



**THE STRATEGY OF BUILDING A BRAND IMAGE THROUGH THE
AVAILABILITY OF FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN AN EFFORT TO
INCREASE SCHOOL COMPETITIVENESS**

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to find out how schools make a brand image strategy utilizing available facilities and infrastructure to improve competitiveness. This study used a qualitative research method with a case study approach at Raden Umar Said Kudus Vocational School. The informants of this study were principals, teachers, students and school committees in Raden Umar Said Kudus Vocational School. The technique of collecting data is through observation and interviews. Based on the data analysis it was found that Raden Umar Said Kudus Vocational School in improving school competitiveness utilized the facilities and infrastructure owned. The utilization is carried out through sector strategy keys (key sector strategies) to build the brand image of the school in the community. The supporting factors are collaboration between Raden Umar Said Kudus Vocational School, the government, and the private sector, management of facilities and infrastructure, and utilization of facilities and infrastructure by students to create works. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are the lack of facilities and infrastructure technicians, the cost of maintaining facilities and infrastructure, and the lack of competency of teaching staff.

Keyword: competitiveness, facilities and infrastructure, brand image, vocational school

INTRODUCTION

In schools, educational goals will run well if supported by adequate equipment, so that goals can be achieved properly. Therefore, the government as the organizer of the national level of education has compiled educational facilities and infrastructure standards as stipulated in the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 19 of 2005 Article 42 which explains that each education unit must have facilities and infrastructure to support regular and continuous learning.

Educational facilities and infrastructure must be available to the maximum extent possible to support the implementation of the teaching and learning process, so that students can participate in the learning process comfortably and without obstacles. Because, not a few educational institutions that still have deficiencies in school facilities and infrastructure, so the teaching and learning process is hampered.

So important is the availability of educational facilities and infrastructure so that each institution competes to meet the standards of educational facilities and infrastructure to improve the quality of the learning process. In fact, the completeness of educational facilities and infrastructure is used to image themselves in the midst of society, one of which is done to attract prospective new students. Conversely, if the facilities and infrastructure are inadequate, it will make the community less interested in the school while reducing the competitiveness of the educational institution. In addition it also impedes the learning process of students, because students are less helped by the learning facilities.

Thus, to improve the competitiveness of educational institutions, forming a *brand image* school is one of the strategies used by a school. This is to address the increasingly competitive competition between educational institutions in an effort to convince the public to choose the educational institution as a choice. Or in other words educational institutions utilize *brand image* to recruit students while at the same time outperform other similar educational institutions.

An educational institution will have a *brand* and will give an *image* that the educational institution is good, favorite, excellent educational institutions, and others. The ability to build and shape *brand image* school's is very necessary to provide knowledge to the public to know an educational institution. One strategy in forming the *brand image* is through the facilities and infrastructure owned by an educational institution.

Research from Hung and Sheue Fu (2010) revealed that the model of planning and marketing structure *brand* in vocational schools has a positive impact on the *brand* and can be applied in different schools. The research was conducted at a vocational school in Taiwan that investigates management *brand* with a feasibility test method to understand the application of the structure and model of planning and marketing *brand* that is practiced.

From the description above, educational facilities and infrastructure can be used as well as possible to form *brand image* school's while supporting school activities. In addition, forming a *brand image* by utilizing school facilities and infrastructure can be a competitive advantage possessed by schools. Utilization of school facilities and infrastructure must be utilized as well as possible for the benefit of the school itself.

Based on the phenomena explained above, the general problem that is the focus of this study is how to improve school competitiveness. While the study's sub-focus is a strategy to build *brand image* through the availability of facilities and infrastructure. Specifically, the problems of this study can be elaborated as (1) How is the strategy to build a *brand image* through the availability of facilities and infrastructure in an effort to improve the competitiveness of SMK Raden Umar Said Kudus? (2) What are the supporting factors in the strategy of building a *brand image* through the availability of facilities and infrastructure in an effort to increase the competitiveness of SMK Raden Umar Said

Kudus? (3) What are the inhibiting factors in the strategy of building *brand image* through the availability of facilities and infrastructure in an effort to increase the competitiveness of SMK Raden Umar Said Kudus ?. The results of this study are beneficial for each (1) School Principal in providing information to schools for the improvement of facilities and infrastructure to support the learning process and improve school competitiveness (2) For teachers in providing input in managing and utilizing existing facilities and infrastructure (3) For Parents or School Committees in providing additional information related to the facilities and infrastructure of Raden Umar Said Kudus Vocational School (4) For further researchers as a reference to explore more deeply the strategy of building a *brand image* to improve competitiveness in educational institutions.

Competitiveness Competitiveness

is the ability possessed by educational institutions or schools in facing competition. Competition among educational institutions is currently something that must be done by educational institutions to maintain their existence in the world of education. This is a good thing because it will lead to a positive race, where competing together to realize one of the national goals, namely to educate the nation's life.

Furthermore, Mulyasana (2015: 230) explains that educational competitiveness is not intended to destroy or kill educational institutions as the military destroys its opponents in war, unlike businesspeople using competitive strategies to immobilize their competitors so that they gain as much profit as the amount. The improvement of educational competitiveness is intended so that schools or institutions of higher education can prepare the future of their students so that they can live in a time different from the time when they were studying. One of the key words of competitiveness in educational institutions is that the aim is not to overthrow one another as in other fields such as the military or the economy, but rather to try to prepare future generations.

Can be explained that competitiveness is the ability or strength possessed by educational institutions to try to be superior in certain things in order to face competition. The purpose of the existence of competitiveness is to be able to prepare the students' future so that they are ready to face challenges according to their times.

A positive image in the community will provide many benefits for a vocational school. This is based on the more positive consumers image of a SMK, the more consumers will be attracted to the SMK. This will result in more and more SMK service users.

Competition that occurs in the world of education is something that must be faced by an educational institution. To win it, you need a strategy to win it. The strategy is to strengthen one of the school components that are considered important to make its own characteristics compared to other educational institutions. Such as adequate facilities and infrastructure so that a vocational school will create its own image in the minds of the community.

Mulyasana (2015: 230) explains that a competition-(*oriented strategy Competitive Oriented Strategy*) is a competition conducted by openly competing. This strategy is divided into several sections, namely: (a) A total competitive strategy, which is a competitive strategy which is carried out by emphasizing the strengths and weaknesses of competitors. This pattern can only be done if all components of educational institutions that have reached a superior level in everything. This means that the school principal must have the courage to offer prices openly to the community because the prices offered are certainly more competitive than those offered by other parties. Schools can also offer quality and products openly because the quality and educational products in the educational institutions

are superior compared to other parties. Schools can also offer an open service system, because the education service system offered is superior to other parties. Before implementing this strategy, schools must have a competitive advantage over other schools. Because this strategy demands the totality of all school components as a whole.

a) *Tri-area Power System*, which is a strategy that uses three areas of power. To do this pattern, strategic decision makers must be able to place competitors in the middle of the work area of educational institutions, so that schools can master the competitive area. This pattern can only be applied if the position of educational institutions is already strong in all lines. This means that its core strength is superior, its reserve strength and supporting strength are already better than those of other parties. This pattern cannot be applied if the educational institution is weak. Unlike the total competitive strategy that uses all the superior components. The *Tri-area Power System* can only be used by educational institutions that are relatively superior in all lines, meaning that there is still an education component that is still below standard. However, the component is better than the components owned by other schools. (b) *Key Sector System Strategy*, which is a strategy that uses the key strength to be used as the only competitive tool. This strategy makes the component considered the most competitive of the other components featured in the competition. In each component of the school (facilities and infrastructure, human resources, capital, services, prices / costs, networks, management, etc.) there is certainly a component that is more prominent among other components. Through this component, schools must carry out marketing or large-scale publications, so that the public knows and feels that schools have advantages in these components. (c) *Door to Door System*, which is a market share control system that is carried out from the door to the door of the consumer. This pattern is very effective in dealing with large competitors and carried out in a climate of intense competition. The condition is that they must have professional field staff, possess tenacity, skills

communication, broad insight, and have many close friends. In the field of education, this pattern can be applied by visiting the pockets of prospective students, officials visiting prospective students, through parents, close friends, or people they respect. This strategy does not require advantages in every component of the educational institution, what is needed is only field staff who are able to convince prospective students, prospective guardians of students and the community to send their children to school at the school. (d) *Guerrilla Pattern*, i.e. a competition carried out by suppressing the opponent's power in secret. This pattern cannot be done openly, bearing in mind the competitors faced are those who have power in all sectors. The pattern of competition is not carried out on just one sector, but on several sectors, in several places, and in a changing climate. This strategy is carried out by looking at the existing environmental conditions, educational institutions must be able to map regions according to their culture and customs, or more specifically the school identifies the potential, hopes and aspirations of prospective students and prospective student guardians so that they can provide services as they expect.

If a SMK has advantages in any case compared to competitors, the right strategy to use is a total competitive strategy. However, if the surplus value held is only in one sector, such as facilities and infrastructure, then the right strategy to use is the *key sector system*. Namely by exploiting the advantages possessed in the form of facilities and infrastructure that already have a positive image in society to win the competition.

Availability of Facilities and Infrastructure

According to Syahril (2005: 2), facilities are elements that directly support or are used in the implementation of an activity, in the implementation of teaching and learning processes. These elements can be shaped: tables, chairs, chalk, blackboards, props and so on. Without educational facilities as mentioned above, of course the implementation of teaching and learning will be disrupted. For example, when in the implementation of teaching and learning the blackboard suddenly breaks down so that it cannot be used. This will certainly disrupt the course of the teaching and learning process because teachers cannot use the blackboard for the teaching process.

Mulyasa (2004: 49) argues that facilities are equipment and equipment that are directly used in supporting the educational process, such as buildings, classrooms, tables and chairs, as well as teaching tools and media, while infrastructure is a facility that does not directly support the course educational or teaching processes, such as the yard, garden, school garden, road to school. However, if the infrastructure is used for learning, for example a school park that is used as biology learning, a school yard for a sports field, then that is a means of education.

Educational facilities and infrastructure as well as all educational facilities should make a meaningful contribution to the course of the education process, including at SMK. So it needs to be managed properly. Educational facilities and infrastructure need to be maintained so that they continue to support the course of the education process.

Brand Image

According to Aaker in Susanto and Wijanarko (2004: 6), a *brand* is a distinguishing name and / or symbol (such as a logo, stamp or packaging) to identify goods or services from a particular seller, and distinguish them from goods or services that are produced by competitors. Finally, the brand signals the source of the product and protects consumers and producers from competitors who try to provide products that look identical. In other words, in the field of education *brand* that is inherent in schools makes a difference between one school and another.

According to Simamora (2006: 28), *image* is a relatively consistent perception in the long run (*enduring perception*). So it is not easy to form an *image*, so if it is formed it is difficult to change it. *Image* or image according to Kotler and Fox in Sutisna (2001: 83) is the sum of the images, impressions and beliefs possessed by someone against an object. While the image according to Kasali (2003: 30) is an impression that arises because of an understanding of a reality. Understanding itself arises because of the information. In education, the image attached to a school if it is formed and attached, it is not easy to change it. To change this requires an effort and strategy that is truly on target.

From some of the theories put forward by the experts above, it can be concluded that the *brand image* is a set of beliefs that are in the minds of consumers or the public about the impression of a brand, in this case is the school.

Educational institutions or schools must have a clear picture and purpose in building an image. After the image is formed, communication can be done with consumers or the public about the image of the institution. After that, educational institutions can analyze the results formed by the process of image formation and how strongly the image is inherent in the minds of consumers.

A positive image in the community will provide many benefits for a school. This is based on the more consumers positively portraying a school, the more consumers will be attracted to the school. This will result in more and more users of these school services.

Kotler and Kartajaya (2000: 485) state that brand image in the minds of consumers can be influenced by several factors, including: (a) Communication from other sources that are not necessarily the same as those done by marketers. Communication can come from other consumers, retailers, and competitors. (b) Consumer experience through an experiment conducted by consumers can change perceptions previously owned. Therefore, the amount of various perceptions that arise will form the total image of the brand (the overall image of a brand). (c) Product development: the brand's position on the product is indeed quite unique. On the one hand, it is an umbrella for the product, meaning that given the *brand*, the product can increase in value. On the other hand, product performance helps shape the *brand image* that underpins it and of course consumers will compare the product performance that has been felt with promises *brand* in the slogan.

From the opinion above, building a brand image of a SMK can be done by developing a product that is by developing facilities and infrastructure owned by the SMK. With this development, it will be able to shape the brand image in the community. This is done because the community will compare with other SMKs by looking at the existing facilities and infrastructure.

Vocational tools and infrastructure can be utilized as well as possible to form the *brand image* of a vocational school. By improving and developing vocational facilities and infrastructure as well as increasing *brand image* a positive in the community. the public as consumers will certainly compare SMK to one another. The advantage of competing with other SMKs is certainly through *brand image* positive of a SMK compared to other SMKs.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this research is qualitative research with a case study approach. Bogdan and Taylor in Moleong (2006: 4) suggest that this qualitative method is used as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people and observable behavior. While Arifin (2011: 140) revealed a qualitative descriptive method, which is a method that aims to describe how the actual conditions and phenomena, then described in the research report. Qualitative method is a process of research conducted naturally and naturally in accordance with objective conditions in the field without any manipulation, as well as the type of data collected.

According to Yin (2002: 1), case study research is a strategy when researchers have little opportunity to control the events to be studied. In addition, case studies can be conducted if the focus of the research lies in contemporary or contemporary phenomena.

The reason the writer chose this case study approach is because the writer aims to describe or describe systematically, actually and accurately about the problems in this study, namely facilities and infrastructure as *brand image* in the context of the competitiveness of Raden Umar Said Kudus Vocational School. Thus, the authors themselves can more easily find out the description of the object of research.

The informants in this study were students, school committees, school principals, vice principals in the field of Sarpras, and Vocational School teacher Raden Umar Said. The informant is the main informant who will research the interview in order to obtain data on strategies to build a brand image through the availability of facilities and infrastructure in an effort to improve school competitiveness.

From the data obtained in the field, then it will be analyzed qualitatively using interactive analysis models. The four components used in interactive analysis are data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions or verification.

This research will use triangulation with sources. According to Moleong (2006: 330) triangulation with sources is to compare and check the degree of trust in information obtained through different time and tools in qualitative research. Moleong (2006: 331) explains triangulation with sources can be done in several stages, namely: (1) comparing observational data with interviews, (2) comparing what people say in public with what is said in private, (3) Comparing what people say about the research situation with what is known all the time, (4) comparing the interview data with the contents of a related document.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Efforts to Improve the Competitiveness of Schools in SMK RUS

From the research conducted at SMK Raden Umar Said Kudus, it was found that from the beginning, namely in 2006, the SMK up to 2013 was classified as a place in place. That is because the majors in SMK RUS do not experience development or addition. At that time only had two majors, namely the Graphic Design and Graphic Production Department. Even this school got another name in the community, namely SMK Graphic.

In an effort to improve school competitiveness, in 2013 SMK RUS undertook massive construction in the field of facilities and infrastructure. The development is the construction of classrooms and practical space for 3 new majors, namely the Department of Animation, the Department of Visual Communication Design (DKV), and the Department of Software Engineering (RPL). The three majors were opened by RUS Vocational School because it is in accordance with the development of the era which is now a digital era. In addition, according to market demand (labor demand from companies) which currently requires many experts in the digital field to support companies.

In opening the three new majors, SMK Raden Umar Said Kudus received support from CSR from the biggest company in Kudus Regency, Djarum, through its CSR program, the Djarum Foundation. The support is in the form of building assistance along with the facilities and infrastructure that is in it. That is what makes the construction of facilities and infrastructure to support the three new majors faster.

After opening a class for the Animation, DKV and RPL majors for the first time in 2015, currently the facilities and infrastructure owned are getting better as time goes by. With the facilities and infrastructure that is owned, schools use it to shape the image of the school to the community including participating in vocational exhibitions and creating works that utilize school facilities to be published to the public.

One of the copyrighted works created by students is a 3D animated film entitled "Paso and the Brave". In producing the film, students use the animation studio in SMK RUS. This shows that the existing facilities at SMK RUS are put to good use by students. In addition, the existence of the film can make SMK RUS better known in the community.

From what has been done by the RUS Vocational School above, schools use what is explained by Mulyasana (2015: 235) in theory, which is using a *key sector system strategy*, a strategy that uses key strength to be used as the only competitive tool. This strategy makes the component considered the most competitive of the other components featured in the competition. In each component of the school (facilities and infrastructure, human resources, capital, services, prices / costs, networks, management, etc.) there is certainly a component that is more prominent among other components. Through this component, schools must carry out marketing or large-scale publications, so that the public knows and feels that schools have advantages in these components. In this case, SMK RUS makes good use of its facilities and infrastructure to compete with other similar schools.

Availability of Facilities and Infrastructure at SMK RUS

In the research that has been done, the availability of facilities and infrastructure at SMK RUS has basically met the standards set by the government as stipulated in the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 40 Year 2008. However, it is not enough if you want to be schools that can survive amid the many similar schools that are currently growing rapidly. There is a need for the ability to make SMK RUS into a school that is superior to other similar schools.

One of the efforts made by SMK RUS is to procure facilities and infrastructure to support laboratories in each department. The most prominent procurement of laboratory facilities is for the majors of animation, DKV, and RPL. At present, the facilities owned by the three majors are already very capable in supporting learning.

The three new majors, namely Animation, DKV, and RPL, are used by schools as a general representation of SMK RUS. With the availability of the three majors, it is expected to be a portrait to create a positive image in society.

At the moment the Graphic Design Department has 6 classes consisting of 3 classes, there are 3 classes, 2 classes are XI, and 1 classes are X. This shows a decrease in the number of classes from the last 3 years majoring in graphic design. This is influenced by many factors. The main factor in the decline in the number of classes is the concentration of schools which in recent years has been aimed at three new majors, namely animation, DKV, and RPL.

Meanwhile, the Graphic Production department at SMK RUS currently has 261 students consisting of classes X, XI, and XII, each of which has 3 classes. Facilities and infrastructure found in the graphic production department are 20 units of screen printing machines, 4 units offset machines, 1 unit semi-automatic acrylic cutting machines, and 1 unit digital printing machines.

However, the Department of Graphic Production has implemented a *teaching factory* as advised by the government to vocational schools. Currently the graphic production department receives orders from the public. Among them are screen printing and banner printing. With this *teaching factory* students are increasingly developing because what is done in school has in common when later in the workforce. Besides benefiting students, it also benefits schools. The school will have graduates who are truly skilled and ready to work when they graduate. Schools will also have a positive image in the community due to interactions between schools and the community through the teaching factory program.

Existing laboratories in the Department of Animation, DKV, and RPL at SMK RUS become one unit, namely in one building. The building was named "RUS *animation studio*". Although one building, but there is a separate room for each of these majors. The design in the building is also very unique because it is like a place to play and relax.

At present each of the Animation, DKV, and RPL majors has 100 computers to support the practice. As for the computer, each department is adjusted to the existing development in supporting learning. For example, an animation major that has Core i7 specifications, 16 GB RAM, and the latest graphics series. There is also room for coloring, sound, and photos / videography.

In the Animation department, currently has 218 students. Class X has 3 classes, Class XI has 2 classes, and Class XII has 2 classes. While there are 141 DKV majors, consisting of class X, there are 2 classes, class XI has 2 classes, and class XII has 1 class. In the RPL department, SMK RUS has 118 students. Of the 118 students consisting of class X there are 2 classes, class XI has 1 class, and class XII has 1 class.

The three majors in the last three years have had developments. That is the number of students who are increasing from year to year. So that the class opened is also increasing.

It is inseparable from the participation of schools that focus on these three majors, including by having qualified laboratory facilities.

At present, in the Department of Animation, DKV, and RPL have also implemented a system *teaching factory*, where it starts when the students' work, 3D animated films, airs on TV and makes SMK RUS known so that it gets an order from a film production house for *coloring* a film. Even now students are working on orders from companies to make an ad on TV.

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