

Service Quality as A Strategy for Improving School Competitive Advantage

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Abstract:

This paper aims to find out about increasing the competitive advantage of schools through optimizing service quality at RA Perwanida 2 Probolinggo. A qualitative method with a case study approach is used to understand the research objectives. Data collection techniques used are interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis used is theme analysis, which focuses on essential issues in understanding the case's complexity. The results of the study show that increasing the competitive advantage of schools through optimizing service quality is carried out through; transformative principal leadership, analyzing student service needs, building a quality culture consisting of several stages; 1) formulate standards of attitude and behavior of school residents; 2) formulate service standards; and 3) motivating school members, conducting regular in-service training, and providing rewards and punishments. This research has implications for the importance of service quality for schools to build public trust so that people will believe in the quality provided by schools.

Keywords: *Competitive Advantage, Service Quality, Leadership, Community*

Abstrak:

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tentang peningkatan competitive advantage sekolah melalui optimalisasi mutu layanan di RA Perwanida 2 Probolinggo. Metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus digunakan untuk memahami tujuan penelitian. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Adapun analisis data yang digunakan adalah dengan analisis tema, yaitu memfokuskan pada masalah penting dalam memahami kompleksitas kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan competitive advantage sekolah melalui optimalisasi mutu layanan dilakukan melalui; kepemimpinan kepala sekolah yang transformative, menganalisis kebutuhan layanan peserta didik, membangun budaya mutu yang terdiri dari beberapa tahap; 1) merumuskan standart sikap dan perilaku warga sekolah; 2) merumuskan standart layanan; dan 3) memotivasi warga sekolah, melakukan inservice training secara berkala, serta pemberian reward and

punishment. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi tentang pentingnya mutu layanan bagi sekolah untuk membangun kepercayaan publik, sehingga akan masyarakat percaya terhadap mutu yang diberikan oleh sekolah

Kata Kunci: *Competitive Advantage, Mutu Layanan, Kepemimpinan, Masyarakat*

INTRODUCTION

What is no longer taboo in this era is the issue of commercialization. Commercial function to relate benefits, business entities directly or indirectly to people's lives (Rumapea & Marlina, 2017). Many factors cause people to get caught up in the flow of commercialization. One of these factors is the mental pragmatism that pervades humans and society. A society inhabited by pragmatic humans automatically creates a pragmatic socio-cultural-political order. Money (cash value) underlies all attitudes and actions in pragmatic human consciousness. Human attitudes and actions will be said to be "right" and "useful" if they directly generate material money. That is why a person's "success measure," one's dignity, and existence depends on the amount of money one has.

The world of education cannot escape this logic. Almost all education management policies do not escape financial considerations. This is the reason for the commercialization of education supported by the expansion of global capitalism, which penetrates various aspects of life (Anwar, 2008). In that era, every organization, including education, needed a solid grip to survive and develop. The handle can be in the form of a character or an advantage that other educational institutions do not have. The educational institution can still survive and be in demand by the community. Educational institutions that are considered successful in winning the competition are institutions that can produce a generation of sound quality logically, mentally, and morally (Kholik & Laeli, 2020). Quality education is education that can carry out the maturation process of students' quality, which is developed by freeing students from ignorance, incompetence, powerlessness, and poor morals and faith (Roziqin & Rozaq, 2018).

To be able to achieve this quality education requires a superior educational process. Excellence can be in the form of output from an institution by its vision and mission. However, in reality, to continue to exist and excel, RA Perwanida 2 needs to increase its competitiveness by optimizing the quality of its services. The development of an increasingly competitive society requires every individual and community group to compete healthily. Likewise, madrasas must compete to win public trust by prioritizing service quality in their managerial and learning processes (Baharun, 2016). For this reason, RA Perwanida 2 tries to optimize the quality of its services, wherein by providing educational services to its customers, the efficiency and effectiveness of its management must continually be improved. Efficiency and effectiveness in services are part of the strategy in providing full service to customers; a service in an educational institution will be optimal if its implementation is by the goals, vision, and mission of the institution; in practice, the implementation or optimization of service quality in RA Perwanida 2 is analyzed

service needs first, then implement and prepare human resources who will take part in it, namely school residents. With this needs analysis, it will be seen that the target in the quality of the service to be implemented along with the stakeholders who will carry it out. With the optimal quality of service at RA Perwanida 2, it is hoped that it will be able to increase the institution's competitive advantage.

The research on a similar topic was carried out by Azwar Iskandar and stated that to increase competitive advantage; a strategy was needed (Iskandar, 2019). Fuchs & Fangpong (2021) also conducted the same research that stated that optimal service quality performance would impact customer satisfaction. With customer satisfaction, it will become a brand in itself for the institution. Branding image can increase competitive advantage, as research conducted by Roziqin (2018). From the several existing studies, researchers analyzed that in dealing with the problem of competitive advantage, no research mentions optimizing service quality as a solution. Therefore, the researcher takes this space and considers it necessary to optimize service quality to increase competitive advantage.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. The case study model focuses its research on a particular case, emphasizing exploration by extracting in-depth data. The type of research used is a single instrumental case study. This research is focused on optimizing service quality at RA Perwanida 2 to increase competitive advantage. Data collection methods used are observation and interviews. The sources in this study consisted of; 1) the head of RA Perwanida 2 Probolinggo; 2) the teacher of RA Perwanida 2 Probolinggo. The author attempted to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the conditions that existed at the research location regarding the object under study, which also stated the facts. A conclusion will be drawn related to these conditions and based on the existing facts. Data analysis is carried out concerning data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Competition or competition in the world of education at this time is a situation that cannot be avoided. With competition, educational institutions are directed at various threats and opportunities, both external and internal, to have a considerable influence on the sustainability of these educational institutions (Rosi et al., 2022). For this reason, every educational institution is always required to understand the desires and needs of consumers in the field and the various changes that exist in the educational environment. This is done so that educational institutions can compete with other educational institutions, especially in minimizing existing weaknesses and maximizing their strengths (Kholik & Laeli, 2020). For this reason, to increase competitive advantage, RA Perwanida 2 optimizes the quality of its services as well as possible.

Transformative Leadership

The leadership theory, which is considered effective or superior, is transformational leadership theory, which is a leadership approach by making efforts to change awareness, arouse enthusiasm, and inspire subordinates or members of the organization to expend extra effort in achieving organizational goals without feeling pressured or pressured (Grimm et al., 2021; Umar et al., 2021). A leader is said to have a transformational style if he can change the situation, change what is usually done, talk about lofty goals, and have reference values of freedom, justice, and equality. Transformational leaders will make subordinates see that the goals are more than just their interests (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). A pleasant work climate is a symbol of the application of transformational leadership at RA Perwanida 2. The work climate or atmosphere of teachers at RA Perwanida 2 is quite harmonious, open, and familial. This was conveyed by one of the teachers of RA Perwanida 2 "Um, yes, the culture is indeed familial. So that there is a high sense of ownership, not even afraid to try this and that. So the madrasa principal did provide space for us to prioritize a sense of ownership. Maybe when we already have a sense of ownership of the madrasa, we will do our best to make the madrasah proud".

Work climate is a set of organizational environments obtained according to the collective perception of its workers. According to him, the work climate has a vital role in improving work quality and performance (Cech et al., 2021). The work climate or teacher atmosphere at RA Perwanida 2 is harmonious, open, and family-friendly. This is as conveyed by one of the teachers there, who revealed that the leadership of the madrasah principal is not coercive on his subordinates; instead, it is fostering so that the conditions in the office are not stressful and more familial. For example, when there is a problem at school, the principal does not immediately give orders like this or that but instead is open and provides opportunities for each teacher or staff to propose solutions.

This certainly affects the work commitment of the teachers. One of the factors that measure the success of education in schools is teachers' performance because the teacher is one of the implementers of education that is indispensable (Hamsah et al., 2019). Teacher performance is a determining factor for student success in achieving achievement (Raupu et al., 2021). In addition to the input factors that determine the success of education, one of them is the process factor carried out by the teacher in teaching and learning. Good input does not automatically guarantee quality improvement.

Service Need Analysis

The next stage after setting the target of service quality is to analyze and formulate service needs at RA Perwanida 2. This needs analysis aims to categorize the criteria needed by schools. This is as stated by the Head of RA Perwanida 2 "The next step taken by the school is to analyze the service needs. One of the functions of this needs analysis is to map the things schools need to increase their competitive advantage." Service needs analysis must be considered in improving service quality This, of course, aims to find out the parts that need updating and the parts that need development.

The important thing in identifying service needs is to have a follow-up stage, such as incorporating these things into school design or planning (Cheng, 2021). The head of RA Perwanida 2 conveyed this in his interview "This analysis of service needs then becomes one way that requires a follow-up stage. So, it does not just stop at identifying needs; there must be a follow-up. Because if you analyze it, it will not impact school management."

The results of the analysis stage regarding the service are then not merely to be known but to be used as material in determining the following action that must be taken. In carrying out several formulations of a program or activity, it is often only up to the point of planning and extracting data. However, for the following process, it is still a mystery. This is then what must also be a taboo. When an analysis of services has been conducted, and data has been obtained, the school stakeholders must already have steps or follow-up actions. That way, the running program will not take up enough time.

Build A Quality Culture

Formulating Standards of Attitude and Behavior of School Citizens

Formulate standards of attitude and behavior-oriented toward high performance for school principals, administrative staff, teachers, and students (Sudrajat et al., 2020). In the era of globalization, leaders and principals will face increasingly complex and uncertain demands (Phillips et al., 2018; Zamroni et al., 2022). Such conditions require the managerial ability and skills of the head of RA to manage changes in the environment of the RA institution that have an impact on the existence of educational institutions through the effective leadership of the head of RA. Leaders in this era of globalization are required to have broad perceptions and insights in dealing with actual conditions in educational organizations, the ability to motivate educators and education personnel, the ability to control emotions, new skills in analyzing, the willingness and ability to involve all employees in empowering roles and functions. Willingness and ability to share power, delegate authority and provide control more effectively and efficiently (Widiastuti, 2021). In addition, according to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture, the head of early childhood institutions must have competencies that include personality competencies, social competencies, managerial competencies, entrepreneurial competencies, and supervisory competencies (Royani et al., 2020).

This was then integrated at RA Perwanida 2 through daily activities giving examples; when students came to school, the teachers dressed neatly to welcome students and greet each other, providing motivation and setting an example of tidiness and cleanliness. By running these programs, it is hoped that they can build a culture of discipline in children.

Formulating Service Standards

Formulate the best service standards that are adhered to by all school residents to improve the quality of service to school customers. As for what is meant by the best service standard, it includes elements of speed, accuracy, friendliness, responsiveness, and providing school quality assurance (Cahyani & Munajat, 2021).

Quality culture in education is implemented by improving services to meet the wishes and expectations of customers. Edward Sallis stated that customers in education are divided into three groups, namely; 1) Students who directly receive services; 2) Parents, governors, or student sponsors who have direct interests individually or institutionally; 3) Parties who have an essential role, although not directly like the government and society as a whole. The diversity of customers makes all educational institutions focus their attention more on the wishes of customers and develop mechanisms to respond to them (Calma & Dickson-Deane, 2020).

The setting of service standards at RA Perwanida 2 is by setting attitude indicators that must be possessed by the head of the RA, teachers, and also parents of students. For example, as stated by the head of RA Perwanida 2, in his interview, he stated that "Teachers must have a patient, competent, and professional attitude in carrying out their roles, especially RA teachers, who must reflect a patient and disciplined personality because it will be used as imitation material by RA students" (Purwanida, 2021).

In addition to these indicators, school stakeholders try to provide adequate facilities, such as completeness of teaching aids and media relevant to early childhood. This was conveyed by one of the teachers at RA Perwanida 2 in his interview as follows "Our effort is also to provide adequate facilities that later support children's programs or activities, which in this case is discipline. The service standard formulated here, which was prepared with the head of the RA, is to provide satisfaction to the parents of students or students".

The quality of service must be able to support the comfort and pleasure of students so that students can carry out their duties and obligations (Ragil et al., 2020). To ensure the successful implementation of the RA service program, it is necessary to have the support and active participation of the community, especially parents. Participation is a role or participation of parents in supporting the progress of early childhood education from design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Synergize and cooperation through participation can be shown in various forms, materially, morally, and attitudinal. The form of material participation can be done by paying for school administration or can donate some of the assets or materials owned; the form of participation with morals is by setting an example, good motivation for children to have enthusiasm for school, while the form of participation with attitude is to be able to show by a playful attitude in attending meetings, attending and in making APE for children's learning and being active in parenting and parenting classes. With the active participation of parents and teachers, they can have active two-way communication to minimize obstacles and problems that may occur.

Motivating School Residents

Motivate all school members to continuously improve quality to meet the requirements demanded by the environment and graduate users (society). In this stage, the institution takes comments or input from external customers as feedback in achieving good quality and makes a mistake as an instrument to do

the best in the future. This was conveyed by the head of RA Perwanida 2 in his interview as follows "We provide a forum for parents to provide input to the institution; this then becomes material that can motivate all school stakeholders in improving performance"

This is part of the school's efforts to implement a quality culture based on local wisdom. This is in line with the characteristics of excellent and quality educational institutions as conveyed by Ahmad Ali Riyadi in Sundari & Zahroh (2021); 1) schools focus on customers, both internal and external customers; 2) schools focus on efforts to prevent problems that arise. , with a commitment to work right from the start; 3) the school has an investment in human resources, so as to avoid various psychological damages that are very difficult to repair; 4) the school has a strategy to achieve quality, both at the leadership level, academic staff, and administrative staff; 5) schools manage or treat complaints as feedback to achieve quality and position mistakes as instruments to do right in the next future; 6) schools have policies in planning to achieve quality, both for the short, medium and long term long-term; 7) schools seek improvement processes by involving everyone in accordance with their primary tasks, functions and responsibilities; 8) schools encourage people to be seen as having creativity, being able to create quality and stimulating others to work with quality; 9) schools clarify roles and everyone's responsibilities, including clarity of direction of work vertically and horizontally; 10) the school has a clear strategy and evaluation criteria; 11) the school views or places the quality that has been achieved as a way to improve the quality of services further; 12) schools view quality as an integral part of work culture; 13) schools place continuous quality improvement as a must.

By making these activities a culture to build superior educational institutions, it is hoped that later students as internal customers of education will get the best service that can encourage them to develop their abilities so that what they desire can be achieved as expected. An educational institution is said to be of high quality if it can make customers satisfied. Talking about quality in education includes four qualities: input, process, output, and outcome. First, educational inputs are declared qualified if they have been processed. Second, the quality education process can create a vibrant, creative, and fun atmosphere. Third, graduates (output) are declared qualified if the learning outcomes in students' academic and non-academic fields are high. Fourth, the outcome is declared quality if the graduates are quickly absorbed in the world of work, the salary is reasonable, and all parties recognize the greatness of the graduates and are satisfied (Afandi et al., 2021).

Quality and superior education must be considered and strived to be achieved. Education will be in vain if the quality of the process and graduates is low. The professional community will determine the assessment and recognition of quality and superior education or not (Munif et al., 2021). In other words, the professional community will be the assessor (quality control) of existing educational institutions. Control is carried out on the graduates' ability in these educational institutions; teachers are valued by the community (Hakim, 2017).

Educational institutions can reach a superior stage if they are of high quality. In addition to quality, making an educational institution superior also requires commitment from all institutional stakeholders. To unite this commitment, the efforts made are to train stakeholders with various activities that support quality into a habit or a quality culture. With the implementation of a quality culture in which various activities are accustomed to educational institutions, these institutions will gradually arrive at a superior stage (Hildesheim & Sonntag, 2020). It is said to be superior and quality if an educational institution can satisfy customers. In this context, prominent educational institutions are institutions that are the majority of choices or beliefs by parents of students who can produce the best graduates. This is undoubtedly reflected in the vision, mission, academic and non-academic achievements, and learning activities in it.

Inservice Training

The fundamental problem in education is the lack of quality improvement, especially in human resources, especially for educators who are not optimal in developing their potential (Syaodih et al., 2021). The success of organizing education can be seen to what extent educators provide their role. To achieve the learning process, success or failure is determined by teachers who can carry out the teaching and learning process creatively, innovatively, and potentially. The teacher is a picture that will appear and be affected by the surrounding environment. The teacher is a noble job; the teacher is a challenging profession (Sundari & Zahroh, 2021). Teachers must be able to facilitate their students academically and their personality development. A teacher must prioritize his dedication in totality. A good teacher is a teacher who can enjoy his work, works hard, who cares about his students and can activate his students in learning (Wiguna, 2021). In particular, PAUD and RA-level education teachers play a vital role, especially in children's mental and emotional growth. Teachers must be able to provide stimulation for children's development to have optimal development. Before delegating their desires to students, a teacher must have creative, productive, competitive, and innovative abilities. If taught by an inspiring teacher, students will be able to translate what is experienced even though it is not related to the existing curriculum.

An inspiring teacher is not a teacher who can only teach the curriculum, but he can teach students to be able to think creatively, one of which is through training. By improving the quality of teachers through training indirectly, the Institute has made improvements and innovations in terms of service. The head of RA Perwanida 2 conveyed this in his interview "Services in schools include services for the learning process, so to increase competitiveness, we are trying to conduct training for teachers so that they can develop their abilities in this regard regarding learning. Improving or developing teachers' ability here will have an impact on the service of teachers here to customers, namely students. The more innovative and creative the teacher is, the greater the chance for customers to be satisfied, so the hope of increasing competitiveness will be even greater."



Workshop on being a cool and fun teacher

To support teachers' abilities and the academic abilities of teachers, it is also necessary to have non-academic abilities, such as training, workshops, seminars, and other scientific activities. The primary purpose of teacher education and training is to acquire the unique skills teachers need as figures for students. Besides that, an educator requires special abilities that must be possessed by someone who occupies the position of a teacher. As explained by one of the teachers of RA Perwanida 2, "We are involved in training activities and various seminars. As for the Institute's great hope, through this training delegation, teachers' knowledge will be wider; with the wider knowledge of teachers, it will be easier to be responsible for their profession. When a teacher is responsible, the service provided to his students will be better."

Reward and Punishment

The quality of its human resources will largely determine an organization's competitiveness. The ability to provide services to the public as an implementation of science and technology is a significant source of competitive advantage. The availability of professional human resources in every organization is a condition sine qua non: something that cannot be negotiated anymore. Human resources (HR) is the most critical factor in the effort to achieve organizational success. The main challenge faced by organizations today and in the future is how to prepare qualified, innovative, and highly creative human resources.

Laschinger (2004) found that job satisfaction significantly affected employee performance. Performance is a function and interaction between capability and innovation. Performance improvement can be encouraged through the provision of reinforcement where, according to behavioristic learning theory, the provision of rewards and punishments can strengthen and weaken positive or negative responses (Djuddah & Rosadi, 2020). The provision of rewards and punishments has proven effective in educational/learning practices and the world of work. Giving punishment weakens negative behavior while rewards will strengthen positive behaviour (Hidayat, 2017). In addition, the provision of rewards is expected to encourage the morale of the teachers by increasing the number of performance parameters that have been set so that they can understand the strengths and weaknesses of each in carrying out the learning process. The head of RA Perwanida 2 conveyed this in

his interview "Many have stated that reward and punishment are very effective; this also applies to teachers, not only to students. With rewards and punishments for teachers, it is hoped that they will be more enthusiastic in carrying out their responsibilities. As I said earlier, the more responsible a teacher is, the greater the chance for customers or students to get satisfaction."

As for the rewards for teachers or staff at RA Perwanida 2, apart from giving praise, they also give certificates of appreciation. This was conveyed by the head of RA Perwanida 2 in his interview as follows "Talking about the importance of a teacher's disciplined attitude, the level of teacher discipline in teaching can help increase student learning motivation, both in the role of motivator, supervisor, mentor, facilitator, to the evaluator. Well, there then the role of rewards or awards is vital to support the success of teachers. Efforts are made here by giving praise and certificates of appreciation"

Giving a reward or award is a form of positive action or treatment that responds to a behavior that can increase the possibility of repeating the behaviour (Fadlilah et al., 2021). In addition, the type of reward given at RA Perwanida 2 is respect. The Head of RA Perwanida 2 conveyed this in his interview "There are several rewards given to the teachers here, sis, such as praise, giving respect by crowning them as exemplary teachers, for example, and can also be supported by the existence of the certificate".

This praise is easiest to do by someone, both superiors, and partners, as a form of reward; this compliment is in words containing praise sentences, such as sound, excellent and excellent. However, it can also be in the form of motivational sentences. Then honors, namely in the form of coronation or awarding titles. Then a token of appreciation can be in goods or written form such as a certificate or certificate (Zuhdiah, 2019).

Punishment or punishment is an unpleasant or unwanted consequence resulting from doing certain behaviors. Punishment is a threat of punishment that aims to correct violators' employees, maintain applicable regulations and provide lessons to violators. The form of punishment imposed on teachers of RA Perwanida 2 is to provide exceptional guidance, such as supervision, but instead of discussion sessions visited directly by the Principal. The Head of RA conveyed this in his interview "Usually at the beginning there will be some kind of warning letter, then if it persists then I will go down directly for a real discussion. The goal is to find out what caused it like that, sis".

Punishment is also carried out through coaching, which is also carried out on teachers or staff who appear to have poor performance or achievements. The coaching can be in the form of participating in workshops or training. The head of RA Perwanida 2 conveyed this in his interview "Yes, there are also those who do not participate in workshops or training on teaching and teacher performance".

As a form of effort in conducting coaching that aims to develop the quality and quantity of educators in order to achieve the goals and objectives to be achieved by teachers, schools, and the community by carrying out various ways such as attending seminars, workshops, and other training related to the field of educator duties, in addition, development is also carried out in the form

of intelligence in creating a better learning process, this requires good knowledge skills, of course, a teacher must have so that learning objectives can be achieved. The ability of students can develop optimally (Zakiya & Nurhafizah, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation and exposure to the extended data above, it can be concluded that RA Perwanida 2 is one of the children's educational institutions that maintain its existence in customers' eyes by optimizing the quality of service in it. Several things have been carried out, including; 1) transformative leadership; 2) analysis of service needs; 3) building a quality culture which consists of several stages; (a) formulate standards of attitude and behavior for school residents, (b) formulate service standards and (c) motivate school members; 4) in-service training; and 5) provide rewards and punishments. Service quality is an option in this case because competition is closely related to customer satisfaction. If customer satisfaction has been met, the implication is that competitive advantage will be controlled. The limitation of this research is that it only focuses on efforts to optimize service quality to boost competitive advantage. For this reason, further research is needed on the careful management of optimizing service quality both at the same educational institution or at different educational institutions.

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