

The Influence of Uniqueness of Resources on Competitive Advantage in Private Higher Education

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Abstract

Competition in the field of education among universities, especially private higher education, is very tight and not easy, especially in getting students. The industrial era 4.0 and the Covid-19 Pandemic require universities to be able to compete for both at regional and global levels. The uniqueness of resources is one of the keys to gain a competitive advantage. Assets and special skills or abilities of a tertiary institution are the basis of competition to provide a competitive advantage. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the uniqueness of resources on the competitive advantage of private higher education. This survey was carried out on 120 respondents spread across 12 (twelve) private higher education in Palembang City. The sampling technique was random stratification based on the shape of the college. The results of this study are expected to be input for managers and administrators of private higher education to produce superior universities. Through its resources, universities can improve their reputation both at regional and global levels. The uniqueness of resources will increase the bargaining value for collaborating with other universities both in Indonesia and with universities at the international level.

Keywords

The uniqueness of the resource, competitive advantage, private higher education.

1. Introduction

In an era like today, business competition is getting stronger so that the strategy that is carried out by every business or business must be given more attention. The current competitive condition can be said to be in a condition where rapid changes are occurring, from increasingly advanced technology to trade with the globalization system. Therefore, an organization must be able to adapt its circumstances to these changes and must be able to keep up with the changes that occur (Suharto & Devie, 2013). Competition in the business world is difficult to avoid, so companies or organizations are asked to understand and fulfill consumer desires (Supranoto, 2011).

Competition in the field of education among tertiary institutions, especially private higher education is very tight and not easy, especially competition in fighting over the student market (Gunarto & Syarif, 2014). Companies must have special abilities that become their competitive advantages so that they can survive and run well in business competition (Jayaningrum & Sanawiri, 2018). Assets and special skills or abilities of a company are things that form the basis of competition to provide competitive advantage (Man, 2011). The positive impact of the tight competition in private higher education is in the form of quality improvement in services and quality improvement in education, while the negative impact is in the form of a decreasing number of students so that it can turn off private higher education, as said (Khotimah, 2012). This condition usually occurs because private higher education still depends on tuition fees (education development donations), IDD fees (institutional development donations), and tuition fees for each student. The sustainability of private higher education in Indonesia still depends on the number of students it has acquired (Wahyudin, 2015). College rankings are interesting because they can be a selling point and a challenge for

universities (Gunarto & Gaffar, 2016). Based on PDDIKTI and WEBOMETRIC rankings, private higher education in the city of Palembang is still unable to compete with other universities, especially universities on the island of Java.

This could be because private higher education in the city of Palembang does not yet have good and unique resources to be a competitive advantage. With the increasingly fierce competition, private higher education must be able to understand how to manage its resources (Dewi, 2016). To minimize various weaknesses and maximize the various abilities or strengths they have, private higher education must precisely choose and determine the strategy to be used in competition (Miraza & Hafas, 2016) so that it cannot be easily imitated by competitors (Ciptagustia, 2019).

Conceptually, companies or organizations have many capabilities to enable them to compete in the market (Awang et al., 2007). To reduce various weaknesses and increase the variety of strengths it has, private higher education must choose the right strategy and determine the strategy to be used in competition (Miraza & Hafas, 2016) so that it cannot be easily imitated by competitors (Ciptagustia, 2019). This study tries to analyze the resources possessed by universities which are their competitive advantages. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the uniqueness of resources on the competitive advantage of private higher education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The uniqueness of the Resource

A unique resource is a collection of tangible or intangible assets owned by a company. Tangible assets are in the form of physical facilities or equipment and land, while intangible assets are in the form of company reputation, human resources, and mastery of technology and information. (Sopandi, 2017). Distinctive capabilities are the ability of a company or organization to generate a competitive advantage through its uniqueness which is the result of a combination of the company or organizational internal resources such as innovation and reputation as well as the company's external environment that competitors cannot easily imitate. (Rothschild & Kay, 1996).

Special abilities are the basis of competition for profit. In the competition that is carried out, the special abilities possessed by a company or organization serve as a source of competitive advantage over competitors (Darsono et al., 2016). Special abilities have to do with the uniqueness of resources because they are different from those of competitors (Lisnawati, 2019). The special abilities possessed by a company or organization are driven by knowledge, technology, and behavioral routines that contribute to competitive advantage (Awang et al., 2007). Distinctive capabilities or special abilities are the combinations of resource competencies and competencies of the company that is different from competitors, such as innovation and high productivity, which are the keys to the success of a company or organization to make consumers feel satisfied (Cheese, 2008). Distinctive capability is one strategy for developing competitive advantage (Weerawardena, 2003), increase competitiveness (Kaur & Mehta, 2017), one of the factors to advance private higher education (Harzing & Giroud, 2014), and is also one of the keys to achieving competitive advantage (Li & Liu, 2014).

Every business or business can compete. Of course, the capabilities possessed by the company must be better than competitors so that the company can be superior to its competitors (Day, 1994). The uniqueness of special resources or capabilities has 3 dimensions, including access extensive support and resources, effective management, and strong market orientation capabilities (Ghosh et al., 2001).

2.2 Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is the virtue or advantage of a company or organization that is obtained through bidding with a lower value than competitors or offering high prices but with great benefits (Suharto & Devie, 2013). Companies that have a competitive advantage can detect changes in the market and have an effective strategy (Hakim & Faizah, 2018). The source of competitive advantage is the strength of the company to maintain the advantages of its capabilities and resources (Tampi, 2015).

The competitive advantage of a company or organization is based on unique or special resources and acts as a barrier to imitation by competitors (Miraza & Hafas, 2016). Competitive advantage is the output from the implementation of a planned strategy in which various company-owned resources are utilized. The source of competitive advantage is viewed through unique assets or special abilities. Unique resources or assets are real resources or assets needed by the company to manage its strategy in competition with competitors (Dewi, 2016). Companies that can create value for customers or consumers can make their competitive advantage grow (Rahmasari, 2011). Indirectly, the competitive advantage of private higher education can be obtained from unique resources which are its special abilities (Teece et al., 1997). The competitive advantage of private higher education can be created by developing distinctive values that are difficult for competitors to imitate (Wen-Cheng et al., 2011). The competitive advantage of long-lasting private higher education can make private higher education superior to its competitors for a long time (Liu, 2013) and can also create better value for its customers (Dereli, 2015).

Companies that can survive and grow are companies that have competitive advantages and can meet consumer needs and produce quality products (Fatonah, 2009). The core or center of marketing performance in facing competition is a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is also defined as a company or organization's strategy when working together for the sake of creating an effective competitive advantage (Dalimunthe, 2017). The dimensions of competitive advantage consist of competitive price, not easily replaced, rare, unique, and not easy to imitate (Supranoto, 2011).

3. Method

The method used in this research is multiple regression to analyze the quantitative descriptive nature. This study has two variables, namely the independent and dependent variables. The uniqueness of resources is the independent variable while the competitive advantage is the dependent variable. In this study, there are 3 independent variables that explain the uniqueness of the resource, so that this study uses multiple regression analysis.

4. Data Collection

The population in this study is private higher education. The number of private higher education in Indonesia is around 4,500 agencies. Due to limited space and time and a large population, the sample of this study was reduced to 12 private higher education in the city of Palembang. Researchers have distributed questionnaires to 120 respondents online. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling, while for data collection, the technique used was by distributing questionnaires. The statistical analysis technique used is multiple regression analysis.

5. Result and Discussion

5.1 Respondent Profile

The unit of analysis in this study was 12 samples of private higher education. This research involved 12 private higher education in Palembang city. This research data was collected through a questionnaire that was distributed online to students. The questionnaire covers a section that assesses the effect of the uniqueness of resources on competitive advantage. Respondents who have filled out the questionnaire in this study are divided into two, namely 79.4% women and 20.6% men with an average age range of 21 years.

5.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1. Description of respondent's answer to resource uniqueness variable

Indicator	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Access Extensive Support and Resources	120	2.80	5.00	4.0083	0.49410	0.244
Effective Management	120	3.00	5.00	4.0333	0.53347	0.285
Strong Market Orientation Ability	120	3.00	5.00	3.9500	0.57027	0.325

Table 1 shows that the mean value for the indicator of broad access to support and resources is 4.0083, while the maximum value obtained is 5.00 and the minimum value is 2.80. This broad access to support and resources discusses what kind of access to support can increase the competitive advantage of a private higher education and how the uniqueness of the resources of a private higher education can increase its competitive advantage. The mean value of the indicator for effective management of 4.0333. The maximum value is 5.00 and the minimum value is 3.00. This indicator discusses the relationship between management in a private higher education so that it can be an ability for its competitive advantage. The mean value for the indicator of a strong market orientation ability of 3.9500. The maximum value is 5.00 and the minimum value is 3.00. This indicator of a strong market orientation ability discusses how strong the market orientation of a private higher education is so that it can be its ability to gain a competitive advantage.

Respondents' answers regarding the competitive advantage variable are divided into 5 indicators with 20 statements. This variable of competitive advantage consists of 5 indicators, namely: unique, competitive price, not easy to imitate, rarely found, and not easily replaced. The five indicators of this variable got a mean value of 4.0285 with a maximum value of 5.00 and a minimum value of 2.94.

5.3. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer the research hypothesis. The results of modeling using SPSS obtained a correlation value (R) of 0.825 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.680. This means that there is a very close relationship between the uniqueness of the resource and the competitive advantage of higher education. The power of the model can explain the data variation by 68%.

Table 2. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	16.243	3	5.414	82.278	.000 ^b
Residual	7.633	116	.066		
Total	23.877	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantage

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strong Market Orientation Ability, Effective Management, Access Extensive Support, and Resources

Table 2 shows that the F-value is 82.278 with a p-value of 0.000, because the p-value is smaller than 0.05, the hypothesis which states that "there is no effect of the uniqueness of resources on higher education competitive advantage" is rejected. Thus the uniqueness of resources as seen from the Strong Market Orientation Ability, Effective Management, Access Extensive Support, and Resources together has a significant effect on competitive advantage. The higher the level of uniqueness of the resources, the higher education will be in facing competition.

Table 3. Partial Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.961	0.202		4.758	0.000
Access Extensive Support and Resources	0.562	0.085	0.620	6.588	0.000
Effective Management	-0.009	0.070	-0.010	-0.122	0.903
Strong Market Orientation Ability	0.215	0.057	0.274	3.764	0.000

Table 3 shows the regression coefficient (B) for the Access Extensive Support and Resources variable of 0.562 with a t-value of 6,588 and a p-value of 0,000, meaning that there is a positive effect of Access Extensive Support and Resources on the competitive advantage of universities and the effect is statistically significant because p-value less than 5%. The regression coefficient (B) for the Effective Management variable is -0.009 with a t-value of -0.122 and a p-value of 0.903, meaning that there is a negative effect of Effective Management on the competitive advantage of higher education which is very small and statistically insignificant because the p-value is higher. greater than 5%. The regression coefficient value (B) for the Strong Market Orientation Ability variable is 0.215 with a t-value of 3.7644 and a p-value of 0.000, meaning that there is a positive effect of Strong Market Orientation Ability on the competitive advantage of universities and the effect is statistically significant because of the p-value. less than 5%. The unique resource factor that most dominantly influences the competitive advantage of higher education is Access Extensive Support and Resources, which is 62%, followed by the Strong Market Orientation Ability factor of 27.4%.

The results of this study indicate that the uniqueness of resources has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage. This is in line with research conducted by (Ciptagustia & Kusnendi, 2019). The highest indicator is access to broad support and resources. Private higher education need to get support from other parties such as the government and must also develop their resource capabilities so that they have a wider network. Strong market orientation ability is the second factor that influences competitive advantage. The uniqueness of special resources or abilities has a significant relationship (Darsono et al., 2016). The better and the more unique the resources of a private higher education, the stronger the competitive advantage will be (Gunarto et al., 2021). Unique resources can be a marketing strategy for private higher education to gain a competitive advantage (Gunarto et al., 2016). If a private higher education has a strong competitive advantage, there will be many students who are interested in enrolling in the private higher education and it can also be a strategy to build private higher education loyalty and improve the image and reputation of the private higher education (Gunarto et al., 2018). Competitive advantage is based on unique resources (Miraza & Hafas, 2016) and is a real asset for managing competition (Dewi, 2016). Private higher education

must develop new values or ideas to maintain their excellence because the advantages they have now cannot last forever (Porter, 1990). New values or ideas that are developed must be rare and incomparable (Wright et al., 1994).

The RBV (Resource Based View) theory views company resources and capabilities as important things for companies because they are the main or basis of company competitiveness and performance capabilities, as well as for universities. Resource advantages can be from tangible and intangible assets (Sopandi, 2017). Tangible assets can be in the form of campus buildings or university buildings, elevators, electronic devices such as computers, vehicles, or transportation to carry out university activities, university alumni, university cooperation, and so on. Meanwhile, intangible assets are in the form of a university brand or good name, university image, university quality, and so on. In recent years, there has been much debate about the role of marketing in the competition (Weerawardena & Mavondo, 2011). The uniqueness of resources is one of the marketing roles to make private higher education excel. Choosing a private higher education is not easy, and one must be careful because it has to consider the future (Gunarto et al., 2016). The image of the university is an intangible asset of the uniqueness of the resource. Therefore, to increase their excellence, private higher education need to improve their image so that they can build trust in prospective students (Gunarto et al., 2018).

Strategies to improve competitiveness are important for private higher education to be superior to competitors (Kaur & Mehta, 2017). Unique resources such as better quality than competitors can make private higher education produce output, namely quality graduates (Miraza & Hafas, 2016). Private higher education must have a competitive advantage in order to manage dynamic businesses (Liu, 2013). The right strategy and unique or different values can provide advantages for private higher education, namely being superior in the competition (Dereli, 2015). Private higher education that have competitive advantages always have the ability to understand changes that occur in the market structure so that they can determine the right and effective marketing strategy (Rahmasari, 2011). The increased competitive advantage of private higher education will be able to improve the performance of these private higher education (Suharto & Devie, 2013). The unique resources possessed by private higher education can strengthen the promotions carried out by private higher education to get many prospective students (Wen-Cheng et al., 2011).

Every private higher education is required to be able to innovate, add and maintain its capabilities or uniqueness of its resources so that it can last long in the world of competition (Wahyudin, 2015). Special abilities such as the uniqueness of the resources of private higher education that are equipped with innovations can make it difficult for competitors to duplicate them (Weerawardena, 2003). In addition, private higher education must optimize their resources and adjust their strategies to develop their competitive potential in a sustainable manner (Liu, 2013). Most businesses have few superior abilities that allow them to outperform the competition (Day, 1994). The uniqueness of the resources that are the special abilities of private higher education will also affect the core competencies of private higher education (Mok Kim Man, 2009). One of the things that can improve the decision of prospective students in choosing higher education institutions, especially private higher education, is to develop their uniqueness or special abilities, better planning, and innovation (Nurwantika & Fakhruddin, 2016). With the existence of research on this unique resource, private higher education can analyze their competitiveness and advantages in competing (Darsono et al., 2016).

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that the uniqueness of resources has a significant effect on the competitive advantage of private higher education. Increasingly unique resources will open up opportunities for universities to be able to collaborate with other institutions, which in turn will increase their competitive advantage. The uniqueness of resources is not only human resources but can be in the form of unique facilities or technologies. The most dominant resource from higher education, especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic as experienced now, is human resources. For this reason, the management of private higher education must be able to provide unique resources, especially human resources, who can build a unique system or learning so that other universities cannot easily imitate them.

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