



Strategic Management in Boarding Schools to Produce Highly Competitive Graduates

(Case Study of Riyadhul Jannah Islamic Boarding School in Subang and MA Sirnarasa in Ciamis)

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Abstract

Education experts agree that the low quality of education is caused by various factors, including the low competency of teachers and education staff, the low quality and lack of educational facilities and infrastructure, irrelevant curriculum, unclear institutional development planning, weak institutional culture, quality only being a slogan, low community support, and low leadership and managerial factors of the heads of boarding high schools. The general purpose of this research is to describe: (1) environmental analysis, (2) strategic planning, (3) policies, (4) programs, (5) strategy implementation, (6) evaluation, (7) problems, (8) solutions, and (9) case study results. The grand theory used is Strategic Management and Integrated Quality Management. The research approach is qualitative with a descriptive study method. The research results are as follows: (1) Environmental analysis is inadequately supported by accurate data and the analysis is still low in sharpness, (2) Strategic planning is not based on the analysis of the school's needs,

which vary greatly, (3) Policies are not fully oriented towards the institution's vision and mission, (4) The formulated programs are not effective because they do not pay enough attention to the continuity of the programs from year to year, (5) Strategy implementation is not effective due to many obstacles, especially human resource competency, cost, and required facilities and infrastructure, (6) Program evaluation is inaccurate because supervision findings are not accurately evaluated and are not followed up with improvements for the next program, (7) Major problems include policy issues, human resources, and other resources that are appropriate to the needs, (8) Solutions to the problems faced are to improve personnel competence, increase budget with inter-agency and entrepreneurial approaches, and communicate with education stakeholders, (9) The result of the strategy is to produce highly competitive graduates. In conclusion, the school management is still ineffective due to many obstacles and has not produced highly competitive graduates.

Keywords

Strategic Management, six value systems.

Introduction

The current era of complexity and turbulence often causes confusion, anxiety, doubt, and uncertainty in decision-making and policy-setting (Sanusi, 2017). This is not only experienced by education policymakers at the national, regional, and local levels, and even institutions such as boarding high schools, but also by education stakeholders in the community.

Education experts agree that the low quality of education is caused by various factors, including the low competence of teachers and education staff, low quality of graduates, insufficient educational facilities, irrelevant curriculum, unclear institutional development planning, weak institutional culture, superficial emphasis on quality, lack of community support, and low leadership and managerial skills of the school head (Renstra Kemdikbud 2020-2024).

The main advantage of boarding high schools is the requirement for each student to reside in the location designated by the foundation. Students are taught to live independently in the location commonly known as a dormitory. In addition, the culture formed in boarding high schools can create a supportive and competitive environment. Students can share experiences, learn, and discuss to improve their abilities. Furthermore, students will also receive strong training in discipline, ethics, and religious values that can help them become more independent and resilient individuals. Thus, boarding high schools offer a deep and comprehensive learning and growth experience that cannot be obtained in regular schools.

The problem in the life of boarding high school students is the emergence of conflicts among students caused by their diverse backgrounds and differences in perception, as well as the still fragile emotional state of students living in dormitories in boarding high schools. In addition, poor supervision and management by the school can lead to other problems such as violence, fighting, and other issues that hurt students.

Strategic management is a choice to address the challenges in maintaining and improving the quality of education. It is a process to determine long-term direction and goals along with the choice of methods to achieve them through the development of strategic formulations and planned implementation focused on creating creative visions and changes, and the combination of superior resources (Susanto, 2014:25). Strategic management also helps schools in developing new strategies that can accommodate changes in internal and external environments.

This research aims to explore strategic management in SMA/MA boarding schools and the factors influencing educational strategic management to produce highly competitive graduates. The research was conducted at Riyadhul Jannah Islamic Boarding School in Subang and MA Sirnarasa Boarding School in Ciamis.

Research Methods

In this research, a qualitative approach is used, while the method used is descriptive research. The data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. The observation technique is used to observe the geographical location and environmental conditions, human resource conditions, and strategic management stages in SMA Riyadhul Jannah Islamic Boarding School and MA Sirnarasa. Then, the interview technique is conducted first by determining key informants, which are conducted with the foundation chairman, school principal, and dormitory head of both schools. It is then followed by a snowball process with the Vice Principal for Curriculum, Student Affairs, and Infrastructure. Meanwhile, the documentation technique is carried out by tracing documents and books related to the research to obtain written data on strategic management. This technique is done to facilitate the researcher in obtaining information about the environmental conditions, human resource conditions, and strategic management stages that exist in SMA Riyadhul Jannah Islamic Boarding School and MA Sirnarasa. The analysis technique used is data analysis before going to the field, namely data found when conducting a preliminary study, which includes objective condition data and strategic management data in both schools. The data analysis technique consists of several steps, including unitization, categorization, and interpretation.

Results and discussion

Based on the research conducted at the two Islamic boarding schools, the following research results can be obtained:

Internal and External Environmental Analysis

The strengths and weaknesses of both schools are determined by the factor of the number of teachers which has been fulfilled according to the required standard, but there is still a weakness in terms of teacher competence which has not yet met the standard set by the government. The number of classrooms in both

schools is considered sufficient compared to the class size, but the standard of classroom comfort and completeness needs to be improved. Both schools already have adequate library rooms, but the number and types of books needed by teachers and students to support the learning process are still inadequate. The library is also not managed based on ICT, so the use of the library is still manual. Both schools already have laboratory rooms, but the laboratory equipment is still incomplete. The number of educational staff is sufficient, but not all are capable of operating ICT, affecting academic services. The number of dormitory rooms is sufficient, but in terms of the completeness of learning facilities, they still do not meet the required standards. The number of dormitory managers is sufficient, but their ability in guiding students still needs to be improved. The relationship between dormitory managers and teachers in schools sometimes still experiences differences in perceptions regarding the responsibility of the guidance program, which can lead to conflicts of interest.

The opportunities and threats identified by the school team and agreed upon in the plenary meeting include the government policies such as "Sekolah Merdeka" and "Merdeka Belajar" to improve the quality of schools and the Ministry of Education's offer to improve school management with its 8 Standard National Education (SNE). The demographic conditions of both schools support the development of educational quality because of the support from the community and parents, making the school environment conducive. However, the economic conditions, influenced by the global economy and the pandemic, affect the financial capacity. The progress of technology and information can support school development and become a learning source for students, but it can also have negative impacts if it is not well-controlled, affecting student behavior. There are also many scholarships offered for further study for teachers to improve their competence. Many outstanding educational institutions are nearby that can be used as benchmarks to improve the quality of highly competitive graduates, but on the other hand, they can become competitors for both schools.

In the SWOT analysis conducted by both schools, some aspects were analyzed that did not match the actual conditions in the schools. The reasons for this include: (1) Not having enough information about the school. Accurate and precise SWOT analysis requires information about the actual school conditions. If the available information is inaccurate, the results of the SWOT analysis will not be relevant or accurate. (2) Lack of participation from students, teachers, and staff. Participation from various parties is crucial to preparing an accurate SWOT analysis. Without adequate participation, the results of the SWOT analysis may not be relevant or accurate. (3) Lack of accurate data analysis. SWOT analysis must be based on accurate and precise data. If the data used is inaccurate and imprecise, the results of the SWOT analysis will also not be accurate. (4) Lack of time and resources to conduct analysis. Accurate and precise SWOT analysis requires adequate time and resources. If time and resources are not available, the results of the SWOT analysis may not be accurate.

In the context of environmental analysis, the school has implemented the principles of environmental analysis from Hunger and Wheelan, although not entirely due to limited resources. The school is also based on a value system of rational logic. Carrying out environmental analysis is supported by accurate data created in the school's database, although there are still limitations, as not all school resources have been entered into the database.

Formulation of Strategy and Policy

There are several strategies formulated by the school to produce highly competitive graduates, including (a) partnership strategy, which is partnering with other institutions around the school, (b) benchmarking strategy, which is selecting educational institutions that have advantages in certain fields both domestically and internationally, (c) lifelong learning strategy, in which the school requires all teachers and students to learn and keep learning, and (d) market analysis strategy, in which the school analyzes market demands and trends.

To carry out these strategies, the school strengthens them by formulating school policies, including all teachers must base their teaching processes on Information and Communication Technology (ICT), all teachers must pass a certification exam, all students are required to live in the dormitory, and the school principal is required to establish partnerships with other educational institutions both domestically and internationally.

Several strategy formulations have been established by both schools, which is a very good thing, as they have also apparently learned the SWOT analysis process. From interviews, observations, and documentation, it is evident that both schools already know about SWOT analysis, although not in the same manner as explained in the Hunger and Wheelan theory, resulting in some of the strategy formulations being inaccurate. This can cause incorrect and even ineffective strategy formulations, leading to failure in achieving the school's goals.

There are still several policies issued by the foundation, school principal, and dormitory head that are not in sync in both schools, which can cause conflicts among the parties involved, especially if there is no clear communication system between them. As a result, schools and dormitories cannot provide the best services for students, such as appropriate training and education. This can reduce student motivation and school productivity. In addition, it can cause financial problems for schools and dormitories, as they may have to face unnecessary additional costs.

The strategy formulation by both schools has followed the concept process of Hunger and Wheelan by using SWOT analysis, although not perfect, their strength lies in the value system, namely the theological values that are reflected, among others, in the attributes of Tawheed, Islamic unity, repentance, prayer, Islamic manners, devotion, steadfastness, and jihad in the way of Allah, as conveyed by Sanusi (2017:135) which has become part of the daily learning in both schools.

Both schools have a very structured hierarchy, starting from environmental analysis, strategy formulation, and policy formulation, although not fully implemented due to the limited resources of the two schools. The policies made by both schools are good because they try to align educational goals with the policy objectives, creating a healthier and safer school environment. In addition, these policies also benefit students from psychological, social, and academic perspectives. Furthermore, the policies also cover aspects such as learning, security, discipline, communication, and safety.

Program Formulation and Implementation

The program formulations made by both schools refer to the previously formulated strategies, including arranging KBM and PBM programs, socializing programs, completing PBM and ICT facilities, teacher and dormitory manager training, strengthening MGMP, implementing quality learning, implementing extracurricular activities, guiding students in dormitories, monitoring learning, monitoring in dormitories, evaluating learning outcomes in schools and dormitories, and following up on evaluation results. To implement the formulated programs, an allocation of program expenditure is also made for employee salaries, benefits, honorariums, infrastructure, and teacher and educational staff development.

A well-crafted strategic plan is not a guarantee for successful implementation. Therefore, it requires the ability and courage to execute and implement the formulated plan, including (a) an Action plan, which is a specific design of interventions to assist the school in achieving the criteria for outcomes. (b) Targets are elaborations of established goals or intermediate goals. (c) Delegation of authority is a critical element in improving work performance. (d) Staff mobilization, where the school principal and dormitory head act as the driving force for school and dormitory resources. In this case, teachers, education personnel, and dormitory counselors need to be mobilized toward a positive, stimulating, and productive work environment, given their significant influence on the learning process. (e) Teacher coaching can provide opportunities for teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills about education and learning, as well as to develop their competencies and improve the quality of educational services they provide. (f) Coordination among school and dormitory lines, particularly synchronization between school and dormitory programs. (g) School organizational communication can take the form of oral, written, and technological communication. Oral communication includes meetings, presentations, announcements, and discussions. Written communication includes letters, memoranda, emails, and reports. Technological communication includes electronic bulletin boards, videos, webinars, and blogs.

Several programs in both schools are still not running well. These programs include (1) Technology-Based Learning Program: Both schools are still not using technology effectively to improve student learning quality. (2) Teacher Evaluation Program: Both schools still do not have an effective way to evaluate teacher

performance and follow-up. (3) Literacy Program: Both schools still do not have a comprehensive literacy program covering reading, writing, and speaking. (4) Environmental Awareness Program: Both schools does not have an effective program to increase students' awareness of environmental protection and how to maintain the environment. (5) Career Development Program: Both schools still do not have an effective career development program to help students explore and develop their abilities.

Both boarding schools have taken steps to implement the strategy correctly, including formulating an action plan together with all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and dormitory managers. The action plan was then socialized to all stakeholders using various media and guided teachers and parents about the plan. In addition, meetings were held with dormitory managers to discuss and evaluate the action plan, and a team was formed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan.

The programs developed by both boarding schools have followed the principles of program development by Hunger and Wheelen, although they are still limited. However, the application of the teleological value principles has been more widely adopted by both schools, although not all of them can be utilized. This way, the achievement of school goals will be more effective and productive.

Strategy Evaluation

Strategy implementation evaluation is important for both boarding schools in producing highly competitive graduates. Evaluation helps schools understand whether the implemented strategy is running according to plan and helps measure the effectiveness of the strategy in achieving its goals. The evaluation also helps schools identify problems that may arise during implementation and helps determine the necessary corrective actions to ensure that the strategy continues to run effectively.

The steps taken in evaluating the implementation of the strategy in both boarding schools are as follows: (a) Control system, by holding weekly, coordination, leadership, and incidental meetings. (b) Evaluation techniques, the data collection method used for the evaluation includes student and parent satisfaction evaluations, inter-unit/school department evaluations, self-evaluations, and school management evaluations. (c) Evaluation analysis, SWOT analysis is used to analyze the evaluation to obtain necessary steps/strategies for continuous improvement. (d) Evaluation results show that the curriculum development strategy applied by both boarding schools has successfully improved the quality of learning and ensured that graduates have the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in the job market and gain entry into their preferred universities. (f) Follow-up, the evaluated results should be used as input for the next program development and as part of continuous improvement efforts to improve the strategy and its implementation.

In the evaluation conducted by these two schools, two things are done. First, the evaluation results are used to create a report for the school leadership.

This report will contain the evaluation results, such as how many students passed the exam and obtained high grades in certain subjects. This will help the school leadership to take action based on the evaluation results so that the quality of learning in the school continues to improve. Second, evaluation results are also used by students to understand their work results. The evaluation results will help students understand their level of understanding of the subjects they are studying. Students will also be able to see how their grades change over time so that they can know where they need to improve and work harder. Evaluation results can also be used as a report to students' parents about their academic achievements. This will help parents to support their children's learning.

These two boarding schools have already implemented good evaluation principles from the technical, analysis, and follow-up aspects according to the principles of strategic management according to Hunger and Wheelen. However, from a theological and ethical legal value standpoint, they often clash with situations and conditions outside the school, both in their families and in the surrounding community. This shows that evaluation must encompass broader aspects to create justice and meet the needs and desires of the community.

Problems faced

The problems often faced by these two boarding schools are: (a) human resource problems, the ratio of teachers to students is not yet proportional, which has an impact on workload, some teachers teach at other educational institutions, so energy and time are not optimal for focusing on school, a lack of understanding of how to educate students by the school's vision and mission, inadequate teaching supervision, and uneven teacher competencies. (b) policy issues, other policy issues that arise include: Learning Time Policy: A learning time policy that is too heavy for students. Boarding Policy: Boarding policies that do not meet welfare and student comfort standards. Funding Policy: An unfair and detrimental funding policy for students and parents. Fund Management Policy: A fund management policy that is not transparent and does not meet accountability standards. Socialization Policy: A socialization policy that does not meet the needs and demands of the community. (c) non-human resource problems, non-human resource problems in boarding schools may include inadequate facilities and equipment, such as uncomfortable beds, unclean bathrooms, or a lack of study space and sports facilities. Lack of extracurricular activities, lack of space to gather, and lack of technological assistance. (d) funding issues, many costs are associated with these schools, including school fees, food costs, boarding costs, transportation costs, and other costs. These costs can be a heavy burden on parents.

Routine problems that have been recorded by the school are reported to the foundation for joint solutions at every meeting. Some other problems are more serious and non-routine, such as financial issues, lack of human resources, administrative issues, technical issues, and service issues. These problems can be resolved with the help of the foundation. The school can hand over these problems to the foundation to get assistance.

Both schools have inventoried the problems faced in implementing education to create highly competitive graduates. From the grading system, it is clear that both schools apply theological values. This is reflected in the standard values applied, which are a combination of academic, spiritual, social, and moral values. In addition, both schools have implemented various alternative learning programs to help students achieve their desired academic goals. Then, both schools have also developed an evaluation system to measure student learning outcomes. This system includes academic, spiritual, social, and moral evaluations. The system also allows for measuring the success of graduates in facing changes in the world. Both schools have also implemented joint strategies to address the problems they face. These strategies include improving the quality of education, improving student skills, and improving the school culture. With these strategies, both schools hope to improve student learning outcomes and increase the competitiveness of their graduates.

Solutions were Implemented

The following are some solutions implemented by both boarding schools to address the various problems that arise in implementing this strategic management to produce highly competitive graduates: (a) HR Solutions: improving the quality of teachers by providing regular training and professional development, hiring qualified teachers and staff who have a high commitment to the school's mission and vision, building a solid team by optimizing collaboration and synergy among all parties involved in school management, including teachers, staff, and principals, establishing open and clear communication between teachers, staff, and students so that problems and needs in school can be identified and addressed quickly, building a positive work culture, including upholding integrity, honesty, and professional ethics. (b) Policy Solutions: developing a comprehensive and relevant curriculum, combining academic subjects and practical skills needed in the workplace, setting policies that ensure the same quality of education throughout all study programs and levels of education, improving students' access to technology and modern learning resources, such as electronic devices, digital books, and internet access, setting policies that support the implementation of internship programs or cooperation with companies, so that students can gain useful work experience and improve their skills, setting policies that ensure the availability of student guidance and counseling programs, to help them overcome personal and academic problems, setting policies that support the development of students' interpersonal and leadership skills, through extracurricular programs or student organization activities, setting policies that support the development of students' critical and innovative thinking skills, by providing challenging assignments and creative learning. (c) Resource Solutions: providing additional programs that improve skills, foreign language proficiency, and problem-solving ability, improving access to technology and information by providing computer, internet, and other information technology training for students and teachers,

improving collaborative learning among students by facilitating the use of technology, projects, and group research, providing skills and business training that can build competence and competitiveness for school graduates, improving access to distance learning resources to make graduates more competitive in the global market, providing education and training programs that can improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students. (d) Financing Solutions: seeking alternative sources of funding, such as scholarships, grants, or funding from private companies or institutions, optimizing the use of existing funds by conducting regular financial audits and identifying potential cost savings, developing fundraising and community participation programs, such as fundraising, donations, or participation in charity events, increasing transparency and accountability in school financial management by involving stakeholders in decision-making and monitoring the use of funds, developing cooperation programs with government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education, to obtain aid or funding support, creating a long-term financial plan and realistic school development strategy, so that existing resources can be optimized and used effectively and efficiently, improving the quality of financial management and school leadership by recruiting quality management staff and providing financial management training to school staff and administrators.

The gradual solutions have been implemented in both of these schools, so there is progress seen from year to year that has been made by the school/madrasah authorities because no problem is left unresolved. However, not all problems can be solved, even though various approaches have been taken, because the problems continue to develop and the number of students also increases every year. Therefore, the facilities must be continuously added according to the needs of the increasing number of students every year. Every problem must be addressed immediately because it can affect the performance of educators and education staff.

Both schools have focused on resolving the problems they face. The solution to teacher and dormitory counselor human resource problems involves the approach between teachers and the school principal and dormitory counselors and the dormitory head, which can be done through training, guidance, religious study, etc. Student problems can be solved through lectures, psychological approaches, home visits, etc. Issues related to policies can be resolved through mutual deliberation, joint religious study, etc. The principle is that all problems must be addressed by the school authorities and the results are very positive. In conclusion, the school principals in both of these schools have made efforts to solve problems that arise in proportion to their nature, even though after one problem is resolved, another problem may arise. But what is important is that the focus is on solving the problems.

The result of The Strategies

The results of the strategies implemented by both boarding schools to produce highly competitive graduates are (a) Effective teacher development that

impacts the quality of learning and improves academic performance, enabling students to compete nationally and internationally. (b) Improved learning processes, resulting in increased academic achievement and competitiveness at the national and international levels. (c) Innovative learning approaches that develop skills and competencies relevant to the job market and daily life, such as integrating project or problem-based learning that encourages students to solve problems and develop their creativity, using innovative learning technologies, such as learning software, video tutorials, or interactive simulations, to enhance learning effectiveness and quality, and applying cooperative learning models that promote social and collaborative skills. (d) Increased teacher competencies in developing effective and structured lesson plans, applying varied and innovative teaching methods and techniques, facilitating student learning responsively and inclusively, providing accurate and useful feedback to students, and developing non-academic skills, such as leadership, creativity, ethics, and independence, that are highly in demand in the future. They are also able to collaborate with fellow teachers, students, parents, and communities to improve overall learning quality. (e) Establishment of a quality culture that enhances student and school staff awareness of the importance of education quality and promotes harder work and commitment to achieving established standards, increased parent and community engagement in monitoring and supporting learning in the school, improved systematic supervision and evaluation of learning quality in terms of input, process, and output, to allow for timely and appropriate improvements, increased student, parent, and community confidence in the quality of education in the school, leading to more students choosing boarding schools as their primary educational institution, and encouraging continuous innovation and improvement in various educational aspects, making boarding schools more competitive and better institutions.

High school graduates in small towns or rural areas have more opportunities to continue their education at universities compared to graduates from areas with lower-quality education. With a competitive curriculum and appropriate guidance, high school graduates in small towns or rural areas have better opportunities to achieve their goals of attending universities and pursuing careers in their chosen fields.

Conclusion

This research concludes that both schools have implemented strategic management principles according to Hunger and Wheelen's concept, although there are limitations in terms of resources, particularly human resources. The environmental analysis conducted by the schools is based on logical-rational values and data, but the database is not yet complete. Both schools have formulated a strategic plan to produce highly competitive graduates using SWOT analysis and have defined their vision, mission, objectives, targets, strategies, and policies, although they are not yet fully implemented. The success of both schools is supported by their high-value systems, including theological and ethical values.

The strategic policies of both schools have been well-planned hierarchically, but they face limitations due to resource constraints. The programs implemented by both schools to execute their strategies follow Hunger and Wheelen's principles, although their application of teleological principles is broader than what is currently being utilized to achieve more effective and productive school objectives. The implementation of strategic programs by both schools adheres to Hunger and Wheelen's principles and high-value systems, including theological and ethical values. The strategic evaluation process applied by both schools follows the principles of strategic management evaluation by Hunger and Wheelen. However, the theological and ethical values often conflict with external situations and conditions in their families and surrounding communities. Both schools have inventoried and identified the obstacles that arise during program implementation and developed solutions for continuous improvement based on their value system. Both schools have implemented theological values to overcome the challenges and achieve problem resolution. The strategic management implemented by both schools has produced highly competitive graduates at the school, district, and provincial levels, although they have yet to achieve national and international recognition. Many have continued their studies at state universities, while others have been absorbed into the workforce, which is part of their successful outcome.

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