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| <br>— FAI UNISMUH MAKASSAR — | International Conference on Actual Islamic Studies |             |                   |
|                                                                                                               | Vol. 3, No. 1                                      | August 2024 | e-ISSN: 2988-7925 |

## Principal's Strategy in Building School Image to Increase Competitiveness at Sdit Thariq Bin Ziyad, Bekasi Regency

*Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Membangun Citra Sekolah Untuk Meningkatkan Daya Saing Di Sdit Thariq Bin Ziyad Kabupaten Bekasi*

**Adinda Siti Mukhlisha<sup>1</sup>, Pauzan Haryono<sup>2</sup>, Irni Victorynie<sup>3</sup>**

Islamic University 45 Bekasi | adinsa.info@gmail.com

Islamic University 45 Bekasi | pauzanharyono@unismabekasi.ac.id

Islamic University 45 Bekasi | victorynie@gmail.com

### Abstract

**Keywords:** Principal Strategy; Building School Image; Increase Competitiveness

School principals have an important role in building the school's image so that they can compete effectively in the midst of increasingly fierce competition in the world of education. However, how the right strategy must be applied by school principals in building school image is still a problem that needs to be researched. This study aims to analyze the strategies used by school principals in building school image at SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad, Bekasi Regency with the main goal of increasing school competitiveness. This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews with school principals, teachers, and parents of students. Data was also collected through direct observation in the school environment and analysis of related documents. The results of the study show that the strategies used by the principal at SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad Bekasi Regency in building the school image include developing a quality curriculum, implementing effective school management, building good relationships with stakeholders, and utilizing information and communication technology to promote school achievement. Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the strategies implemented by the school principal have a significant role in building the school's image and increasing the competitiveness of SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad Bekasi Regency. With the development of a quality curriculum, effective school management, good relationships with stakeholders, and the use of information and communication technology, schools can improve their image and reputation in the eyes of the public and increase their competitiveness in the world of education.

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### Abstract

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**Kata Kunci:** Strategi Kepala Sekolah; Membangun Citra Sekolah; Meningkatkan Daya Saing

Kepala sekolah memiliki peran penting dalam membangun citra sekolah agar dapat bersaing secara efektif di tengah-tengah persaingan yang semakin ketat di dunia pendidikan. Namun, bagaimana strategi yang tepat yang harus diterapkan oleh kepala sekolah dalam membangun citra sekolah masih menjadi permasalahan yang perlu diteliti. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi yang digunakan oleh kepala sekolah dalam membangun citra sekolah di SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad Kabupaten Bekasi dengan tujuan utama meningkatkan daya saing sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara dengan kepala sekolah, guru, dan orang tua siswa. Data juga dikumpulkan melalui observasi langsung di lingkungan sekolah dan analisis dokumen terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi yang digunakan oleh kepala sekolah di SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad Kabupaten Bekasi dalam membangun citra sekolah meliputi pengembangan kurikulum yang berkualitas, penerapan manajemen sekolah yang efektif, membangun hubungan yang baik dengan stakeholder, serta memanfaatkan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi untuk mempromosikan prestasi sekolah. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa strategi yang diterapkan oleh kepala sekolah memiliki peran yang signifikan dalam membangun citra sekolah dan meningkatkan daya saing SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad Kabupaten Bekasi. Dengan pengembangan kurikulum yang berkualitas, manajemen sekolah yang efektif, hubungan yang baik dengan stakeholder, dan pemanfaatan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi, sekolah dapat meningkatkan citra dan reputasi mereka di mata masyarakat serta meningkatkan daya saing dalam dunia pendidikan.

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### INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and increasingly fierce competition in the world of education, the role of school principals has undergone significant changes. No longer just limited to administrative duties, the role of the principal now includes important aspects of building the school's image to improve its competitiveness.

(Wahyudin, 2019). In this context, SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad in Bekasi Regency is a prominent example because of their deep understanding of the urgency of the principal's strategy in creating a strong and positive school image.

According to Winda (2019), the principal is no longer only responsible for the internal management of the

school, but must also pay attention to how the school is viewed by the wider community. Building the image of the school is crucial because it creates a good impression among students, parents, and society in general. (Kotler, 2019). A strong school image can increase public interest in choosing the school as a place of learning, as well as give confidence to students and parents that they are in a quality educational environment. (Van Riel, 2020).

At SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad, an understanding of the importance of building a school's image is reflected in various strategies implemented by the principal. Starting from improving the quality of education, managing good physical facilities, to active interaction with the local community, all of these aspects are designed to strengthen the image of the school as a whole.

In the context of globalization and increasingly fierce competition, building the image of schools is no longer an option, but an urgent need for every school. (Yulius Mataupun, 2018). SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad is one example of how awareness of the importance of the principal's strategy in building a strong school image can have a positive

impact on increasing school competitiveness in the world of education.

SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad has a deep understanding that the image of the school is not just an additional aspect, but a crucial foundation in shaping the school's identity and influencing community perception. They realize that the image of the school plays an important role in attracting the interest of the community to choose the school as a place of education for their children. In addition, SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad also understands that the image of the school contributes to building trust among students and parents in the quality of education offered, as well as in improving the reputation of the school in the wider community.

The headmaster plays a leading role in designing and implementing effective strategies to build a positive and strong image of the school. They are responsible for the formulation of the school's vision and mission that reflect the values and excellence that the school wants to instill. In addition, school principals are also the driving force in the implementation of strategies aimed at improving the image of the school,

both through improving the quality of education, managing school resources efficiently, to actively interacting with the community to expand networks and strengthen relationships with school stakeholders. (Van Riel, 2020).

With visionary leadership and well-planned strategies, SDIT principal Thariq bin Ziyad was able to take their school in the desired direction in building a positive and strong school image. They realize that these efforts are not only important to attract prospective students and parents, but also to strengthen the school's identity and increase public confidence in the quality of education provided.

In this view, a comprehensive and varied approach in school management becomes very important to achieve the goal of building a strong and positive school image. (Kotler, 2019). This approach covers several key aspects, which include quality management of education, maintenance of physical facilities, interaction with communities, and utilization of information and communication technology.

First, education quality management is the main focus in efforts to build a good school image.

Headmasters need to ensure that high educational standards are implemented in schools, including the development of relevant curricula, effective implementation of learning, and fair and transparent assessment of student achievement. (Wahyudin, 2019).

Secondly, the maintenance of the school's physical facilities is also an important part of comprehensive school management. The principal must ensure that school facilities are in good condition and safe to use, including school buildings, classrooms, libraries, and sports facilities. Good facilities will create a comfortable learning environment and meet the needs of students. (Fullan, 2019).

Third, good interaction with the community is key in building a positive school image. School principals need to be actively involved in various community activities, such as social events, charity activities, and cooperation with local community institutions. Thus, the school can become an integral part of the community and get strong support from the community. (Wahyudin, 2019).

Finally, the use of information and communication technology is also an

important strategy in strengthening the image of the school. Principals must ensure that schools have adequate technological infrastructure, such as fast internet access, up-to-date hardware and software, and effective use of social media and school websites to communicate with students, parents, and the community. (Wahyudin, 2019).

By combining these diverse strategies, headmasters are able to create an environment that supports quality learning and has a positive impact on the school's image. Through this article, he hopes to explore various strategies that have been implemented by SDIT principal Thariq bin Ziyad to build the image of the school, as well as the resulting positive impact on increasing school competitiveness in the field of education. It is hoped that this discussion will provide deep insight into the importance of the role of the principal in managing the image of the school and improving the overall quality of education.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research method adopts a qualitative approach that allows for more in-depth and comprehensive

research on the strategies applied by the principal in building the image of the school. This research adopts a qualitative methodology approach. According to Creswell (2018) qualitative methodology is a research approach that emphasizes the collection and analysis of descriptive data, such as speech or written transcripts, as well as observed behavior of research subjects, with the aim of understanding the phenomena experienced by research subjects. (Sugiyono, 2019). The qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore complex and contextual aspects in the phenomenon under study, which are unlikely to be adequately revealed by the quantitative approach. The type of data used in this study is qualitative data, which is obtained through various methods such as interviews, observation, and document analysis.

The interview data collection process involves interacting directly with various parties involved in school activities, including principals, teachers, administrative staff, and parents. Through interviews, in-depth information and a rich understanding of the strategies applied can be obtained. In

addition, direct observation is made on activities in the school environment and interactions that occur between various parties involved, such as principals, teachers, students, and parents. These observations allow researchers to gain a more direct understanding of strategy implementation in the real context of schools.

In addition, document analysis is also an important part of the data collection process. Documents related to the strategies and activities undertaken by the headmaster to build the image of the school will be carefully analyzed. This includes school programs, activity reports, and other strategic documents that can provide insight into how strategies are understood, planned, and implemented in day-to-day practice.

Qualitative data collected from various sources will be analyzed using a thematic approach. Thematic analysis makes it possible to identify key patterns and themes emerging from the data, making it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the principal's strategies in building the image of the school.

The variables that are the focus of this study include the principal's strategy, school image, and school competitiveness. These variables will be measured through a variety of relevant indicators, such as perceptions of teachers, staff, students, and parents, as well as empirical data related to academic achievement and the school's reputation in the community. Taking these various aspects into account, this study aims to provide a holistic understanding of how the principal's strategy can influence the development of the school's image and improve its competitiveness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Result

#### 1. Principal's Strategy

The identification of strategies implemented by school principals was an important stage in this study, which was conducted through a series of interviews and observations. From this research, various strategies used by school principals have been successfully identified. These strategies are designed with the aim of improving the quality of education, strengthening school identity,

building good relationships with various related parties, and promoting school achievement.

One of the main strategies identified was efforts to improve the quality of education at SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad. The headmaster takes various steps, such as introducing innovative educational programs, improving teacher qualifications, developing a curriculum that suits the needs of students, and ensuring the availability of adequate supporting facilities.

The principal also emphasized the importance of strengthening the school's identity as a leading educational institution in Bekasi Regency. This includes strengthening the school's values and culture, enhancing the spirit of togetherness among students and staff, and developing a positive image of the school in the eyes of the community.

Another strategy implemented is to build good relationships with various related parties, including teachers, staff, students, parents, and local communities. This is done through open communication, active participation in school activities, as

well as holding regular meetings with relevant parties to discuss various issues and problems that arise.

In addition, the principal also promoted the school's achievements widely. This is done through participation in various academic and non-academic competitions, holding events or activities that showcase student achievements, as well as communicating effectively with the community about school achievements and achievements.

By identifying and implementing these strategies, SDIT principal Thariq bin Ziyad aims to create a supportive, quality, and highly competitive educational environment. These strategies serve as the foundation for further efforts in building a strong image of the school and increasing its competitiveness amid increasingly fierce educational competition.

## **2. School Image Building**

The strategies implemented by the headmaster have contributed significantly in building a strong and positive image of the school. The

positive impact of this strategy is reflected in positive perceptions from various relevant parties, including teachers, students, staff, and parents. They looked appreciatively and recognized the principal's efforts in improving the quality of education and maintaining the integrity of the school.

The image of a solid school is reflected in several observable indicators. First, the increase in the number of new students shows that the image of the school has succeeded in attracting parents to enroll their children in the school. In addition, a good reputation in the community is reflected in the recognition and appreciation given by outsiders to the achievements and quality of education produced by the school. Finally, active participation in various school activities signifies a strong sense of ownership and involvement of the entire school community in realizing the vision and mission of education.

Thus, the strategies that have been implemented by the headmaster not only have an impact on the internal perception of the school community, but also have a real impact in

strengthening the image of the school in the eyes of the wider community. This is the result of continuous efforts in building an inclusive, achievement-oriented educational environment towards achieving excellence in all aspects.

### **3. Improving School Competitiveness**

The strategies implemented have also had a significant positive impact on improving school competitiveness, which is reflected through several indicators that show an increase in overall school achievement and reputation.

First, there is an increase in student academic achievement, which can be observed from the increase in test scores and other academic evaluation results. This improvement shows that the educational strategies implemented by the headmaster have succeeded in having a positive impact on student learning outcomes, indicating an improvement in the quality of learning and teaching at SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad.

Second, a good student attendance rate is an important indicator of the effectiveness of the

learning environment in schools. With strategies that support student attendance, such as reward or incentive programs, schools are able to create a conducive learning environment and encourage active student participation in the learning process. Good attendance also strengthens learning continuity and allows students to get the maximum benefit from their educational experience.

Lastly, the strong reputation of the school is reflected in the trust and recognition of the community towards the quality of education organized by SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad. This good reputation is built through consistency in providing quality educational services, brilliant student achievement, and the school's contribution in developing students' overall potential. A good reputation also creates a conducive climate to attract prospective new students and maintain support from parents and other stakeholders.

Thus, the strategies that have been implemented not only have an impact on improving student achievement, but also on improving

the overall reputation of the school. This creates greater attraction and trust from the public towards SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad, thereby increasing the competitiveness of schools in the local and national education arena.

## **B. Discussion**

Identification of strategies implemented by school principals is a crucial stage in this study. Through a series of interviews and observations, various strategies practiced by the principal have been successfully revealed. The purpose of these strategies is to improve the quality of education, strengthen school identity, foster harmonious relationships with various related parties, and promote school achievements.

The main strategies identified in this study include efforts to improve the quality standards of education at SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad. One approach taken is to introduce innovative programs that aim to enrich students' learning experience and increase learning effectiveness. According to Michael Fullan (2019), innovation in education can be the key to improving the quality of education and creating a stimulating learning environment. In

addition, this strategy also involves efforts to improve teacher qualifications, which is in line with the theory by Linda Darling-Hammond (2020) which emphasizes the importance of having qualified teachers in achieving significant educational improvements.

The preparation of a curriculum that adapts to the needs of students is also the focus of the strategy. Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner (2020) emphasize the importance of adapting the curriculum to the individual characteristics and needs of students to achieve more effective learning. By crafting a curriculum that is responsive to students' needs, schools can ensure that every student gets a relevant and meaningful education.

In addition to the academic aspect, the principal's strategy also includes efforts to strengthen the school's identity. According to Anthony Bryk and Barbara, Schneider (2019) highlights the importance of school identity in improving student and staff performance. In this context, strengthening the values and culture of the school, strengthening the bonds of togetherness between students and

staff, and building a positive image of the school in the eyes of the community are key steps. Thus, this strategy not only contributes to academic achievement, but also to the establishment of an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Other strategies in this context include efforts focused on building harmonious relationships with various relevant parties in the school environment. According to experts in the field of education management, a good relationship between the principal and school stakeholders such as teachers, staff, students, parents, and local communities is the key to creating a conducive and effective learning environment (Leithwood, et al, 2019). Open communication and active participation in school activities are considered important strategies to strengthen bonds between various related parties (Bryk & Schneider, 2022). Through transparent communication, principals can open channels for exchanging information, build mutual understanding, and strengthen trust between all parties involved in the educational process.

In addition, holding regular meetings with school stakeholders is also considered an effective practice in strengthening relationships between parties (Bryk & Schneider, 2022). In these meetings, problems and challenges that arise in the school environment can be discussed openly, and solutions can be sought together. According to Leithwood et al. (2019), effective leadership of the principal is reflected in his ability to organize and facilitate such meetings, so that various parties feel heard and involved in the decision-making process.

In addition to efforts to build harmonious relationships, the promotion of school achievements is also an important strategy carried out by the principal. According to Hallinger and Heck (2019), effective principals take a role in promoting a culture of achievement in their schools. This can be done through a variety of means, including participation in academic and non-academic competitions, organizing events or activities that showcase student achievements, and effective communication with the community about school achievements. Thus, this

promotion strategy not only helps improve the image of the school in the eyes of the community but also provides additional motivation for students to achieve higher achievements (Michael Fullan, 2019).

These strategies serve as a foothold for further steps in building a strong school image and increasing its competitiveness amid increasingly fierce education competition. The positive impact of implementing this strategy is reflected in the positive perceptions of various relevant parties, including teachers, students, staff, and parents. They observe and appreciate the principal's efforts in improving the quality of education and maintaining the integrity of the school.

A solid school image is an important indicator of the success of the strategy implemented by the principal. This is in accordance with the theory of *Branding School (Branding School of Thought)*, which states that schools can be considered as brands that require careful management to create a strong image in the eyes of the public. One indicator of a solid school image is an increase

in the number of new students. According to Kotler et al. (2019), an increase in the number of new students can be evidence of a good reputation and public trust in the quality of education offered by schools.

In addition, a good reputation in the community is also an important indicator of a solid school image. According to Van Riel and Fombrun (2020), the reputation of the school reflects the community's perception of the credibility, trustworthiness, and quality of the school. If the school has a good reputation, this will have a positive impact on increasing public interest in choosing the school as a place of education for their children.

Active participation in various school activities is also another indicator of a solid school image. According to Fullan (2019), active participation in school activities shows the spirit of togetherness and involvement of all members of the school community in achieving common goals. This active participation can create a strong bond between the school, students, parents, and the surrounding community, thus

strengthening the school's image as a dynamic and outstanding educational institution.

Thus, it can be concluded that the strategies that have been implemented not only have an impact on the internal perception of the school community, but also have a real impact in strengthening the image of the school in the eyes of the general public. This is the result of continuous efforts in building an inclusive, achievement-oriented educational environment that is excellence in all aspects, in accordance with the strategic management approach applied in the educational context.

The implementation of the strategy also has a significant positive impact on improving school competitiveness. This impact is reflected in increased student academic achievement, good student attendance rates, as well as a strong reputation in the community. Increased academic achievement, good student attendance, and a solid reputation have increased public attraction and trust in SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad. Thus, the strategies that have been implemented not only have an

impact on improving student achievement, but also on improving the overall reputation of the school. This creates greater attraction and

trust from the public towards SDIT Thariq bin Ziyad, thereby increasing the competitiveness of schools in the local and national education arena.

## CONCLUSION

Identification of strategies implemented by school principals is a key step in this study. Through interviews and observations, various strategies have been revealed, aimed at improving the quality of education, strengthening school identity, building good relationships, and promoting school achievement. Key strategies include improving the quality of education and school identity, as well as building harmonious relationships with various related parties. The positive impact is reflected in good perceptions

from various relevant parties and indicators such as an increase in the number of new students, a good reputation, and active participation in school activities. The implementation of the strategy also has a positive impact on improving school competitiveness through improved academic achievement, good student attendance, and a strong reputation. This proves the effectiveness of these strategies in strengthening the image of the school and increasing its competitiveness in the local and national education arena.

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