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## **Concept of Education Management: Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) for the Advancement of Islamic Education (Study at SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi, Malang)**

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**Abstract.** Educational progress is produced by a strategic and quality process. To produce educational progress, the concept of educational management is needed with the Positioning-Differentiation-Brand strategy. This study aims to formulate a theoretical model: 1) positioning strategy developed by SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi to improve school competitiveness 2) differentiation strategy by SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi so as to strengthen the attractiveness of new students 3) branding strategy at SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi to make it known easier and become the hope of society 4) management strategy and reconstruction of Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi so as to achieve the success of graduates being accepted by the industry and achieving school progress. This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach in order to give birth to a phenomenological model formulation. Data collection techniques used: 1) direct observation, 2) documentation study, and 3) in-depth interviews. Data analysis using data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity and reliability of the research results are measured by four criteria: 1) Credibility, 2) Transferability, 3) Dependability, and 4) Confirmability. The results of this study indicate: 1) positioning strategy: on the customer (customer); on internal capabilities and strengths (company); over competitors (competitors); on changes (change); be a power of differentiation (clarity); compete for the products owned (consistency); have high credibility (credibility), and have superior products (competitiveness). 2) differentiation strategy: unique and different performance and design (product differentiation); friendly service with speed and convenience (service differentiation); capabilities in distribution channels (channel differentiation); Reliable Human Resources (HR) (people differentiation); courage to act (progressive differentiation); Iduka curriculum is always updated (content), industrial cooperation (context), and technology with other facilities (infrastructure: inabler) 3) branding strategy; innovative (core identity); open (extended identity); public trust (value proposition). 4) Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) management and reconstruction.

**Keywords.** Education Management, Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB), Educational Progress

The findings of this study are the reconstruction of the education management concept model with the Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) strategy for the advancement of Islamic education.

## **1. Introduction**

Developed countries such as Japan have made good progress in education, economy, technology and other fields. One of the cities in Japan is named Kumamoto city, and this city has a long history. During the Meiji Restoration, the city was founded as the number 5 High School in Japan which was named Daigo Gakko City. The forerunner of Imperial Colleges such as Tokyo University, Kyoto University, and others that are highly branded is starting from Japan, establishing 10 excellent schools. From these schools have produced many great leaders including prime ministers, who have built modern Japan. Kumadai is not an imperial college, but after all Kumadai is a breed of kusuma seeping honey for the history of Japanese education restoration. (Robandi, 2012) By looking at a developed country like Japan, educational institutions in Indonesia must also rise up to achieve brilliant progress and have many advantages, including the advancement of vocational education.

Educational institutions must always think and struggle to maintain their existence. Every educational institution must make improvements based on a high commitment, so that it can determine strategic steps, and can take part in international situations. Among these commitments is to follow the dynamics of changing times and always make innovations in all fields. This commitment is of course the educational management framework and subsequently becomes the basis for determining steps in the management of education. (Sudarmani, 2018) To determine the management steps, strategic steps must be taken to innovate by building trust in the community.

Presidential Instruction (Inpress) Number 9 of 2016 concerning the Revitalization of Vocational High Schools (SMK) was issued by the government. However, the implementation is not optimal. The Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI) conveyed at a Hearing Meeting (RDPU) with Commission X DPR RI on September 4, 2017, showing that, among other things, the number of productive teachers in SMK is currently only 22% of the total number of teacher needs, as well as weak link and match. In addition, there are also obstacles or problems with the introduction of vocational education through education stakeholders through Hearing Meetings (RDP) and Public Hearings Meetings (RDPU) in the work committee for Evaluation of Elementary and Secondary Education and the National Standards Committee for Dikdasmen, including competence and teacher professionalism with the partnership between the Business World and the Industrial World. (Faqih, 2019) To answer these challenges, it is necessary to start with improving the quality of educational institutions in addition to competitive educational competition.

Educational leadership must be able to organize and link ideas, as proposed by Bannister and Fransella, as follows: "Educational growth is not the accumulation of more and more pieces of information, but the development of an increasing complex structure for organizing and interrelating ideas". (Novak, 2002) Author George Bernard Shaw wrote in Rhenald Kasali: (Kasali, 2017) "Only two percent of people believe; three percent of people think they believe; and ninety-five percent of people would rather die than think." The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia mandates in particular Article 31, in fact it is very firm and clear to position national education in a strategic position as an instrument of the nation's struggle that does not only play a role in the intellectual life of the nation, but also but to build the nation and civilization of the nation Education regulations at the primary and secondary education levels,

particularly in the form of related laws, including Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. That in formulating policies and administering and managing education in Indonesia, especially in primary and secondary education (Faqih, 2019) it is hoped that there will be an increase in the quality of education and this is a great hope for the progress of the nation.

The ideal concept of Vocational High Schools (SMK) includes having vocational graduates in the future, according to the Director of Vocational Development at the Ministry of Education and Culture, M. Bakrun, who are expected to have cognitive aspects, soft skills, and integrity. The soft skills aspect emphasizes communication skills, leadership, problem solving, English presentation, critical thinking, and creativity. From the aspect of integrity, it includes the values of honesty, hard work, gratitude, sincerity, winning character, inspiring. Physically and spiritually healthy, and love the homeland. They must also be equipped with entrepreneurial skills. In addition, the importance of SMK getting closer to the business world and the industrial world with the concept of link and match must be the focus of educational institutions and industry, in order to reduce the unemployment rate for SMK graduates. (Muhammadiyah, 2021)

Among the 3,334 Muhammadiyah schools, there are SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi Kab. Malang, East Java. In the direct observation of researchers and according to [sangpencerah.id](http://sangpencerah.id) that SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi Kab. Malang, East Java is one of the leading schools for educational institutions in the Muhammadiyah association. In addition, according to the data obtained, SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi is one of the best SMK in Malang Regency, East Java. (Gondanglegi, 2021)

Its competitiveness in educational institutions, so that in marketing educational institutions it is perceived as important to do. Besides having the achievements of SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi, this has a big impact on the progress of education. However, it is still not in accordance with the ideal concept of Vocational High School (SMK) that is expected and the dynamics that exist are still many that must be addressed with ideal competencies in advancing education.

In the SWOT matrix of SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi, they are as follows: 1) strength (S); educate 2,524 students with 14 skill competencies. 35% of these students came from outside Malang Raya, synchronized the curriculum with Iduka, held workshops in the preparation of learning tools, analysis of KI/KD, lesson plans and job sheets, collaborated with 364 Iduka and universities (domestic and overseas), in collaboration with Astra Daihatsu Motor (ADM) in the application of Iduka 5S culture (Seiri, Saiton, Seoso, Seiketsu, Setsuke). 2) weakness (W); The absorption of graduates is still low, 61% with a waiting period of 12 months, with details of 57% working in Iduka, 3% continuing and 1% in entrepreneurship. Curriculum synchronization with Iduka is only in certain study programs, the Iduka curriculum document is not yet complete and not optimal in its application, collaboration with Iduka has not been implemented optimally, the culture of Iduka in schools has not been implemented properly, not yet strong and sturdy. 3) chance (O); the community puts high trust in schools as evidenced by the increasing number of students, great support from stakeholders, positive public perception and grief towards SMK, graduates can work, can continue and become entrepreneurs. 4) threat (T); The number of Vocational High Schools in Malang Regency is quite large, totaling 140 schools (State Vocational Schools numbering 9 and Private Vocational Schools totaling 131) and in Gondanglegi District there are 14 villages with 10 Vocational High Schools. Stakeholders hope that candidates from SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi, the absorption of candidates can reach 100% (work, continue to study and become entrepreneurs). How is the management and reconstruction of the Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) of SMK

Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi so that the achievement and progress of Islamic education is that graduates are accepted by the industry?

## **2. Research Objectives**

This study aims to analyze and find comprehensively the concept of positioning, differentiation, and branding of SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi and how the concept of education management is to achieve progress in Islamic education.

## **3. Theoretical Review**

Management is the board, directors and administrators, which comes from the verb "manage", which means to work, manage and control. The term "management" comes from the Italian "managiere" which means to train horses as trainers. The term "to govern" in French means "to lead" or "to lead". (Tanthowi, 1983)

Abdul Madjid Latief in his book *Management Education: Concepts, Applications, Standards, and Research*, suggests about education management from several experts, including: (Latief, 2017) 1) Shrode and Voich (1986) stated that the basic structure of the concept of education management includes: "Philosophy, Assumptions, Principles, and theory which are basic to the study of any discipline of management". 2) Rexohadiprojo in Manaf (2001) says that management is the achievement of effective and efficient goals in an organization, so it takes effort, planning, organizing, leading, coordinating and controlling activities. 3) George Terry (1956) defines leadership as "the actions or actions of someone who has the right to order others to do something, while the responsibility (responsibility) remains in the hands of those who govern". 4) Mulyasa (2006) defines education management as a system of managing and structuring educational resources such as teaching staff, students, community, curriculum, resources, assistance and educational structure, management and environment. 5) Pidarta (1988) argues that education management is an activity that unites educational resources in such a way that they are concentrated in an effort to achieve the pedagogical goals that have been set. Educational leadership can be defined as the process of planning, organizing, coaching, supervising educational staff, educational resources to achieve educational goals.

In the repertoire of Islamic education thought, researchers use various terms to understand Islamic education. Langgulong from Muhaimin explained that Islamic education includes eight meanings, namely: at-tarbiyah ad-diniyah (religious education), ta'lim ad-diny (religious teaching), al-ta'lim al-Islami (Islamic teachings), tarbiyah al- -muslimin (education of Muslims), al-tarbiyah fi al-Islam (education in Islam), al-tarbiyah 'inda al-muslimin (education among Muslims), and al-tarbiyah al-Islamiyah (Islamic education). Meanwhile, education experts usually refer to the term in terms of the difference between tarbiyah and ta'lim. (Muhaimin, 2002)

### *Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) Triangle Concept*

The positioning, differentiation and branding (PDB) triangle is one of the theories in marketing management science, which is the core of the nine elements of marketing (marketing), which consists of branding, differentiation, positioning, segmentation, targeting, marketing mix, sales, service, and marketing. Kartajaya divides these nine marketing elements into three parts, namely strategy, tactics, and values. All three are a unit with their respective specific roles. (Setiarini, 2017) Together, these nine elements form the "grand design" of a product, brand, and company or institution.



Kotler and Keller, in their book *Marketing Management*, define marketing as an organizational function and a set of processes that can create, communicate and deliver value to customers, and manage good customer relationships, all of which can benefit the organization itself. (Iqbal, 2019)

According to Hermawan Kartajaya, the positioning-differentiation-brand (PDB) triangle has a basic strategy within the company that includes three main elements. First of all, this is how you can accurately position products, brands and companies in the minds of customers. Second, how to support this correct positioning with strong and strong differentiation. Third, if you can position yourself well and support it through solid differentiation, then the next step is how to build sustainable brand equity. (Kartajaya, 2004)

Positioning is an important mantra for marketers in the late twentieth century. This is almost never revealed in marketing practices, marketing seminars, agency meetings and their clients, even in everyday marketing conversations. However, it must be admitted that not many people can position their products well. Misconceptions about the definition of positioning are still heard everywhere. (Kasali, *Targeting the Indonesian Market: Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning*, 1998) J. Williams in his book (Williams, 2010) argues that the concepts of positioning and branding are easier to understand in the context of consumer products, but all the same principles apply to professional companies. . Therefore, in an organization, whether profit-oriented or non-profit, its position in the hearts of customers should not be underestimated. When positioned properly, an organization must be able to maintain and be able to increase its market share in order to ultimately increase the profitability of the organization. According to Jobber in Agnes Tika Setiarini, the criteria for product positioning excellence are formulated as follows: (Setarini, 2015) a) Clarity: The product position must be clear in describing the target market and opportunities for differentiation. b) Consistency, a consistent message about product positioning is important to make a product competitive. c) Credibility (reliability), the power of differentiation must inspire trust in the minds of the target market. d) Competitiveness (competitiveness), the ability to differentiate, must describe the value of consumer products that cannot be offered by competing products.

Hermawan Kartajaya defines 3D differentiation as "the integration of content, context and infrastructure of our customer offerings." According to him, the offers offered to buyers are not only considered different by buyers, but must be completely different in the following aspects: (Kartajaya, *Positioning, Differentiation, and Brand*, 2004) 1) Content or "what to offer" (what is offered ) 2) Context or "how to offer" 3) Infrastructure or "enablers" distinguish ownership. Philip Kotler said that differentiation can be done according to several indicators, namely: 1) Product (product differentiation) includes, but is not limited to: features, specifications, design, and so on; 2) The service (service differentiation) includes speed, convenience, delivery time, empathy, and others; 3) Its distribution channel capabilities (channel differentiation) include, among others: channel coverage, selling capabilities, customer service, and others; 4) human resources (people differentiation) includes, among others: capabilities, work culture, skills, and others; or 5) Image (image differentiation) includes, among others: logo, corporate identity, associations, characters, celebrity supporters, and many more. Differentiation has different tools for a product, service, person or channel or image. (Jurate Sereikiene, 2015)

The brand is an indicator of the value offered to customers, the brand is an asset that creates value for customers, increasing their satisfaction and loyalty, the brand is a tool to measure the quality of the value offered. (Kartajaya, *On Brand Series 9 Marketing Elements*, 2007) Brands have identities to encourage recognition, strengthen differentiation, make ideas and big meanings accessible. (Wheeler, 2017) According to Klein in Jean-Noel Kapferer

(Kapferer, 2008) in his book entitled *New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*, brand has become a major player in modern society. Brands are everywhere and penetrate all areas of life, whether economic, social, cultural, sports and even religious. As the main symbols of the postmodern economy and society, they can and should be analyzed from various perspectives: macroeconomics, microeconomics, sociology, psychology, history, semiotics, philosophy and so on.

Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) in Agnes Tika Setiarini explains that the result of the process of positioning and differentiation is to become a brand identity. Brand identity is a set of associations created and maintained by a company. The brand identity structure consists of: (Setiarini A. , 2015) a) Core identity, a strategy that must reflect and the values of the organization that makes it. b) Extended identity, brand identity is included in elements that are not in the basic identity. c) Brand essence is the only thought that contains the soul of the brand. The essence of a brand has characteristics that can reach consumers and guide a value proposition, can differentiate it from competitors, can survive in the long term, and can inspire members of an organization.

#### **4. Research Methods**

##### **Research Methods and Procedures**

Research is defined as an attempt to find the correct answer to a problem based on logic supported by facts or empirical data. In addition, research is also an activity that is carried out systematically through processes, including data collection, data processing, and drawing conclusions from data using certain methods and techniques. Thus, research is a systematic step in trying to solve problems. (Warso, 2015)

In this study using a qualitative phenomenological approach. Phenomenological research according to Creswell cited by Dede Rosyada is research on experiences, traditions and various cultural phenomena of a social community. While narrative research is more focused on investigating individual experiences that are unique to their life experiences, phenomenological research is more focused on exploring the experiences of a group of people, a social community, their social traditions, by exploring the meaning of their social behavior, then researchers also explore their views. about their experiences, and even explore the philosophy of their life experiences of social groups whose phenomena are being observed by researchers. (Rosyada, 2020)

The main goal of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences of phenomena to descriptions of universal entities or entities ("understanding the distinctive nature of things,"). To this end, qualitative researchers identify phenomena ("objects" of human experience). This human experience can be a phenomenon. (Creswell, 2014)

##### **Research Place**

This research will be conducted at SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi Kab. Malang, East Java, which is located on Jalan KH. Ahmad Dahlan No. 20 Dusun Krajan, Putat Kidul, Kec. Gondanglegi Kab. Malang, East Java. This school is one of the best vocational high schools owned by the Muhammadiyah association, especially in the East Java area under the Elementary and Secondary Education Council (Dikdasmen). SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi Kab. Malang, East Java, which is located in a sugarcane plantation, according to the researcher, is a feasibility to be studied in the concept of education management: positioning-differentiation, and branding for the advancement of education.

## **5. Research Results and Discussion**

### **Analysis of Positioning Strategies Developed by Schools to Improve School Competitiveness.**

SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi has applied educational management theory with the positioning concept developed by the school so that it can improve school competitiveness starting with several positioning criteria including: customer, company, competitor, change, clarity, consistency, credibility, and competitiveness.

The positioning of SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi which is a strength other than the criteria described above is the 68% job absorption model before graduating with the Iduka curriculum and Iduka collaboration. However, the absorption of work that has been achieved is only 61%, so there needs to be an increase according to the targeted positioning. Thus, it can be concluded that the positioning strategy with these criteria can increase high trust and increase school competitiveness. With such positioning, creativity improvements in positioning will increase expectations and have a competitive advantage and become a strength to excel in the competition.

Based on the eight indicators in building the positioning, there are indicators that are very influential on the progress of education in schools. The indicator is customer oriented (oriented to market needs). This indicator is very influential on the positioning that is built on the basis of the vision and mission of providing services to customers, the absorption of graduates working is 86%. However, the absorption of new graduates only reached 61% (working at IDUKA, continuing to college, and entrepreneurship). This has not been maximized with the expectation of ideal conditions as expected by schools, students, parents and IDUKA. Even what stakeholders want is the absorption of graduates to reach 100% of graduates working, continuing to college and entrepreneurship. So the step that must be taken is to take strategic steps with curriculum adjustments.

### **Analysis of Differentiation Strategies Conducted by Schools, Thus Strengthening the Attractiveness of New Students.**

SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi has applied education management theory with a strong differentiation concept by schools so as to strengthen the flow of new student enrollment starting with the following criteria: product differentiation, service differentiation, channel differentiation, people differentiation, progressive differentiation, content (what to offer), context (how to offer), and infrastructure (inabler).

Thus, it can be concluded that the differentiation criteria can increase high confidence and increase the flow of trust. Thus, it is hoped that the creativity of the improvements in differentiation will increase expectations.

Based on the eight indicators in building the differentiation, there are indicators that are very influential on the progress of education in schools. There are two such indicators are first; product differentiation (soft skills and hard skills as industrial culture development). This indicator has a differentiation with other schools, namely a different curriculum in general. For example, in the development of periodic service services in collaboration with industry, class X must receive 10,000 KM periodic service, XI class 20,000 KM and class XII periodic service 40,000 KM. In addition, the soft skills and hard skills of the 5S culture industry (Seiri/brief, Seiton/tidy, Seiso/clean, Seiketsu/care and Shitsuke/diligent) are well developed. Second; progressive (courage to act). This indicator is built with a strategic concept and requires leadership courage in making decisions. For example, daring to open a new study program



according to the needs of the community, having a product that is a lighthouse that becomes a brand so that it is known to the wider community with modern publications.

**Strategy analysis of School Branding Development to be Known by the Community and Become Hope.**

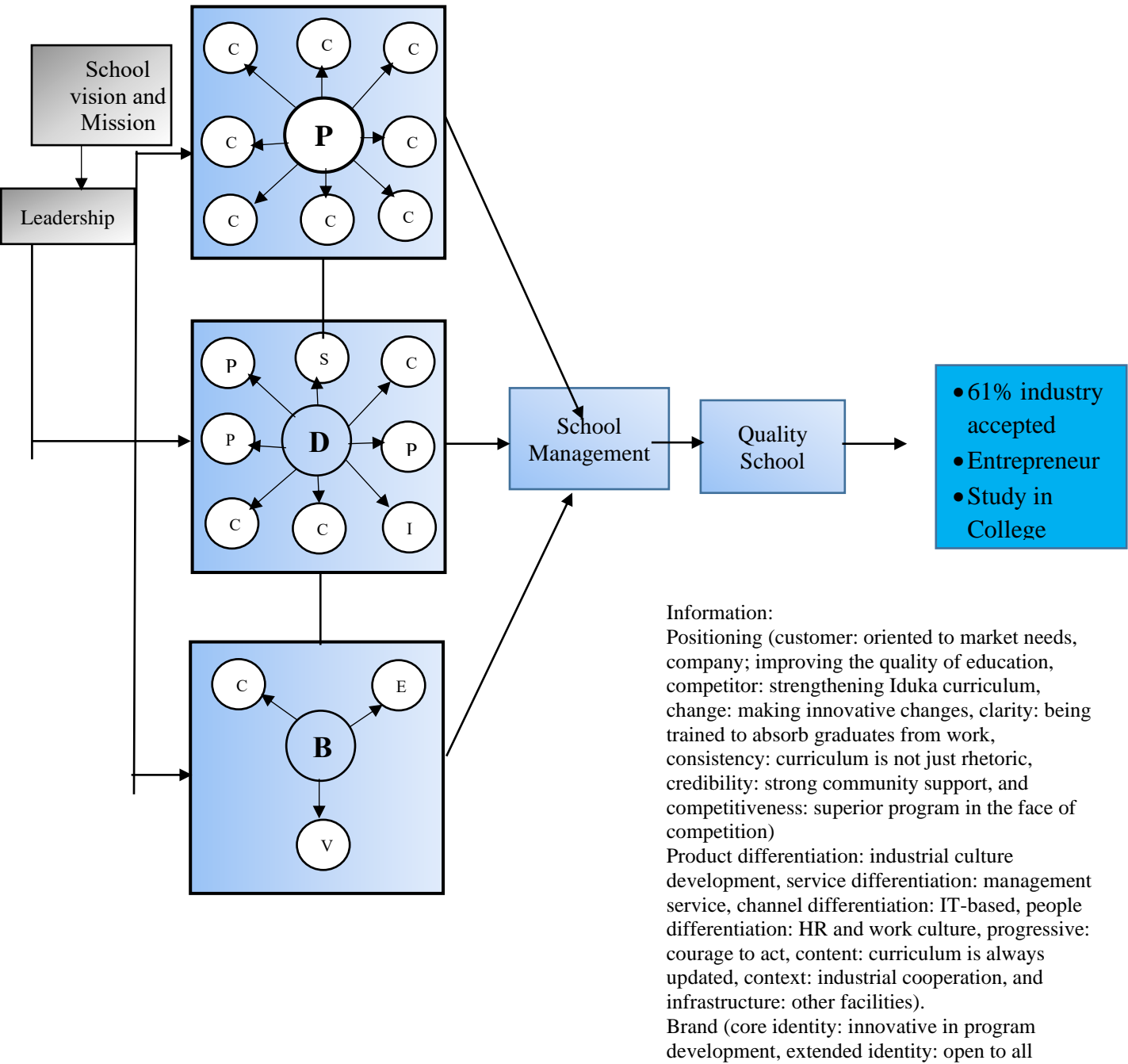
SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi has implemented educational management theory by developing a school branding strategy so that it is known and becomes the hope of the community, with the following criteria: core identity, extended identity, and value proposition (function benefits and emotional benefits).

Based on the three indicators in building the brand, there are indicators that are very influential on the progress of education in schools. The indicator is core identity (innovative in program development). The school which is located in Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah is in the development of building a brand, including endorsements from figures both regional and national figures. Cooperating with industry so that the promotion of company logos as partners is included. In addition, the availability of graduates who are accepted for work before graduation is published, testimonials of graduates who have worked both domestically and abroad. This is what makes the brand in the community so that it is widely known.

**Analysis of Management and Reconstruction of Positioning, Differentiation, and Brand (PDB) to Achieve Success of Graduates Accepted by Industry and Progress of Islamic Education**

Researchers found success in managing positioning, differentiation, and branding so that graduates can be accepted by the industry with development strategies including the following: First, reconstructing the mindset; Second, strengthening the competence of school principals; Third, develop the school's strategic plan; Fourth, improve the quality of human resources; Fifth, spur PTK performance; Sixth, sharpen the promotion line; Seventh, establish cooperation.

The reconstruction of management in achieving the progress of Islamic education is as follow



**Figure 4.7 Education Management Concept for School Progress (Reconstruction of Management of SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi)**  
 The Urgency of Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) in the Advancement of Islamic Education

Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) is a concept that is urgently applied in Islamic education management. SMK Muhammadiyah 7 Gondanglegi has successfully implemented this concept so that the progress of Islamic education is getting superior in the face of competitive competition.

Through this educational management concept, it will strengthen the growth and progress of educational institutions that are carried out creatively and constructively so that it will improve the quality of Islamic education and can be highly competitive both nationally and internationally. For this reason, the concept of Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) that was developed can realize the formation of educational progress and can be implemented universally.

## 6. Conclusion

Whereas with these indicators, the concept of Positioning-Differentiation-Brand (PDB) which is developed from the school's vision and mission can then influence school management and improve school quality so as to produce alumni or graduates who are accepted by the industry.

Positioning built with eight indicators, namely oriented to market (customer) needs, improving the quality of educational services (company), strengthening the IDUKA curriculum (competitor), always making innovative changes (change), being trained in the absorption of graduates to work before graduation (clarity), non-standard curriculum. only rhetoric (consistency), trust and strong support from the community (credibility), excellent programs in the face of competition (competitiveness). Differentiation is built with eight indicators, namely soft skills and hard skills for developing industrial culture (product differentiation), service management (service differentiation), information technology-based (channel differentiation), HR capabilities, work culture and skills (people differentiation), courage to act ( progressive), the IDUKA curriculum is always updated (content), industrial cooperation and the teaching and learning system (context), human resources, technology and other facilities (infrastructure). The brand is built with three indicators, namely innovative in program development (core identity), open to all circles (extended identity), public trust (value proposition).

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