

Private University Competitiveness Model Based on Resource Based View

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the competitiveness of Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Kendari City through the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective and an integrative theoretical framework that includes institutional theory, contingency theory, and Porter's theory. The study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection through in-depth interviews, observations, and institutional document reviews. The results show that the competitive advantage of PTS in Kendari stems from a combination of valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized (VRIO) internal resources, such as lecturer quality, leadership, facilities, superior curriculum, and external partnership networks. However, limited funding, varying human resource quality, and public perception are major obstacles in creating sustainable excellence. The resulting integrative model shows that PTS competitiveness depends not only on internal resource management, but also on institutional legitimacy, adaptation to external dynamics, and cross-sector collaborative strategies. These findings provide theoretical contributions in extending the RBV to the dynamic and contextual context of higher education, as well as practical implications for strengthening PTS resource and collaboration strategies.

Keywords: *Competitiveness, Private Higher Education, Resource-Based View (RBV), Institutional Theory, Contingency Theory, Porter, Integrative Model.*

Introduction

In the era of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0, Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Indonesia face increasingly complex challenges due to technological advances, rising industrial expectations, competition from non-formal education, and increasingly stringent government regulations. These conditions require PTS to continuously innovate and improve the quality of higher education delivery to survive and compete. The success of PTS in responding to these challenges depends heavily on their ability to manage and optimize internal resources, such as the quality of lecturers and educational staff, educational facilities, curriculum, and networks with the industrial sector (Kemendikbudristek, 2023; Giorgia Miottoa et al., 2019). According to Law Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education, PTS are institutions of higher education established and run by the community and play a strategic role in providing access to higher education. Quantitatively, PTS dominate the number of higher education institutions in Indonesia, accounting for approximately 96.2% of the total number of higher education institutions and accommodating approximately 58% of the nation's student population (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). However, private universities (PTS) have not yet fully become the primary choice for prospective students, primarily due to the strong dominance of state universities (PTN) in terms of funding, student selection, faculty quality, and institutional image. This situation places private universities under intense competitive pressure, both nationally and regionally.

In the context of Southeast Sulawesi, and Kendari City in particular, competition between private universities and state universities (PTS) shows significant inequality. Data from the Southeast Sulawesi Education Office and the Indonesian Higher Education Agency (PD-Dikti) (2023) show that although private universities (PTS) significantly outnumber state universities (PTN), the number of students at state universities (PTN) consistently exceeds that of state universities. This intense competition is

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exacerbated by stagnant high school (SMA/SMK) graduates, the expansion of state universities (PTN), the Independent Learning–Independent Campus (MBKM) policy, and the demands of digital transformation in higher education (World Bank, 2020; Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2021; UNESCO, 2022; BPS Sultra, 2023). This situation poses a serious challenge to the sustainability of private universities, particularly in attracting students, enhancing their reputation, and developing academic services. The Resource-Based View (RBV) approach is a relevant theoretical framework for analyzing the competitiveness of private universities because it emphasizes the importance of internal resources as a determinant of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Barney, Wright, and Ketchen, 2001; Barney, Ketchen & Wright, 2021). In the context of higher education, these resources include physical assets, human resources, intellectual capital, organizational culture, and institutional management capabilities. However, studies show that the resource characteristics of private universities in Kendari do not fully meet the VRIO/VRIN criteria, particularly regarding the limited number of doctoral lecturers, research capacity, technology-based facilities, and sustainable quality assurance systems (Isbandriyati, 2021; Aydin & Tasci, 2021; OECD, 2022; BAN-PT, 2021).

In addition to resources, organizational capabilities and core competencies also play a crucial role in strengthening the competitiveness of private universities. Core competencies are a unique combination of knowledge, skills, and resources that are difficult for competitors to imitate (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990 in Isbandriyati Mutmainah, 2021). In the context of private universities (PTS), the ability to design innovative curricula, develop flagship programs, strengthen a culture of quality, and forge strategic partnerships with industry and stakeholders are crucial elements in increasing the relevance of graduates and attracting prospective students (Polat and Satil, 2012; Wulandini and Saputra, 2017; Ilgan et al., 2018; Teece, 2018). Although extensive research on RBV-based competitiveness has been conducted, studies examining the contextual competitiveness model of private universities, particularly in Kendari City, are still limited. Previous research has tended to focus on commercial companies, is quantitative in nature, and has not integrated the roles of top leadership, organizational culture, and dynamic capabilities within the RBV framework (Barney & Zhang, 2017; Hartono, 2021; Zhang and Liu, 2018; Marginson, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to develop a RBV-based model of private university competitiveness by considering the local context of Kendari City. This is expected to provide theoretical contributions and strategic recommendations for strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of private universities amidst the increasingly competitive dynamics of the higher education environment.

Literature Review

The Concept of Competitiveness

The competitiveness of higher education institutions, including Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS), refers to the institution's ability to demonstrate better, more efficient, and more valuable performance in the context of educational competition, both internally and externally (Minister of National Education Regulation No. 41 of 2007; Afriyani, 2011; Porter, 1985; Lall, 2001; Tsai et al., 2020; Brouwer et al., 2012b; Stefan, Schick & Häring, 2017). The concept of competitiveness encompasses the institution's ability to expand services, innovate, improve the quality of human resources, facilities, curriculum, and partnership networks, while maintaining a competitive position in the education market (Sumihardjo, 2008; Ramonienė & Lanskoronskis, 2011a; Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1996a; Isbandriyati Mutmainnah, 2021). At the company or institutional level, competitiveness is defined as the ability to design, produce, and provide services superior to competitors, utilize resources efficiently, and obtain sustainable advantages through profitability, quality, and strategic positioning (De Man, 1994; Michael, 1990; Porter & Morgan, 1990; Cruz et al., 2001; Brouwer et al., 2012a; Lall, 2001; Rakhimbekova & Seitkazyeva, 2014; Smith & McCarthy, 1995; Kuncoro, 2005). In the context of PTS, the competitiveness model can be viewed through two approaches: (1) a collaborative model with industry and the external environment based on Porter's Five Forces concept, which emphasizes industry factors, competition, new entrants, substitute products, and stakeholder bargaining power (David, 2009), and (2) a resource-based model or Resource-Based View (RBV), which emphasizes the importance of managing internal resources—physical, human resources, and organizations—that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized to achieve competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984; Fatmasari & Wulandari, 2016). The dimensions of competitiveness can be analyzed through product/market indicators, such as graduate waiting periods, research grants, and the number of new students, as well as the ability to maintain a competitive position, such as the number of international publications, doctoral lecturers, and international partnerships (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1996a;

Isbandriyati, 2021). Thus, the competitiveness of PTS becomes a key factor in improving the quality of higher education through relevant curriculum, modern facilities, qualified teachers, satisfying student experience, and adaptation to internal and external dynamics to maintain the sustainability and strategic position of the institution in the higher education market.

Resource Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is an approach to strategic management that emphasizes that an organization's competitive advantage stems from unique, rare, difficult-to-imitate, and organized internal resources (Barney, 1991a; Wernerfelt, 1984). This approach views a company as a collection of assets, capabilities, and competencies that, when managed effectively, can generate sustainable competitive advantage (Sukma, 2017; Elya Dasuki, 2021a). These resources include physical assets, technology, knowledge, human resource skills, brands, intellectual property rights, and relational networks that form the foundation of added value for the organization (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2022; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997a). The RBV also emphasizes that competitive advantage depends on an organization's ability to integrate and coordinate these internal resources into unique capabilities, aligned with the VRIO principle—Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Organized, and supported by organizational and dynamic capabilities to survive in increasingly complex competition (Barney, Wright, & Ketchen, 2001; Teece, 2018; Wernerfelt, 2020).

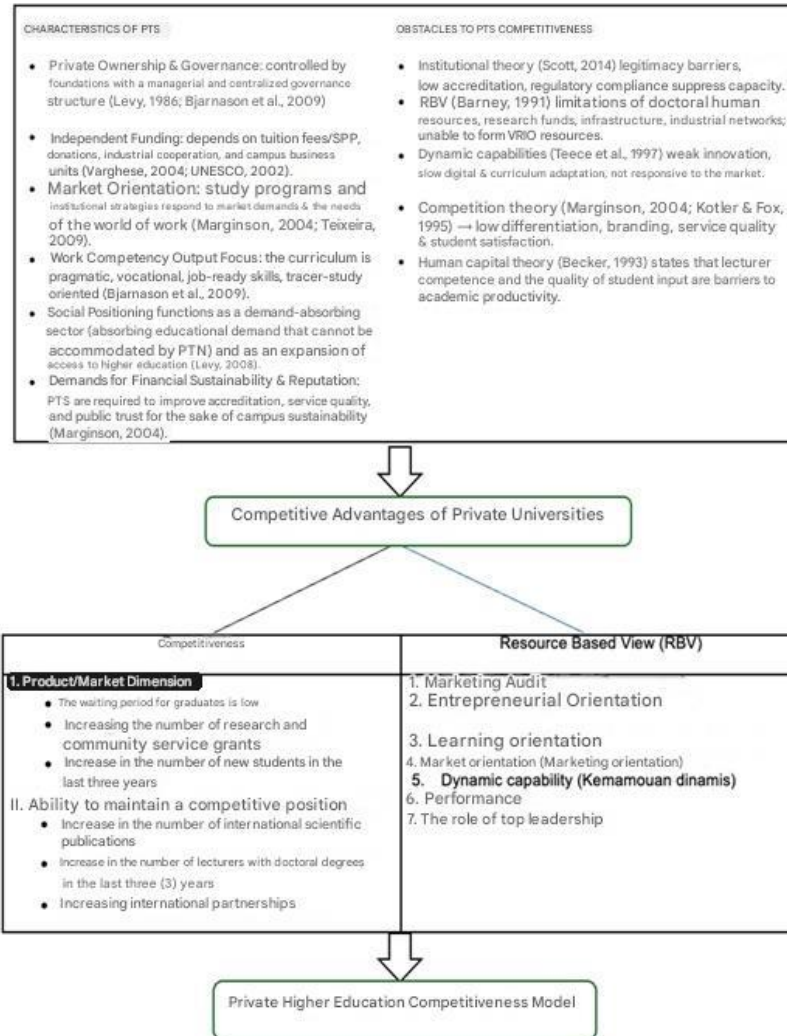
In the context of higher education, the RBV helps explain how institutions can leverage quality faculty, educational facilities, information systems, and industry and government partnership networks to build sustainable competitiveness (Isbandriyati Mutmainah, 2021; Penrose & Pitelis, 2002). Competitive advantage is not only determined by resource ownership, but also by an organization's ability to transform, develop, and optimize those resources to adapt to external pressures, regulations, and market dynamics (Aguzman et al., 2021; Hart, 1995; Joseph T. Mahoney & Pandian, 1992). Determinants of competitiveness according to the RBV include the management of valuable assets, core capabilities, organizational competencies, and the role of top leadership in directing innovative and adaptive strategies (Elya Dasuki, 2021b; Isbandriyati Mutmainah, 2021). With this understanding, the RBV provides a comprehensive conceptual framework for organizations to maintain competitive advantage through effective and sustainable optimization of internal resources.

The Relationship between Resource Based View and Private Universities

The Resource-Based View (RBV), developed by Barney, emphasizes that an organization's competitive advantage stems from the optimal management of unique, rare, difficult-to-imitate, and organized internal resources (Barney, 1991a; Supriadi, 2021). In the context of private higher education institutions (PTS), these resources include qualified faculty, educational facilities, alumni and industry networks, and managerial capabilities that can improve operational efficiency, educational quality, and research (Hemsley, Brown, & Oplatka, 2006). Managing intellectual capital and intangible assets such as knowledge, skills, organizational culture, and innovation is also key to building competitive advantage, enhancing the institution's reputation, profitability, and added value (Rengganis et al., 2023; Dewi & Dewi, 2020). Thus, the RBV provides a strategic framework for PTS to identify, develop, and effectively utilize internal resources to survive and thrive in the competitive higher education market.

The integration of RBV with other perspectives such as institutional theory and contingency theory strengthens understanding of achieving competitiveness and organizational performance. Institutional theory explains the influence of norms, regulations, and stakeholder expectations on organizational behavior, including legitimacy and adaptation to external pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 2017). Meanwhile, contingency theory emphasizes the importance of adapting organizational strategy and structure to situational conditions to increase effectiveness (Donaldson, 2019; Utama, 2024). The synergy of these three theories enables private universities to build sustainable competitive advantage by optimizing internal resources, responding to external pressures, and adjusting organizational strategy to environmental dynamics, thereby improving the quality of education, research, reputation, and profitability.

Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework



Research Methods

This research was conducted at four private universities in Kendari City, selected purposively: Muhammadiyah University of Kendari (UM Kendari), Southeast Sulawesi University (Unsultra), Nahdlatul Ulama University of Southeast Sulawesi (Unusra), and Mandala Waluya University (UMW). The selection of research locations was based on several considerations, including the relevance of the phenomena and problems to the research focus, the absence of similar research in the locations, the researcher's contextual understanding of field conditions, and ease of access to data, informants, and supporting documents. The research design employed a qualitative case study approach, chosen for its ability to in-depth explore the phenomenon of competitiveness, resource management, and capabilities of private universities within a complex and unique real-life context (Creswell, 2009; 2010; Yin, 2011 in Taridala Sulastri, 2023).

Research informants were selected purposively, with the criteria being understanding of the problem, possessing relevant information, and being willing to provide complete and accurate data (Moleong, 2004). Informants included internal elements of the university in the form of university leaders, academic and administrative implementing elements, as well as academic support elements, and supplemented by external informants from LLDikti Region IX, with a total of 29 people. The research data consisted of primary and secondary data sourced from person, place, and paper, and were collected through non-participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies. Data analysis was carried out interactively and continuously through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification as stated by Miles and Huberman (1994). Data validity was maintained through triangulation, cross-checking with informants, and in-depth description of findings to ensure the validity and accuracy of the research results (Creswell, 2013).

The conceptual definition in this qualitative research focuses on the meaning of concepts and their relationships within the research model, rather than on measurement aspects as in the quantitative operational definition. Competitiveness is defined as the ability of private higher education institutions (PTS) to survive, grow, and operate effectively in a competitive higher education environment. PTS competitiveness is represented through two main dimensions: the product/market dimension and the ability to maintain a competitive position. The product/market dimension reflects the PTS' ability to attract and retain students, as reflected in low graduate waiting periods, faculty research performance, and an increase in student numbers over the past three years. Meanwhile, the ability to maintain a competitive position demonstrates the PTS' capacity to face competitive pressures, as reflected in an increase in internationally reputable scientific publications, an increase in the number of faculty with doctoral degrees, and strengthening international partnerships.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) approach views PTS competitiveness as stemming from the strategic management of internal resources, including human resources, curriculum, physical facilities, reputation, and network. The RBV in this study is operationalized through several key dimensions: marketing audit, entrepreneurial orientation, learning orientation, market orientation, dynamic capabilities, performance, and the role of top management. The marketing audit encompasses an evaluation of the marketing environment, marketing strategy, and marketing functions to ensure the alignment of services with market and stakeholder needs. Entrepreneurial orientation reflects an institution's drive for innovation, proactivity, autonomy, and risk-taking, while learning orientation emphasizes the development and utilization of knowledge as a source of competitive advantage. Market orientation reflects the ability of a private university to understand student needs, competitor dynamics, and coordination across organizational functions. Dynamic capabilities demonstrate the institution's capacity to integrate, build, and reconfigure resources to respond to environmental changes. Performance is understood as the institution's academic achievements, particularly related to lecturer qualifications and curriculum relevance, while the role of top management is a strategic driver through establishing the institution's vision and mission, making decisions, managing resources, building relationships, and ensuring innovation, quality, and accountability.

Research Result

Characteristics of Resources Owned by Private Universities in Kendari City

This study aims to identify the resource characteristics of Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Kendari City based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective using a qualitative descriptive approach. The results indicate that PTS play a crucial role in expanding access to higher education and driving regional development in Southeast Sulawesi Province. The resource characteristics of PTS are reflected in the quality of their human resources, which are dominated by lecturers with master's degrees (S2) qualifications, with a limited number of lecturers with doctoral degrees (S3), a less-than-ideal faculty-to-student ratio, and a limited number of administrative staff. In terms of facilities and funding, there is variation in capabilities among PTS, which generally rely on student tuition fees with limited grant support and industry collaboration. Curricula and study programs tend to be tailored to local potential and job market needs through an emphasis on practical learning, while networks and collaborations with state universities (PTN), local governments, industry, and religious organizations serve as crucial assets in strengthening institutional legitimacy and capacity.

Through Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis and data triangulation, this study found that each private university in Kendari City has different internal resource strengths in the aspects of human resources, leadership and governance, organizational culture, institutional networks, and digital innovation, which meet the criteria of valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized (VRIO). This finding confirms the existence of internal resource heterogeneity as the basis for sustainable competitive advantage as explained in the RBV theory (Barney, 1991). In addition, the ability of private universities to respond to external dynamics through curriculum adaptation, learning digitalization, and strengthening collaboration reflects the role of dynamic capabilities (Teece et al., 1997), while the involvement of local government, industry, and the community is in line with the perspective of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and the importance of continuous learning in organizational learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Senge, 1990). With integrated and collaborative resource management, private universities in Kendari City have strong potential to increase institutional competitiveness and contribute to regional development.

Obstacles/Constraints for PTS in increasing competitiveness

Private Universities (PTS) hold a strategic position in the Indonesian higher education system, including in Southeast Sulawesi. They not only serve as an alternative for prospective students who are not accepted into State Universities (PTN), but also serve as a primary means of expanding access to higher education and driving regional development. However, in their efforts to increase competitiveness, private universities in Kendari City face various complex internal and external barriers. Internal barriers primarily relate to limited funding, which hinders facility development, lecturer training and professional development, and research funding, ultimately impacting the quality of learning and academic productivity. Furthermore, the quality of human resources remains a challenge, particularly the limited number of doctoral lecturers and educational staff, which is influenced by the limited ability of private universities to offer competitive compensation and career development support.

Externally, private universities face intense competition from state universities with stronger reputations, lower tuition fees, and greater government support, which impacts interest and the number of applicants. Other barriers include negative public perceptions of private university quality, complex government regulations, and high accreditation costs, which further pressure the operational stability and sustainability of institutions. This condition can be explained through Resource Dependence Theory which emphasizes the organization's dependence on external resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), Human Capital Theory which emphasizes the importance of investing in the quality of human resources (Becker, 1993), and Institutional Theory which explains the pressure of legitimacy and external regulation (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In addition, Competitive Strategy shows the strong pressure of competition in the higher education sector (Porter, 1990), while the Triple Helix Model emphasizes the importance of collaboration between universities, government, and industry as a key strategy for PTS to increase competitiveness and institutional sustainability (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000).

Competitiveness Model of Private Universities in Kendari City

This research produces an Integrative Model as a conceptual framework for understanding the competitiveness of Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Kendari City, which combines the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, Porter's theory of competitiveness, Institutional theory, and Contingency theory. RBV (Barney, 1991) is the main foundation for assessing the internal competitive advantage of PTS through human resource management, development of superior study programs, accreditation, and academic innovation, while Porter's theory (1990) emphasizes the analysis of the external environment, including competition with other PTS, collaboration with industry, and adaptation to technological changes to maintain strategic positions and differentiation advantages. Institutional Theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) emphasizes the importance of social legitimacy, government regulation, and national accreditation as determinants of strategic success, while Contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967; Donaldson, 2001) emphasizes the need to adapt strategies to the social, cultural, and local environmental conditions of Kendari City. Thus, this integrative model reflects the reality of private universities in Kendari. Despite facing resource constraints, they are still able to optimize internal potential, adapt to external dynamics, and leverage legitimacy and strategic flexibility to enhance competitiveness and institutional contribution to local development. This model holistically integrates internal, external, and contextual perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors determining the success of private universities in improving educational quality, reputation, and graduate readiness to face job market challenges.

The relationship between competitiveness, RBV and research barriers

The concept of competitiveness of Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Kendari City in this study is based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective proposed by Barney (1991) and Wernerfelt (1984), which emphasizes that organizational competitive advantage comes from the management of valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized (VRIO) resources. The research findings show that PTS has strategic capital in the form of lecturer quality, leadership commitment, learning facilities, and external partnership networks, which are the basis of the institution's reputation and attractiveness, but the value creation of these resources is still potential due to weak organizational coordination and limited funding, so it has not fully achieved sustainable excellence. In addition, according to the modern RBV and the Dynamic Capabilities theory (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997; Teece, 2014), excellence does not only depend on resource ownership, but also the institution's ability to transform, configure, and manage resources synergistically to create competitive differentiation; Obstacles such as limited funding, low quality of human resources in some study programs, minimal collaboration with industry,

and negative stigma towards PTS reflect weaknesses in resource orchestration, which emphasizes the need to strengthen organizational capacity so that PTS can optimally utilize their internal potential, adapt to the Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka policy and academic digitalization, and maintain competitiveness amidst the dynamics of higher education.

Implications of Research Results

This research produces significant theoretical and practical implications for the development of Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Kendari City. Theoretically, the developed integrative model expands the understanding of Resource-Based View (RBV) by adding contextual and institutional dimensions, so that the competitive advantage of PTS is not only determined by valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and organized internal resources (VRIO), but also by institutional legitimacy, adaptive capabilities, and strategic suitability to external pressures, regulations, and social norms, making RBV more dynamic and contextual (contextualized dynamic RBV) through the integration of RBV, institutional theory, contingency theory, and Porter's framework (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Porter, 1990; Fiedler, 1967; Teece et al., 1997). Practically, this research provides guidance for PTS leaders to gradually strengthen institutional competitiveness through optimizing academic and non-academic human resources by improving the qualifications of doctoral lecturers, digital learning training, performance-based incentives, digital transformation, improving learning facilities to support Independent Learning–Independent Campus, and strengthening external collaboration through MoUs/MoAs with industry, government, and research institutions. Furthermore, policy support from LLDikti Region IX and the Southeast Sulawesi Regional Government is crucial, including a competitive funding scheme for lecturer research and community service, accelerating institutional and study program accreditation with mentoring, and facilitating research networks and industrial internships through triple helix collaboration, so that PTS can shift from survival mode to a competitive strengthening strategy based on internal resources and cross-sector collaboration, enhancing reputation from the local to the national level.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective, Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Kendari City have internal resource characteristics that include teaching staff, educational facilities, diversity of study programs, and partnership networks with various parties. Although not yet optimally managed, they show great potential in producing competent and competitive human resources, especially if supported by the relatively high institutional adaptability to the dynamics of higher education. However, efforts to increase the competitiveness of PTS are still faced with various structural and cultural obstacles, such as limited funding, suboptimal quality and development of human resources, inadequate learning infrastructure, minimal collaboration with the industrial world, public stigma regarding the quality of PTS, and high lecturer workloads that limit professional development space. Responding to these conditions, this study produces an integrative competitiveness model that combines the Resource-Based View and Porter's theories with institutional theory and contingency theory as a conceptual framework to explain the interaction between internal resources, environmental pressures, and institutional adaptation strategies. This model also opens up opportunities for further research development, using both quantitative and mixed methods approaches, to test the empirical relationships between variables by incorporating aspects of digitalization and sustainability to build a more holistic model of PTS competitiveness. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a basis for PTS leaders in Kendari City in formulating Strategic Plans and Development Master Plans with a focus on improving lecturer quality, strengthening internal quality assurance systems, expanding partnership networks with industry and local governments, and implementing digital innovation in learning and academic governance, which are strengthened through collaborative approaches between PTS at the regional level. On the other hand, the local government and LLDikti Region IX Sultanbatara are expected to play an active role in strengthening the PTS competitiveness ecosystem through affirmative policies, competitive funding, institutional capacity building programs, research incentives, and facilitating collaboration with the industrial world to accelerate the transformation of PTS into superior, inclusive, and nationally competitive higher education institutions.

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