

Building Competitive Advantage of Educational Institutions through Nature Leadership

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the nature of leadership in building a competitive advantage in educational institutions to win the competition between institutions. The location of research was carried out at three academic institutions with different cultures but having the same strategy in advancing their educational institutions, which are located in the province of West Java. A qualitative approach to the type of case study is used to reveal phenomena in the field. Interviews, observations and documentation are used as media to collect data. Data analysis is done through data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The research results show that; the three institutions use the nature of leadership in building competitive advantage through precise and effective strategies. Strengthening commitment, work ethic, sheer effort and maintaining partnerships is an effective strategy for leadership in managing their organization. This research provides implications about the importance of competencies, skills and other complementary aspects that a leader must possess in managing his organization to be the best of some of his competitors.

Keywords: *Nature Leadership, Competitive Advantage, Organization*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang nature leadership dalam membangun competitive advantage pada Lembaga Pendidikan dengan tujuan untuk mememangkan persaingan antar lembaga. Tempat penelitian dilakukan pada tiga lembaga pendidikan yang berbeda kultur namun memiliki strategi yang sama dalam memajukan Lembaga pendidikannya yang terletak di propensi Jawa Barat. Pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kasus digunakan untuk mengungkap fenomena yang terjadi di lapangan. Interview, observasi dan dokumentasi dijadikan sebagai media untuk mengumpulkan data. Analisis datanya dilakukan melalui reduksi data, display data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa; ketiga lembaga tersebut menggunakan nature leadership dalam membangun competitive advantage melalui strategi yang jitu dan tepat guna. Penguatan komitmen, etos kerja, vertikal effort dan penguatan kemitraan merupakan strategi efektif pimpinan dalam menakhodai organisasinya. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi tentang pentingnya kompetensi, skill dan aspek komplementer lainnya yang harus dimiliki oleh seorang pemimpin dalam mengelola organisasinya guna menjadi yang terbaik dari beberapa pesaingnya.

Kata Kunci: *Nature Leadership, Keunggulan Kompetitif, Organisasi*

INTRODUCTION

In the current generation of globalization, the rapid development of various aspects, especially in the field of technology and information, has triggered competition in the global market (Ulfah et al., 2022). Amid solid global demands, phenomena at the local, national, regional and international levels in the last few decades have been the increasing development of higher or tertiary education. Every institution is required to improve quality and innovation and its services to compete in the global market, including educational institutions (Alamsyah, 2017; Banmairuroy et al., 2021; Molina et al., 2022).

Today, many educational institutions are scattered throughout the country, starting from the level of early childhood education, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools and even universities. This indicates that the level of appreciation for educational institutions will be higher, so public and private institutions must achieve service excellence to maintain their reputation and students obtain value from their participation in education (Najib & Ma'arif, 2018).

The rapid growth of educational institutions in recent years shows the dynamic development of the education sector. Increased awareness of education is one of the elements that encourage the growth and development of various educational institutions (Zamroni et al., 2021). However, competition for the quality of education is the primary assessment in developing educational institutions that are increasingly mushrooming in our environment (Jabbar & Hussin, 2019; Hanh et al., 2020). Educational institutions that have managed to grow well at this time are educational institutions that can develop competitive strategies to see the opportunities that exist besides always carrying out continuous development (Rozi, 2021; Liu, 2020).

The emergence of competition in the world of education is unavoidable. The development of Management Information Systems in educational institutions is urgently needed because, in the face of global competition, educational institutions are required to provide information more quickly, accurately and conveniently, which is part of the quality of service, so that it will become a competitive advantage. Institutions can achieve this if institutions can provide benefits or services according to customer needs so that customers become satisfied with the services provided, and users of educational services are also happy with the results obtained (Rahayu, 2020).

Referring to some of the above descriptions that continue to confront and provide opportunities for the growth and development of educational institutions, the existing educational institutions should be balanced with good quality to have a competitive advantage. Openness to interact with various strategic supports is essential in nature and is a tool to move faster and develop a competitive advantage (Rosalin, 2010).

Conceptually, advantage competitive action is a set of clear and directed competitive activities carried out repeatedly and continuously (Bashori, 2017; Permana et al., 2021). The advantage of competitive advantage must have customer value and product uniqueness (Banmairuoy et al., 2021). The competitive advantage strategy in education is innovation, creativity and new and updated ideas (González-Morales et al., 2020). As a result of globalization, technological innovation and the chaotic business environment and dramatic competition cause actions and reactions between schools to occur quickly; therefore, advantage competitive advantage is significant to note.

Competitive advantage or competitive advantage is an effort to improve the quality of the competitiveness of educational institutions so that they can become quality educational institutions and are in demand by students. So a competitive strategy is one of the leading solutions in viewing the competition of educational institutions (Aprianto et al., 2022).

Competitive advantage in educational institutions, namely innovation, creativity, quality of education, being a reference for interested students, and having different excellent programs to attract those who want a different and quality education (Aminah, 2022). Competitive advantage action is also an institutional movement that can be seen, specific, and initiated by an institution to improve its competitive position in academic and non-academic fields.

Based on the facts in the field, it was found that SMA IT Insan Prosperous Sumedang, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Alfauziyah Ngamprah, and SMK Negeri 1 Haurwangi, Cianjur Regency have competitive advantages when compared to the surrounding institutions. It is no secret that competition between institutions involves various elements, including digital media involvement, partnerships, and leading program involvement.

The results of observations in the field found that these three institutions have the same strategy, namely through cold hands handled by an innovative and visionary leader in advancing their institutions. The leader is a figure previously recruited by his cadres and well-educated to show good performance. This is what researchers call the nature of leadership. Through the hands and feet of natural leadership, the three institutions have the same innovation in dealing with the competitive advantages that exist in their institutions. The three institutions have uniqueness and several different advantages, but the strategies for solving problems are in the same category.

Afandi (2013), in his research, said that an institution needs a figure who can manage and organize the programs to be implemented; this figure is given the title of a natural leader, where the leader can provide direction and can set strategies for the progress of the institution. Nature leadership competence has the readiness to be able to influence, encourage, invite, guide, move, direct, and, if necessary, force people or groups to accept that influence and then make something that can help achieve a specific goal that has been set by involving environmental elements in the institution (Sari & Afriansyah, 2020). Nature leadership can provide a foundation to be able to provide the latest breakthroughs within the framework of learning programs, increasing the productivity of all human resources in one school environment and also being

able to develop ideas or ideas that can be useful for improving the quality of schools (Rizkita & Supriyanto, 2020).

A leader must continuously improve what is lacking in himself and his institution so that the institution's goals can influence and move subordinates to achieve the institution's goals, as emphasized by Sahabuddin (2022), who said that there is no doubt that success and institution or every group within an institution is highly dependent on the quality of leadership. School quality is also very dependent on the school management system. Schools with a poor management system will result in poor quality and vice versa. If the school management system is sound, the quality of the school will also be good (Engin, 2020; Saripudin et al., 2022).

From some of the research results, a can be drawn to a common thread that the nature of leadership is the most fundamental process in influencing individuals or groups of people to do something voluntarily so that the desired goals are achieved. In other words, in the leadership process, it is found that there is a leader function that gives influence which is adjusted to the casuistry of the environment, there are followers (members) who receive influence, and there is activity. There is a situation where this leadership takes place, especially in the face of competitive advantage.

This is the novelty of this research, in which researchers place more emphasis on the nature of leadership, which can build a competitive advantage in educational organizations so that they can win the competition between the surrounding educational institutions. The results of this research will undoubtedly contribute to developing educational institutions that focus on strengthening their leaders. Therefore, this research focuses on the nature of leadership in building the competitive advantage of educational institutions in West Java Province.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative case study type approach, where the researcher wants to reveal the meaning behind the nature of leadership in building competitive advantage in three institutions in West Java Province, namely; IT Insan Sejahtera High School, Sumedang Regency, 1 Haurwangi State Vocational School, Cianjur Regency, Alfauziyah Ngamprah Elementary School (MI), Bandung Regency.

The researcher conducted interviews with several informants, including leaders, teachers, parents and students, using a purposive technique to obtain accurate data. Furthermore, researchers made observations of various activities carried out by the Institute on the theme raised. To complete the research data, the researcher also documented various data and information obtained, both in the form of soft files and complex files.

After the data is obtained, the researcher collects the data to sort and select according to the research focus. Through data reduction, data will be obtained that are by the research focus (Milles & Huberman, 2014). Furthermore, the researcher presents the data according to the themes that have been obtained and determined. The final step is to conclude, as a final finding of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Institutional Commitment

As a leader, you must be able to emphasize the institution's commitment to its target members so that all actions taken by individuals in the institution remain by the corridors that have been determined and mutually agreed upon. Commitment can be interpreted as an attachment to doing something (Muis et al., 2018; Mittal et al., 2022; Alqudah et al., 2022). Commitment can be proven by taking sides or tendencies because they feel they have a bond with something, be it a relationship, promise, work, trust, activities, and so on (Suriansyah, 2014; Iskandar et al., 2017; Rabiul et al., 2022). Commitment describes the meaning of responsibility; commitment must be applied in institutions so that the components inside can work with full responsibility based on that commitment.

Based on interviews with informants, there is some information indicating that there is a strengthening of commitment in the three institutions.

Table 1. Interview Results from Three Institutions

No	Informant	Interview Results
1	AIF-1	Without commitment, consistency from an individual to continue to prioritize common interests will not materialize in this institution. Commitment is significant for the progress of an institution. Every time there is an opportunity, we, as the principal, always remind all school members to maintain self-commitment so that the initial goals that have been built can meet the desired target qualifications.
2	AIF-2	A good institution consists of highly committed people. The higher the value of commitment from each individual, the better the institution's achievement. Committed people always give their best for what they are committed to
3	AIF-3	By enforcing commitments, the individuals within the institution are more confident to stand firm by the initial commitment without being influenced by the outside world or the environment, which will dampen the spirit of the commitments that have been made.

Table 1 shows that these three institutions hold a high commitment principle in maximizing activities in their respective institutions because they believe that with firm commitment, the vision and mission they want to aim for will be more easily achieved.

One form of institutional commitment to this research was also shown by the SMA IT Insan Sejahtera Sumedang institution as stated by AIF-5, one of the teachers who said that all components of the school committed to strive together in creating a superior generation according to vision and mini, with a strong commitment. In carrying out the task, achieving the target is closer to success, especially in improving the quality and quality of existing education.

Commitment in the Institution is an attitude or behaviour shown by proving loyalty to achieve the institution's vision, mission, values and goals. This loyalty is formed because of mutual trust, emotional closeness, and alignment of expectations between members and the Institution (Pasolong, 2021). Therefore, a member strongly desires to remain an essential part of the institution. Institutional commitment has a powerful influence on the institution. Someone will identify an existing request, and he is motivated to make it happen, even

when the source of motivation is no longer there (Adhari, 2021).

Based on the field study, the commitments of the three institutions are almost the same, that is, to uphold whatever the vision and mission of the institutions are. In addition, commits to mobilizing all efforts and efforts in carrying out the tasks carried out to realize the institution's vision and mission so that the institution can continue to exist, especially in the field of competitive advantage, to strengthen the foundation of competition.

Leaders who can apply the commitment of the components involved in the institution, the leader has succeeded in forming solid teamwork. If you already have a solid team, then the institution's quality cannot be doubted; cohesiveness within the team will make it easier for competitive institutions to compete anytime and anywhere.

Institutional solid commitment produces several benefits for all parties, including; the members of the institution will work in totality; the initiative of the members of the institution for the progress of the institution is high so that it will give birth to many innovations, a dynamic work environment makes the atmosphere not monotonous or dull, the level of solidarity is high, both among members and between departments, to create an atmosphere that works for hand in hand, the institution becomes a place that is longed for, the institution develops fast because the people in it are happy and responsible, the members feel comfortable. Hence, they feel happy, and finally, the institution members are willing to do their best, even when resources are lacking.

Work ethic

In general, the work ethic is all good habits, including discipline, honesty, responsibility, diligence, and patience, which are based on ethics that must be carried out in the workplace (Handayati & Harsono, 2021). With a work ethic, as mentioned above, an employee will feel free of all work responsibilities, and the lousy impact will increase company productivity according to the desired target (Asmonah, 2019).

Performance in a leader's work is determined and influenced by his work ethic. Nurhaco et al. (2021) stated that the Work Ethic is a set of positive work behaviours rooted in strong awareness, fundamental beliefs, and a total commitment to an integral work paradigm. The indicators of the work ethic are: Full of responsibility, high work enthusiasm, disciplined, diligence and seriousness, and maintaining dignity and honour (Saleh & Utomo, 2018).

The teacher's strong work ethic is the three institutions' most visible character. The fighting spirit in advancing educational institutions is evident and real. Even with the minimum salary received, the number of reliable fighters, starting from the heads and teachers at the three institutions, is still very high. This strong work ethic is a unique characteristic that motivates people to choose these three institutions as their favourite schools.

AIF-7, as Chair of the Alfauziyah Ngamprah Madrasah Ibtidaiyah foundation, said that the fighting spirit of both school principals and teachers in advancing the institution made the foundation move to do positive things, especially in supporting infrastructure, which is an urgent need in improving the

quality and quality of education in institutions through collaboration with several companies in the school environment to become donors in completing infrastructure deficiencies.

Then AIF-1 as a teacher at SMK Negeri 1 Haurwangi said that; fighting spirit and a strong work ethic are shown by the discipline of the principal and teachers in fulfilling their responsibilities towards the institution by their respective responsibilities. 90% of teachers in this institution are very disciplined in carrying out their duties, helping each other between teachers, working together and respecting each other. When there are uncomfortable things, the head will be the facilitator and motivator in finding the best solution, carried out at the monthly deliberation meeting.

Through the work ethic shown by the leader, it will motivate subordinates or teachers to follow in the leader's footsteps, thereby making competitive advantage easier to achieve in this global competition because all components of the institution already have a very high sense of responsibility, especially in advancing more competitive institutions. From this, it can be seen that the competitive nature of leadership greatly influences subordinates to be more enthusiastic in carrying out their duties; in other words, leadership is not about who leads and is not a descendant of whom, but leaders who are competent in their field can exert a strong influence in developing the quality of educational institutions.

The embodiment of the work ethic that can be seen from this research institution as stated by AIF-3, which institutional leaders and teachers show at SMA IT Insan Sejahtera with the unlimited spirit of dedication of the head and teachers, we are very optimistic about producing reliable output for the nation's generation, print a generation that develops in every aspect of intelligence, so that students can improve their achievements better. This work ethic is also transmitted to the parents of students by collaborating in the field of student development in holding activities that involve parents of students.

The cohesiveness of leaders and teaching staff in these three institutions is evident in the high work ethic; leaders and their subordinates work hand in hand in building the institution's progress as seen from time discipline, hand in hand, cooperation and mutual support for the progress of the institution. The leaders in this institution are complete and have the same vision and mission even though they come from different castes; the three leaders in three different institutions are very competent in cultivating the institution's culture so that a positive work ethic can be transmitted to other employees.

With discipline and enthusiasm that is applied through a strong work ethic capable of establishing good cooperation with all components involved in an institution, a strong work ethic can shape the character of an institution that is a tough fighter in rocking the ship of the institution towards the ocean of achieving goals, namely competitive advantage.

Vertical Effort

In running an institution, it is not only the spiritual form that is honed and nurtured but also the inner form that needs to be honed and nurtured so that the

achievement of a goal can go as expected. Because, after all, it is an effort, the final determination lies in the destiny blessed by the Almighty to be achieved (Abdullah, 2015).

As stated by AIF-3, 'besides establishing ourselves with qualified knowledge in managing an institution, apart from involving an influential environment, we also draw closer to Allah so that the efforts we make in creating institutions with competitive advantages can run smoothly without any obstacles'.

Also emphasized by AIF-1, in calming the mind when experiencing much pressure, especially at work, we only rely on Allah SWT by involving all matters in the name of Allah, so since I founded the institution until now this institution has increasingly made it competitive with society, collaboration among colleagues or teams are more active and productive so from here we believe that the All-Knowing is involved in guiding us to develop this institution.

Furthermore, AIF-5 said that, in strengthening the determination of educators, parents and students, we involve vertical efforts in the form of joint *istighosah* every three months; in structured (annual) activities, this institution holds meetings between educators, parents and students. To discuss the school program's presentation, followed by *istighosah* and prayer together. With this strength, we get full support from student parents to continue to be committed to improving the institution's development from various aspects. This activity is also a form of institutional branding to the community so that the institution is increasingly in demand and shows its positive image.

However, an effort and plan that determines the end is the destiny of the owner of the will, namely Allah Azza Wajallah; using maximum effort and self-approach to the owner of power, there will be easy steps to achieve the goal, especially for educational institutions whose primary goal is to transfer knowledge to students who certainly need a sheer effort as a *dhohir* effort that will broaden the way in stimulating the knowledge itself. Vertical effort can provide broad thinking on the nature of leadership so that it is more optimistic in managing competitive advantage institutions so that they can break through tough competition in the global arena.

Strengthening Partnership

The substance of the partnership is interpreted as an effort to prioritize the importance of a shared understanding of problems, and the role of the community, agencies/institutions, and institutions that are partners can commit to mutually support activities for the benefit of both parties (Siregar, 2021). The definition of partnership has also been stated in Law Number 9 of 1995, which reads, "that partnership is a cooperation between small and medium businesses or with large businesses accompanied by guidance and development by medium or large businesses with the principle of mutual need, mutual strengthening and win-win solution".

Based on the results of partnership interviews conducted by these three institutions involving many partnership relationships that have existed for an extended period, ranging from 1 (one) year to 3 (three) years. The partnership

strategy for these three institutions is carried out so that the institutions continue to exist and are competitive in facing global competition. Through collaboration or partnerships, institutions can expand access to raising institutional branding, which will impact public trust in institutions.

Emphasized by AIF-7 which said that partnership in our institution is an attitude of carrying out cooperation which can be said to be characterized by long-term, formal relationships, and also a high-level collaboration, which is mutual trust, open, and of course, mutually beneficial in achieving the goals of the working relationship. The partnership expected by the institution is not a value-free partnership but a partnership that is still based on moral responsibility and healthy partnership ethics, which is in line with educational democracy.

According to Idrus, (2017), a partnership is a form of mutually beneficial cooperation between parties by placing both parties in an equal position. This partnership implies cooperation activities, namely the degree of effort of one party to fulfil the wishes of another party. Firmness, namely the degree of effort of a party to fulfil its desires. Collaboration, namely a situation where each party in the conflict is willing to sacrifice something, resulting in the sharing of burdens and benefits. Accommodating, namely, the willingness of one of the parties in the conflict to place the interests of his opponent above his own.

AIF-2 reveals that reliable leaders will not waste the opportunity to partner with anyone if it is seen as good for the progress of the institute; we become partners with various aspects that can support the development of student education because this partnership will provide more significant benefits in the long term because do not have to allocate significant investment funds to build and operate educational facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, with this partnership, something will change in education management, which is expected to provide significant benefits.

Several forms of implementation are related to increasing resources from partnerships, not just resources for teachers and staff who benefit significantly from partnerships that are undertaken with partners. Starting from coaching to improving the academic quality of students. Partnerships in the three institutions can be identified through several aspects, including the following;

Table 2. Forms of Partnerships in the Three Educational Institutions

No	Partnership Form	Description
1	Education	Collaborating with educational institutions such as schools below this level, this partnership is in the context of promoting institutions in institutions so that they can attract consumers, then partnerships with the nearest university or college in order to find solutions from research actions and to develop educational innovations for heads and teachers,
2	Social	Collaborate with components of community institutions that can have a branding impact on institutions, such as (partnerships with the police chief, police chief, firefighters, partnerships with villages, social services etc.)
3	Health	Collaborate with existing health centres within institutions such as village midwives, community health centres, psychologists etc

Table 2 is a partnership classification carried out by the three institutions in different fields. This partnership is a program of school leaders or principals to improve the quality of institutions from three aspects: education, social and health. With partnerships, the advantages of institutions or schools can remain superior to competitive advantages among other institutions.

CONCLUSION

Competitive advantage needs to be done in an institution to elevate the existence of the institution so that it is considered capable of being competitive with other institutions. Educational demands in the era of globalization, quality institutions with services that satisfy consumers. The excellent quality and service must be managed and planned to develop right on target, the correct figure in managing a program, namely the leader.

The involvement of Nature Leadership in Building Competitive Advantage is a suitable technique for managing institutions to develop optimally because the nature of leadership can adapt to the surrounding environment, making it easier for leaders to collaborate on their competencies with the environment around the institution.

Involving nature leadership in building competitive advantage in three institutions could run effectively and dynamically. However, this strategy can only be generalized to some existing institutions because it is adapted to the cultural climate of the institution and the environmental culture of each institution. This provides an opportunity for future researchers to study the same thing but more comprehensively, which can bring up new, more relevant content.

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