

KH. SHOLAHUDDIN WAHID STRATEGY IN INCREASING THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF PESANTREN TEBUIRENG, JOMBANG, EAST JAVA

Asaduddin Luqman

Fakultas Tarbiyah, Institut Agama Islam Sunan Giri Ponorogo,
Jl. Batoro Katong No. 32, Desa Ronowijayan, Kecamatan Siman,
Kabupaten Ponorogo, Jawa Timur 63411, Indonesia.

M. Suyudi

Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Kependidikan,
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya,
Jl. Ahmad Yani No. 117, Komp. Jemur Wonosari, Kecamatan Wonocolo,
Kota Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60237, Indonesia.

Faisal Husen Ismail*

School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia,
Minden, 11800, Penang, Malaysia

Siti Marpuah

Jabatan Pengajian Islam, Pusat Pengajian Umum dan Kokurikulum,
University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia,
Hab Pendidikan Tinggi Pagoh (Kampus Pagoh)
86400 Parit Raja, Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia.

**Corresponding Author's Email: faisalhu@usm.my*

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out what KH. Salahuddin Wahid's public interest in sending his children to the Tebuiireng Islamic boarding school continues to increase. This research is a literature study using content analysis. KH. Sholahuddin Wahid chose efforts to increase the competitive advantage of the Tebuiireng Islamic boarding school to focus on two things. First, the physical construction of the Tebuiireng Islamic boarding school complex includes a dormitory for students to live

in, a mosque, and other supporting facilities. Second, students should strengthen their mastery of kitab kuning. One of them is by reopening Mu'allimin and reviving the Madrasah Diniyah so that Tebuireng students have the ability to read and understand kitab kuning as characteristic of pesantren salafiyah.

Keywords: *Pesantren Tebuireng, KH. Sholahuddin Wahid, pesantren salafiyah*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of Shalahuddin Wahid's leadership, public trust in the pesantren Tebuireng declined. A decrease in the number of pesantren Tebuireng students marks it. Pesantren Tebuireng students in 2007 when Salahuddin Wahid became a caregiver for 1,200 students. This is one of the concerns of caregivers who encourage to increase the competitiveness of the pesantren Tebuireng with the hope that its students will continue to grow.

After two years of Salahudin Wahid's leadership, there has been an extraordinary increase, even the number of registrants has increased by 100 percent from the number of registrants in the previous year. In 2009 there were 500 new students who entered the pesantren Tebuireng, while in 2010 the number of new students registered reached 1,000 students. The number of students who were in 2007 enrolled 1,200 students increased to around 4,500 students in 2019 (Wahid, 2020).

2.0 RESEARCH METHODS

The study uses a descriptive-analytical literature review based on text review. The data used consisted of primary data and secondary data. The primary data source that is a reference in this study is a book by Salahuddin Wahid entitled *Transformation of pesantren Tebuireng: Maintaining Tradition in the Midst of Challenges*, the book KH. Salahuddin Wahid on Islamic Education and pesantren, and *Gus Sholah: The Architect Unifying the Ummah* by Sahlul Fuad and friends. Secondary data sources used in this study are various books, journal articles, and other written documents related to the research theme.

The data collection technique used is a documentation technique. The data sources that have been inventoried are identified and clarified by conducting careful and systematic recording according to the purpose and needs. In this analysis, content analysis has been use a research method. Krippendorff defines content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.(Krippendorff, 2004)

3.0 STRATEGY TO INCREASE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF PESANTREN

The strategy, according to Drucker, is to analyze the current situation and change it if necessary, including figuring out what resources a person has and what should be done (Nabyla, 2014; Tajvidi & Karami, 2016; Wilkinson & Kannan, 2013). Porter

stated strategy is about how to create a company's unique and different position from competitors that involves a series of other activities (Kazmi & Kazami, 2015; Nabyła, 2014). Mintzberg describes the strategy in five ways. Strategy as plan, strategy as ploy, strategy as pattern, strategy as position, strategy as perspective (Ehnert, 2009; Hubbard et al., 2014).

On a broad level, we can identify three common strategies that are internally consistent and can be used singly or in combination to create a position that can be defended in the long term and outperform competitors. In the face of five competitive forces, there are three strategic approaches to outperform competitors: 1) cost leadership, 2) differentiation, 3) focus (Greco, 2020; Porter, 1998).

Competitive advantage by Porter's definition is a distinguishing feature of a company with a strong market position where the products produced can create unique value for buyers (Huggins & Izushi, 2012; Jenkins & Williamson, 2015; Porter, 2008). A strong competitive position arises only if there is a high degree of compatibility between the environment, strategy, and control system (Nilsson et al., 2020). According to Hooley, there are three main characteristics of resources that can create a sustainable competitive advantage (Dyer et al., 2017; Hooley et al., 2008): 1) Contribution to create customer value (Jannesson et al., 2013); 2) Uniqueness or rarity; 3) It cannot be imitated (Hitt et al., 2005).

Competitive advantage can be achieved by pesantren by creating better customer value than competitors with the same price or creating the same customer value with competitors with lower prices. Customer value is the difference between what the customer receives and what has been sacrificed by the customer (Zulfikar, 2011). The competitive advantage of pesantren can be built through the modernization of the education system without reducing the existing pesantren education pattern. Modernization is related to learning components consisting of students, ustadz, materials, learning methods and evaluation. The indicator of the competitive advantage of pesantren can be seen in the competence of its graduates (Amadin, 2021).

The modernization of pesantren education is an effort to make pesantren an educational institution that has a true cultural identity. Several efforts to modernize pesantren education: 1) Revitalizing the pesantren education paradigm; 2) Harmonizing between faith and science and technology; 3) Efforts to eliminate educational dualism; 4) Reforming the sorogan and bandongan system into a classical system and leveling; 5) Make the curriculum clearer (Mukri, 2013).

The competitive advantage of pesantren can be assessed by the community through the quality of their graduates. Both related to learning experiences, the ability to adapt, the ability to solve societal problems, and the ability to put oneself in the position of a person who masters religious knowledge in society (Inswide, 2021).

The competitive advantage of pesantren in Azumardi Azra's view is related to the ability of pesantren to organize a quality educational process to prepare students who have the basics of competitive advantage. In realizing this, pesantren must provide a wide space for school principals to organize and develop human resources and be able to communicate regularly with pesantren leaders, teachers, the community and the government (Azra, 2001).

Image is very influential for institutions because it is a picture of one's mind towards the institution, which is what the public sees. The institution's popularity, in general, is a competitive advantage in gaining public interest in the institution. Therefore, the institution tries to disseminate information as best as possible to give a positive impression to the community (Rezeki, 2021).

4.0 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF PESANTREN TEBUIRENG

Of the many pesantren in Java, Tebuireng is a pesantren that is always interesting to study. First, because the pesantren Tebuireng was founded by Hadratussyaikh KH. Mohammad Hasyim Asy'ary who is the main figure and founder of jam'iyah Nahdlatul Ulama. Second, Tebuireng has given birth to progressive figures in the field of pesantren education, namely KH. Wahid Hasyim is one of the BPUPKI members and once served as Minister of Religion at the age of 32. Third, Tebuireng has also made history with the election of KH. Abdurrohman Wahid who is better known as Gus Dur as the fourth President of the Republic of Indonesia (Noor, 2010).

In Greg Barton's view, pesantren is an Islamic religious school that provides dormitories for its students led by a Ulama with a special emphasis on Islamic education. Most pesantren located in rural areas and only deal with the implementation of traditional Islamic education. But in the last two decades, a number of pesantren have been established in urban areas, as there have been modern pesantren (Barton, 2002).

According to Ziemek, pesantren are educational institutions that are influenced and determined by the individuals of their founders and leaders who tend not to follow certain types of patterns. The goal is to spread knowledge, form a person and develop certain human attitudes. The strength of Islamic education in Indonesia lies in the pesantren system, where the dominant position of pesantren produces many scholars whose high quality is imbued with enthusiasm and perseverance in guiding, disseminating and strengthening the faith of Muslims (Ziemek, 1986).

This paper tries to present the efforts made by the caregivers of the pesantren Tebuireng in increasing the competitive advantage of the KH Salahuddin Wahid leadership eras. Because at the beginning of his leadership period, the public's interest in sending their children to the pesantren Tebuireng experienced a huge decline. This is as stated by KH Salahuddin Wahid when he was appointed as the caretaker of the pesantren Tebuireng replacing KH Yusuf Hasyim, that at the beginning of his leadership the condition of Tebuireng was not encouraging (Salahuddin Wahid, 2011).

The priority program to increase competitive advantage carried out by KH Salahuddin Wahid in accordance with his profession as an Architect is to carry out physical development of the pesantren Tebuireng. In 2005, the construction of the student dormitory building began and began to function in 2007. The completion of this new building marks a new tradition in the Tebuireng, naming the building according to the choice of the person who funded of the building. So this new building was named Wisma Suryo Kusumo. Then a second dormitory building was built named Wisma Haji Kalla. The construction of new buildings continues to be

carried out, namely Wisma Sholihah, Wisma Saifuddin Zuhri, and Wisma Ilyas (Salahuddin Wahid, 2011).

The first focus carried out by KH Salahuddin Wahid is to increase the competitive advantage of pesantren Tebuireng through the image of pesantren. The image of pesantren Tebuireng with modern, beautiful and clean building facilities. Starting from dormitory buildings, mosques, and other facilities, all of which have been renovated into modern and beautiful buildings (Ridwan, 2020). During his leadership, one of the concerns of KH Salahuddin Wahid was the issue of the cleanliness of the pesantren environment. So he implemented strict rules related to hygiene, health and food for the students. In a short time, the face and environment of the pesantren Tebuireng changed completely into a clean, neat and beautiful environment (Fuad, 2021).

The image of a pesantren can be formed from the identity, characteristics, or characteristics of the pesantren either in physical form such as mosque buildings, dormitories, schools or non-physical such as curriculum, pesantren traditions, or kiai charisma. To form the image of the pesantren, it can refer to the basic elements that become a pesantren tradition as stated by Dhofier, namely (1) the boarding school, (2) the mosque, (3) the students, (4) the teaching of the classical Islamic book, and (5) kiai (Dhofier, 2011).

The second program carried out by KH. Salahuddin Wahid is to restore the identity of pesantren Tebuireng as it was when it was first established. Pesantren Tebuireng is a "Kawah Condroidiumuko" to produce students who have a deep understanding of Islam (*tafaqquh fī al-dīn*) through their reading of the texts of kitab kuning.

In order to improve the quality of mastery of the kitab kuning, the pesantren Tebuireng collaborates with pesantren Lirboyo Kediri and pesantren Sidogiri Pasuruan. The cooperation is to send the ustadz from the two pesantren who will be assigned as ustadz who teach kitab kuning at pesantren Tebuireng (Mardiyah, 2012).

Based on the search carried out, it was found that several alumni of the Hasyim Asy'ary Islamic Religious Institute (now Hasyim Asy'ari University) could not read kitab kuning. So in 2008 KH Salahuddin Wahid reopened Mu'allimin with the hope that Mu'allimin graduates would be able to continue to Ma'had Aly or to foreign universities (Salahuddin Wahid, 2011).

The values implemented at Madrasah Muallimin Tebuireng are the values of sincerity, honesty, responsibility, hard work, tolerance or *tasammuh*. This value must be the grip of the students as a whole. This is in accordance with the views of the founder of pesantren Tebuireng, namely Hadratussyaikh KH. Hasyim Asy'ari (Mubarak, 2019). The great tradition in pesantren is to study Islamic teachings through the reading of the texts of kitab kuning. The main reason for the establishment of pesantren is to transmit traditional Islamic teachings as contained in the texts of kitab kuning (Bruinessen, 1995).

The importance of mastering kitab kuning for students in pesantren, Zamakhsari includes the teaching of classical Islamic books (kitab kuning) as one of the five basic elements that must be possessed by pesantren. In the past, the rooting of classical Islamic books, especially the writings of scholars adhering to madzhab Shafi'i, was the only formal teaching given in the pesantren environment. The other four elements are cottages, mosques, kyai and santri (Dhofier, 2011; Ziemek, 1986).

The acceleration of the development of the education sector in pesantren Tebuireng which was massive in the five years of KH Salahuddin Wahid's leadership as a caregiver, received recognition, the Rector of UIN Malang was interested in giving an award. In 2011, through an open senate session of UIN Malang, he was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa with a scientific oration entitled "The Transformation of Pesantren Tebuireng Maintaining Tradition in the Midst of Challenges". He was the first person to receive an Honorary Doctorate from UIN Malang (Fuad, 2021; Tebuireng, 2020).

Michael Porter's Competitive Advantage Theory states that strategy is a set of activities chosen by an organization to produce specific values that are different or better than competitors. One of the ways to increase competitive advantage is through the mastery of the yellow book as a characteristic of pesantren salafiyah.

The strategy to develop pesantren buildings includes two essential elements of pesantren, namely cottages and mosques. When discussing lodges, there are many parts physically. Buildings for dormitories where students live, bathhouses, canteens, rooms for the recitation of kitab kuning and formal education, libraries, and sports and cultural arts facilities. Even for pesantren libraries, Tebuireng has a very representative library and a very complete collection of kitab kuning that are rarely owned by other pesantren.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Efforts to increase competitive advantage can be made in three ways: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. Of these three methods, KH. Sholahuddin Wahid chose to focus on two things to increase the competitive advantage of pesantren Tebuireng. First, the physical construction of the Pesantren Tebuireng complex, which includes a dormitory for students to live in, a mosque, and other supporting facilities. Second, reopen Mu'allimin and revive the Madrasah Diniyah so that the students can read and understand the contents of kitab kuning. The first focus is to eliminate the impression that pesantren are synonymous with slums and untidy. The second focus aims to restore pesantren as producing students who deeply understand the Islamic religion (*tafaqquh fi al-din*). These two focuses were carried out by KH. During his leadership period, Salahuddin Wahid was appointed caretaker of the pesantren Tebuireng, replacing KH Yusuf Hasyim. These two focuses are carried out to increase the competitive advantage of the pesantren Tebuireng in the community, thus increasing the public interest in sending their children to pesantren Tebuireng.

Author Contribution

Luqman, A. Suyudi, M., Husen Ismail, F. & Siti Marpuah, the writing process involved the introduction, discussion on idea organization, language style review, and final draft editing, all of which were collectively carried out and completed by all parties involved.

Conflict of Interest

This manuscript has not been published elsewhere, and all authors have agreed to its submission and declare no conflict of interest regarding the manuscript.

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