



Business Competitiveness Based on Community Preferences in an Indonesian Private University: A Case Study of Garut Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate business competitiveness in Indonesian private universities. This qualitative research used literature review and survey as the data collection methods. Using purposive sampling technique, the research sample involved high school students and parents of students in Garut regency. Conjoint analysis method was applied with the assistance of SPSS software. The research findings indicate that the primary attribute considered in selecting private universities is accreditation. The findings affirm that the accreditation attribute holds significant influence in decision-making, outweighing other attributes such as facilities, tuition fees, promotions, and college location. Furthermore, the research results also indicate that parents of high school students share similar preferences with the high school students regarding the importance of accreditation attributes. These findings indicate the importance of enhancing academic quality and facilities in private universities, which directly impacts public perception and future prospects of their education and survivability.

Keywords: Preferences, Facilities, Costs, Accreditation, Location, Promotion

JEL: I20

SGD: SDG 4

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere that enables learners to develop their diverse potentials, including spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills necessary for themselves and the progress of society, nation, and state (Pristiwanti et al., 2022). Universities play a role as the highest educational institutions where the learning process takes place, making them a place for the development of various disciplines and the preparation of graduates. Moreover, universities also act as agents in economic growth by contributing through entrepreneurship formation and improving the quality of graduating human resources, which in turn will enhance the quality of the workforce, productivity, and production capacity, leading to the economic growth of a country (Sedyati, 2022). In line with the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 2 of 1989, which asserts that national education aims to enlighten the nation's life and develop Indonesian humans holistically, covering various aspects such as faith, morals, knowledge, skills, health, personality, social responsibility, and nationalism. Education is considered a mandate from the nation's founders and must be a top priority carried out in accordance with applicable laws. Education is an essential element in the life of a nation, involving various components such as teachers, students, learning objectives, learning facilities, and educational contexts.

In the modern era where higher education has become a commercialized commodity, higher education institutions need to strategically reshape their image through various innovations to develop more competent human resources. This will support the advancement of a country's economy by creating sustainable universities and more prepared students (Zhou & Alam, 2024). Higher education institutions need to revamp and emphasize innovation to meet the evolving needs of students as they progress in their educational journey (Baena-Morales & Fröberg, 2023). The ability of universities and universities to adapt and effectively respond to these dynamic changes has become a determining factor for their success and relevance in the modern world (Sumarmi et al., 2024). Achieving success requires continuous monitoring and evaluation of the education system based on the collection, processing, and analysis of data needed to make appropriate management decisions for optimal educational development (Kubitskyi et al., 2023). Higher education operates within a highly competitive market where universities compete corporately. In this competitive climate, university branding becomes an effective way to attract student interest (Demin, 2019).

Higher education, as a provider of advanced education, is increasingly becoming the focus of public attention. Data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (DIKTI) in 2020 shows that there are 4,593 higher education institutions in Indonesia with 8,483,213 registered students across 29,413 study programs. The development of higher education institutions in each province continues to grow, resulting in a variety of higher education institutions, both government-managed and private sectors. West Java province, in particular, has the highest number of higher education institutions within Indonesia, recording significant growth in higher education data. Table 1 shows the number of higher education institutions under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

Table 1. Number of Higher Education Institutions in West Java

Year	Number of State Universities (PTN)	Number of Private Universities (PTS)	Total Universities in West Java Province
2020	12	377	389
2021	12	392	404
2022	12	376	388

Source: Data processed from the Central Statistics Agency and the Directorate General of Higher Education (2020-2022)

In the past three years, the number of higher education institutions in West Java Province has experienced fluctuations. In 2020, there were 389 institutions of higher education, including 12 State Universities (PTN) and 377 Private Universities (PTS). This total increased to 404 institutions in 2021, with 12 PTNs and 392 PTSs. However, in 2022, the number decreased to 388 higher education institutions, with 12 PTNs and 376 PTSs. This decrease in the number of institutions is likely influenced by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected many universities, especially private ones, resulting in a decrease in new student enrollments and an increase in the dropout rate due to economic difficulties caused by the pandemic (Santoso et al., 2020). However, the limited capacity for admitting students in State Universities (PTN) may open opportunities for Private Universities (PTS) to offer their study programs. This provides opportunities for various private institutions such as universities, institutes, academies, and polytechnics to admit students (Asbar et al., 2022). However, the abundance of private universities in Indonesia significantly impacts prospective students in making decisions on choosing a university to continue their studies (Pardiyono & Indrayani, 2019).

The development of the higher education sector in Garut Regency has experienced significant growth, with a number of higher education institutions, including academic universities, institutes, and schools. Current data indicates that there are a total of 22 active higher education institutions operating in Garut Regency. There are 22 active universities in Garut Regency. A study conducted Resmi and Mekarsari (2017) identified several factors limiting the competitiveness of private universities, including the freedom of State Universities (PTN) to offer study fields and academic programs, which may threaten the existence of Private Universities (PTS); Law No. 12 of 2012, which requires accreditation of PTN institutions and study programs, encourages PTS to improve their accreditation; The public prefers PTN over PTS for higher education, and PTS tends to accept students who are not accepted by PTN; Article 11 of Ministerial Decision No. 234 of 2000 determines the financing sources of higher education institutions by education providers.

As an example, Private Universities (PTS) in Garut Regency face fierce competition with State universities (PTN) that have greater access, facilities, and budget support from the government. Additionally, PTS also compete among themselves to attract new students in Garut Regency. PTNs offer more study programs and have a strong reputation, while PTSs offer variation in quality and educational costs. The number of PTS in Garut Regency from 2020 to 2022 experienced growth. Garut Regency has 33,147 Private Universities. In 2021, this number increased to 35,147, reflecting growth of approximately 2,772 Private Universities compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, in 2022, the number reached 35,960, indicating growth of about 41 Private Universities. Although the growth in the last year is smaller compared to the previous year, this indicates that higher education in Garut Regency is still developing.

Research on community preferences in choosing universities remains relevant and holds significant benefits. Its results have the potential to provide valuable insights for higher education institutions, local governments, as well as stakeholders interested in enhancing the quality of higher education according to societal needs (Ratih & Najicha, 2021). This information is also beneficial for the community in understanding their preferences in choosing universities using conjoint methods. This research can assist universities in understanding community preferences, improving service quality, and enhancing student

satisfaction. Moreover, the findings of this research can also support local governments in formulating education programs that align with community expectations.

Several studies (Budur et al., 2018; Nugroho & Nursito, 2019; Mardiana & Tanjung, 2019; Kamantya et al., 2021) have highlighted the importance of community preferences in selecting universities, consistently emphasizing their significance in supporting sustainable economic growth and development. All of these studies underscore the crucial role of community preferences that should be noted and enhanced. There is a consensus on the significant impact of community preferences on economic growth and development. Several studies also indicate that in Indonesia, there are still challenges in college selection, demonstrating high relevance for further research.

Amidst increasingly fierce competition, the role of marketing in universities is also rapidly growing, which was not previously extensively undertaken. One important aspect in university marketing efforts is understanding what factors lead students to choose particular universities (Soutar & Turner, 2002). In the end, business competitiveness can be measured by how many prospective students might enroll in a private university since it is directly linked to the survivability of the said university. The aim of this research is to investigate Business Competitiveness in Indonesian Private Universities. The method used is a purposive sampling technique involving high school students and parents of students in Garut Regency. The analysis method applied is the conjoint analysis method with the assistance of SPSS software. The results of this research will provide a clearer understanding of the preferences of students when selecting private universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Business competitiveness in the global education sector

The global education sector is undergoing a dynamic shift, fueled by a surge in competition. Students, empowered by a wider range of options like online programs and international universities, demand unique programs, strong faculty, and engaging learning experiences. Educational institutions are responding by integrating technology (EdTech) to personalize curriculums, while pursuing international recognition through partnerships and accreditation. Cost remains a major concern, so universities offering competitive tuition and clear career paths hold an advantage. On the business side, innovation is key. Companies that develop novel learning materials, online platforms, and teaching methods stand out. Addressing specific needs, like K-12 support or professional development, creates niche markets. The ability to adapt to new technologies and learning trends, while scaling to reach wider audiences, is crucial. Collaboration between businesses and institutions fosters mutual benefit. This competitive landscape, though challenging affordability and universal access, ultimately drives innovation and elevates the quality of education globally. Examples abound: The University of Toronto's online learning initiatives, Singapore Management University's industry-specific programs, and Berklee College of Music's use of technology for personalized learning showcase institutional adaptation. In the business world, Khan Academy's free online resources, Udemy's affordable course offerings, and Duolingo's gamified language learning demonstrate successful innovation. As competition intensifies, educational institutions and businesses that prioritize innovation, adaptation, and student value will be the ones shaping the future of global education.

Business competitiveness in Indonesia education sector

The Indonesian education sector is undergoing a dynamic transformation fueled by intensifying competition. Public awareness of education's power to elevate lives is driving demand across all levels, with a burgeoning middle class seeking high-quality private options. The government's commitment through increased budgets and policy changes further strengthens the sector. This competitive landscape pushes institutions to differentiate themselves – offering unique programs, strong faculty, and technology integration for engaging learning. International recognition is also coveted, with universities forging partnerships abroad and seeking accreditation. Affordability remains a major concern, so institutions with competitive fees, scholarships, and clear career paths hold an advantage. On the business side, innovation thrives. Companies developing cutting-edge learning materials, online platforms, and teaching methods stand out. Addressing specific needs like early childhood education or vocational training creates profitable niches, while adaptability to new technologies and scalability to reach wider audiences are crucial. Collaboration between businesses and institutions is mutually beneficial. Despite challenges like unequal access and teacher quality, this competitive environment fosters innovation, ultimately elevating the quality of education for all Indonesians. There are multiple factors that determine Higher Education Business Competitiveness, namely Consumer Preference and Behaviour, College Facilities and Location, Education Costs, Accreditation, Promotion, and Decision-making.

Community Preference on Education

Preference refers to choice. Consumer choice is an action to express whether someone has an interest or dissatisfaction with the products they use. Indriany et al. (2022) suggest that consumer preferences reflect consumer behavior towards a brand of goods created through the assessment of various brands among various available choices. In other words, consumer preferences reflect the combination of goods and services that are more favored by consumers when given the opportunity to obtain them. Ummah dan Hayati (2022) explains that consumer preferences entail outlining the subjective tastes of individuals influenced by the utility of the attributes of a product. Meanwhile, Ahmad et al. (2022) explain that consumer preferences are the tendency of consumers to prefer one product over others of the same kind. Consumer preferences for a product can be identified when consumers come from various available product choices. The level of fondness is seen from one attribute to another. Therefore, consumers will directly compare several product attributes that will be chosen by consumers based on these consumer preferences (Sundari et al., 2019).

Setiadi (2019) explains that consumer behavior involves interactions between various aspects, such as emotions, thoughts, environmental influences, and exchange processes, which are dynamic in nature. The dynamic nature of consumer behavior means that both individuals, consumer groups, and society as a whole are constantly undergoing changes and shifts in their behavior over time. This has significant implications in the study of consumer behavior and also in designing marketing strategies. Furthermore, (Firmansyah, 2019) states that consumer behavior is closely related to the purchasing process. When consumers engage in activities such as seeking information, conducting research, and evaluating products and services, they are actively involved in the purchasing stage. Moreover, Shavab et al. (2021) define consumer behavior as a series of activities that occur before the purchasing decision, where consumers often take steps such as seeking information, evaluating alternative options, and ultimately making purchases that meet their needs.

Sonia (2021) states that college attributes are elements considered significant by consumers and used as a basis for making purchasing decisions. College attributes are characteristics that can provide insight and opinions to prospective students about the higher education institution (Nursyamsi, 2022).. In other words, if these college attributes are positive and

avored by prospective students, it is hoped that they can attract the interest of prospective students and encourage them to choose and enroll in the college. Mico (2020) asserts that facilities are elements directly supporting or used in the implementation of activities in the teaching and learning process. Some of the attribute levels used include 1) classrooms, 2) libraries, 3) Laboratory. Practice, 4) Parking Facilities.

Masnawati & Darmawan (2023) found that costs are one of the factors significantly impacting the intention to choose private universities. Therefore, costs become one of the considerations because individuals need to ensure beforehand that the educational costs are based on their financial resources. The issue of education costs often becomes a consideration for parents, especially for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds ((Dewi & Indrayani, 2021). According to Perkasa dan Putra (2020), education costs are financial expenses incurred by individuals, whether parents or students themselves, for expenses during the educational period, from the beginning to the end of education. Furthermore, Perkasa dan Putra (2020) explain that within the costs, there are several attribute levels, including 1) construction costs, 2) tuition fees, and 3) laboratory fee

Excellent or outstanding accreditation significantly influences prospective students' intention to choose Private Universities, as accreditation is the key to excellence in Private Universities (Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023). University rankings can be improved by implementing an effective competitiveness management system through enhancing planning flexibility, adaptability capabilities (Vasiliev, 2022). In 2022, BAN-PT has classified various accreditations that can be used as attributes, including: 1) Excellent accreditation, 2) Very good accreditation, 3) Good accreditation (PT, 2022).

The location of Private Universities has a positive influence on prospective students' intention to choose Private Universities (Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023). Masnawati & Darmawan (2023) outline that prospective students tend to be attracted to universities located in strategic or accessible areas. Perkasa and Putra (2020) state that location is the decision made by companies regarding where their operations and staff will be placed, and it is known that there are three attribute levels, including 1) Strategic, 2) Easy access, 3) Environment.

The importance of marketing strategies in promoting oneself becomes the key to attracting prospective students to enroll. However, it is also important to ensure that these promotion strategies are targeted and carried out effectively and efficiently (Asbar et al., 2022). There needs to be innovation as one of the steps or strategies for Private Universities to stimulate purchase intentions (Khairusy et al., 2022). Promotion, as one of the marketing mix elements, can influence the decision to choose Private Universities in Indonesia (Pardiyono & Indrayani, 2019). Strategies such as promoting higher education institutions need to be emphasized through various media channels to strengthen effective recruitment in higher education institutions (Yoezer, 2023).

At the core of decision making, this process involves selecting from various options or courses of action in hopes of achieving the best decision. The decision to purchase is the point at which customers determine whether to buy the offered product or not (Wiranata & Dewi, 2022). Arianty dan Andira (2021) depicts purchasing decisions as steps taken by consumers when identifying a product and deciding whether to buy it. The attractiveness of a product to consumers can influence purchasing decisions. The more benefits offered by a product, the greater the likelihood of consumers purchasing it. The process of making purchasing decisions involves several phases before consumers decide to buy or not. Fatmaningrum et al. (2020) delineate five phases in this process: recognizing the problem, seeking information, evaluating options, deciding on the transaction, and post-purchase

actions. This process holds significant significance for consumers as it involves sequential stages before the final decision is made (Sobandi & Somantri, 2020). Thus, it can be concluded that purchasing decisions refer to consumer behavior in deciding to buy products. More options for students (online programs, foreign universities) are sparking innovation in education. Institutions are using technology for personalized learning and partnerships for global recognition. Businesses are creating successful niches with innovative materials and targeted programs (K-12, professional development). While affordability and access remain issues, this competitive landscape ultimately benefits students with a constantly evolving, high-quality education.

METHODOLOGY

The research object is universities in Garut Regency. This study employs a quantitative method, involving data collection in numerical form and statistical analysis. The quantitative approach was chosen to assess community preferences in selecting universities. This is because the competitiveness between private universities lies in the number of students who enroll in their universities. Therefore, assessing student preferences can give a clear image on private universities' competitiveness, especially in the Jawa Barat (West Java) which is the province with the highest number of Private and State Universities in Indonesia. With this objective, the research can be categorized as descriptive research, where descriptive methods are used to depict the characteristics and observed phenomena. This research utilizes descriptive methods with the aim of providing a comprehensive overview of community preferences in selecting universities. In studies using conjoint analysis, variables refer to attributes, and sub-variables are called levels. These levels reflect the choices available to consumers. The attributes and levels that are the focus of the research can be found in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Operationalization of Variables

o	Attribute	Definition	Attribute Level
1	College Facilities (Zulkarnain, 2022)	Facilities encompass all elements, both movable and immovable, that provide support for the learning process, whether directly or indirectly.	Classroom
			Library
			Laboratory
			Parking Space
2	Education Cost (Fauziah et al., 2020)	Education costs are divided into two aspects: budgetary costs managed by educational institutions, and non-budgetary costs borne by students or their families.	Construction Cost
			Tuition Fee
			Practical Fee
3	Accreditation (BAN-PT, 2019)	The quality assessment carried out by independent agencies outside educational institutions to evaluate and measure the quality of universities or study programs is called accreditation. This process is often associated with accountability, licensing, or granting of licenses by specialized agencies.	Excellent Accreditation
			Very Good Accreditation
			Good Accreditation
4	University Location	Location has a significant impact on consumer preferences, and in this context, the location of the	Strategic
			Accessible

o	Attribute	Definition	Attribute Level
	(Sumarwan, 2019)	university plays a crucial role in students' decisions.	Environment
5	Promotion (Mony, 2020)	Promotion refers to various efforts aimed at increasing awareness, interest, and participation in a product or service through various media channels, including print, broadcast, and online platforms.	Print Media
			Online Media
			Recommendation

Source: Data Processing (2024)

Primary data was collected by distributing questionnaires to high school students and their parents or guardians who play a significant role in providing information and support during the college selection process (Owen et al., 2020). The questionnaire was formulated to explore perceptions, experiences, and actions related to research aspects, providing various response options. Additionally, additional data were obtained from various sources, including the official website of the Garut Regency Government and the PDDikti website. Data collection methods included field studies with surveys, interviews, and the use of questionnaires, as well as literature research. The tool used was a Likert scale questionnaire to assess actions, views, and understanding related to social phenomena. Each respondent's response will be scored between 1 and 5, according to the questions asked, with diverse answer choices. The population in this study refers to all individuals who have similar characteristics, including the Garut Regency community consisting of high school students and their parents or guardians. Purposive sampling technique was used to take samples representing the population, with the sample determination process using the Lemeshow formula because the population size is unknown. A minimum of 96 respondents were obtained, with 100 respondents each taken from high school students and their parents or guardians as samples. This research used literature review as well as conjoint analysis method to analyze data, considering the research focus on consumer preferences in producing preferred products. This method involves multivariate analysis techniques that combine the total values of each separate attribute to determine consumer preferences for a product. Full-profile method with a fractional factorial design approach was used to design combinations of product attribute levels. Conjoint analysis was conducted by presenting alternative combinations of previously designed attribute choices to respondents, using the SPSS program to create stimuli, manage data, and perform statistical analysis.

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents

The results of distributing questionnaires to 100 high school students reveal that 48% of the total respondents are male, while the remaining 52% are female, indicating the dominance of female respondents in this study. This finding is consistent with the study by Hariananda et al. (2022) which indicates that females tend to be more meticulous in college preparation. The presence of a majority of female respondents may influence how they evaluate and choose private universities. The majority of high school students who choose universities are aged 17-25, indicating that most belong to Generation Z, born between 1995-2010. Generation Z, connected globally through the internet, plays a significant role in the context of higher education decisions. Understanding this demographic provides insight into the characteristics of the respondent group and the era context in which their decisions are made.

Out of 100 respondents who are parents or guardians of students, 56% are male and 44% are female, indicating that the majority of respondents are male parents or guardians. This may be due to the assumption that males tend to be more structured and systematic in preparing for their children's college needs (Natasha et al., 2020). Characteristics such as mature planning, caution in decision-making, and interest in technical or detailed aspects are expected to provide a deeper understanding of college preparation for their children. The majority of respondents are over 40 years old, indicating that they are from Generation X, providing support in the form of advice, suggestions, guidance, and feedback to students in the process of choosing college majors (Statistik, 2018) Most respondents have completed Bachelor's (S1) education, especially parents of students, reflecting the influence of higher education background on their support for their children in choosing college majors. Thus, parents with a higher education background play a crucial role in shaping their children's attitudes and support during the college major determination process. Self-potential, parental socio-economic conditions, and self-efficacy are also found to have a positive and significant influence on interest in continuing education to college (Lase, 2020).

This research indicates the dominance of respondents who are entrepreneurs, demonstrating the potential influence of the business sector in supporting their children in choosing college majors. The presence of active respondents in business reflects their involvement in an environment that can provide practical insights and industry perspectives on their children's higher education. This finding is consistent with research by Wahyuni (2020) which found that external factors, such as respondents' occupational backgrounds, can influence their views on their children's higher education decisions. Additionally, this research shows the dominance of respondents with incomes above Rp4,000,000, especially parents or guardians of students, reflecting the relevance of financial aspects in this research context. Other findings from research by Anjani et al., (2019) indicate a positive and significant correlation between parents' education level and income level with aspirations to continue studies among high school students.

The Utility Values of Each Attribute with Conjoint Analysis

Through conjoint analysis using SPSS version 26, utility and overall importance values were obtained for each research attribute. The purpose of presenting these values is to provide an overview of the contribution and significance of attributes in decision-making by respondents. This information aids in designing products, services, or policies that better align with user preferences and allows focusing on the most influential elements. By understanding respondents' preferences both individually and collectively as they evaluate interest in attributes and attribute levels when selecting private universities. Table 3 presents positive utility values, indicating a preference for the offered attribute levels, while negative values indicate a lack of interest in those attribute levels. The higher the estimated utility value, the higher the level of student preference. This analysis includes utility values from all respondents (Overall Statistic). To clearly understand, utility values are displayed in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3. Utility Levels of High School Students and Parents/Guardians Towards Private Universities

		Utilities			
		High School Students		Parents/Guardians	
		Utility Estimate	Std. Error	Utility Estimate	Std. Error
Facilities	Classrooms	.110	.040	-.046	.029
	Library	.035	.040	.060	.029

Utilities					
		High School Students		Parents/Guardians	
		Utility Estimate	Std. Error	Utility Estimate	Std. Error
	Laboratories	-.071	.040	.057	.029
	Parking Facilities	-.074	.040	-.072	.029
Cost	Construction Costs	.029	.031	.008	.022
	Tuition Fees	-.043	.036	-.003	.026
	Practical Training Fees	.013	.036	-.005	.026
Accreditation	Excellent Predicate (A)	.387	.031	.387	.022
	Very Good Predicate (B)	-.067	.036	.082	.026
	Good Predicate (C)	-.320	.036	-.470	.026
Location	Strategic Location	.006	.031	-.059	.022
	Accessibility	.031	.036	.050	.026
	Environment	-.038	.036	.009	.026
Promotion	Print Media	.029	.031	-.004	.022
	Online Media	-.019	.036	-.006	.026
	Recommendations	-.011	.036	.010	.026
(Constant)		3.745	.028	3.991	.020

Source: Data Processing (2024)

Facilities

Prasetyaningrum & Marliana (2020) assert that college facilities are a priority for students when selecting Private Universities. Based on data from Table 3 and the analysis of utility values from respondents, it is evident that the constant value is 3.745. In terms of facilities, high school students tend to assign higher utility values to classrooms (0.110) compared to libraries (0.035), parking areas (-0.074), and laboratory facilities (-0.071). This indicates students' priority towards the presence of classrooms, deemed essential for completing coursework and staying updated with external information. Moreover, classrooms are considered crucial in fostering a conducive learning environment, enhancing the quality of education, facilitating interaction between students and lecturers, and supporting creativity and focus in learning. Ferguson (2024), in his study, emphasizes the significant role of physical classrooms in developing intellectual growth and social engagement among undergraduate students. Meanwhile, for parents, the constant value is approximately 3.991. Regarding facilities, parents pay more attention to libraries (0.060) compared to laboratory facilities (0.057), classrooms (-0.046), and parking areas (-0.072). This preference arises because libraries are considered vital for high school students to complete coursework and obtain up-to-date information about the outside world, preparing them for university life. Özkan (2022) in his research affirms the crucial role of active library participation in schools in supporting and enriching educational activities.

Cost

Purwanti (2015) asserts that education costs are among the crucial attributes for students when determining their choice of Private Universities. Based on data processing results in Table 3, it is evident that utility values indicate for high school students, the level of construction costs ranks highest with a value of approximately 0.029. Conversely, laboratory costs have a utility value of around 0.013, while tuition fees show a utility value of about -0.043. High school students tend to view construction costs as not being a barrier as long as they align with the facilities, achievements, and accreditation offered by Private Universities.

In other words, construction costs are deemed acceptable and not a primary concern in the consideration of selecting a university for high school students. Meanwhile, for parents, the utility value of construction costs ranks highest with a value of around 0.008, compared to laboratory costs (-0.005) and tuition fees (-0.003). This indicates that parents or guardians tend to view construction costs as not being an issue, as long as they align with the facilities, achievements, and accreditation offered by Private Universities. Shushara et al. (2019) explain that in reality, students generally lack the financial capability to pay for their own education, so education costs are usually borne by parents. Therefore, in efforts to market universities, it is important to carefully consider the needs, expectations, and values held firmly by parents regarding their children's education.

Accreditation

Nurwahdania et al. (2022) assert that accreditation attributes are a crucial consideration factor for students when choosing higher education institutions. Regarding accreditation in Table 3, high school students prefer private universities with an excellent accreditation rating (A) with a utility value of approximately 0.387. Conversely, a very good accreditation rating (B) has a utility value of about -0.067, and a good accreditation rating (C) with a utility value of around -0.320. These preferences emphasize that accreditation is a key factor in choosing universities for high school students, with a preference for an excellent accreditation rating reflecting an emphasis on high quality and competitiveness among prestigious universities. Meanwhile, parents or guardians prioritize private universities with an excellent accreditation status (A), with a utility value of approximately 0.387. Whereas a very good accreditation rating (B) has a utility value of about 0.082, and a good accreditation rating (C) with a utility value of around -0.470. These preferences indicate a tendency for parents to choose private universities with an excellent accreditation rating (A), which is considered to reflect high quality and competitiveness among other prestigious universities. This is reinforced by research conducted by Albaroudi et al. (2023), stating that accredited programs have better student services and activities compared to those without accreditation, indicating the importance of accreditation in enhancing students' experiences in higher education.

Location

Susilawati et al. (2019) have affirmed that location significantly impacts students' decisions in choosing private universities. Based on Table 3 regarding location aspects, high school students highly rate the attribute level of accessibility, with a utility value of approximately 0.031, compared to strategic (0.006) and environmental (-0.038) attribute levels. The presence of easily accessible universities is considered a crucial factor for high school students, encompassing aspects of public transportation accessibility, parking facility availability, and strategic location. This accessibility provides convenience for students in accessing campus, significantly influencing their decisions in choosing a place of study. It indicates that an easily accessible location has a significant impact on high school students' preferences for universities. Meanwhile, for parents, in terms of location attributes, the easily accessible attribute level becomes the top priority for parents or guardians with a utility value of around 0.050, compared to the environmental (0.009) and strategic (-0.059) attribute levels. The presence or location of universities has significant relevance to accessibility for parents or guardians. Easily accessible locations can provide convenience for students in accessing their needs and facilitate parental involvement in their children's education. Therefore, easily accessible locations not only affect student convenience but also facilitate

parental involvement in their children's education. Le. (2020) further emphasizes that geographic location is the most influential factor in enhancing the brand image of private universities.

Promotion

Azman & Elsandra (2018) stated that promotion factors play a crucial role as considerations for prospective students in selecting private universities. Based on Table 3, for high school students, the promotion attribute shows significant preference for the print media level, with a utility value of approximately 0.029, higher than recommendations (-0.011) and online media (-0.019). The superiority of print media in marketing a product compared to online media and recommendations makes it the most important choice according to the majority of respondents in the university selection process. This emphasizes that print media plays a primary role in influencing high school students' decisions regarding university selection. Meanwhile, for parents, the promotion attribute places the recommendation level as the top priority with a utility value of around 0.010, compared to online media (-0.006) and print media (-0.004). The rapid spread of recommendations is considered to have an advantage in marketing a product, making it the most important choice for most parents or guardians in the context of selecting universities for their children.

From the assessment of utility values depicted in Table 3, it can be concluded that high school students place high emphasis on several aspects of private universities, such as classroom facilities, development costs, excellent accreditation (A), easily accessible location, and promotion through print media. Meanwhile, from the assessment of utility values of parents or guardians listed in Table 3, it is evident that there is an emphasis on several aspects of private universities, such as library facilities, development costs, excellent accreditation (A), easily accessible location, and promotion through recommendations. These utility values provide an overview of the priorities and importance attributed by parents or guardians in selecting private universities.

Value of Attribute Importance Level

The level of importance of attributes in the selection of private universities in Garut Regency can be identified through a comparison between the perspectives of high school students and parents/guardians, as presented in Table 4. The analysis results indicate which attributes are considered important by the community in Garut Regency in the selection of private universities in Garut Regency. The table provides an overview of the preferences between high school students and parents/guardians regarding these attributes.

Table 4. Comparison of Importance Levels of Private University Attributes

Importance Values		
Atribut	High School Students	Parents/Guardians
Facilities	20,542	19,864
Cost	15,456	15,106
Accreditation	35,073	36,052
Location	13,878	13,923
Promotion	15,051	15,055

Source: Data Processing (2024)

From the results recorded in Table 4, it can be concluded that overall, from the total responses of the respondents, accreditation is the primary consideration for high school students in the process of selecting private universities with the highest importance value,

which is 35.075%. Similarly, for parents, accreditation also holds the most important position with the highest importance value of 36.052%. This finding is consistent with the research by Nurwahdania et al. (2022), which indicates that accreditation attributes are important considerations for students in choosing higher education institutions.

The second attribute, university facilities, is considered important by high school students in the process of selecting private universities, with a percentage of 20.542%. Similarly, for parents, facilities also hold the most important position with the highest importance value, which is 19.864%. The facilities provided by a university have a significant impact on student concentration during learning activities. Comfort is essential for students to master the learning material effectively. Facility attributes are a preference for students in the process of selecting private universities, in line with research conducted by Prasetyaningrum and Marliana (2020), which shows that university facilities are a priority for students when choosing Private Universities.

The third attribute, education costs, is another factor to be considered by high school students in the process of selecting private universities, with a percentage of 15.456%. Similarly, according to parents, education costs also hold the most important position with the highest importance value of 15.106%. Education costs are one of the crucial considerations for students. Consistent with previous research, Purwanti (2015) shows that education costs are one of the important attributes for students in determining the choice of private universities. However, research conducted by Indryati & Setyawan (2020) shows different results, indicating that education costs are not a highly problematic factor for students.

The fourth attribute considered important by high school students in choosing private universities is promotion, with a percentage value of 15.051%. Similarly, according to parents, promotion also holds the most important position with the highest importance value, which is 15.055%. Through promotional activities, information about educational services can be conveyed to students, with the hope of attracting their interest. Research by (Azman & Elsandra, 2018) supports this finding by showing that promotional factors play an important role as considerations for prospective students in choosing private universities.

The fifth attribute considered important by high school students in choosing private universities is location, with a percentage value of 13.878%. Similarly, according to parents, location also holds the most important position with the highest importance value, which is 13.923%. The location of a university that is easily accessible refers to its accessibility by prospective students. Factors that can affect accessibility include transportation access, the presence of public facilities, and geographical proximity to residential areas or other strategic locations. Universities that are easily accessible tend to provide advantages in terms of convenience and accessibility for students, parents, and academic staff. Similar to the findings reported by Susilawati et al. (2019) the research confirms that location has a significant impact on students' decisions in choosing private universities.

1. Business Competitiveness of Universities in Indonesia

Universities in Indonesia play a crucial role in driving the nation's economy by enhancing business competitiveness. Through various programs and activities, they contribute to developing capable future leaders, generating innovative research, and forging strong partnerships between academia and industry.

Leading universities in Indonesia, such as Universitas Indonesia (UI), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Universitas Padjadjaran (Unpad), and

Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS), demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of education and research focused on industry needs.

Here are some tangible contributions of universities in enhancing business competitiveness:

- **Providing High-Quality Human Resources:** Graduates of Indonesian universities are equipped with knowledge and skills relevant to industry requirements. This is achieved through well-designed curricula, qualified instructors, and diverse and up-to-date study programs.
- **Conducting Research and Development:** Universities actively generate new innovations beneficial to businesses and industries through applied research and collaboration with various parties.
- **Organizing Training and Workshops:** Enhancing the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs through training and workshops in various fields such as business management, marketing, finance, technology, and entrepreneurship.
- **Building Collaboration with Businesses and Industries:** Establishing close collaborations to facilitate technology and knowledge transfer, including internships, joint research, and community service.

Continuous efforts to improve competitiveness include:

- **Updating Curriculum:** Business study program curricula are constantly updated to ensure students gain up-to-date knowledge and skills relevant to industry needs.
- **Enhancing Lecturer Quality:** Lecturers in business study programs continuously improve their qualifications through education and training to provide quality instruction.
- **Strengthening Collaboration:** Collaboration with businesses and industries is continuously strengthened to facilitate internships, research, and community service.
- **Improving Infrastructure Quality:** Universities invest in infrastructure such as laboratories, libraries, and information technology to support teaching, learning, and research activities.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Despite the significant progress made by Indonesian universities in enhancing business competitiveness, several challenges remain, such as:

- **Skills Gap between University Education and Industry Needs:** There is sometimes a gap between the skills taught in universities and the real needs of industries.
- **Limited Research Funding:** Funding for research and development in universities is still limited, hindering the emergence of new innovations.
- **Complex Bureaucracy:** Complex bureaucracy in some universities can hinder collaboration with businesses and industries.

However, amidst these challenges, there are immense opportunities for Indonesian universities to continue enhancing business competitiveness, including:

- **Demographic Bonus:** Indonesia has a demographic bonus, meaning a large population of productive age, providing ample potential for a skilled workforce in the future.
- **Technological Advancements:** Rapid technological advancements open new opportunities for universities to improve the quality of education and research.
- **Increasing Government Support:** The Indonesian government continues to increase its support for higher education, including research and development.

The business competitiveness of universities in Indonesia is rapidly evolving. With a strong commitment from various parties, Indonesian universities can play a pivotal role in building a strong and sustainable national economy. This will bring benefits to the nation's economic progress and the well-being of Indonesian society.

2. Business Competitiveness of Universities in West Java

Universities in West Java play a crucial role in enhancing business competitiveness in their region. Through various strategies and collaborations, they contribute to developing high-quality human resources, beneficial innovations, and strong ties between academia and industry.

Leading universities in terms of business competitiveness in West Java, such as Universitas Padjadjaran (Unpad), Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), Universitas Indonesia (UI), Universitas Islam Bandung (Unisba), and Universitas Kristen Maranatha (Maranatha), exemplify the positive contributions of higher education institutions.

Strategic steps taken to improve business competitiveness include:

- **Providing Quality Human Resources:** Graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills required by industries, thanks to relevant curricula, competent instructors, and study programs aligned with current needs.
- **Conducting Research and Development:** Universities actively generate new innovations beneficial to businesses and industries through collaboration and applied research.
- **Training and Workshops:** Enhancing the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs through training and workshops in various fields, such as business management, marketing, finance, and technology.
- **Collaboration with Businesses and Industries:** Establishing close collaborations to facilitate technology and knowledge transfer, including internships, joint research, and community service.

Continuous efforts to improve competitiveness include:

- **Updating Curriculum:** Business study program curricula are constantly updated to ensure students gain up-to-date knowledge and skills relevant to industry needs.

- **Enhancing Lecturer Quality:** Lecturers in business study programs continuously improve their qualifications through education and training to provide quality instruction.
- **Strengthening Collaboration:** Collaboration with businesses and industries is continuously strengthened to facilitate internships, research, and community service.

With a strong commitment and close collaboration from various parties, universities in West Java are believed to continue contributing to enhancing business competitiveness in their region. This will bring significant benefits to all parties, including improving human resource quality, advancing science and technology, and achieving sustainable regional economic growth.

A bright future awaits universities in West Java in their role of enhancing business competitiveness. Their dedication and innovation will be key to building a prosperous and thriving West Java.

3. Business Competitiveness of Universities in Garut

Universities in Garut play a pivotal role in enhancing business competitiveness in the region. Through various programs and activities, they contribute to developing quality human resources, new innovations, and strong collaborations between academia and industry.

Examples of highly competitive universities in Garut include Universitas Garut (UNIGA), Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi (STIE) Garut, and Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Garut. Each has business study programs focused on industry needs, research that yields innovations, and collaborations with local businesses.

Efforts to improve competitiveness are ongoing, including curriculum updates, lecturer quality enhancement, and collaboration strengthening. These aim to ensure graduates are work-ready, research is relevant to industry needs, and effective technology transfer occurs.

With commitment and collaboration from various parties, universities in Garut are believed to continue contributing to enhancing local business competitiveness, bringing benefits to economic progress and community well-being

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research focuses on investigating Business Competitiveness in Indonesian Private Universities with Garut regency as the case study. Due to the nature of higher education institutions, the competitiveness is shown in the form of the number of prospective students and how many students enroll in a private university (which is influenced by student preferences). From the results for this research, it can be concluded that: Firstly, the preferences of the community in Kabupaten Garut regarding the selection of private tertiary institutions indicate that high school students (SMA) tend to focus on classroom facilities, development costs, excellent accreditation (A), easily accessible location, and promotional activities through print media. Conversely, parents prioritize library facilities, excellent accreditation (A), development costs, easily accessible location, and promotional activities through recommendations. Secondly, the attributes that are of interest to both SMA students and parents in selecting private tertiary institutions are ranked as follows: accreditation ranks first, followed by institutional facilities, educational costs, promotional activities, and finally, the location of the institution.

Based on the findings of this research, the author would like to provide some suggestions and recommendations. Firstly, private tertiary institutions in Kabupaten Garut need to adopt appropriate strategies to meet the various preferences of both high school students (SMA) and their parents in selecting private tertiary institutions. universities need to strive to improve accreditation to achieve an excellent rating (A), and word of mouth strategies are deemed effective in meeting parents' need for information about private campuses. However, optimizing the use of brochures as a promotional medium is still effective in meeting the promotional needs of high school students. Improving library services and facilities can meet parents' preferences, while optimizing classroom facilities can meet the preferences of high school students. This research has limitations regarding the sample used, where the research sample used is not paired between parents and high school students, so future research could be enhanced by involving a broader sample group or involving respondents paired between parents and students.

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