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Formulation of School Competitive Strategies in Efforts to Improve the Quality of Education at MTs Nurul Jadid

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to determine the formulation of school competitive strategies in efforts to improve the quality of education at MTs Nurul Jadid. The quality of education is our hope in facing the tense exchange of life in various sectors, especially in the education sector, for a better future. To create quality education, it is necessary to plan a school's competitive strategy, especially for private schools whose condition needs to be better regarded by the public. MTs educational institutions. Nurul Jadid's efforts to improve competitiveness are essential and necessary to carry out education on an ongoing basis, both in marketing schools and increasing the competitiveness of MTs schools. Nurul Jadid. Another thing is, of course, with the support of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School Foundation, the Government, Society, the Industrial World, Higher Education and the Mass Media, to continue to pay attention to private schools. Hence, they cannot compete with public schools and make MTs. Nurul Jadid as a forum for quality education. As a result, creative and innovative efforts are needed from education providers to continue to explore the "uniqueness and superiority" of their schools so that they are increasingly needed and in demand by users of educational services.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The competition among schools today is very compelling. The best approach to increasing customer satisfaction and meeting customer needs, especially those of children, is by improving the quality of education in schools, according to educational institutions that provide educational services. All descriptions and characteristics of educational services, whether provided internally or externally, that demonstrate their capacity to meet anticipated needs are considered high quality (Hayudiyani et al. 2020). Furthermore, according to Edward Sallis, quality management is a concept of continuous

development that can provide educational institutions with a set of useful tools to help them meet the requirements, desires, and expectations of their customers, both now and in the future. As a result, every institution must continuously improve its standards (Rukiyah 2016), particularly for education in private schools.

What has been experienced by MTs. Nurul Jadid, namely the decline in interest from new students recently, has become a major concern for the principal, teachers, and several other staff members. This is because MTs. Nurul Jadid has experienced a decline in both intramural and extracurricular education, as well as services that are still unsatisfactory to some consumers. Experiencing a decline is an urgent matter, considering that quality education is education that is capable and satisfying for the target of MTs. Nurul Jadid, in terms of school curriculum, school facilities, school services, or from other perspectives. Through competitive strategies, the school can make plans to maintain and improve its level of competitiveness. Finding a successful competitive position in the virtual arena where competition occurs is the goal of a competitive strategy. This indicates that in order to succeed in competition, every organization or business must have a condition and a plan.

School quality improvement management and strategies for enhancing the quality of education in schools cannot be separated. In this regard, Usman stated that quality improvement management involves efforts to (a) control processes occurring in schools, both curricular and administrative, (b) involve diagnostic processes, and (c) require the participation of all parties, including principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents, and experts. Furthermore, Usman mentioned that quality improvement management has the following principles: (1) quality improvement must be implemented in schools, (2) quality improvement can be carried out with good leadership, (3) quality improvement must be based on data and facts, both qualitative and quantitative, (4) quality improvement must empower and involve all elements in the school, and (5) quality improvement has the goal that the school can provide satisfaction to students, parents, and the community.

According to Porter, the goal of a competitive strategy is to position an institution in a way that can best defend itself against external pressures or positively impact those pressures. Therefore, having an effective competitive strategy that combines offensive or defensive measures is important to establish a defendable position. Hence, the key to creating a plan is to investigate and analyze each source of strength Rizal, H., & Sholeh, L. (2025). Henry Mintzberg has developed alternative types of competitive strategies that are considered better at describing the increasing complexity of the competitive environment. In this new perspective on competitive strategy, Mintzberg proposed two strategies: the differentiation strategy and the undifferentiated strategy. There are six competitive strategies that can support differentiation competitive advantage, namely: (price, market image, product design, product quality, product support). Philip Kotler argues that strategy is a strong positioning of an institution against competitors, which gives the institution the strongest possible competitive advantage.

Hoy, Jardine and Wood (2005: 11-12) state that quality in education is an evaluation of the educational process which enhances the need to achieve and develop the talents of the customers of the process, and at the same time meets the accountability standards set by the clients who pay for the process or the outputs from the educational process. This opinion explains that quality in education is an evaluation of the educational process that increases the need to achieve and develop the talents of the customers (students), while simultaneously meeting the accountability standards established by the clients (stakeholders) who pay for the process or outputs of the educational process.

According to Sagala (2010), educational quality is described as a comprehensive picture and the characteristics of educational service provision, both internally and externally, which indicate its ability to meet the expected needs. To face competitive conditions, there are three general strategic techniques that can outperform competitors in a particular industry: overall cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. The issue of education quality is evident in one of the private schools, MTs. Nurul Jadid, with a declining interest and satisfaction among students in attending the school. This is reflected in the very low number of new students and a decrease in potential in both Intracurricular

and extracurricular activities. From this problem, we want to study the formulation of the school's competitive strategy in an effort to improve the quality of education at MTs Nurul Jadid.

2. METHODS

Based on its approach, this type of research is descriptive qualitative research, meaning the data collected is in the form of words and images, not numbers (Fadli 2021). Meanwhile, according to Lexy J. Moleong (2000:17), descriptive research is a type of research aimed at describing or portraying existing phenomena, whether natural phenomena or human-engineered phenomena. The purpose of descriptive research is to systematically, factually, and accurately create a picture of the facts and characteristics of a population or a specific area. This research is used to find competitive strategies to improve the quality of education at MTs. Nurul Jadid. The subjects in this study were determined using purposive sampling, a technique for selecting data sources based on certain considerations (Sugiyono 2016). The research subjects consisted of the Principal, the Deputy of Student Affairs, and school teachers. In terms of data collection, the author directly engaged with the research subjects to obtain valid data, so the researcher used the following methods: (1) Observation Method, (2) Interview Method, and (3) Documentation Method. The data analysis used is the interactive data analysis model, where the data components are processed simultaneously with the data collection results.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Competitive Strategy

Competitiveness is a depiction of how an organization and its human resources manage their competencies in an integrated manner to gain advantages (Waston and Taryanto 2019), while Thoha (2004) explains that competitiveness is one way to win an organization's competition. Thus, competitiveness is a method that involves all aspects of the organization to gain advantages and win competitions. Hubeis & Najib (2014) describe the current situation where the increasing number of alternatives offered in all fields, including education, drives efforts to enhance competitiveness, even up to the level of superior competitive advantage. For the educational institution MTs. Nurul Jadid, efforts to improve competitiveness are important and essential in order to carry out the provision of education sustainably. In the school's benchmarking and efforts to increase competitiveness, MTs. Nurul Jadid outlines competitive strategy steps that need to be considered, namely:

1. Market Identification

   In this section, the school must conduct research to understand market conditions and expectations, including educational attributes that are of interest to customers. In this regard, MTs. Nurul Jadid is an education service provider whose market segment is beginning to shift from the emotional segment to the rational segment. In the emotional segment, customers pay more attention to religiosity and less to price, quality, standard, and the availability of adequate networks, while in the rational segment, customers are truly sensitive to developments in the quality and standard of education (Djuwarijah 2008).

   According to the principal of MTs. Nurul Jadid, there are five main educational problems at MTs. Nurul Jadid, namely: First, inadequate physical facilities. Regarding the lack of physical facilities at MTs. Nurul Jadid, the problems that will be experienced include: low student interest in learning, teachers being less effective in maximizing instruction, and low student achievement. Second, scarcity of resources and funds. To meet educational needs, sufficient resources and funds are required to fulfill educational demands, such as providing teachers, buildings, books, teaching facilities, scholarships, and other costs. Even though resources and funds have increased significantly, the consequence is an influx of students, and educational needs continue to rise, resulting in diminishing resources and capabilities.

   The three educational costs are becoming increasingly expensive. To improve the quality of education, it is necessary to improve the quality of teachers, increase teachers' salaries, enhance both the quantity and quality of books, and also improve teaching aids.

Therefore, to improve the quality of education, an increase in educational costs for each student is certainly required.

The four inaccuracies in educational outcomes. Educational results can no longer meet the needs of individuals in society and the needs of society because they do not align with attitudes and interests toward work and the image of the desired position by the individual.

Fifth, the delays and inefficiencies of the education system. The management system of the curriculum, teaching methods, patterns, and structure of teacher education show delays and inefficiencies in meeting increasingly high demands, in line with technological advances and societal needs. It can thus be concluded that there are two main problems plaguing the education sector in Indonesia, namely: how the entire society can take advantage of educational opportunities and how education can prepare students in terms of abilities and skills ready to compete in the workforce.

2. Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a market into groups of buyers who are distinguished based on needs, characteristics, or behaviors, who may require different products (Ruli, Ida Bagus Brata, and Ida Bagus Nym Wartha 2020). Porter (1997) explains that it is possible that the desired products or services exist elsewhere, but there may be segments within the market that are not well served. Therefore, to enhance competitiveness, this strategy needs to be considered by examining whether there are market segments that have not yet been targeted by others.

From the presentation by the Student Affairs Section of MTs. Nurul Jadid, Mr. Franco Leo, SP., regarding the implementation of market segmentation carried out by MTs. Nurul Jadid, it is as follows:

a. Geographic segmentation, This segmentation is based on the location of prospective consumers who live in the same area and have the same needs. In this case, MTs. Nurul Jadid not only markets in East Java Province, but also seeks to market in other provinces outside of East Java. Moreover, this is now made easier with the existence of social media, which can reach a wider market area.
b. 2) Demographic segmentation, In addition to conducting geographic market segmentation, MTs. Nurul Jadid also conducts demographic market segmentation based on religion, age, and education. Religion In terms of religion, MTs. Nurul Jadid specifically selects prospective students who are Muslim, in accordance with its status as an Islamic educational institution under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Age Regarding age, the students admitted to MTs. Nurul Jadid are children who are 12-13 years old. If a child has not yet reached the age of 12, they are encouraged to study at MI/SD (Islamic/Elementary School), unless the child has received a recommendation from the Head of MTs. Nurul Jadid, as they are considered capable of following lessons at the next level of education. Education MTs. Nurul Jadid, in determining its students, considers the educational background of prospective students. MTs. Nurul Jadid prefers students who are graduates of Raudlatul Athfal (RA) or Kindergarten (TK). This is because children who have attended education at RA/Kindergarten are seen as being able to easily adapt and ready to receive learning at the next level.
c. Behavioral Segmentation Behavioral segmentation divides groups based on user status, loyalty status, usage rate, buyer readiness stage, and attitude. The market can then be classified into non-users, former users, potential users, first-time users, and regular users of a product. This grouping is based on the behavior of students and the behavior of students' parents. The expected behavioral characteristics of prospective students at MTs. Nurul Jadid are prospective students who have normal characteristics, not Special Needs Children (ABK). This is because MTs. Nurul Jadid does not have educators or learning support facilities for ABK. Furthermore, ABK are handled separately by special education institutions, namely Special Schools.

3. Differentiation

Hidayat & Machali (2012) explained that differentiation is one of three marketing strategies as a competitive strategy. With differentiation, schools can offer something different from what other schools provide. Thus, schools are required to offer attributes and services that differ from their competitors and provide unique and superior values to customers in terms of quality or special characteristics (Kamayuda 2016). At this stage, the strategy can be implemented by creating a good image to enhance competitiveness. Based on the results of the research conducted, the following will discuss the findings of school differentiation at MTs. Nurul Jadid.

The first differentiation is school ownership. School ownership has different consequences for students. For example, government-owned schools, commonly referred to as public schools, are inexpensive or almost free due to state subsidies. The low or nearly free cost is associated with public schools, which generally have fewer facilities and more students per class. This is different from private schools, which usually have more facilities in accordance with the fees paid.

The second differentiation is school affiliation. The school affiliation referred to here is schools established with a corporate background, such as schools under a foundation, specifically MTs. Nurul Jadid, which is under the Nurul Jadid Foundation known for the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. MTs. Nurul Jadid has special programs that have been part of students' choices since grade VII, as stated by the principal of MTs. Nurul Jadid: "Students of MTs. Nurul Jadid must already be able to focus on the subjects they choose in order to continue to the next level (MA/SMA)." Among them are

a. Religious Excellence Program, this program is specifically designed for students of MTs. Nurul Jadid who want to study and deepen their reading of the yellow book (religious field), along with supporting programs, namely foreign language programs, Arabic and English. In this case, there is a special coordinator responsible for it, namely Mr. Utsman, SP.d
b. Tahfidz Science, this program is specifically designed for students who want to deepen their knowledge in science while memorizing the Qur'an. The hope is that Qur'an memorization is not just about reading, but also about being able to implement and demonstrate it in the real world, especially in Natural Sciences.
c. Regular, this program is intended for students who want to cover all knowledge evenly, meaning there is no specific intra-specialization within it.
d. Dormitory Program, this program serves as a support for the curriculum of the flagship program and as a support for achieving curriculum targets, which is conducted in the dormitory. For the religious flagship program, this program is very helpful, as stated by the Coordinator of the religious flagship program, "Every student is required to participate in scripture discussion activities and speak Arabic every day while in the school environment; this can help and develop students' interest in this program".

4. Marketing Communication Consumers sometimes do not realize or may even be completely unaware of the existence of a product or service being offered. Through communication, consumers can become aware of and understand the existence of the products or services offered. In the marketing communications of MTs. Nuru Jadid, marketing is carried out through various forms of offers, including organizing competitions, scientific forums, publishing achievements in the mass media, or even through direct promotions. The principal of MTs. Nurul Jadid stated, 'The most intensive marketing of MTs. Nurul Jadid, which results in many consumers, is communication with the alumni of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid.' This statement has indeed proven to be true, as the number of students who are alumni of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid is very large. Hidayat and Machali (2012) revealed that communication that is often overlooked is word-of-mouth communication. For example, alumni of a school share experiences about the school and its achievements.

5. School Services

Quality service is a form of a service promise reflected in the efforts made by the government to produce quality products needed by the public (Prihatmadji et al. 2022). It is stated that the relationship between the government and the people is a relationship between promise and trust. Therefore, if these promises and trust are well fulfilled, public participation in development will also decrease, so to ensure good service, a leader who is committed to public service is required. In general, there are four ways used to measure the effectiveness of public service, namely fast, fair, good, and affordable, as stated by Ndraha (1997).

Service is a benchmark that is often observed by customers (Siregar 2020). Regarding service, MTs. Nurul Jadid pays attention to reliability in delivering the promised service accurately and reliably, being responsive in assisting customers and providing services, the knowledge and competence of teachers to build trust, showing empathy to customers, such as paying attention to student development, and providing complete and good physical facilities (Magdalena et al. 2020). As stated by the Principal, Mr. Mashduqi S.Ag, "Service is our number one priority because the first thing prospective students and their parents pay attention to is our service." Education is a process that must continue and is continuously related to customers, so schools as providers of educational services need to learn and take the initiative to improve customer satisfaction with school services (Hasyim and Wijaya 2019). Good service will provide satisfaction for customers and will build customer appeal. Several services of MTs. Nurul Jadid that serve as benchmarks for school elements, as stated by the curriculum department, Mr. Supandi, S.Pd, include:

a. Fast. Efforts to provide fast service to students have been carried out by the school (Burhanudin and Irawan 2019). Fast service is primarily aimed at providing the latest information about the education implementation system and responding to any issues faced by students in the learning process (Pujiastuti 2021). This is carried out by MTs. Nurul Jadid so that all students can receive the latest information in the implementation of education, so that if there are any changes in the education system, each student can prepare themselves properly.
b. Fairer. Teachers still find it difficult to be fair to all their students in providing services during the teaching and learning process. The difficulty for teachers to be fair is more directed towards giving equal attention to each student in the class (WiraBhakti 2022). Therefore, the principal of MTs. Nurul Jadid pays great attention to teachers in serving each student both during the teaching and learning process and outside of it, as well as to the administrative staff, to act in a balanced manner, such as managing administration and other tasks.
c. Good (Better). A teacher must be able to prepare teaching materials and methods well and must be able to provide objective assessments for each student in every subject (Kosim 2017). Because having a good mastery of the materials and teaching methods to be used will certainly make it easier to provide understanding to the students attending the lessons conducted by the teacher. At the end of each month, MTs. Nurul Jadid always conducts routine evaluations, which among other things aim to evaluate the teacher's learning model in the classroom. One of the results is that when MTs. Nurul Jadid students feel bored with classroom learning, teachers are advised to conduct teaching and learning processes outside the classroom, whether in the school yard, library, or elsewhere. Thus, the teacher's ability to understand the material being taught and to use the appropriate methods in the teaching and learning process will have an impact on the students' ability to understand the subjects being taught.

Improving the Quality of Education

The quality of education is very broad in scope, and many only look at the quality of its outcomes. If we realize that a good learning process will produce good outcomes as well, then if the learning process is not good, the expected quality of results will also be poor. If learning is less than

optimal, this results in good test scores, so it can be said that the learning outcomes are superficial. This indicates that there is a problem with the quality of education related to the "processing" of learning. The learning process runs well if it is supported by various educational elements, including educators, students, learning facilities, curriculum, and even the surrounding environment. For example, if the facilities available at the school are complete, but the educators are less skilled, this causes the learning process to be less than optimal in terms of improving the quality and outcomes of learning.

The issue of educational quality is closely related to the availability of access at all levels of education, where conditions in Indonesia are still uneven, especially in rural areas, which are still low compared to urban areas. (Meirawan, 2010: 126-127). Research conducted by Goldhaber and Anthony (2007) states that improving teacher quality can be achieved through a teacher certification system. The principal of Mts. Nurul Jadid said that "although MTs. Nurul Jadid is a private school, it must have strong competitiveness, especially in making MTs. Nurul Jadid a high-quality school," so the school programs repeatedly conduct internal and external evaluations, such as meetings between teachers and staff with the students' guardians.

Furthermore, the strategy for improving the quality of education in schools in its implementation is closely related to school quality management. In this regard, MTs. Nurul Jadid implements quality management, which involves efforts to control the processes occurring in the school, both curricular and administrative, requiring the participation of all parties, including the principal, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents, and experts, strict selection for the admission of prospective students, the development of educators' skills through training, and the refinement of the curriculum and its materials. Adjusted to the programs available at MTs. Nurul Jadid, the development of facilities and infrastructure that can create a comfortable learning environment both inside and outside the classroom, the improvement of school administration to achieve budget efficiency, and organization in order to maintain the quality of educational providers need to be established with the support of authorized institutions in guaranteeing quality, including the Education Quality Assurance Agency, the National Accreditation Board for Schools and Madrasahs (BAN-SM), as well as independent institutions.

4. CONCLUSION

In its development, when elaborated based on school status, the difference in the number of students between public and private schools becomes increasingly apparent. Smart strategies are implemented by the administrators of private schools, namely MTs. Nurul Jadid, to ensure the school remains competitive in admitting new students, particularly in maximizing the curriculum that has become a target of MTs. Nurul Jadid itself. Quality service is a form of service promise reflected in the efforts made by the government to produce quality products needed by the community. Another factor, of course, is the support from the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School Foundation, the Government, and the Community. The industrial world, universities, and the mass media must continue to pay attention to private schools so that they do not fall behind public schools in competition, and to make MTs. Nurul Jadid a quality educational institution. As a result, creative and innovative efforts are needed from education providers to continually explore the "uniqueness and advantages" of their schools so that they are increasingly needed and favored by education service users. Educational institutions or schools today must be able to identify the market share and market opportunities.

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