

Implementation of Quality Improvement Strategies and Competitiveness in Islamic Educational Institutions

Muhammad Fadhli

IAIN Lhokseumawe, Lhokseumawe
fadhlikhan88@gmail.com

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Abstract: The increasing public interest in Islamic Education Institutions has not been followed by efforts to improve the quality of Islamic Education Institutions (IEI). The quality of IEI will have an impact on its competitiveness. This research uses a qualitative method of literature type. The data collection technique starts from mapping, analyzing, and evaluating data from primary sources in the form of scholars' results of previous studies. The findings in this study are four main things that must be achieved or maintained by Islamic educational institutions to improve quality and have competitiveness: 1) Islamic educational institutions must have a high quality that follows the wishes of parents, government, and society in general. 2) Islamic educational institutions need to pay attention to and examine every customer response from Islamic educational institutions because the main goal is to provide satisfaction to customers of Islamic educational institutions (students, parents, government, and the world works). 3) Innovation is necessary because Islamic educational institutions can respond to changing times. Islamic education institutions must continue to innovate, including institutional innovation and management, curriculum innovation, learning innovation, innovation of learning facilities and infrastructure, and innovation by educators and education staff. 4) effectiveness and efficiency is the estuary of the management process.

Keywords: *Strategy, Education Quality, Competitiveness, IEI*

supposedly, educational institutions that use the name of Islam (pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic schools) are institutions that have the best quality. Because Islamic educational institutions have the perfect guidelines and guidance, the Qur'an and hadith, especially in the Indonesian context where most of the population is Muslim, Islamic educational institutions should be the foremost choice of society in educating their children.

A quality of IEI has a vision, mission, goals, good program, effectiveness, productivity, accountability, relevant curriculum, appropriate facilities, and infrastructure (Ab. Samad et al., 2014; Malaikosa, 2021). Having an academic atmosphere that makes the school environment more conducive, both internal and external. Able to achieve the main target of Islamic educational institutions, to make graduates capable of skilled service to Allah (Fadhli, 2018).

IEI that has been able to improve its quality will have competitiveness. The growth and development of new educational institutions make the competition more intense. For that, every institution is forced to deal with other institutions in the arena of competition. This competition is basically to attract education stakeholders. This increase in stakeholder attractiveness is evidenced by the large number of registrants for the MTs Negeri Kota Medan. MTs Negeri 2 Medan, for example, registrants in 2021 who registered 609 prospective students and only 389 students declared passed.

But in reality today, Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia are still in a condition that has not provided complete trust for Muslims themselves. Some Islamic educational institutions such as MAN

IC and Islamic Schools, which are of reasonably good quality, are still far behind in number compared to Islamic educational institutions of low quality. Some of the problems of Islamic educational institutions include inadequate facilities and infrastructure, low teacher competence, leadership that is not yet transformative, a curriculum that is not relevant, etc.

Various strategic efforts are needed to overcome these problems in Islamic educational institutions. Islamic educational institutions require strategic steps in improving their quality towards increasing competitiveness (Muneeb et al., 2020). Implementing strategic management is an important reference for every IEI to achieve competitiveness.

The literature establishes that education drives economic performance, but the extent to which education is linked to a country's competitiveness has not been empirically tested. Our study analyzed Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) data from 63 countries to ascertain the role of education in explaining a country's competitiveness. Strong correlations were found between reading and science (53% sharing the variance) and mathematics (50%). Educational achievement explains 54% of competitiveness (Baumann & Winzar, 2016)

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method is a library method where the process of obtaining data uses steps to collect information from previous studies. As research starts from generalized conceptual ideas to more specific academic conclusions, the researcher continuously tracks various sources of information while documenting when and where the material has been found (Allen, 2017). The secondary sources of this research are scholars' results of previous studies. Then, the data is mapped/described, and then the data is analyzed thoroughly. Finally, the data is evaluated to find and select primary sources in the study of strategy, Education Quality, Competitiveness, and IEI.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Quality Concept of Islamic Educational Institutions

Producing quality products is the goal of all organizations, both for-profit and non-profit. The process of getting good quality is not an easy thing. In-depth studies are needed to produce a quality product. Before knowing the process to produce quality products, it is necessary to understand the meaning of quality itself.

Defining quality is not easy. Many quality experts have different interpretations of it. Garvin in Foster found that most definitions of quality are transcendent, product-based, usage-based, manufacturing-based, or value-based. For more details, each part of the definition is described as follows: Transcendent: A quality is something that is intuitively understood but almost impossible to express, such as beauty or love that is difficult to define. Product-based: Quality is found in the components and attributes of a product. User-based: If the customer is satisfied, the product has a good quality. Manufacturing-based: If the product conforms to the design specifications, it has a good quality. Value-based: If a product is perceived as providing value and making it valuable, it has a good quality (Foster, 2013).

Ishikawa also provides the following definitions: (1) quality and customer satisfaction are the same things, and (2) quality is a broad concept that goes beyond just product quality to also include the quality of people, processes, and every other aspect of the organization (Goetsch & Davis, 2014). Ishikawa's definition has two concentrations: quality goes hand in hand with customer satisfaction, and quality also includes the quality of people, processes, and every other aspect of the organization. In line with Ishikawa, Oakland defines high quality is meeting the customer requirements, and this is not restricted to the functional characteristics of the product or service (Oakland, 2014). Quality meets customer requirements, and this is not limited to the functional characteristics of the product or service. Meanwhile, Goetsch and Davis explained that quality is a dynamic state associated with products, services, people, processes, and environments that meets or exceeds expectations and helps produce

superior value (Goetsch & Davis, 2014)”. Quality, whether a product or service, must demonstrate conformity to meet or exceed usage expectations (Mitra, 2021) Quality is the dynamic state associated with products, services, people, processes, and environments that meet or exceed expectations and help generate excellence.

Some of the definitions above prove that defining quality is not easy. However, there is no need to dwell on the problem of definition. If we examine more in some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that quality is a goal to meet customer needs and desires. These needs are obtained through a process carried out by people in the organization.

There is no generally accepted definition of quality. Still, some similarities between the quality concepts are: 1) quality meets or even exceeds customer expectations, 2) quality covers products, services, people, processes, and the environment, 3) quality is a dynamic state following certain situations and conditions.

Summers provides several job descriptions that can achieve the following qualities (Summers, 2018):

Table 1. Quality-Related Work

No	Job	Description
1	Analyst	Supervising and coordinating organizational data and services used for decision-making. Usually more quantitative and statistical.
2	Auditor	Reviewing and making a report about internal and external processes that are critical to achieving organizational effectiveness.
3	Consultant	Providing advice and training on administrative and technical aspects. Developing and maintaining the knowledge and expertise of organizational members to achieve quality.
4	Coordinator	Monitoring and reviewing organizational programs such as Six Sigma or ISO. Ensure that appropriate data related to the organization’s quality improvement efforts are collected, organized, analyzed, reviewed, and used to continue the organization’s continuous quality.
5	Educator/ instructor	Responsible for training and instructing others in the use of quality tools and techniques. Inspect and report on the quality of products, processes, services, and materials to ensure conformance to specifications desired by customers.
6	Manager	Influence organizational members to work with good processes and produce products and services that meet the expectations set by their customers.

The quality improvement movement in education can be late compared to the quality movement in profit organizations. There are some doubts from some academics and educational practitioners in implementing the quality movement from profit institutions to educational institutions. Educational managers must be willing and able to make the quality movement a profit institution by modifying it so that it is suitable for educational institutions to produce the effectiveness of educational institutions.

Understanding the quality of education should not be narrowed down to the level of student achievement only. However, it must be understood comprehensively on the management of education (financing, equity, the role of government and society, and others) to achieve the effectiveness and efficiency of education (Eri Kusumaningrum et al., 2017)

Similar to the concept of quality in profit organizations, the purpose of improving the quality of education is also to achieve customer satisfaction. Sagala stated that the quality of education is the overall characteristic of educational services internally and externally that shows its ability to satisfy the expected or implied needs, including educational inputs, processes, and outputs (Sagala, 2010).

Because the quality of education is also related to customers’ quality, it is necessary to identify who the education customers are. Sallis provides education customer identification to four categories: 1) primary customers; secondary customers (second customers); tertiary customers (third customers); internal customers (internal customers) (Sallis, 2002). For more details, it is described as follows:

Main customers are people who directly receive services (students); Second customer. These customers such as parents, local governments, sponsors, and all those who have a direct share in the education of certain individuals or certain institutions; Third customer. Customers who have indirect but significant concerns in education, business, industry, government, and society as a whole; Internal customers. Customers who are employees (teachers and education personnel) of the institution and who have a substantial stake in the success of the organization.

Because the initial concept of quality education is customer satisfaction, following the opinion of Sallis above, the quality of education must be able to achieve the satisfaction of main customers, second customers, third customers, and internal customers. Various efforts and strategies undertaken by educational institutions must be centered on customer satisfaction. Support from various parties is also an important thing in achieving this quality.

Concept of Competitiveness in Islamic Educational Institutions

Leaders will not make decisions without providing an analysis that these decisions are important for the competitiveness of their institutions. Organizational institutions will compete with each other for the attention and trust of customers. Sometimes the competition will not occur in a “fair play” manner; therefore, the most efficient and effective institution will win the competition. Competition between institutions/organizations will continue until other organizations are closed and then replaced by other institutions as new competitors.

Competitiveness is the advantage achieved over competitors, where the organizational advantage is greater than the average profit of similar organizations (Hill et al., 2015). Meanwhile Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson stated that a firm has a competitive advantage “when it implements a strategy that creates superior value for customers and that its competitors are unable to duplicate or find too costly to imitate (Hitt et al., 2011)”. A competitive organization will implement a strategy that can create superior value for customers that its competitors cannot imitate.

Highly competitive competitiveness within an organization must be able to identify how to gain a “competitive advantage” or “differential advantage” over other organizations offering similar programs/goods or even services. This competitive advantage will give the organization the confidence of its customers to want to be part of the organization.

Organizational excellence must be created through complex planning and strategies to create competitiveness. The leader is most expected to be present in these efforts to create competitiveness. To develop an effective strategy, company leaders must 1) understand the competitive arena and sources of advantage, 2) anticipate opposing moves, 3) know their options and competitiveness, and 4) analyze the potential impact of existing strategies (Sampurno, 2013).

Then Rothaermel explained the importance of competitiveness as a superior performance from other competitors in the same field; organizational leaders must be able to complete two essential tasks: Accurately assess the performance of their firm. Compare and benchmark their firm’s performance to other competitors in the same industry or against the industry average (Rothaemel, 2017).

Competitiveness is the ability of an organization to have and show better, faster, or more meaningful results than other similar organizations. In Islamic education, the competitors are not only general educational institutions but also other Islamic educational institutions. Even fellow Islamic educational institutions will compete more tightly because they have the same market. For that, every educational institution must have the best strategies to achieve excellence and competitive.

Implementation of IEI’s Quality and Competitiveness Improvement Strategy

Every strategy taken by Islamic educational institutions aims to improve the quality and create competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions themselves. The initial stage of strategy formation is to determine the current condition of Islamic educational institutions. There are three steps: 1) assessing the school’s internal resources and their use, 2) assessing external influences in the school, and 3)

implementing the applicable internal school culture (Fidler, 2002).

David and David add four important aspects in achieving and maintaining an organization's competitiveness. The four aspects are: 1) determining a clear vision and mission, formulating strategies, implementing strategies and evaluating strategies, and monitoring results (David & David, 2015). For more details, it can be illustrated as follows:



Figure 1. How to Achieve and Maintain Competitiveness

The picture above provides a guide for increasing the competitiveness of the organization. The four steps can be described as follows:

Defining vision and mission

The first step that educational institutions must take in achieving and gaining competitiveness is to establish a clear vision and mission. Various consensus shows that an organization's vision is a valuable thing for the organization to have. Vision and mission are the basic steps for an organization to move for that vision, and the mission must be able to describe the future desires of the organization.

Leaders in organizations, including educational organizations, in developing organizations, one of the essential aspects is creating a vision. Even to measure high school performance is if the principal can explain the vision, mission, and goals in helping students to learn (Kurland et al., 2010; Mombourquette, 2017). In addition to school organizational leaders, from the perspective of other organizational members, it turns out that vision also contributes significantly to employee performance (Slåtten et al., 2021).

Strategy Formulation

The second step is strategy formulation. Strategy formulation is the initial action of strategy. This activity is carried out by collecting, analyzing, and prioritizing data using a matrix; to establish a superior strategic plan. Strategy formulation is part of the priority and is an essential element of organizational success (Mashingaidze et al., 2021). Strategy formulation has a positive and significant contribution to improving organizational performance (Borrero et al., 2020).

Strategy Implementation

The third step is strategy implementation. This step is the most crucial in realizing the organization's strategy and a potential source of competitive advantage (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). If not followed by good implementation, careful planning will certainly not produce good output. The reason for the ineffectiveness of the strategy is the weak transition from strategy formulation to strategy implementation. Thought processes, emotional experience, and consistency are needed in strategy implementation (Aladag et al., 2020; Tawse et al., 2019). The formulation can be carried out by establishing a structured resource allocation, providing motivation to members, rewards, attracting stakeholders, and managing

to finance effectively. An integrative framework consisting of three components was obtained to improve the strategy implementation process: (1) leaders directly influence the implementation process, (2) situations and conditions that support the effectiveness of strategy implementation, and (3) dynamic managerial capabilities (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021).

Strategy Evaluation

The fourth step is strategy evaluation which includes monitoring success by taking corrective action on things that have not been good and optimizing what has been successful. The important thing is that the organization must be able to adapt to continue to transform. Evaluation is carried out at the final stage and is also needed during planning and strategy implementation. Evaluation is the act of ensuring that the implementation process is following what has been planned. The organization should be able to adopt a robust strategy evaluation process that will enable it to identify and take corrective action when strategic initiatives fail or can be improved (Hieu & Nwachukwu, 2019). Strategic evaluation is important to conduct simulations to compare the effectiveness of achieving goals with the management of various combinations of data collection schemes, analysis methods, and subsequent processes that lead to evaluation management actions (Punt et al., 2016).

Then, Hill, Jones, and Schilling provide four factors that can make an organization build and maintain its competitiveness: superior efficiency, quality, innovation, and customer responsiveness (Rothaemel, 2017). These four components are a unity that influences each other and can make the institution competitive. More details can be seen in the following figure:

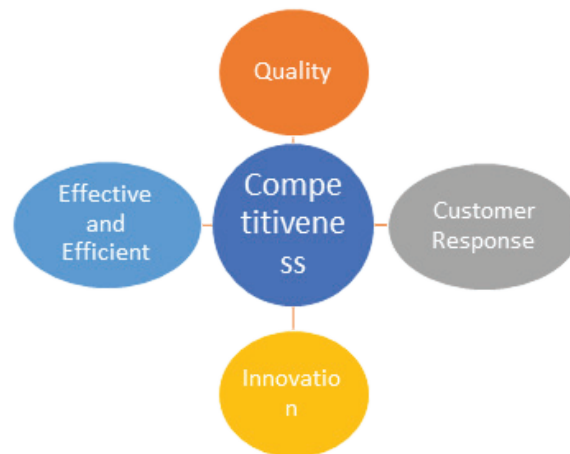


Figure. 32 Components of Building Competitiveness

These four components are interrelated. Superior quality can produce superior efficiency and innovation can improve efficiency, quality, and good customer response. Hence, it can increase organizational competitiveness.

CONCLUSION

To gain and maintain competitiveness, organizations must formulate strategies that take advantage of their internal strengths and continuously improve their weaknesses. It must be done cost-effectively, but not by minimizing costs for managing the organization's HR.

Competition in Islamic educational institutions is not only general educational institutions but also other Islamic educational institutions that have the same target stakeholders. For this reason, there are four main things that Islamic education institutions must maintain or maintain to be competitive. 1) Islamic educational institutions must have quality following the wishes of parents, government, and society in general. 2) Islamic educational institutions need to pay attention and examine every customer response of Islamic educational institutions because the main goal is to provide satisfaction to customers of Islamic educational institutions (students, parents, government, and the world of work). 3) Innovation

is the ability of Islamic educational institutions to respond to changing times. Islamic educational institutions must continue to innovate, including institutional innovation and management, curriculum innovation, learning innovation, innovation of learning facilities and infrastructure, and innovation by educators and education staff. 4) effectiveness and efficiency is the estuary of the management process. A successful Islamic educational institution is able to adjust what it plans to achieve with what it achieves.

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