Implementation of Blue Ocean Strategy in Strengthening Madrasah Competitiveness

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Abstract:

Competition between educational institutions in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era is increasingly fierce, requiring every school/madrasah to undertake strategic efforts to develop sustainable excellence. Research at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 1 Kota Bandung (MIN 1 Bandung) aims to examine the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) as a strategic approach to strengthening the quality and competitiveness of madrasahs. The research used a qualitative case study approach with in-depth interviews with the madrasah principal, teachers, and the madrasah committee, participant observation, and documentation. The results show that MIN 1 Bandung implemented various value-innovation measures in the form of differentiation of Islamic-modern educational services, development of flagship programs, optimization of limited resources, and stakeholder synergy. The implementation of BOS supported an increase in student enrollment, achievement, and the image of the madrasah, despite still being hampered by limited funds and land. The implications of this research include recommendations for strengthening human resource capacity, utilizing technology, and institutionalization. the process of creating blue oceans.

INTRODUCTION

Basic education is the foundation for the competence of future generations. As the number of educational institutions and societal expectations for quality increase, educational institutions including madrasas face intense competition to attract students and demonstrate competitive advantage. Madrasah competitiveness is determined by teacher professionalism, curriculum, facilities, student achievement, and community involvement (Saykili, 2023; Thoyib et al., 2024). For public madrasas, competitiveness is not only a matter of the number of facilities, but also the creativity of the principal in designing innovative strategies. In this context, implementing creative

and value-oriented strategies is an urgent need for educational institutions seeking to maintain their relevance and organizational sustainability (Hasanah, 2023).

In this case, the main factor and determinant of the success of an educational institution lies in the effectiveness of the role and function of the principal in carrying out his leadership duties (Rozi et al., 2021; Hasanah, 2023; Baharun, 2024). He is responsible for creating policies that guide educational institutions to achieve their best achievements, create an effective learning environment, provide inspiration and motivation for the entire academic community, and communicate openly with all stakeholders (Winoto, 2022; Wei & Yin, 2024). Therefore, choosing the right strategy in managing educational institutions is crucial for creating sustainable excellence and competitiveness.

In many cases, school principals' efforts to improve educational quality often fall into the trap of conventional red ocean-oriented strategies, namely, the struggle for the same market through intensive competition with similar institutions. Instead of creating superiority, these efforts actually exhaust institutions by competing on the same parameters. Therefore, the Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) proposes the idea of creating new market space through value innovation, namely combining differentiation and cost efficiency so that competition becomes relatively irrelevant (Hamid Wahid et al., 2021; Knipp, 2024). The implementation of BOS in education is beginning to attract the attention of academics and practitioners. International studies Saykili (2023) show that BOS can be implemented in universities and schools to create sustainable excellence.

BOS, developed by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne, emphasizes the creation of new markets through value innovation. In the school context, BOS seeks to identify underserved educational needs and then offers innovative solutions relevant to current community needs (Vasiliene-Vasiliauskiene et al., 2020).

There are four main steps in implementing this strategy known as the Four Actions Framework, namely Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, and Create (El Iq Bali et al., 2020; Teixeira et al., 2021). These steps aim to create new value for customers and remove barriers to business development.

In its application in the world of education, these four steps can be explained as follows: first, Eliminate (Delete); This principle involves eliminating elements or activities that have been considered essential but do not provide significant added value for students, parents, or the community. For example, eliminating cumbersome and inefficient school administration practices, thereby simplifying the registration and student service processes and streamlining them. Second, Reduce (Reduce); Reducing elements that are still necessary but less significant creates efficiency and savings in costs. For example, reducing excessively dense and non-essential class hours allows students to focus more on core subjects and character development. Third, Raise (Increase); Enhancing high-value elements that are key strengths, even exceeding the standard values in education. For example, improving the quality of teaching through regular teacher training, or strengthening character development programs and student soft skills that will be needed for the future. Next, Create (Create); Creating new, previously unseen elements or activities that provide unique value or differentiate the school from competing schools. For example, creating project-based learning

programs, integrating digital technology into learning, or career counseling services not yet available at other schools.

In the education sector, BOS is interpreted as an institutional effort to overhaul service components, curriculum, and image building to create a value proposition that differentiates it from local competitors. Several empirical studies in the context of madrasahs and elementary and secondary schools in Indonesia provide preliminary evidence regarding the potential and challenges of BOS implementation in the education sector.

Carmo (2020) Madrasah Development from a Blue Ocean Strategy Perspective (MTs Al-Islam Joresan, Ponorogo). This research uses a case study method with a qualitative approach. It aims to describe the development of MTs Al-Islam Joresan through the implementation of BOS in increasing community interest. The focus of the analysis is related to the implementation of ERRC (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, Create), strategy curve (strategy canvas), divergence (moving away from competition) and institutional value motto/innovation. The results of the study indicate that the Madrasah has formulated a strategy and implemented the Eliminate, Reduce, Raise principle; but has not fully implemented the Create principle. The Madrasah shows divergence from competitors (building a different value curve) and has an attractive motto so that there is an increase in interest even amidst price competition.

El Iq Bali et al (2020) Implementation of Blue Ocean Strategy Management at LPI PG-RA Al-Muttaqin (Tasikmalaya). This study uses a case study method with a qualitative approach. It aims to describe the overview of the strategy management process at LPI PG-RA Al-Muttaqin in developing schools that are experiencing increasing interest. The study focused on analyzing the principles of BOS (institutional curve, divergence, ERRC), and their influence on branding (slogan/motto). The results of the study indicate that LPI Al-Muttaqin is seen as having implemented the principles of BOS: focusing on the institutional value curve, showing divergence from competitors, having an attractive slogan/brand ("School of Champions"), and having implemented the four principles of ERRC, thus giving rise to increased public interest in the institution.

Sanjani et al (2023) Implementation of Blue Ocean Strategy in Micro Secondary Education (Madrasah Aliyah Al-'Imaroh). This research uses a case study method with a qualitative approach. It aims to analyze the possibility and practice of implementing BOS at the secondary education level. The research focuses on the application of ERRC principles, strategy formulation (strategy canvas), and divergence steps to form a "new market space" in education. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of BOS is considered possible and has been carried out, where the institution has implemented ERRC principles and a differentiation strategy. This strategy helps madrasas maintain and increase their attractiveness (applicant interest) by prioritizing the uniqueness of their services/curriculum.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 1 Kota Bandung (MIN 1 Bandung) is a government-owned elementary educational institution and adheres to centralized regulations. However, in building its excellence and competitiveness, the role of the Madrasah Principal in implementing effective strategies is a determining factor in the institution's progress. This ensures that the Madrasah can continue to develop its various potentials

amidst centralized government policies and other obstacles.

This study aims to analyze the strategic steps implemented by the Principal of MIN Bandung to improve the quality and competitiveness of education as an effort to address the challenges of competition between educational institutions. The BOS analysis is used to illustrate the ERRC principles, divergence, and vision/motto developed by MIN 1 Bandung, so that it can develop sustainably amidst existing limitations.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach and Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to understand the meaning, dynamics, and strategies implemented by madrasas in real-world contexts rather than to test hypotheses or make statistical generalizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, the researcher functions as the primary instrument, directly involved in the processes of observation, interviewing, and documentation. The case study method was selected because the research focuses on a single institution Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 1 Bandung City allowing for an in-depth understanding of the strategic management applied by the madrasah principal in implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS). Kayyali (2023) the case study approach is appropriate for intensive and detailed exploration of a single phenomenon within its real-life setting.

Data Types and Sources

The data in this research consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the madrasah principal as the key informant, followed by snowball sampling involving teachers especially members of the madrasah development team committee members, and parents. In addition, the researcher conducted direct observations of the madrasah's learning activities, flagship programs, facilities, and school culture. Secondary data were collected from official madrasah documents such as the institution's vision and mission statements, the Madrasah Work Budget Plan (RKAM), teacher performance reports, student achievement records, photographs of activities, and administrative data from the 2024/2025 academic year. Supporting documents from previous academic years were also reviewed to provide contextual depth to the analysis.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques employed in this study consisted of observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly on the implementation of learning activities, the strategic roles of the madrasah principal, and the execution of the BOS program at MIN 1 Bandung City. This process focused on three main educational standards: content standards, educator and educational personnel standards, and graduate competency standards. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the madrasah principal, teachers, committee members, and parents. This flexible interview format allowed the researcher to obtain rich and detailed information while adapting to field dynamics (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Documentation complemented these techniques by analyzing official school documents, archives, and activity photos to substantiate and triangulate the findings from observations and interviews.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2019), which involves four interrelated stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the first stage, data were gathered from interviews, observations, and documentation. The next stage involved reducing the data by selecting, focusing, and summarizing essential information to identify emerging themes. The data were then presented in narrative, tabular, and visual forms to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn inductively from the analyzed data and verified through cross-checking among different data sources, supported by triangulation to ensure credibility and consistency.

Data Validity Test

To ensure the validity of the data, source triangulation was applied by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This triangulation process enhanced the credibility, reliability, and academic accountability of the research results, ensuring that the interpretations accurately reflected the realities of the field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

This study found that Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 1 Bandung City has implemented a number of innovative strategies in an effort to strengthen its competitiveness amidst the tight competition among elementary education institutions. The implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) is seen in the madrasah's efforts to create a competitive advantage that does not rely on conventional competition with other schools, but rather through the creation of a new space (blue ocean) based on uniqueness and innovation (Ye & Yuan, 2022; Iman & Alfaridli, 2025). 1) Implementation of ERRC Grid in Madrasah Strategy. The ERRC Grid (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, Create) framework was used to analyze the strategies implemented by MIN 1 Kota Bandung.

Based on the research findings, these strategies can be outlined as follows: first, Eliminate (Remove):Madrasahs are eliminating monotonous, lecture-based learning practices that tend to be passive. Instead, teachers are encouraged to use participatory and project-based methods. This aligns with the BOS orientation, which calls for the elimination of outdated, less relevant practices (Thoyib et al., 2024; Baharun et al., 2025). Second, Reduce (Reduce): Madrasas reduce rigid curriculum bureaucracy by providing teachers with innovative space to develop more creative and adaptive teaching tools. Third, Raise (Increase): The quality of learning is enhanced by strengthening standards for Quran memorization, religious literacy, and academic achievement. This improvement is supported by teacher training, regular tryouts, and the introduction of religious programs. Next, Create (Create): Madrasahs have created new programs, such as Market Day Entrepreneurship, based on Project-Based Learning

(PjBL). This program trains students in entrepreneurship from an early age while fostering values of independence, creativity, and Islamic morals.

The implementation of the ERRC confirms that MIN 1 Kota Bandung is able to transform challenges into opportunities through strategic innovation (Table 1.1). This aligns with Kim and Mauborgne's (2017) findings that educational organizations can emerge from the "red ocean" of competition by creating new value not offered by competitors.

Table 1. Four Actions Framework (ERRC) MIN 1 Bandung

ERRC Aspects	Implementation at MIN 1 Bandung City
Eliminate (Remove)	Eliminate the monotonous lecture method, replace it with participatory and PjBL methods.
Reduce (Reduce)	Reducing rigid curriculum bureaucracy, providing space for teacher innovation.
Raise (Increase)	Improving the standards of Quran memorization, Quranic literacy, academic and non-academic achievements.
Create (Create)	Creating Market Day Entrepreneurship programs, student work exhibitions, and green school programs.

Innovation and Differentiation of Educational Programs

Differentiation is a crucial factor in BOS because it allows madrasas to stand out from similar educational institutions. MIN 1 Kota Bandung implemented an innovative religious curriculum based on IMTAQ-IPTEK, emphasizing the integration of science and spiritual empowerment (Sanga & Wangdra, 2023; Williams & Tierney, 2023).

Some innovative programs include: 1) Quranic Memorization and Literacy 2.0, which not only emphasizes memorization, but also understanding the meaning of verses and social implementation (for example, creating a charity program after understanding QS. al-Ma'un). 2) Student work exhibition, both in the fields of art, literacy, and science, which are a place to show creativity and institutional branding. 3) Strengthening extracurricular activities, including science clubs, sports, and Islamic arts (marawis, qasidah, MTQ, MHQ).

With this innovation, MIN 1 competes not only on the level of physical facilities which are relatively limited but also creates a space for differentiation through the quality of educational services. This aligns with Porter's (1996) view that differentiation is an effective strategy for winning in a competitive environment.

Madrasah Motto and Branding

The vision of MIN 1 Kota Bandung is "To produce graduates with noble character, high achievement, and environmental awareness." This vision is not just a formal document, but has been internalized as a motto and branding that distinguishes the madrasah from other schools.

This branding is strengthened through: 1) Green school program, which fosters a culture of environmental care. 2) Religious culture, through the habituation of daily worship, memorization, and moral development. 3) Social activities, which involves students in community care programs.

This branding strategy effectively enhanced the institution's image, as evidenced by the consistently higher number of new applicants from 2017 to 2025 (Rita Fitria, 2024; Abubakari, 2025). Thus, religious-ecological branding became a unique value proposition (UVP) for MIN 1 in the primary education market.

Strengthening Competitiveness through Human Resources and Collaboration

MIN 1 Kota Bandung's competitive strength stems not only from its programs, but also from the quality of its human resources (HR) and social support. Teachers are continuously encouraged to improve their competencies through workshops, Teacher Working Groups (KKG), and independent curriculum-based training.

Furthermore, collaboration with parents and the madrasah committee provides social capital that strengthens the institution's position. Parents' active participation in alternative funding (education donations, madrasah cooperatives, and external partnerships) demonstrates the high level of public trust in the institution.

This concept aligns with the resource-based view theory Hadi (2020), which posits that competitive advantage stems from unique, valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate resources. Madrasahs' human resources and social capital are strategic assets that cannot be easily replicated by other schools. Table 1.2 illustrates a comparison of competition factors between MIN 1 Bandung and other madrasas/schools using the Blue Ocean Strategy framework (Albab, 2021).

Table 1. Comparison of MIN Bandung's Competition Factors

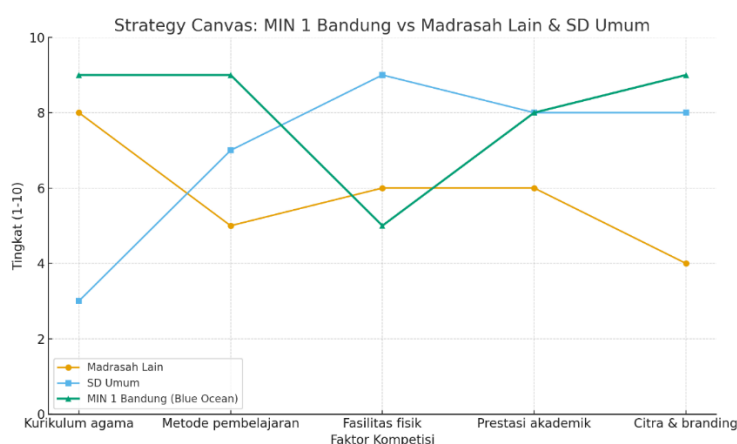| Competition Factors	Other Madrasahs	Public Elementary School	MIN 1 Bandung (Blue Ocean)
Religious curriculum	Tall	Low	High + STEM Integration
Learning methods	Conventional	Varied	Innovative (Project-based, digital)
Physical facilities	Currently	Tall	Limited but creative
Academic achievement	Currently	Tall	Significant increase
Image & branding	Low	Tall	Strengthening through Islamic-modern innovation

Figure 1. MIN 1 Bandung Canvas Strategy

Impact of Implementing Blue Ocean Strategy

The impact of the implementation of BOS at MIN 1 Bandung City can be detailed as follows: 1) Public trust increases, proven by the surge in new applicants exceeding

class capacity. 2) Academic and non-academic reputation is strengthening, with student achievements at city to national levels. 3) Transparent internal management, through the implementation of accountable e-RKAM in BOS management. 4) A superior image is formed, because graduates have a religious profile, are high achievers, and have an independent character.

Thus, the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy in this madrasah has succeeded in shifting the focus from merely surviving in competition (survival mode) to creating new value (value innovation), which has an impact on improving the reputation, competitiveness, and sustainability of the institution.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 1 Bandung City has successfully implemented the principles of the Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) as a framework for strengthening institutional competitiveness in the increasingly dynamic field of elementary education. Through the application of the ERRC Grid (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, Create), the madrasah was able to move beyond conventional competition and instead create new value propositions that distinguish it from other institutions (Moh Mundzir et al., 2023; Sahrul et al., 2024). The elimination of monotonous lecture-based learning and the introduction of participatory and project-based learning (PjBL) demonstrate a paradigm shift in the teaching process. This transformation aligns with Kim and Mauborgne's (2015) assertion that innovation in education must begin by identifying and removing elements that no longer add value. By reducing rigid bureaucracy and allowing teachers creative freedom, the madrasah fosters a flexible learning ecosystem that is responsive to students' needs and environmental changes (Luneto et al., 2022; Zakaria et al., 2023; Alfaridli et al., 2024).

Innovation and differentiation are central to MIN 1 Bandung's success in implementing BOS. The madrasah's innovative programs such as Market Day Entrepreneurship, Quranic Memorization and Literacy 2.0, and student exhibitions embody the integration of intellectual, spiritual, and practical learning. This approach not only cultivates students' cognitive and creative abilities but also embeds Islamic moral values in their daily activities. In line with Porter's (1996) differentiation strategy, MIN 1 Bandung has proven that institutions with limited physical resources can still compete effectively through innovation in educational services. The IMTAQ-IPTEK-based curriculum strengthens the integration between science and spirituality, allowing students to see religion not merely as a subject of study, but as a guiding principle in applying knowledge for social benefit (Subaidi et al., 2023).

Branding and institutional identity also play an essential role in MIN 1 Bandung's strategic success. By internalizing the vision "to produce graduates with noble character, high achievement, and environmental awareness," the madrasah has created a distinctive brand that combines religiosity and ecological awareness. The implementation of the Green School program, religious culture activities, and community service initiatives has not only enhanced the school's reputation but also increased public trust, as evidenced by the continuous rise in new student enrollment (Petrosyants et al., 2020; Mundiri et al., 2021). This reflects an effective application of

educational marketing and strategic positioning, where institutional identity becomes a competitive advantage in itself. Such branding strategies affirm that the value of education lies not only in academic excellence but also in the cultivation of ethical, spiritual, and environmental awareness among students.

The competitive advantage of MIN 1 Bandung is further strengthened by its human resources and collaborative culture. Continuous professional development for teachers through workshops and training enhances pedagogical competence and innovation capacity, while active collaboration with parents and the school committee fosters strong social capital. This aligns with Barney's (1991) resource-based view theory, which posits that sustainable advantage derives from valuable, rare, and inimitable resources in this case, the teachers' expertise and community trust (Balanaieva et al., 2020; Julhadi & Ritonga, 2023). The successful implementation of BOS at MIN 1 Bandung has shifted the institution's orientation from mere survival to value innovation, creating a balance between quality, spirituality, and sustainability. As a result, the madrasah not only stands as a competitive educational institution but also as a model of how strategic innovation rooted in Islamic values can drive long-term institutional excellence.

CONCLUSION

Research on the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) in strengthening the competitiveness of madrasas at MIN 1 Bandung City shows that this educational institution has succeeded in creating competitive advantages through innovation, differentiation, and collaboration strategies.

FirstThe implementation of the ERRC Grid (Eliminate, Reduce, Raise, Create) has proven effective. Madrasas have eliminated monotonous conventional learning methods, reduced rigid curriculum bureaucracy, improved memorization standards, Quranic literacy, and academic achievement, and created new programs such as Market Day Entrepreneurship, student work exhibitions, and green school initiatives.

Second, innovation and differentiation strategies demonstrate that MIN 1 competes not merely on limited physical facilities, but rather emphasizes its uniqueness through an IMTAQ-IPTEK-based curriculum, integration of religious programs with modern learning, and development of academic and non-academic extracurricular activities. This affirms the madrasah's position as an institution capable of providing added value compared to similar schools.

Third, branding, and the motto "Cultivating graduates with noble character, achievement, and environmental awareness" serve as a strong identity strategy for increasing public trust. The increasing number of enrollees, which consistently exceeds class capacity, demonstrates that the madrasah's vision and mission have been effectively internalized into the organizational culture.

FourthStrengthening competitiveness through human resources and collaboration is reflected in teachers' commitment to improving competency through training and workshops, as well as the active participation of parents and committee members in alternative funding and social support. This social capital is a unique strength that is difficult for other institutions to replicate.

With these strategies, the impacts achieved by MIN 1 Kota Bandung include increased public trust, continued development of academic and non-academic achievements, more transparent management, and the formation of a superior image in the eyes of the public.

Overall, the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy at MIN 1 Kota Bandung successfully shifted the focus from conventional competition to the creation of new value innovation. This demonstrates that BOS can serve as a relevant strategic framework for madrasas in facing the challenges of modern educational competition, while simultaneously strengthening their role as religious, innovative, and highly competitive educational institutions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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