge cycles. For SMEs in Malaysia, this accelerates adaptation in volatile markets, a challenge highlighted in World Bank (2020) reports.

Third, pragmatic market analysis drives focused growth. The disciplined application of TAM-SAM-SOM under mentorship prevented overestimation of opportunities and directed

founders toward attainable, profitable niches. This approach aligns with emerging research emphasising the role of realistic market sizing in SME scalability (Blank & Dorf, 2012).

While **The Raw.** illustrates how structured mentorship (e.g. RCG's SPIRE and Titan frameworks) catalyses the transformation of a technical founder through experiential learning and market alignment, **NOIR Health & Beauty**—also supported by RCG—offers a compelling parallel in Malaysia's skincare SME landscape. Founded in 2017 by Eriyca Baiduri ("Madammu"), NOIR quickly expanded from a home-based venture into a multi-award-winning premium halal brand. Within its first year, it generated millions of ringgit in revenue and scaled its team from 24 to over 1,500 members (NOIR Health & Beauty, 2023; NOIR Beauty World, 2023).

NOIR's approach leveraged an **entrepreneur-driven direct-selling model**, empowering a large network of micro-entrepreneurs through incubation, training, and digital sales infrastructure—commonly referred to as the *Usahawan NOIR System* (NOIR, 2023a; NOIR, 2023b). In contrast, The Raw.'s growth was propelled by **pharmacist-formulated credibility**, experiential learning, and formal mentorship focused on market penetration and brand positioning.

This comparison underscores how RCG's structured mentorship can accommodate **diverse business models**—from consumer trust through technical expertise (The Raw.) to rapid network-led scaling (NOIR). It also enhances generalisability: RCG's influence appears effective across different entrepreneurial archetypes, reinforcing the value of mentorship as both a **cognitive accelerant** and a **strategic enabler**.

These findings reinforce the importance of structured mentorship ecosystems in Malaysia's entrepreneurial landscape. With SMEs comprising 97% of Malaysian businesses and contributing 38.2% to GDP (SME Corp Malaysia, 2023), interventions such as RCG's mentorship are not peripheral but central to sustaining national economic growth.

7. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that structured mentorship, exemplified by RichWorks Consulting Group, acts as a catalyst for entrepreneurial growth in Malaysia's skincare industry. By enabling founders to integrate experiential learning, adopt realistic market sizing, and bridge the gap between technical expertise and business execution, mentorship transforms early-stage stagnation into scalable success.

The case of *The Raw.* illustrates this trajectory vividly, with mentorship facilitating a progression from RM100,000 to RM31.9M in revenue over four years. This validates the argument that

mentorship is not simply a supportive tool, but a strategic lever that directly influences growth trajectories in emerging industries such as clean beauty.

From a theoretical standpoint, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and the TAM-SAM-SOM framework provide robust lenses to understand this transformation. From a practical perspective, the study suggests that structured mentorship ecosystems can be replicated across other SME sectors, positioning consulting groups as critical enablers of Malaysia's entrepreneurial competitiveness.

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