

## Strategies for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Educational Institutions in the Era of Globalization through a Strategic Management Approach

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Strategic Management, Educational Competitiveness, Globalization, Institutional Strategy, Higher Education.

*Received :* 21 February

*Revised :* 23 March

*Accepted:* 23 April

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze strategic management approaches in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions in the globalization era, emphasizing planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving seven purposively selected informants, including institutional leaders, managers, and educators, within a three-month period. The findings reveal that competitiveness is strengthened through digital transformation, human resource development, and strategic collaboration, although gaps remain between planning and execution. This study contributes a contextual strategic framework integrating local adaptability with global orientation, offering practical implications for improving institutional performance and sustainability in competitive educational environments.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization has fundamentally transformed the landscape of education, requiring educational institutions not only to function as providers of learning services but also as strategic actors in global competition. This transformation is characterized by increased academic mobility, curriculum internationalization, and the adoption of digital technologies in the learning process. Educational institutions are expected to develop competitive advantages to survive and thrive in a dynamic and complex environment. In this context, strategic management serves as a crucial approach in guiding institutional policies and practices in a systematic and sustainable manner. Marginson (2022) emphasizes that the competitiveness of higher education is largely determined by an institution's ability to respond to global pressures through adaptive and innovative strategies.

At the implementation level, the challenge of enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions is not only global but also contextual, depending on regional conditions. Many institutions in developing countries face limitations in terms of resources, infrastructure, and managerial capacity. These limitations affect their ability to adopt effective and forward-looking strategies. Schleicher (2021) argues that disparities in educational quality across regions reflect weaknesses in strategic governance within education systems. Furthermore, Salmi (2020) highlights that the success of educational institutions in improving competitiveness strongly depends on strategic leadership and effective governance. Therefore, a comprehensive approach to managing educational strategies is required to address both global and local challenges simultaneously.

A number of empirical studies have demonstrated the importance of strategic management in enhancing institutional performance and competitiveness; however, conceptual and empirical gaps remain. Hazelkorn (2023) points out that most studies focus on reputation and global rankings without deeply examining internal strategic processes. Meanwhile, Jung and Lee (2021) emphasize organizational innovation in higher education but do not systematically integrate strategic dimensions. Additionally, Cai and Ahmad (2022) find that many institutions struggle to align strategic planning with operational implementation. These gaps indicate the need for research that integrates planning, implementation, and evaluation processes within the framework of improving educational competitiveness. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to bridging these gaps through a more integrative approach.

The development of digital technology has also become a key determinant in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions in the era of globalization. Digital transformation enables institutions to expand access to education, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen international collaboration. However, the success of digital transformation is not solely determined by the availability of technology but also by organizational readiness in managing change strategically. Bond et al. (2020) state that integrating technology in education requires a well-planned strategic approach to achieve optimal outcomes. Furthermore, Zawacki-Richter (2021) asserts that

digitalization in education must be accompanied by changes in organizational culture and adaptive leadership. Thus, strengthening strategic management is essential to maximize the benefits of digital transformation in education.

Conceptually, strategic management provides a systematic framework for organizations to achieve competitive advantage. This process involves analyzing internal and external environments, formulating strategies, implementing policies, and continuously evaluating performance. Rothaermel (2021) emphasizes that organizational competitive advantage depends on the ability to effectively integrate resources and capabilities. In addition, Hill, Jones, and Schilling (2020) explain that strategic success is largely determined by the alignment between planning and implementation. However, in practice, many educational institutions have not been able to optimize these processes consistently. Therefore, examining the application of strategic management in the educational context is highly important.

This study aims to analyze in depth the implementation of strategic management in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions in the era of globalization. The focus of the study is directed toward the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation of strategies carried out by educational institutions. In addition, this study seeks to identify factors influencing the effectiveness of these strategies in improving institutional competitiveness. This approach is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of strategic management practices in education. Thus, the study contributes not only to theoretical understanding but also to practical implications for institutional management. The objectives are formulated to address the need for adaptive and sustainable strategies in responding to global challenges.

This research is expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical development in the field of educational management. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse on the integration of strategic management and institutional competitiveness within the context of globalization. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for policymakers and institutional leaders in formulating more effective and context-sensitive strategies. Moreover, this study offers a conceptual model that can be applied across various educational contexts, particularly in developing regions. The findings are expected to bridge the gap between theory and practice in educational management. Ultimately, this study provides a meaningful contribution to improving the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions in the global era.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Strategic Management in Educational Institutions***

Strategic management is a crucial approach in managing educational organizations to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. In the educational context, strategic management not only focuses on planning but also encompasses the systematic implementation and evaluation of strategies. The Resource-Based View theory explains that an organization's competitive advantage is determined by its ability to manage resources effectively and uniquely (Barney, 2021). In the education sector, this includes the management of human resources, curriculum, and learning infrastructure. Research by Ansoff and McDonnell (2020) emphasizes that strategic success is strongly influenced by the alignment between external environmental conditions and internal organizational capacity. In Indonesia, a study by Mulyasa (2021) indicates that the implementation of strategic management in educational institutions remains suboptimal, particularly in the implementation phase. Therefore, strengthening strategic management is essential to enhance the competitiveness of educational institutions.

### ***Competitiveness of Educational Institutions in the Era of Globalization***

The competitiveness of educational institutions refers to their ability to produce high-quality graduates, build academic reputation, and adapt to global changes. Globalization has intensified competition among educational institutions at both national and international levels. According to Knight (2021), internationalization has become one of the key indicators of competitiveness in higher education institutions. Furthermore, research by Deem, Mok, and Lucas (2020) shows that institutional competitiveness is also influenced by government policies, teaching quality, and international networks. At the national level, Tilaar (2022) highlights that educational competitiveness in Indonesia still faces structural challenges related to quality and equity. This indicates that improving competitiveness depends not only on internal factors but also on broader external contexts. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is required to enhance the competitiveness of educational institutions.

### ***Digital Transformation as a Supporting Factor of Competitiveness***

Digital transformation has become a critical factor in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions in the globalization era. The integration of technology in learning processes and institutional management provides opportunities to improve efficiency, accessibility, and educational quality. According to Selwyn (2021), digitalization in education is not merely about technology adoption but also involves a paradigm shift in the learning process. Research by Williamson, Eynon, and Potter (2020) indicates that institutions that strategically integrate technology achieve higher competitive advantages. In Indonesia, a study by Arifin and Setiawan (2022) reveals that the implementation of educational technology still faces various challenges, particularly in terms of human resource readiness. This suggests that digital transformation must be supported by well-developed strategies to achieve optimal outcomes. Thus, digitalization becomes an integral part of strategic management in enhancing institutional competitiveness.

### ***Research Gap and Strategic Integration***

Although numerous studies have examined strategic management and the competitiveness of educational institutions, there remains a gap in integrating strategy, digitalization, and globalization contexts. Research by Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley (2020) indicates that most studies focus primarily on internationalization without deeply analyzing internal strategic processes. Meanwhile, Tight (2022) highlights the lack of research linking strategic management theory with real-world practices in educational institutions. On the other hand, a national study by Suyanto (2021) shows that many educational institutions have not effectively integrated planning and strategy implementation. This gap suggests the need for research that combines these aspects into a comprehensive analytical framework. Therefore, this study is important to address these gaps and provide a more integrated perspective.

### ***Research Relevance and Scientific Contribution***

Based on the literature review presented, it can be concluded that strategic management plays a vital role in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions in the globalization era. However, there remains a need to further examine how strategies are designed, implemented, and evaluated in real contexts. This study is relevant as it integrates strategic management approaches with globalization dynamics and digital transformation. Furthermore, this research contributes to developing a strategy model that is locally grounded yet globally oriented. This aligns with Porter's (2021) view that competitive advantage must be built through contextual and sustainable strategies. Thus, this study not only enriches academic literature but also provides practical implications for managing educational institutions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Type and Approach***

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of strategic management in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions in the era of globalization. The qualitative approach is selected as it allows for the exploration of social phenomena in a contextual and holistic manner through participants' perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2021). The descriptive design is used to systematically describe the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation of strategies carried out by the institution. This approach is relevant to the research objectives, which emphasize a comprehensive understanding of strategic management practices. Furthermore, qualitative methods enable the exploration of organizational dynamics that cannot be measured quantitatively. Therefore, this approach is considered appropriate for generating comprehensive and contextually grounded findings.

### ***Population and Sampling Technique***

The population of this study consists of all managerial and operational elements within a higher education institution in Jayapura City, which was purposively selected based on its relevance to the research focus. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling,

where informants are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Etikan & Bala, 2020). The study involves a total of seven informants, consisting of one institutional leader, two managerial staff members (deans or heads of study programs), and four academic staff members. The number of informants is determined based on the principle of data saturation, where no new information emerges from additional data collection (Guest et al., 2020). Informants are selected due to their strategic roles in formulating and implementing institutional policies. Moreover, their direct involvement in strategic management processes ensures the validity and relevance of the data obtained. Thus, the selection of informants is methodologically justified.

#### ***Data Collection Techniques and Instruments***

Data in this study are collected using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured format to obtain comprehensive insights into the strategies implemented by the educational institution. The interview guidelines are developed based on strategic management concepts, including planning, implementation, and evaluation aspects (Bryman, 2021). Observations are carried out to understand real conditions in the field and interactions among organizational actors. Meanwhile, documentation is used to complement the data through the analysis of institutional documents such as vision, mission, and strategic plans. Data validity is ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, which involves comparing information obtained from different sources and data collection techniques (Flick, 2022). This approach aims to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

#### ***Research Procedure***

The research is conducted through several systematic stages. The first stage is a preliminary study, which includes problem identification and literature review to define the research focus. The second stage involves determining the research location and selecting informants based on purposive sampling criteria. The third stage is data collection, which is carried out over a three-month period through interviews, observations, and documentation at the research site. The fourth stage is data processing and analysis, conducted simultaneously with data collection. The final stage is the preparation of the research report, including interpretation of findings and conclusion drawing. This procedure follows the principles of qualitative research, which are flexible yet systematic (Maxwell, 2021). Therefore, the research process ensures the production of valid and scientifically accountable data.

#### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

Data analysis in this study employs the interactive model developed by Miles et al. (2020), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involves simplifying and categorizing data according to the research focus. Data display is presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding of patterns and relationships among the data. Conclusion drawing is conducted gradually based on findings obtained throughout the research process. Additionally, the analysis is strengthened using SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to institutional strategies. The data analysis

process is supported by the use of NVivo software to assist in data management and coding. This approach enables a more systematic and in-depth analysis of qualitative data.

## RESEARCH RESULT

### *Strategic Planning in Enhancing Institutional Competitiveness*

The findings indicate that strategic planning serves as the primary foundation for enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions. Based on interview and documentation data, the institution has established a vision and mission oriented toward improving quality and global competitiveness. The planning process is conducted participatively by involving institutional leaders, managers, and academic staff, reflecting the overall needs of the organization. However, it was found that strategic planning tends to be normative and not fully based on dynamic global needs analysis. In addition, the integration between long-term planning and operational implementation remains suboptimal. This suggests that although planning has been carried out systematically, strengthening adaptability and strategic execution is still required.

The interview findings support these results as follows: As stated by the institutional leader: *"We already have planning in place, and the vision and mission are clear, but sometimes the implementation is not optimal because field conditions vary."* (L-1, January 12, 2026). In addition, a managerial staff member stated: *"We have strategic plans every year, but not all of them can be implemented as targeted due to limited resources."* (M-2, January 15, 2026). Furthermore, an academic staff member noted: *"We understand the direction of the institution, but not all lecturers are fully involved in the planning process."* (A-1, January 18, 2026).

These findings emphasize that strategic planning has not yet fully functioned as a transformational instrument but remains at an administrative level. The novelty of this study lies in identifying the gap between formal planning and adaptive implementation within educational institutions in developing regions. This suggests that the effectiveness of strategy is not only determined by the existence of planning documents but also by flexibility and stakeholder involvement in the process. Therefore, a participatory-adaptive strategic planning model becomes a significant contribution to enhancing institutional competitiveness.

### *Strategy Implementation and Organizational Challenges*

The implementation of strategy within educational institutions reveals complex organizational dynamics. Based on observations and interviews, strategy implementation is influenced by factors such as resource availability, leadership, and inter-unit coordination. Although strategies have been well formulated, their implementation often encounters technical and structural challenges. This results in a gap between planning and actual execution in the field. In addition, the absence of an integrated monitoring system hinders the effectiveness of strategy implementation. Thus, strengthening coordination and supervision mechanisms is necessary.

These findings are supported by the following interview excerpts: As explained by a managerial staff member: *“Strategy implementation often depends on each unit’s readiness, so not everything can run simultaneously.”* (M-1, January 14, 2026). An academic staff member stated: *“Sometimes the programs are good, but their implementation is constrained by facilities or technical support.”* (A-2, January 20, 2026). Additionally, the institutional leader mentioned: *“We have tried to oversee the programs, but not all of them can run as planned.”* (L-1, January 22, 2026).

These findings highlight that strategy implementation faces significant coordination challenges within educational organizations. The novelty of this study lies in emphasizing that the implementation gap is not solely due to resource limitations but also due to weak integration among organizational units. This suggests that the success of strategy depends heavily on structured coordination and monitoring systems. Therefore, an integrated organizational approach to implementation is essential to enhance overall strategic effectiveness.

#### ***Evaluation of Strategic Management Practices***

Strategy evaluation is a critical component in ensuring the success of strategic management. The findings indicate that evaluations are conducted periodically; however, they are not yet fully based on measurable performance indicators. Evaluations tend to be administrative and are not well integrated into strategic decision-making processes. Moreover, evaluation results are not optimally utilized as a basis for future strategic improvements. This indicates that the evaluation function has not been fully optimized in supporting institutional competitiveness. Therefore, a more systematic and data-driven evaluation system is needed.

These findings are supported by the following interview statements: A managerial staff member stated: *“Evaluation does exist, but it is mostly in the form of activity reports, not in-depth analysis.”* (M-2, January 25, 2026). An academic staff member explained: *“Evaluations are usually conducted at the end of the semester, but not all results are followed up.”* (A-3, January 27, 2026). Additionally, the institutional leader noted: *“We are continuously improving the evaluation system to make it more measurable and useful for decision-making.”* (L-1, January 29, 2026).

These findings indicate that strategy evaluation has not yet functioned effectively as a strategic decision-making tool. The novelty of this study lies in identifying that weaknesses in evaluation are not only methodological but also related to the utilization of evaluation outcomes in policy formulation. This underscores the importance of developing a performance-based evaluation system integrated within the strategic management cycle. Thus, evaluation should not merely be administrative but should serve as a strategic instrument for enhancing competitiveness.

#### ***Digital Transformation as a Driver of Competitiveness***

Digital transformation has proven to be a significant factor in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions. The findings reveal that the institution has begun adopting technology in both learning processes and administrative functions. The use of digital platforms facilitates access to information and improves operational efficiency. However, the level of

technology utilization remains uneven across different units. Additionally, human resource readiness in operating digital systems presents a challenge. Therefore, digitalization must be supported by more structured and sustainable strategies.

The interview findings indicate: An academic staff member stated: *"We are already using online systems, but some people are still not used to them."* (A-4, January 21, 2026). A managerial staff member explained: *"Digitalization is helpful, but training is needed so everyone can adapt."* (M-1, January 23, 2026). The institutional leader added: *"We are encouraging digital transformation, but it takes time for full adaptation."* (L-1, January 24, 2026).

These findings emphasize that digital transformation is not solely about technology adoption but also about organizational and human resource readiness. The novelty of this study lies in highlighting that digitalization without capacity-building strategies leads to uneven implementation. This indicates that digital transformation should be viewed as an integral part of overall organizational strategy. Therefore, a human resource readiness-based digitalization approach becomes essential in enhancing institutional competitiveness.

#### ***Human Resource Development and Strategic Collaboration***

Human resource development and strategic collaboration are key supporting factors in enhancing institutional competitiveness. The findings show that the institution has implemented various efforts to improve lecturers' capacity through training and professional development programs. In addition, collaboration with external partners has been initiated to expand networks and improve educational quality. However, the implementation of human resource development programs is still constrained by limited resources. Similarly, existing collaborations are still limited in scope and not yet fully optimized. Therefore, a more integrated strategy is required in both human resource development and collaboration.

These findings are supported by the following interview excerpts: An academic staff member stated: *"There are training programs, but they are not regular and not all lecturers can participate."* (A-2, January 26, 2026). A managerial staff member noted: *"Collaborations already exist, but they need to be expanded to have a greater impact."* (M-2, January 28, 2026). The institutional leader emphasized: *"We continue to improve human resources because they are the key to competitiveness."* (L-1, January 30, 2026).

These findings demonstrate that human resource development and strategic collaboration are essential elements in building institutional competitiveness. The novelty of this study lies in integrating internal capacity development with external network expansion as a unified strategic approach. This confirms that competitiveness is not only built internally but also through interaction with the external environment. Therefore, a collaborative-integrative approach emerges as a relevant strategic model for addressing the challenges of globalization in education.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate that strategic planning in educational institutions remains at an administrative level and has not yet become fully adaptive. This aligns with strategic management theory, which emphasizes that planning should not only be formal but must also respond dynamically to changes in the external environment. According to Rothaermel (2021), effective strategic planning should be based on comprehensive environmental analysis to achieve competitive advantage. In the educational context, this implies that planning must consider the demands of globalization and technological advancements. Research by Marginson and Considine (2020) also shows that many educational institutions are still trapped in normative planning without strong implementation. Similarly, a national study by Sudrajat (2022) reveals that strategic planning in Indonesian educational institutions is not yet fully aligned with actual needs. However, this study offers novelty by demonstrating that a participatory-adaptive approach can bridge the gap between planning and implementation.

In terms of strategy implementation, the findings reveal a gap between planning and execution, influenced by coordination and organizational readiness factors. This is consistent with strategy implementation theory, which states that successful implementation depends on alignment between organizational structure and operational execution. Hill and Jones (2020) argue that implementation failure is often caused by weak coordination among organizational units. In addition, Bryson (2021) highlights that strategy implementation in the public sector, including education, requires strong cross-unit integration. In the Indonesian context, Kurniawan (2023) also found that implementation challenges often arise due to limited resources and internal coordination issues. However, this study contributes new insights by emphasizing that organizational integration is a critical yet often overlooked factor in educational strategy implementation. Therefore, an organization-integrated approach is essential to improve implementation effectiveness.

Regarding strategy evaluation, this study finds that evaluation practices remain administrative and are not optimally utilized as a basis for strategic decision-making. This finding is consistent with performance evaluation concepts that emphasize the importance of measurable indicators in assessing strategic success. Kaplan and Norton (2020) state that effective evaluation should be based on clear performance indicators and integrated into organizational management systems. Furthermore, Ferreira and Otley (2021) indicate that non-integrated evaluation systems hinder strategic decision-making processes. In the national context, Wibowo (2022) also reveals that evaluation in educational institutions tends to focus more on administrative reporting rather than performance analysis. However, this study provides novelty by highlighting the importance of utilizing evaluation results as a basis for continuous strategic improvement. Thus, evaluation should not only function as a control mechanism but also as an organizational learning instrument.

Digital transformation in this study is proven to be a key factor in enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions, although its

implementation still faces challenges related to human resource readiness. This finding aligns with digital transformation theory, which emphasizes that success depends not only on technology but also on organizational and individual readiness. According to Vial (2021), digital transformation is a complex process involving structural and cultural changes within organizations. Research by Verhoef et al. (2021) also shows that organizations successful in digital transformation are those capable of integrating technology with business strategies. In the Indonesian context, Raharja and Nugraha (2023) identify human resource readiness as a critical factor in successful educational digitalization. However, this study offers novelty by emphasizing that digitalization should be viewed as an integral part of organizational strategy rather than merely a technical innovation. Therefore, a human resource readiness-based approach becomes essential for optimizing digital transformation.

Furthermore, human resource development and strategic collaboration are identified as key factors in enhancing institutional competitiveness. These findings align with human capital theory, which states that the quality of human resources is a primary asset in achieving competitive advantage. Becker (2020) emphasizes that investment in human resource development improves organizational productivity and performance. Additionally, Etzkowitz and Zhou (2021) highlight that collaboration between educational institutions and external stakeholders strengthens innovation and competitiveness. In the Indonesian context, Suryadi (2022) also underscores the importance of human resource development and collaborative networks in improving educational quality. However, the novelty of this study lies in integrating internal capacity development and external collaboration into a unified strategic approach. This confirms that competitiveness is not only built internally but also through interactions with the external environment. Therefore, a collaborative-integrative approach emerges as a relevant strategic model in addressing the challenges of globalization in education.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study concludes that the implementation of strategic management in educational institutions plays a crucial role in enhancing institutional competitiveness in the era of globalization. The findings indicate that while strategic planning has been formally established, its implementation remains suboptimal due to gaps in coordination, organizational readiness, and evaluation mechanisms. Competitiveness is significantly strengthened through digital transformation, human resource development, and strategic collaboration; however, these efforts require more integrated and adaptive approaches. Therefore, it is recommended that educational institutions adopt participatory-adaptive planning, strengthen inter-unit coordination, implement performance-based evaluation systems, and enhance human resource readiness to support digital transformation. These strategies are essential to ensure sustainable institutional performance and global competitiveness.

## ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study is limited to a qualitative approach within a single institutional context, which may not fully represent broader educational settings. Future research is recommended to employ mixed-method approaches or comparative studies across multiple institutions to provide more generalizable findings. Additionally, further studies can explore quantitative measurement models of strategic management effectiveness in enhancing institutional competitiveness.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all informants, including institutional leaders, managers, and academic staff, for their valuable contributions to this study. Appreciation is also extended to Universitas Doktor Husni Ingratubun Papua for institutional support in the completion of this research.

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