



Visionary Leadership and Corporate Culture for Increasing Competitiveness and Customer Interest toward Transformative Islamic Education

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Abstract

Visionary leadership and corporate culture have an important role in increasing competitiveness and customer interest. This study aims to describe visionary leadership and corporate culture in increasing the competitiveness and interest of customers of transformational Islamic education. This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach in the form of a literature review (library research). The analysis technique used is content analysis. The results of the study on visionary leadership and corporate culture in increasing competitiveness and customer interest in this transformative education found: 1) Efforts to increase customer interest require the accuracy of the leader's vision regarding the characteristics of the interests and satisfaction of the targeted or expected customers and educational program models that are in line with it and the existence of benchmarks for service standards that are in demand by customers and are realized in the service programs offered, both in terms of reliability, sensitivity, certainty, empathy and its form, 2) Customer interest is also influenced by the leader's vision in winning the competitiveness through a low-cost approach, service differentiation, focusing on strengthening competition in the same service program, or a diversification approach, 3) Efforts to increase competitiveness and customer interest must be built on the basis of an ideal and progressive organizational culture by prioritizing the principle that culture is not just regulations, in accordance with the conditions and movement of the institution's progress, in accordance with the challenges faced by the institution, can be followed by all members and truly implemented by all members.

Keywords: Visionary Leadership, Corporate Culture, Competitiveness, Customer Interest, Transformative Islamic Education.

Introduction

The progress and decline of an institution, whether in the form of a state, organization or community group, is also determined by the leader and his leadership behavior. Leadership is part of the process of influencing the activities of an organized group towards achieving goals (Andari, 2022). Leadership is identified with a person's ability to influence others (subordinates) in such a way that others want to do the will of the leader even though personally it may not be liked (Rosyaad, Maunah, & Patoni, 2024). Because the concept of leadership is based on a person's ability to influence others in achieving common goals, leadership theory continues to develop often the dynamic development of human character (as a leader or led) (Aryatnaya Giri, 2021).

Leadership theory is basically a generalization of a series of leader behaviors and leadership concepts, highlighting the historical background, the causes of the emergence of leadership, the requirements to be a leader, the main characteristics of the leader, the main tasks and functions, and the ethics of the leadership profession. Because it is generalized, it is possible for various leadership experts to propose theoretical approaches to leadership that have similarities. 'Situational' leadership, for example, is part of the leadership approach studies of Sadler, Northouse, Hoy & Miskel, Gill, and Yukl. The 'transformational' approach is a study of Sadle, Hoy & Miskel (Husaini Usman, 2014). Meanwhile, visionary leadership is one of the serious concerns of Robins and Quikley. The importance of visionary leadership in Seng's eyes is based on the phenomenon of dynamization, that an organization will only be able to adapt to changes if it is able to make itself appear as a learning organization, which is an organization built by people who are constantly willing to expand their capacity in order to achieve the common goals that have been set (Anwar, Maris, Handayani, & Assyauqi, n.d.).

One of the problems of dynamization and cannot be avoided by a company or educational institution either engaged in products or services is the problem of competitiveness and customer interest. This literature review seeks to find answers related to visionary leadership characteristics, corporate (organizational) culture in relation to efforts to increase competitiveness and customer interest in transformative education.

Literature Review

Visionary leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes a leader's ability to look far ahead, formulate the organization's future direction, and inspire all members to realize that vision. Visionary leaders play a crucial role in guiding change, fostering innovation, and ensuring the organization's relevance to the dynamics of the external environment. In the context of Islamic education, visionary leadership becomes a strategic factor in fostering institutions that are adaptable and responsive to the challenges of globalization without abandoning Islamic values (Rosyaad, Maunah, & Patoni, 2024). Shobri, M.'s (2025) research indicates that the head of madrasah's visionary leadership influences institutional competitiveness thru curriculum innovation and improved quality of educational services. Similar results were obtained by Khoriroh, F., et al. (2024), who stated that visionary leaders

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are capable of creating significant changes in teacher quality and the development of madrasah flagship programs.

Beside visionary leadership, corporate culture is a crucial internal factor determining the organization's success. Schein (2017) defines organizational culture as a system of values, beliefs, and norms that guide the behavior of organizational members in achieving common goals. A strong organizational culture fosters synergy, boosts productivity, and builds social cohesion among institutional members (Febrianti, I., et al., 2025). In Islamic educational institutions, an organizational culture based on religious and professional values can shape the character of a highly competitive institution (Hojanto & Irwanti, 2022). The research by Shafrani, et al., (2022) confirms that an adaptive, participatory, and results-oriented organizational culture is capable of improving institutional performance after structural changes, such as those that occur in post-merger institutions. This result aligns with the research by Prasetyo, H. D. (2024), which shows that a positive organizational culture can strengthen the oversight function and improve the quality of financial reporting for institutions, which in turn supports reputation and public trust.

Competitiveness in educational institutions is the ability to offer superior and more valuable services compared to other institutions. Wiratmuko, B., et al., (2023) explain that competitiveness stems from a combination of comparative and competitive advantages, enabling organizations to provide greater value to customers. In the world of education, this excellence is manifested in the quality of learning, curriculum innovation, management effectiveness, and excellent service to students (Maulidin, S., et al., 2024). Research by Wiratmuko, B., et al., (2023) shows that differentiation strategies and innovative services are key to improving institutional competitiveness amidst intense competition in the service market. Meanwhile, Sholeh, M. I., (2023) adds that a strategy focused on a specific market segment can help institutions maintain an advantage amidst rapid environmental changes. In the context of Islamic education, institutional competitiveness is not only measured by academic aspects, but also by the institution's ability to shape the character and morals of students according to Islamic values.

Customer interest in the world of education is closely related to public perception of the institution's quality, credibility, and excellence. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), customer interest is the result of cognitive and affective processes influenced by experience and trust in an institution. Nurohman, D. A., (2024) explains that increased customer interest in Islamic educational institutions is not only determined by academic achievement, but also by moral reputation, friendly service, and a conducive learning environment. The research by Stansyah et al. (2023) indicates that customer interest is also influenced by emotional factors, ease of service access, and effective communication between the institution and customers. In transformative Islamic education, institutions are required not only to market their programs but also to build emotional and spiritual connections with the community.

The relationship between visionary leadership, organizational culture, competitiveness, and customer interest is mutually reinforcing. The research by Ismail, F. et al., (2025) confirms that transformational, vision-oriented leadership is capable of fostering an innovative

organizational culture, which in turn increases public trust and customer interest in Islamic educational institutions. Meanwhile, the research by Maksum, A., et al., (2025) shows that the synergy between the leader's vision and the organization's value system results in a significant increase in the institution's competitiveness in the digital era. This is supported by the findings of Supriyanto (2024), who emphasizes the importance of leadership communication strategies in maintaining the consistency of the organization's vision, values, and services to remain relevant to customer needs. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions that aspire to be transformative and competitive must integrate strong visionary leadership, an adaptive organizational culture, and a service orientation focused on customer needs and expectations.

Research Method

This research uses the library research method. Library studies are related to theoretical studies and several references that will not be separated from scientific literature. The main characteristics of library studies according to Zed (2019) include: 1) Researchers are dealing directly with text or numerical data and not direct knowledge from the field or eyewitnesses in the form of events, people, or other objects; 2) Library data is ready-to-use, meaning that researchers do not go anywhere except to deal directly with source material that is already available in the library; 3) Library data is generally a secondary source, meaning that researchers obtain second-hand material and not original data from the first hand in the field; and 4) The condition of library data is not limited by space and time. Data sources come from searching related literature obtained from journals and books on prophetic leadership, and Islamic education. Data collection techniques through related references, both offline and online. The data obtained is then processed to become more complete and up-to-date. Data analysis uses direct analysis through literature.

Result and Discussion

1. Visionary Leadership

Visionary leadership is described as the leader's ability to create, formulate, communicate/socialize/transform and implement ideal thoughts that come from within himself or as social interactions among organizational members and stakeholders who are believed to be the future ideals of the organization that must be achieved or realized through the commitment of all personal (Tim Dosen Pendidikan Administration University of Education Indonesia, 2009). The leader's ability to create and articulate a realistic, believable, attractive vision of the future for an organization or organizational unit that continues to grow and improve to date (Bakhtiar, 2022). Visionary leadership in an organization can be seen from a number of indicators, a) Leaders have the power to achieve organizational goals, this is based on formal or non-formal legitimacy attached to the leader, b) Leaders are more free to create creations and innovations to develop the organization, c) Higher career opportunities as a reward for achievements, d) Can do more for the benefit of others / society (Abdullah, 2022).

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Visionary leadership as presented by Supriyanto (2024) is built on four elements, a) Vision as a fundamental source of power (vision is an attribute of leadership of an institution that makes the direction and purpose of the institution in the long term, and more importantly the vision offers direction and a map to the future and becomes a guide / instructions for the organization on how to interact to achieve what they want), b) Values as the foundation of the vision (organizational values as rules or guidelines by which the organization urges its members to behave consistently with orders and developments, c) Mission and goals, the mission of an educational institution responds to what it wants to achieve, d) Strategies and tactics in implementing the vision required strategies and techniques. Strategies provide integrated direction for the organization and various organizational goals, and provide guidelines for the use of organizational resources used to achieve goals (Agustin, Utami, Kushariyadi, Suprayitno, & Dwiwijaya, 2024).

Furthermore, in terms of achievement, the success of visionary leadership as stated by Robbins (in Wahyudi) is determined by the leader's ability in terms of, a) Ability to explain the vision to others (Leaders need to explain the vision in terms of required actions and goals through clear oral and written communication), b) Able to express the vision not only verbally but through leader behavior (leader behavior that continuously encourages the achievement of the vision), c) Able to expand the vision to different leadership contexts (ability to sequence activities so that the vision can be applied to various work situations in an organization) (Wahyudi, 2009).

2. Corporate Culture

Corporate culture can be defined as a system of values, beliefs, assumptions, or norms that have long been valid, agreed upon and followed by members of a company as a guide to behavior and solving company problems. Corporate culture is also called organizational culture, which is a set of values or norms that have been relatively long in effect, shared by members of the company (employees) as a norm of behavior in solving company problems. Corporate culture is an invisible social force, which can move people in a company to carry out work activities. Each person in a company unconsciously learns the culture that applies in his company. A strong corporate culture supports company goals, while a weak or negative one hinders or contradicts company goals. In a company with a strong corporate culture, shared values are deeply understood, embraced, and fought for by company members (Hojanto & Irwanti, 2022).

Organizational culture can be distinguished according to its type in four kinds of culture, namely hierarchy, clan, adhocracy, and market (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Clan culture has family characteristics, involving employees in every decision making, a friendly work environment where everyone shares, the organization is run on the basis of loyalty and tradition, and high commitment Adhocracy culture is characterized by readiness to face changes and challenges, each individual has different responsibilities, according to the task or problem at hand, product and service innovation, dynamic and creative environment, success means unique and original products/services, what unites the organization is a commitment to experimentation and innovation. Market culture is characterized by a results-oriented work

environment, leaders work hard to direct and compete, what unites the organization is the desire to win, long-term plans focus on competition and achievement of targets Success means market control and penetration. Hierarchy culture has the characteristics of a stable, formal and structured work environment, there are procedures that regulate what must be done, running an organization properly, stably and efficiently is very important, rules and policies apply, employees and their work are always controlled, authority in making decisions is very clear (Shafrani, Wahyuningtyas, & Farida, 2022).

Related to the dynamics of the development of the company or organization, the results of Kotter and Heskett's research from Harvard Business School show that culture has a strong and growing impact on organizational performance, a) Corporate culture can have a significant impact on the company's economic performance in the long term, b) Corporate culture may even be a more important factor in determining the success or failure of the company in the coming decades, c) Although it is difficult to change, corporate culture can be made to further improve performance (Moeljono Djoko, 2005).

Robbins proposed seven characteristics of a thriving organizational culture, namely Innovation and risk taking, Attention to detail, Outcome orientation, People orientation, Team orientation, Aggressiveness and Stability (Simanjuntak, n.d.).

3. Competitiveness

Competitiveness is the level of productivity which is defined as the output produced by a work (Michael Porter). Another differentiating advantage consisting of comparative advantage (comparative advantage factor) and competitive advantage (competitive advantage factor) or the ability to compete (Aprilia, 2023). Permendiknas No. 41 of 2007 concerning process standards refers to competitiveness as the potential or ability to outperform the competition, namely excellence in one area that is not owned by the other party, the ability to show better, faster and more meaningful results in, a) strengthening market position, b) connecting with the environment, c) improving performance without stopping, d) enforcing a favorable position.

In an effort to maintain or improve competitiveness, education providers must have a number of competitive attitudes, including: a) Having a commitment to do the best and strive for excellence and perfection, b) Sticking to the principles of honesty, professionalism, and trustworthiness, c) The principle of always being in front, d) Visionary and able to map the future picture to today's work table, e) Careful, calculating, and always avoiding mistakes, f) Oriented to the principles of goodness, justice, honesty, and usefulness, and g) Sensitive to the demands of aspirations and always believe that all parties have been served. Careful, calculating, and always avoiding mistakes, f) Oriented to the principles of kindness, justice, honesty, and usefulness, and g) Sensitive to the demands of aspirations and always believing that all parties have been well served (Mulyasana D., 2012).

While in the institutional or organizational context, educational institutions must, a) Have a clear and measurable vision, mission, goals, programs, and strategies, b) Have a research body to conduct a critical assessment of problems, potential / strengths, future trends, and as material for taking anticipatory steps to overcome future trends, c) Have a strategy that

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is appropriate and in accordance with the needs of space and time, and understand the strategies implemented by others. Mastering the sources of strategic information, so that before others know, he has mastered the data, problems, and direction of competition, d) Mastering the field of competition, supplies, technology, and competitive strategies, e) Knowing exactly the position of the institution he leads; whether it is in the lower, middle, or upper segment (Mulyasana Dedi, 2012).

Furthermore, as an effort to create competitive strength, there are 4 approaches that can be offered, namely Cost Leadership, Differentiation, focus, and product diversity diversification (Fauzi, Mandey, & Rotinsulu, 2022). A low cost strategy is carried out by emphasizing efforts to produce standard products (the same in all aspects) at a very low cost per unit. This strategy is only possible if it has several advantages in the field of resources, especially the ability to market products, creativity and talent of human resources, strict supervision, market research, strong distribution, work skills, and low distribution and promotion costs (Kholifah, 2023). The Product Differentiation Strategy is carried out by prioritizing the ability to find its own uniqueness in the target market (Mayasari et al., 2022).

The uniqueness of the product (goods or services) put forward allows a company to attract the greatest possible interest from its potential customers. Focus Strategy is used to build competitive advantage in a narrower market segment (Gultom & Lumbanraja, 2022). This type of strategy is aimed at serving the needs of consumers who are relatively small in number and in their decision making to buy relatively uninfluenced by price. Meanwhile, the diversification strategy is carried out by expanding the development of goods and services that have been offered by the company, by adding new products or services in order to pursue growth, increase sales, profitability, and flexibility (Ramadhanto, Akbar, & Agoestyowati, 2022).

4. Customer Interest

Customer interest is part of the consumer behavior component in the attitude to consume, the respondent's tendency to act before the buying decision is actually carried out (Stansyah, Choirunnisa, Tegar, & Putri, 2023). Interest has the following special properties and characters: a) Interest is personal, there are differences between the interests of one person and another, b) Interest has a discriminatory effect, c) Closely related to motivation, influencing and being influenced by motivation, d) Interest is something that is learned, not innate and can change depending on the needs, experiences, and fashion of interest to the customer (Ramadhanto et al., 2022).

Customer interest can be identified through the following indicators: a) Transactional interest, namely a person's tendency to buy a product, b) Referential interest, namely a person's tendency to refer the product to others, c) Preferential interest, namely interest that describes the behavior of a person who has a primary preference for the product, this preference can only be changed if something happens to the preference product, d) Exploratory interest, this interest describes the behavior of a person who is always looking for information about the product he is interested in and looking for information to support the positive properties of the product (Thamrin Abdullah and Francis Tantri, 2013).

5. Visionary Leadership and Corporate Culture in Improving Competitiveness and Customer Interest Transformative Education

Customer interest in the context of transformative educational institutions is determined by the institution's ability to provide excellent service. Customer interest and satisfaction in the context of today's educational institutions is no longer just how students can continue their education to a higher level with academic achievement as a benchmark, but also moral character, non-academic achievements of students and institutions and service systems organized by institutions, especially in terms of reliability (reliability), responsiveness, certainty (assurance), care (empathy) and realization (Fatah Syukur, 201).

Visionary leadership in this context is required to be able to have a vision of the characteristics and opportunities of service models as well as the characteristics of educational customer interest and satisfaction. Leaders must have clear benchmarks related to reliability (reliability), responsiveness, assurance, care (empathy) and tangibility that customers want and that can be provided by educational institutions. Through measuring the standards that the Educational Institution is able to provide and the standards that customers want, the Educational Institution will be able to determine customer targets. As it is known that in the promotion and marketing of education, effective educational institutions must determine clear target layers of society, so that the work process and results can be measured.

Customer interest is in principle strongly influenced by the competitiveness of educational institutions. To win the competition, educational institutions can take a choice of cost advantage approaches (lower or equivalent costs with more quality and facilities), differentiating products with other educational institutions, focusing on certain services and winning competition in them, or the approach of diversity of products offered. Educational institutions that have sufficient financial strength and human resources usually take all of these approaches. For example, in one institution offering regular class programs and superior classes where regular classes are charged a low fee while superior classes are expensive. Differentiation and diversification are carried out by organizing Olympic classes, language classes, tahfizh classes, yellow book classes and so on. Regardless of the approach model in winning the competition.

Visionary leaders are the most decisive and responsible for the choice of approach. Visionary leaders must be able to read opportunities for educational programs that may be of interest to the community with low competition or improvise programs amidst intense competition.

The efforts of visionary leaders in winning the competition and gaining the interest of education customers must be built on the basis of a strong educational institution culture. The culture of a strong and competitive educational institution is characterized by innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, results-oriented, people-oriented, team-oriented, aggressive and stable. Visionary leaders in the context of building the culture of educational institutions, do not necessarily only imitate the culture of educational institutions that have advanced as a result of comparative studies or leadership training organized by the officialdom. The ideal

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organizational culture in an educational institution is not necessarily suitable for other educational institutions.

Visionary leaders must understand the fundamental principles of a good and effective organizational culture for progress, among others: a) the culture of a good educational institution is that which is made is the culture of the educational institution and not the regulations of the educational institution, b) the culture of a good educational institution is a culture that is in accordance with the conditions and progress of the educational institution, c) a good culture is a cultural value formulated in accordance with the challenges of the educational institution, d) for the culture of the educational institution, once good, must be able to make the culture of the educational institution itself able to work in the educational institution, e) the culture of a good educational institution is a culture that is truly applied by all members of the educational institution.

Conclusion

Efforts to increase customer interest in transformative Islamic education demand the accuracy of the leader's vision of the characteristics of the intended or expected customer interest and satisfaction as well as educational program models that are in line with it. Leaders must have a definite benchmark for service standards that customers are interested in and are embodied in the service programs offered, both in terms of reliability, sensitivity, certainty, empathy and form.

Customer interest is also influenced by the leader's vision in winning the competitive base whether using a low-cost approach with the same or better types of services, differentiating his services from the services provided by other educational institutions, focusing on strengthening competition in the same service program, or through the approach of multiplying and expanding the educational programs offered..

The efforts of visionary leaders in increasing competitiveness and customer interest must be built on the basis of an ideal and progressive organizational culture by promoting the principle that culture is not just institutional regulations, in accordance with the conditions and progress of the institution, in accordance with the educational challenges faced by the institution, able to be followed by all members and actually applied by all members of the institution.

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