

Innovation, Competitive Advantage and Marketing Performance of Vocational Higher Education in Private Polytechnics in Indonesia

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Vocational higher education, especially in private polytechnics in Indonesia, has a serious problem with competitive advantage, indicated by low institutional accreditation and a lack of intellectual property rights and patents produced. They also face marketing performance problems, indicated by a large number of students who drop out from school, and a long working period for graduates. Innovations in educational service are offered to overcome this problem. This study uses a survey of all private polytechnics in West Java and the Banten Province in Indonesia, with 876 respondents from faculty members and students assigned randomly. The results of the study show that competitive advantage and marketing performance are influenced by service innovation. Likewise marketing performance is influenced by competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Service Innovation, Educational Service, Competitive Advantage, Marketing Performance, Private Polytechnics.*

Introduction

Higher education is one of the most important aspects in providing reliable human resources for the advancement of the nation. From research by Carnevale, Jayasundara & Cheah (2013) it has been found that someone who holds an undergraduate degree in the United States will currently earn better income than those who are not highly educated. Related to these findings, academic institutions need to develop their abilities and responses in facing these changes and demands (Fullwood, Rowley, & Delbridge, 2013). The efforts to increase the institutional capacity include competitive advantage. It is acknowledged that competitive



advantage has a significant influence on marketing performance (Limankrisna & Yoserizal, 2016).

For institutions that wish to be competitive and to win competition, they need to develop innovation (Pardi, Iman & Zainul, 2014). So, innovation in private polytechnics, as higher educational institutions, is also needed, especially in supporting academic freedom, academic identity, and the nature of research conducted by institutions. Blass & Hayward (2014) note that there are still many instances of higher education research that stop at the point of discovery, namely: the discovery of new ideas - not innovation, the application of new ideas for new results, and the lack of management capabilities that can threaten the future of the institution itself. According to Bowonder, Dambal & Kumar (2010) innovation strategies help companies in three ways: they attract customers, beat competitors, and build a new product portfolio.

Universities in Indonesia are still ranked below the leading universities in the world. Even in the Center for World University Rankings (CWUR), none of the universities from Indonesia entered the top 1000 rankings from 2012-2019. In contrast, in the QS ranking of the best universities in 2018 (www.qs.com/world-university-rankings-2018/), the University of Indonesia (UI) is ranked 277, Bandung Institute of Technology ranked at 331, Gadjah Mada University (UGM) ranked between 401-410, and Bogor Agricultural University ranked 751-800. In the Times Higher Education version in 2019 (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2019/world-ranking>), the University of Indonesia was ranked between 601-800 and the Bandung Institute of Technology between 800-1000. Gadjah Mada University, Bogor Agricultural University and Ten November Institute of Technology were ranked 1000+. The above rankings show a considerable gap in the competitive advantage and performance of universities in Indonesia.

The education system in Indonesia affirms that polytechnics are higher education institutions that carry out vocational education in various clusters of science and or technology. If they fulfil the requirements, polytechnics can possess a professional education. Referring to the 2015-2019 vision of higher education, private polytechnics also have a competitive advantage. The government is currently encouraging vocational secondary education and vocational higher education. Through the Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2016, the government seeks to revitalize vocational secondary education by involving several relevant ministries and government institutions. But in fact, in 2018, students who choose Bachelor degree programs constitute 84.45% of the total 6 million students. Students who chose diploma III programs were as much as 12.55% of the total students, and, the diploma IV program accounted for 2.5% of total students (Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia, *forlap dikti*, 2018). The marketing performance of private polytechnics is thought to have serious problems.

Based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016), more than 57% of private polytechnics generally offer Diploma III programs, with a small number of students. Allegations concerning the lack of superiority of private polytechnics can also be seen in the data of the 2017 Higher Education National Accreditation Board where very few private polytechnics were institutionally accredited. It can also be expected that private polytechnics nationally, under the coordination of regional IV higher education service institutions, are generally in cluster 4 and cluster 5. There are no private polytechnic institutions have a qualification in cluster 2 or, the best, cluster 1. But private polytechnics are allegedly not innovative, which, among others, can be seen in: 1) almost no private polytechnic has the value of research and publication of research results with values above average; 2) the reliance of private polytechnics on funding from students tuition. Looking at the various phenomena above, several questions appear as follows: Does innovation have an effect on competitive advantage? Does innovation affect marketing performance? And does competitive advantage affect marketing performance?

This study aims to analyse the absence of the influence of innovation on competitive advantage and marketing performance. In addition, it is also aimed at knowing the effect of competitive advantage on marketing performance.

Literature Review

Innovation is all goods, services or ideas that are considered new (Kotler & Keller, 2015). Innovation in business is intended to describe new products, services, methods and organisational approaches that enable businesses to achieve extraordinary results (Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman & Bamford, 2015). Innovation requires companies to have knowledge related to customers (Kaya & Patton, 2011). This concentration of consumer knowledge is formed by a set of knowledge-based resources that are easily transformed into innovative outputs. Innovation is widely seen as an important component of competitiveness, embedded in the organisational structure, processes, products and services within a company (Gunday, Ulusoy, Kilic & Alpan, 2011). Roberts & Amit. (2003) provide support for general positions that build competitive advantage and that depend on the company's activities concerned with innovation. Camison & Villar-Lopez (2011) confirm that memory and learning abilities support the development of organisational innovation and marketing innovation. Likewise the study of Komaladewi, Nanere, Suryana & Rufaidah. (2012) confirm that service innovation is considered as the key to success in gaining competitive advantage.

In research on innovation in higher education, Alhousseini & Elbeltagia. (2014) use two indicators: namely, product innovation and process innovation. In addition, Vila, Perez & Morillas (2012) use two indicators: namely, development innovation competencies and the

modes of teaching and learning. Saginova & Belyansky (2008) use two indicators: innovations in programs and innovation in the market.

Competitive advantage is the key concept of strategic management (Krja & Osmani, 2015). Competitive advantage is the ability of a company to work in one or more ways that competitors cannot match (Kotler, & Keller (2013). A company can be said to have a competitive advantage when the company is able to create more economic value compared with competing companies (Barney & Hesterly, 2012). De Hann (2014) has analysed the competitive advantage of universities using 13 indicators, including: quality of education and or research, reputation/brand/image/attractiveness, unique/different selling points, growth in the number of students, quality of buildings, facilities and services, ranking positions, international cooperation, geographical location/environment, doing better, being the best, experiential knowledge, competitive position, alumni network and accreditation certificates. Huang & Lee (2012) argue that the performance of higher education institutions in technical and vocational education depends on the compatibility between the state of the environment around the institution and the use of their resources. Mainardes, Ferreira & Tontini (2011) have shown evidence that, to be competitive, higher education must have a stronger relationship between resources, regions, and stakeholders.

In a study from Camison & Villar-Lopez, (2011) competitive advantage can be promoted by innovation, primarily by organisational innovation and marketing innovation. According to Weerawardena & Mavondo (2011) there is a general consensus in the literature that all types of innovation can contribute to the company's competitive advantage. In addition, Tan & Sousa (2015) stated that competitive advantage has a relationship with performance.

Marketing performance can be interpreted as an achievement obtained by the company through the marketing activities carried out (Limakrisna & Yoserizal (2016). Ferdinand & Fitriani (2015) revealed that the concept of marketing performance was widely discussed by many scientific researchers, showing the various steps used to demonstrate the performance of companies in the field of marketing. Morgan (2012) mentions the performance of marketing, regarding the response of customer behaviour to products in the market. Measurement of marketing performance is an assessment of the relationship between marketing activities and business performance (Clark & Ambler, 2001).

According to Katsikeas, Morgan, Leonidou, & Hult (2016), marketing performance can be seen from six key aspects: namely, 1) customer mindset outcomes - the result of the perception of customer thought and customer attitude about the company and its offer value (for example, brand equity, customer satisfaction); 2) customer behaviour outcomes - the result of customer buying behaviour and post-purchase behaviour towards the company and value offerings (for example, customer retention, word of mouth); 3) customer level

performance - the result of customer-level economic performance for companies, regarding the behaviour of individuals or groups of customers (for example, customer profitability, customer lifetime value); 4) product market outcomes - the result of market-product performance, specifically of products offered in the market (for example, unit sales, sales revenue, market share); 5) accounting performance - the result of the accounting financial performance reported in the company's financial statements and reports (eg profitability, ROA); and 6) financial market performance - financial market performance which is reflected in stock or debt indicators related to the market (for example, the number of shareholders returning, bond ratings).

In their research in the field of higher education, Smith, McKnight, & Naylor (2000) proposed the ability of graduate works to reflect as colleges performance. Meanwhile, Abdul Hamid, Mustafa, Suradi & Idris (2013) suggest non-financial metrics to measure university performance: namely, profitability, noble value, intellectual capital, market value, stakeholder satisfaction and reputation. In addition, Duque (2014) uses three dimensions that describe the marketing performance of higher education: student satisfaction, perceived learning outcomes, and (intention to drop out).

Meanwhile, there is also student satisfaction which, according to Mark (2013) is when they get what they pay for: the quality of education in their chosen field with accompanying achievements in the labour market. And according to Douglas, Douglas, McClelland & Davies (2015), student satisfaction has an impact on word of mouth as a form of student loyalty behaviour. Almost the same thing was conveyed by Casidi (2014), that student satisfaction encourages positive attitudes and their promotional behaviour.

This research intends to overcome the problem of the sustainability of vocational higher education in private polytechnics. Therefore, several hypotheses have been developed as described in the following questions:

The results of research from Chen, Lin & Chang (2009) found a relationship between learning and a positive absorption effect on the company's innovation performance, and a further positive effect on the company's competitive advantage.

H1 Innovation affects competitive advantage.

Roberts & Amit (2003) explain that building marketing performance depends on the company's innovative activities. Tsai & Yang (2013) show that corporate innovation affects business performance.

H2 Innovation affects marketing performance.

The study from Newbert (2008) has shown that value and scarcity are related to competitive advantage, and competitive advantage is related to performance. It also found that competitive advantage mediates the relationship of scarcity and performance. Based on McCarthy, Rouse, & Serban (2015), it was found that companies that transition from the right upper quadrant (high performers) to one of the other three quadrants must find ways to achieve competitive advantage to regain superior performance.

H3 Competitive advantage affects marketing performance

The influence of innovation on competitive advantage, and the influence of competitive advantage on marketing performance, open the hypothesis of the influence of innovation through competitive advantage on marketing performance. Thus it can be hypothesized:

H4 Innovation affects marketing performance through competitive advantage

Research Method

This research variables consist of one exogenous variable, innovation, and two endogenous variables, competitive advantage and marketing performance. The operationalisation of the variables used in this study is summarized in Table 1. Meanwhile, this research variable is a latent variable that is developed through dimensions measured through question items using a Likert scale of 7 points.

Table 1: Operationalisation of Innovation, Competitive Advantage & Marketing Performance

Variable	Indicator
Innovation	Improvement in curriculum, learning, and academic atmosphere
	Improvement in research, service/community service and cooperation
	Enhancement in governance
	Improvement in leadership, management systems, and quality assurance
	Up grading in human resources
	Enhancement in financing, facilities and infrastructure, and information systems
	Student and graduate management improvement
Competitive Advantage	Student Competency
	Institutional Accreditation or Average Study Program Accreditation
	Professional lecturer

	Scientific Publications
	Patents or Intellectual Property Rights
	Implementation of Internal Quality Assurance System
	Technology in Modern Learning
Marketing Performance	Acceptance for work of graduates in the industrial world
	Word of mouth
	Student willingness to pay education money on time
	Desire to drop out
	Benefits of research, service and cooperation grants
	Satisfaction with institutions

Determination of the sample using census method for 30 private polytechnics under the coordination of higher education institutions in the IV region of West Java and Banten. The representatives of each institution are important elements of polytechnics, consisting of internal elements (faculty members) and external elements. Internal elements consist of directors or deputy directors, lecturers, educational staff, or heads of study programs. 501 respondents were internal elements, while the external elements were students - as many as 375 respondents. In total there were 876 respondents.

This study uses a quantitative approach based on structured questionnaire surveys and uses statistical analysis techniques based on variants. The structured questionnaire was based on Likert scale of 7 points. In accordance with the objectives and research model, partial least square (PLS) was used to examine the causal relationship between latent variables and can be used in a relatively small sample size (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). Furthermore, the data is processed with the help of the Smart PLS 3.0.

Discussion

Overall, the questionnaires obtained from 30 private polytechnics, after considering the proportions and feasibility of data obtained, numbered 305 questionnaires from lecturers, 49 questionnaires from education personnel, 104 questionnaires from head of the study program, 43 questionnaires from top management and 375 questionnaires from students. Thus, the questionnaires from internal respondents amounted to 501. And external respondents numbered as many as 375. When combined, the number reached 876 questionnaires. The number is close to the target, matching the proportion of each group of respondents. and can be considered as representative of the elements of each institution.

The validity and reliability of the data is tested with Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) using the Smart PLS 3.0 professional series. Variables of innovation, competitive advantage and marketing performance all have AVE

values > 0.5 . All have a composite reliability value > 0.7 and a Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7 . It can be stated that the variables are valid and reliable in all models.

The items (manifest indicators) that can meet the qualifications fit the outer model. From 34 items, there are only 17 items that fit. The manifest indicator fit criteria is indicated by a loading factor value > 0.6 or 0.7 . It can also be seen from a discriminant validity > 0.7 . In the Innovation variable there are 7 items that can be accepted, namely: innovation in the curriculum, learning and academic atmosphere (IN1), improvement in research, service and cooperation (IN2), enhancement in governance (IN3), improvement in leadership, management system and quality assurance (IN4), upgrading in human resources (IN5), renewal and improvement of facilities, infrastructure and information systems (IN7), improvement in student admissions (IN8), and improvements in graduate placement (IN9). In Competitive Advantage Variables there are six items that are fit the model: student competence in science (CA1), student competence in general skills (CA2), student competence in special skills (CA3), lecturer dedication as educator (CA7), use of technology in learning (CA12) and the use of modern technology on campus services (CA13). And Marketing Performance Variables have five items that fit: the desire to recommend the alma mater (MP3), the willingness of students to pay education fees on time (MP5), the benefits felt by students from litabmas/cooperation (MP9), grants, overall satisfaction (MP11), and inner attachment to guarding the good name of the alma mater (MP12).

Based on the manifest indicators that fit as mentioned above and shown in table 2, seven of eight indicators of the innovation variable support the research model. While the competitive advantage variable has only 6 indicators in support. On the marketing performance variables, there are four of the six indicators in support.

Table 2: Dimensions that Support Variables in The Model

Variable	Indicator
Innovation	Improvement in curriculum, learning, and academic atmosphere
	Improvement in research, service/community service and cooperation
	Enhancement in governance
	Improvement in leadership, management systems, and quality assurance
	Upgrading in human resources
	Enhancement in financing, facilities and infrastructure, and information systems
	Student and graduate management Improvement
Competitive Advantage	Student Competency
	Professional lecturer

	Technology in Modern Learning
Marketing Performance	Word of mouth
	Student willingness to pay education money on time
	Benefits of research, service and cooperation grants
	Satisfaction with institutions

In evaluating structural models that use PLS it can be seen in Table 3 that changes in R-Square values can explain the influence of certain exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables. The value of R-Square is 0.75, thus it can be concluded that it is the strong model, the moderate being the 0.50 model and 0.25 the weak model. Based on PLS output, generally the R-Square of each variable shows a model that is close to moderate. When viewed from the Q2 Predictive Relevance structural model, it shows predictive relevance. Thus changes in Q2 can have an impact relative to the structural model. In general, structural models are good and have moderate predictive relevance. When analysing the Goodness of Fit (GoF) index, all variables in all structural models have a large GoF (large).

Table 3: Inner Model

	Cronbach's Alpha	rhoA	Composite Reliability	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q2 (1-SSE/SSO)
Innovation	0.881	0.882	0.906	0.423	0.422	0.235
Competitive Advantage	0.800	0.802	0.857	0.301	0.298	0.141
Marketing Performance	0.802	0.811	0.856	0.501	0.498	0.265

The results of hypotheses testing are presented in Table 4. Based on the results of statistical calculations, innovation significantly influences competitive advantage. This can be seen from the path coefficients where the T-statistic is $5.049 > 1.95$ and the probability is $0.000 < 0.05$. Likewise, innovation influences marketing performance significantly where T-Statistics is $8.909 > 1.95$ and probability is $0.000 < 0.05$. But competitive advantage does not significantly influence marketing performance where the T-Statistic is $0.613 < 1.95$ and probability $0.270 < 0.05$. Thus, innovation has a significant effect on competitive advantage. Innovation also has a significant effect on marketing performance. Competitive Advantages do not have a significant effect on marketing performance. Therefore, innovation has no effect on marketing performance through competitive advantages. This research model can be seen in figure 1.

In general, this study that shows the relationship of innovation to competitive advantage, supports the research of Camison and Lopez (2011), and, regarding innovation promoting the

achievement of competitive advantage, is also in line with the research of Robert and Amit (2003) where competitive advantage depends on the company's innovation activities.

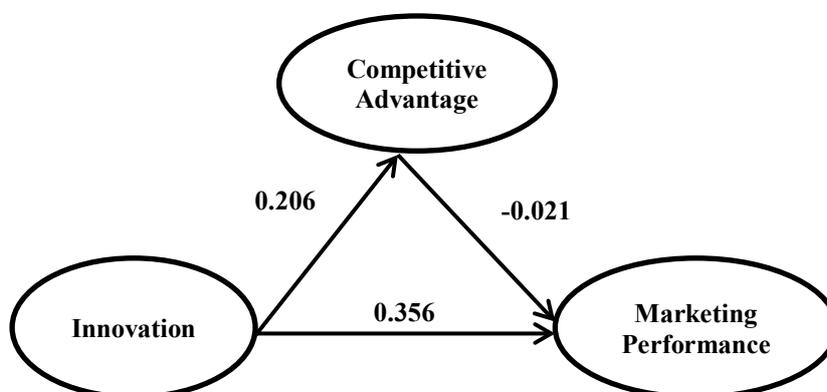
This finding is not in line with the results of the study of Tan and Sousa (2015) which revealed that competitive advantage has a relationship with performance. This study is also different from the study of Limankrisna and Yoserizal (2016) which states that competitive advantage has a dominant influence on marketing performance. However, these findings are new in vocational higher education research in private polytechnics, where innovation has a significant effect on competitive advantage and marketing performance.

Table 4: Total Effect of Innovation, Competitive Advantage & Marketing Performance

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	T Statistics	P Values
Competitive Advantage -> Marketing Performance	-0.021	-0.020	0.613	0.270
Innovation -> Competitive Advantage	0.206	0.208	5.049	0.000
Innovation -> Marketing Performance	0.356	0.356	8.909	0.000

Innovation in private polytechnics is driven more by the increasingly strict regulation of tertiary education. In this regard, the fulfillment of accreditation and the administration of education, research and community service delivered to the ministry of higher education is internet-based. The results of innovations that appear include e-learning, e-books, e-libraries, and integrated service information systems. However, the results of these innovations were only seen in a few private polytechnics. Related to competitive advantage in the field, it was found that the accreditation of study programs in private polytechnics was generally dominated by a C level (sufficient) accreditation of 45.83% and an accredited B level (good) of 32.5%.

Figure 1. Research Model Innovation, Competitive Advantage & Marketing Performance





Conclusions

Innovation has an influence on competitive advantage and marketing performance. However, competitive advantage has no effect on marketing performance. Thus, competitive advantage does not mediate innovation into marketing performance. Direct innovation has a very important and necessary role in building competitive advantage and marketing performance in private polytechnics in Indonesia.

This study provides a reference for managers and practitioners of vocational higher education institutions, especially private polytechnics, with which to streamline marketing performance supported by innovation. For superior competitive advantage, innovation is needed.

This research is based on the institutional perspective of private polytechnics as vocational higher education institutions. Studies on marketing performance and competitive advantage should be carried out. Research on other vocational higher education providers from the customer's point of view can be the next research agenda.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia for supporting this research through funding.



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