

New Student Admission Selection Strategy to Increase Competitiveness and Competitive Advantage in Integrated Islamic Vocational Schools

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Abstract

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The selection strategy for accepting new students is a stage of the process of accepting new students and an annual routine agenda that must be carried out by every educational institution where this activity must be carried out carefully so that the number and quality of students are as expected. Based on this, researchers are interested in researching selection strategies for accepting new students in order to increase competitive advantage. Based on this background, the objectives of this research are as follows: 1) To find out the selection strategy for accepting new students. 2) To determine the acceptance of new students at Daarur Abror IT Vocational School in order to increase competitive advantage. This research uses descriptive qualitative research, to collect data researchers use observation, interview and documentation techniques. The results of this research are, firstly, the selection strategy for accepting new students in order to increase competitive advantage uses the right selection strategy which uses tests as selection in the PPDB, consisting of academic tests, BTQ tests and interview tests, both prospective participants For new students, it is easier to process the costs, namely with the existence of scholarships, thirdly, in contrast to other schools, the school offers tahfidz entrepreneurship and the school also collaborates with other institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

The growth in the number of schools in Indonesia in 2022/2023 increased by 1.18% so that the total number of schools was 394,708, consisting of public and private schools (BPS, 2023). There are several government demands regarding the implementation of PPDB in public schools, such as the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 1 of 2021.(Permendikbud, 2021). In this case, schools are required to use a zoning system, affirmation, achievement, and transfer of duties by parents. (Zamjani et al., 2020). The existence of this regulation is a limitation for public schools to innovate because of the standardization of the system. This is different from private schools that are able to innovate and be creative in PPDB to get results according to the desired goals (Maulana, 2022; Meidianto et al., 2022; Rachmat & Arman, 2020). Although it seems that the process of accepting new students is an annual routine agenda that must be carried out by every educational institution, this activity must always be carried out carefully, which will produce various strategies or new

innovations, so that the number and quality of prospective students who successfully enter the institution are as expected.

Promotion strategy is a strategy for accepting new students without conducting selection. (Kratochwill et al., 2004; Wijaya, 2021). In this strategy all applicants will be accepted and adjusted to the acceptance quota. Once the quota is fulfilled, registration will be closed. (Lisdayanti et al., 2024). (Muhammad et al., 2022) His research entitled Strategy for Accepting New Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic, obtained results of a significant increase in the number of new student admissions over the past 3 years, where 2020 and 2021 were quite difficult years to be able to promote schools because they were hampered by the pandemic. (Efferi, 2019) The research results obtained that the strategies used were 1) PPDB activities were carried out together with MTS because they were from the same foundation, 2) Grade IX students were given convenience if they continued to MA, 3) utilizing the charisma of the kyai and ulama who founded the foundation, 4) recruitment of teaching and education staff also took into account the domicile factor.

This study has 2 objectives that can contribute to the strategy of new student admissions so that two questions are asked in this study. The first is How is the selection strategy for new student admissions at SMK IT Daarur Abror? This question aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the selection strategy for new student admissions at SMK IT Daarur Abror. The second question is how is the acceptance of new students at SMK IT Daarur Abror in increasing competitive advantage? This second question is to analyze the acceptance of new students at SMK IT Daarur Abror in increasing competitive advantage.

Although there are many studies discussing new student admission strategies (PPDB) in various educational institutions, most of these studies focus more on public educational institutions and the impact of government regulations, such as the implementation of zoning, affirmative, and achievement systems. These studies show that regulatory standards for public schools limit flexibility and innovation in new student admission strategies. In contrast, private schools have more freedom to innovate in the PPDB process. However, research on how private schools, especially SMK Islam Terpadu (SMK IT), use new student selection and admission strategies to increase their competitive advantage is still limited. Most studies focus on general promotion and admission without selection, but not many have explored how private schools, such as SMK IT, utilize this freedom to not only attract prospective students but also increase their competitiveness in the education sector. This study fills the gap in the literature by providing an in-depth analysis of new student selection and admission strategies at SMK IT Daarur Abror, and how these strategies help increase the school's competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive environment. This research not only broadens the understanding of PPDB strategies in private schools, but also provides practical insights for other schools who wish to improve their competitiveness through innovative approaches in PPDB.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative research (Aspers & Corte, 2019). This type of research was chosen because the data found was descriptive data and related to the strategy approach to accepting new students in increasing competitive advantage at SMK IT Daarur Abror Garut. In field research (field research) the most important thing is to collect data in the field (Sugiyono, 2010). A series of techniques used to collect data in the field require techniques that are appropriate to the data being sought, to ensure that the data collected is in accordance with expectations in compiling it. (L. Haven & Van Grootel, 2019).

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews and documentation. (Grbich, 2013). The data analysis model used in this study is the Miles and Huberman model which consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. (Miles et al., 2013). Data validity is the implementation of validation of research data. To validate this research data, data triangulation is used. Triangulation aims to check and confirm data (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the results of research that has been conducted at SMK IT Daarul Abror in the selection strategy is carried out using interview tests, academic competency tests, and BTQ (Reading and Writing the Qur'an). This was obtained in the results of the researcher's interview with Mr. Reza Fauzi as the head of PPDB at SMK IT Daarul Abror Garut

“The selection system here uses a test selection, in the test there are several stages, namely filling out the form, interview, academic competence and BTQ (Reading and Writing the Qur'an)”

This statement was reaffirmed through an interview with Mr. Enjang Tasdiq as the coordinator of the selection for New Student Admissions at SMK IT Daarul Abror Garut. “for the selection at SMK IT Daarul Abror school is done by means of a test. The tests are interviews, BTQ tests and the last is the Academic test”

From the statement above, it can be seen that the selection strategy carried out at SMK IT Daarul Abror Garut is carried out by taking several tests provided including interview tests, BTQ (Read and Write Al-Qur'an) academic competency tests and the last is academic competency tests. Based on the interview, it is known that the test system used in the first selection was an academic test, where the school uses a method where students come to school and take the test online where a barcode is given to be scanned by prospective students.

In an institution or school in increasing competitive advantage with other school institutions, there needs to be something very important to attract new prospective students, the thing that we need to analyze is in the form of benefits for new prospective students. Based on the results of the interview with the head of PPDB revealed that.

"In terms of competing with other schools, we need to see that the competition here is quite tight. Here in one sub-district alone at the SMA/SMK level there are 8 schools not to mention other sub-districts, even though one sub-district only consists of 5 villages. Here in competing for the attraction of prospective students we offer scholarship programs, among the scholarship programs are scholarships for the underprivileged, achievement scholarships, scholarships for orphans, scholarships for local residents, this scholarship program for local residents is to advance local sons. "

This was reaffirmed by the PPDB Team saying that,

"It should be noted in increasing competitive advantage with others, schools here offer several scholarship programs to new prospective students, the first is an orphan scholarship, scholarships for local residents, scholarships for outstanding students and the last is a scholarship for the underprivileged. "

From the interview results above, we can conclude that SMK IT Daarul Abror really looks at the surrounding conditions to attract students to register, one of which is by issuing scholarships. Uniqueness or difference with others to attract new prospective students and what distinguishes it from other educational institutions. Based on the results of the researcher's interview with the head of PPDB, he said that

"Building differences with other institutions is not only using SMK and its departments but with the Islamic boarding school itself, namely Hafidz Entrepreneur and Tahfidz Al-Qur'an or with SMK can continue, because the government's target for SMK schools is (BMW) Work, Continue and Entrepreneurship) now here we respond by if those who want to continue then we provide facilities, if there are those who want to work then we are also ready to facilitate them and if there are those who want to be entrepreneurs then we facilitate them by providing facilities during the students' studies at school with the school providing facilities with the existence of Teaching Factories or a type of entrepreneurship education"

The PPDB Head's statement was reaffirmed by the PPDB team, he said that. "The characteristic or difference that we highlight is by promoting that the school here has a tahfidz and entrepreneur program, and the school also facilitates if later there are those who want to continue to college and even if there are those who want to go straight to work, then we, the school, have collaborated with the MOU or company. Regarding the Teaching Factory, schools provide project-based learning where students work together, such as the culinary department to make products, DKV in the design section and for the digital business department as product marketing."

So we can conclude from the statement above that the school in its competitive advantage with other institutions, the school provides differences, including by promoting that the school here has a program, namely tahfidz entrepreneur, where the school here provides facilities for its students to memorize the Qur'an and can also be entrepreneurs, and the school also facilitates if there are students who want to continue to college, they are assisted.

Discussion

Based on the explanation above about the relationship in the research process using the observation, interview and documentation methods at SMK IT Daarul Abror Garut. In this discussion, it will be detailed according to the research focus that has been determined by the researcher. The following is an explanation of the research discussion related to the new student admission selection strategy (PPDB) in increasing competitive advantage at SMK IT Daarul Abror.

Selection strategies for accepting new students

Selection is part of accepting new students. According to Rifa'i, selection is an activity of prospective students in determining whether or not prospective students are accepted as part of the students at the educational institution based on applicable provisions. (Fathurohman, 2022; Sari et al., 2022). Selection in educational institutions is very important to do because it has a significant impact on the quality of education in an institution. The selection process can ensure that students who are accepted have the potential and qualifications that match the needs of the institution. The goal is to improve the effectiveness of learning, create a conducive environment and support the achievement of overall educational goals. According to Ali Imron, the selection strategy can be divided into 3 parts, namely based on DANEM (List of Pure Ebtanas Values) or UN, PMDK (Interest and Talent Search) and entrance test selection.

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, researchers found in the selection strategy at SMK IT Darul Abror Garut which is in accordance with the theory, namely the entrance test selection. In the selection of new students, the school divides it into 3 stages, namely academic tests, BTQ tests (Reading and Writing the Qur'an) and interview tests. The academic test is the first test carried out in the selection of new students, where the selection is held in the school. The academic test is carried out in the classroom but uses an online system, where students who are present are directed to scan the barcode that is already available. Then students will fill in their biodata and choose the major they are interested in, then they will enter the questions provided, but the questions are around the majors in the school but only basic questions. The second test conducted in the selection of new student admissions is the BTQ test (Reading and Writing the Qur'an), this BTQ test is to see students in reading the Qur'an, this test is used to determine student grouping, because the school here is based on Islamic boarding schools and there is a tahfidz program, students who are not yet fluent in reading the Qur'an will not be immediately put into the tahfidz class but to the basic stage.

Lastly in the selection process for accepting new students is the interview test, the interview test here is not only for students but also with parents. In the interview test, students will be asked about implementing existing regulations at school or Islamic boarding school, whether the selection of majors has been communicated with parents and so on. For parents related to the readiness of Islamic boarding school and school rules, existing payment administration. And directing the interests of prospective new students in choosing their majors. The new student admissions team officers will direct

according to interests and academic tests that have been carried out, and the potential for the future of these majors.

Selection of New Student Admissions in Increasing Competitive Advantages at IT Vocational Schools

Researchers found based on the theory of John A Pearce and Richard B Johnson that competitive advantage is divided into 3 indicators, namely low costs, differentiation and focus. (Pearce, 2014). Then, after conducting research, the researcher found that it was in accordance with Porter's theory, namely differentiation. (Islami et al., 2020). According to Kotler Armstrong, differentiation can be seen from the important, unique/different, communicable and difficult to imitate aspects.

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, researchers found important and distinctive/different in SMK IT Daarul Abror which is in accordance with the theory, namely important and distinctive. Important in education has a value that it has to help achieve the goals of an institution and meet the needs of students. Criteria that are considered important have a major influence on marketing strategies. In the context of education, something that is considered important is elements that have strategic value to achieve the goals of educational institutions and meet the needs of students. In SMK IT Daarul Abror, this important aspect is related to the curriculum, learning methods, educational facilities, or expertise programs offered. Each of these important elements supports the achievement of the school's vision and mission, such as preparing students to be competent in the field of information technology.

The distinctive features of SMK IT Daarul Abror can refer to something that distinguishes this school from other schools, especially in terms of educational approach and the uniqueness of the programs offered. For example, a focus on information technology with a strong practice-based learning approach may be an attractive distinctive feature. This distinctive feature not only makes this school unique, but also provides a competitive advantage in attracting prospective students. In a school's marketing strategy, aspects that are considered important and distinctive have a crucial role. These elements can be the main selling points that differentiate the school from other competitors. Highlighting the uniqueness and important values of the school's educational programs can help attract prospective students and parents, thus contributing to the success of new student admissions and the achievement of the school's growth targets.

As is done in SMK IT Daarul Abror by way of that it is important in providing convenience to register at school even up to 100% reduction in funding by holding scholarship programs for students. The criteria for the scholarship program at school are achievement scholarship programs, scholarships from underprivileged families and scholarships for orphans. In this case the school provides services for students in several scholarship programs, one of which is the underprivileged family scholarship program, here students provide evidence by bringing a certificate of poverty, and for the

achievement scholarship program students provide evidence such as bringing a certificate of achievement that has been achieved by students. And students must have memorized at least 1 juz, be willing to follow all existing rules, be willing to participate in a minimum of 1 year of service after graduation, be committed and ready to deposit 30 juz and 42 hadiths of Arbain An-nawawi, do not commit violations that exceed the maximum limit. If students are able to meet the criteria set by the school, they will receive the existing scholarship and if later students commit violations that exceed the maximum limit, their scholarship will be revoked and they may even be expelled by the school.

Characteristic The uniqueness or distinctiveness of a product or service can be shown in having added value that is not possessed by other educational institutions. Uniqueness or different can be a fairly effective strategy to attract prospective students. As is done by SMK IT Daarul Abror by being unique/different from others, namely by branding the school with "Hafidz Entrepreneur". Someone who is a hafidz can become an entrepreneur by the school facilitating the existence of a Teaching Factory. Teaching Factory is a learning approach designed to provide real learning experiences to students. SMK IT Daarul Abror also provides this facility to new students in order to increase the entrepreneurial spirit in the souls of students. And not only that, the school provides its difference, namely that SMK can continue, in the government's target for SMK schools to Work, Continue and Entrepreneurship, the school responds by providing facilities in the form of if there are students who want to continue to college, the school will help them, students want to become entrepreneurs, the school has provided facilities with the existence of a Teaching Factory. and not only that, the school also has an MOU or industrial partner.

This result is in line with research (Kenny et al., 2016), shows that schools that provide clear career paths, such as working, continuing education, or entrepreneurship, help students in directing their future. SMK IT Daarul Abror not only focuses on the educational aspect but also provides support for students who want to continue their education or enter the world of work and business. In addition, several researchers revealed that the best promotion emphasizes the importance of differentiation strategies to meet the needs of the labor market (Hasanefendic et al., 2016; Polidano & Mavromaras, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The selection strategy for accepting new students at SMK IT Daarul Abror is by conducting several tests, the selection process starts with academic tests, BTQ, and interviews. From the results of the selection, 100 students were accepted. In organizing the acceptance of new students, there are limitations in the acceptance quota which results in limited acceptance of students due to limited facilities and infrastructure. In increasing competitive advantage, schools provide facilities and services to students, namely by providing scholarship program facilities consisting of orphan scholarships, scholarships from underprivileged families and achievement scholarships. And to

provide services to students, namely providing assistance to students who want to continue their studies to higher education and providing assistance to those who want to become entrepreneurs by holding a Teaching Factory or subjects in the form of entrepreneurship lessons and schools have also collaborated with MOUs or companies. This research still has many shortcomings and is far from perfect. Therefore, it is expected to be one of the reference references in writing scientific papers and with the hope that more in-depth research will be developed regarding selection and competitive advantage in PPDB using more relevant and up-to-date theories.

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