

FORGING PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN CENTRAL JAVA

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Abstract

This research identifies leadership styles at private universities in Central Java, analyzes organizational culture, and formulates strategies for the success/survival of private universities. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with 9 university leaders as informants, with stratified sampling based on excellent, excellent, and good accreditation categories. Semi-structured interviews focused on leadership approaches, organizational culture, success strategies, and challenges. The data were analyzed using ATLAS.TI with thematic analysis. The results show that private universities have characteristics, such as leadership styles, that form different organizational cultures. There are differences in higher education management strategies between accreditation categories, especially in strategic priorities according to institutional goals. Superiorly accredited universities tend to prioritize research excellence, international collaboration, and innovative academic programs. The implication is that understanding the relationship between leadership, organizational culture, and strategic priorities can help universities align these elements for optimal effectiveness in achieving success in the competitive environment of higher education.

Keywords: Management; Private Higher Education; Organization Culture; Strategy

JEL Classification: D20, D23, I23

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INTRODUCTION

The organization continues to face challenges to remain competitive and successful, and Shah encourages the organization to regularly evaluate its strategy, structure, policies, operations, processes, and culture (Shah, 2009). Readiness to change is an important factor in an organization's success in implementing change (Madsen et al., 2005). Involves shared actions, values, and beliefs developed within the organization and serves as guidelines for the Behavior of its members (Schermerhorn et al., 2002). Culture refers to the common norms of Behavior and values between a group of individuals. Norms of Behavior are ways of acting that are common or disseminated within a group that prevail because group members tend to act in a certain pattern in instructing new members of the organization. Common values shape group behavior and often persist over time, even when group members have changed (Kotter, 1996)

Good governance requires good organizational performance (Bird, 2001). This cannot be separated from the role of a leader. Leaders are responsible for providing leadership for an organization to achieve predefined goals. How each leader moves and motivates subordinates is different. This could have been influenced by the leader's personal characteristics (Utari & Hadi, 2020). Higher education as an organization engaged in services and services certainly has a leader. The field of services, including libraries, needs to have a leader because it is the leader who regulates the rhythm of work for the sustainability of an organization (Kienast, 2023). Human resource management intends that management is expected to be able to unite the perceptions or perspectives of employees and management leaders to achieve management goals, among others, through the formation of a good work mentality supported by high dedication and loyalty to their work, providing work motivation, guidance,

direction and good work coordination by leaders to their subordinates (Rismayadi & Maemunah, 2016)

Leadership in the education sector has become an important issue. Over the past few decades, academics have increased their interest in investigating leadership in education to engage with technological development, innovative practices of work, and globalization (Gumus et al., 2018; A. Khan et al., 2020; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Leadership is a significant factor that affects individual and organizational performance (Azizah et al., 2020; Godbless, 2021; Tjahjono et al., 2019; Eslami & Lo, 2022). Various leadership styles have been practiced in organizational and educational contexts. Leadership styles can be characterized based on the traits of the leader (Denmark, 1993). Much educational leadership research has been dedicated to studying the influence of different leadership styles on organizational effectiveness and job performance (Junusi et al., 2021; Nebiyu & Kassahun, 2021), innovation and creativity (Humaid Almaskari et al., 2021; M. A. Khan et al., 2020; Ranjbar et al., 2019), Knowledge creation and sharing (Abdulmuhsin et al., 2021; Al-Husseini et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021), job commitment (Ahmad et al., 2018; HassenYimam, 2023), Organizational citizenship behavior (Dinc, 2018; Ho & Le, 2023), and the welfare of academic environment (Adil & Kamal, 2020; Samad, Muchiri, et al., 2022).

Previous research has not comprehensively explored the relationship between leadership style, organizational culture, and strategies for achieving success in private higher education institutions (Adil & Kamal, 2020; Samad, Rasli, et al., 2022). The majority of studies only focus on specific aspects, such as performance or innovation, but few link the three as a whole. Empirical exploration regarding the implementation of culture-based leadership in private higher education environments is also still limited (R. A. Quantz et al., 2017).

Leadership has a central role in shaping organizational culture. Effective leaders manage tasks and resources and influence employee values, attitudes, and behaviors. Culture-based leadership involves leaders creating an environment where the desired culture can thrive. Culture-based leadership is more likely to support normative rationality related to ethical values, moral community, and the good life. This includes democratic politics as an integral part of leadership that values equality, freedom, community, and justice (R. Quantz et al., 2017). So the study aims to identify leadership styles in private universities in Central Java, analyze the organizational culture applied in universities in Central Java, and then formulate strategies for implementing Private Universities for Success / Survive.

The main novelty of this research is to empirically explore the implementation of culture-based leadership in the private higher education environment in Central Java and examine the integrative relationship between leadership style, organizational culture, and specific strategies to ensure the success and survival of private universities in Central Java. The cultural context and environmental dynamics unique to Central Java are unique and will be discussed in identifying the success factors of local private universities.

The research question raised is: how is culture-based leadership implemented in private universities in Central Java empirically? What is the dominant leadership style and organizational culture and their relationship to the strategy for achieving success/survival of the institution? How can the unique cultural and environmental context of Central Java be considered in formulating appropriate strategies for local private universities to succeed and survive?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Style

Leadership is one of the important external and internal elements that can affect organizational performance (Klein et

al., 2013). Leaders who are able to understand, shape, and maintain an organizational culture that supports business goals tend to create a more productive, creative, and fulfilling work environment for employees, which will ultimately improve overall organizational performance. Leadership and organizational culture are very important factors for business sustainability (Ilmi et al., 2021). Culture-based leadership involves the leader in creating an environment where desired culture can thrive. Culture-based leadership is more likely to support normative rationality as it relates to ethical values, moral community, and the good life (R. Quantz et al., 2017).

Organizational Culture

One factor that seems to have an impact on innovation is organizational culture (Bessant et al., 2021; Büschgens et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2013). On the other hand, culture has been studied in terms of definition, theoretical scope, conceptualization, characteristics and types (Lavine, 2014; Schein, 1996). Although organizational culture is debated to contribute in achieving the promotion of shared values (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016), Although organizational culture is debated to contribute in achieving the promotion of shared values (Nazarian et al., 2017; Zhang & Li, 2016) innovation (Lin et al., 2013),

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach. This study aims to identify leadership styles, map the organizational culture of private colleges in Central Java and strategies for implementing colleges to be successful / survive. The data used in this study is primary data in the form of *in-depth interviews* with university leaders as informants. Stratified sampling was used to determine the sample in this study so that the samples from this study were classified into 3 categories, namely PTS with Superior Accreditation as many as 3, private colleges with Excellent Accredi-

tation as many as 3, and private collages with Good Accreditation as much as 3. Data collection will be carried out in February 2024. The interview data obtained was then transcribed and then analysed. The analysis of this study used triangulation as well as using Atlas.Ti.

Interview recordings are transcribed, categorized, and reviewed to "make meaning" out of the data in the manner indicated by (Miles et al., 2014). Searches for categories, patterns, and themes that will facilitate coherent data synthesis are performed (Creswell, 2018). Interview transcripts are reviewed and categorized to facilitate coding; Steno designations are assigned to various aspects of data for easy retrieval (Merriam, 2009). Responses are placed in tabulations and graphs to organize the key elements of responses for descriptive statistical analysis to reach good conclusions, classify and categorize emerging patterns and evaluate percentages or proportions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Yin, 2003). Comparison of results across participants, across institutions, and within institutions is used to evaluate results from different perspectives. The meaning of the findings from the perspective of the researcher is also shown to be appropriate for understanding the problem (Creswell, 2018), although competing interpretations are noted.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Style in Private Universities of Central Java Province

Leadership is one of the keys to success in an organization. Especially leadership styles that are appropriate to the situation and environment of the organization. Leadership is a universal phenomenon that exists in all organizations, including universities, that move to achieve

predetermined goals (Mahyuddin et al., 2021). When in office, a person who performs leadership responsibilities will always engage with the people under their supervision to influence them (Simarmata et al., 2021). In addition, according to (Heyler & Martin, 2018), Leaders must have traits or characteristics in interacting with humans or subordinates to achieve goals that have been made into the vision and mission of an organization. Identifying leadership styles helps to know how the organizational culture trends. Table 1 is a table of leadership styles of superior accredited Private Universities.

The style of each leader is different, as well as his followers. This is another way of saying that certain situations demand one particular style of leadership while other situations demand another. The leadership styles a person exercises differ (Paramita, 2011). In this case, we distinguish the leadership style in universities based on accreditation. Excellent accredited, Very Good Accredited, and Good Accredited. Here are the leadership styles in private universities with accreditation Very Good (Table 2).

A leader needs to move subordinates in work so that organizational goals can be adequately achieved. How each leader moves and motivates subordinates is different. The personal characteristics of the leader can influence this (Table 3).

Organization Culture

The organizational culture orientation of the respondents selected as the object of research underwent a shift indicated by a significant difference in scores between the existing organizational culture orientation and the preferred organizational culture orientation. Mapping organizational culture on Figure 1.

Table 1. Leadership Style of Superior Accredited Private Universities in Central Java

Accreditation	Type	Verbal
Excellent A	Visionary	<p>“We have a quality assurance office to guarantee our quality.”</p> <p>“Now for that, we have a special guide; there is also an acceleration of professors. There is a scheme in LPM from the bottom of the beginner to the unemployed....”</p> <p>“The goal is for lecturers with functional positions to obtain functional positions. After that, we have the basic research of the college. The skim we create, we will imitate from Bhima's.”</p> <p>“So what used to be TKT 1-3 used to be able to sinta 4,5,3. Now, it is not allowed. All basic research universities must now sinta 2. And for those above, namely applied PDPT with TKT 4-6, they are now mandatory scopes. No Sinta at all.”</p> <p>“Well, then the RENSTRA that will be evaluated every year. From which evaluation has not been achieved, it is then discussed at once at the management review meeting and the results of the internal quality audit. Now, we present these findings at LPM and describe the achievements of the strategic plan at LPM. So there is a common target that we will achieve together.”</p>
	Multicultural	<p>“No, not annoying. It's here free; there's no distinction, being an official, not considering it. In college students, it is also the same.”</p> <p>“And each deepens their respective studies. Suppose that the Muslim has khataman, so it's twice.”</p> <p>“...And later Christian friends. Christian friends held a prayer activity to..”</p> <p>“Yes, because the culture here also has its characteristics. The organizational culture here can accommodate everything. For example, just now. If Muslims have ‘<i>khataman</i>,’ Christians also have activity like that.”</p>
	Supportive	<p>"We have incentives for lecturers who do publications. For example, for Scopus publications, monthly incentives for one year for one publication."</p> <p>“We support for publication fee payments. Lecturers apply to the University, which is outside for grant output. It depends on which scheme you go into. Does it enter into the Professor's acceleration scheme or which scheme..”</p> <p>“We have journal subscriptions such as Springer, Emerald, and Elsevier to make it easier to access journals.”</p>

Table 1. Continue

Accreditation	Type	Verbal
Excellent A	Delegative	<p>“We work according to each other's objectives..”</p> <p>“LPM focuses on managing funding and incentives, programs for lecturers ...”</p> <p>“In LPM itself, it is also the same. Later, someone will represent if the invitation ad is related to the DJKI. When it comes to devotion, there is also. So there is research, too, according to their respective main duties. There is such a presentation of the results of the research that it will be seen that all of it is for socialization.”</p>
	Liberal	<p>“...We want to create a fun learning atmosphere, not only from this kind of falsity but also from the lecturers who teach. It must also be fun; the relationship between lecturers and students must be happy.”</p>
Excellent B	Visionary	<p>“Our vision-mission is the first to accompany young people to master knowledge, moral integrity, and mature personality so that they dare to take a role wherever they work...”</p>
	Visionary	<p>“Vision, mission, goals, and strategies are listed in 2019. The vision and mission of the next 5 to 10 years are to become a leading university to build the best generation by providing teaching research service based on Islamic values...”</p> <p>“We have a journal house to help the lecturers publish...”</p> <p>“International cooperation on outside campuses has been a lot so that the exchange program has become a flagship...”</p> <p>“Educating student character seriously with pesantren for new students without exception.”</p>
Excellent C	Supportive	<p>“We provide incentives/semesters for international journals then incentives for service of communities ...”</p> <p>“We have 42 journals, and Scopus indexes one journal. For Sinta is six.”</p> <p>“Have a journal subscription that can be accessed through the library.”</p>

Source: primary data, 2024

Table 2. Leadership Style of Very Good Accredited Private Universities in Central Java

Criteria	Type	Verbal
Very Good A	Visionary	<p>“...If it is external, of course, through competition, there are grants. That grant. Thank God we are responsive. We prepared a long time ago and even have a bank proposal.”</p> <p>“We mapped out the problems to see what needs to be fixed. Later, the lack of human resources, the lack of infrastructure that is pushed infrastructure...”</p> <p>“We initiated a consortium grant...”</p> <p>“We follow the mediator ToT at MK to provide mediator certification. So later law graduates from our University can have mediator certification and work in law firms, prosecutors..”</p>
	Supportive	<p>"We have a grant program for accelerated professorship."</p> <p>"We have a publication incentive for Scopus' publication. We also have IKK..."</p> <p>“...will be in push that the Doctor is usually in group IIIB if the Doctor is already a Lector. What are the obstacles, and where will the solution be found?"</p>
Very Good B	Supportive	<p>“We have incentives for journal publications and rewards. Certainly not as much as in other Universities, but we deliver that ...”</p> <p>“The quality of teaching and learning facilities for lecturers, our students always improve and ensure they feel our infrastructure facilities...”</p>
	Liberal	<p>“Yes, we free the lecturers here to teach by variative method...”</p> <p>“Teachers here don't always have to be available at campuses...”</p>
Very Good C	Visionary	<p>“We provide international certification for students so they can be more ready to work in the international market.”</p> <p>“An environment with high discipline creates soft skills, one of which is by applying it earlier, training then it is not only in the field that we grow there is character building.”</p>
	Supportive	<p>"Through the jaFa Lecturer acceleration workshop both online and offline.”</p> <p>“providing S3 scholarships, training on international journal publications, and training for accelerating academic functional positions.”</p>

Source: primary data, 2024

Table 3. Leadership Style of Good Accredited Private Universities Sample in Central Java

Criteria	Type	Verbal
Good A	Supportive	<p>“I want the lecturers to be open to their insights to be able to receive education outside. So not everything is domestic”</p> <p>"There are incentives for journal outcomes. Then also a patent, then there was a teaching incentive”</p> <p>“Publication fees at cost, each lecturer is funded for publication, and starting in 2024, there are publication incentives for each quality of publication. On average, each lecturer meets the publication criteria at least 1 time in 1 year.”</p> <p>“Now that we invite speakers, TKBI (English language proficiency test) is running, Certificate of Basic Instructional Technique skills improvement program or applied approach (AA), quality assurance, scientific writing</p>
	Multicultural	<p>“The establishment of our University since the beginning has been agreed as a national university, jd diversity of religion, ethnicity; culture makes strengthening between people. Each member of this University family must understand this. Interfaith holidays are also commemorated.”</p>
Good B	Supportive	<p>“We provide incentives equated with incentives in PTN as well.”</p> <p>“ We support lecturers to increase capacity following their main duties depending on needs.”</p> <p>"Our students are encouraged to be financially independent since they are still studying with programs and can become graduates who are ready to work."</p>
	Multicultural	<p>“Since then, there has never been a conflict related to SARA. Because from the beginning, the position of Stekom University had no religious appendages. There is Christianity, there is Islam, everywhere there is also nothing.”</p> <p>"So yes, there is nothing to dispute because we don't group ourselves universally. Pancasila”</p>
Good C	Supportive	<p>"improve academic quality..."</p> <p>“ We're improving infrastructure, that's clear.”</p> <p>“If in our place there is. We routinely actually oblige one research in the first semester, one research in the semester, one community service in the first semester, and vice versa in the second semester. We also do so.”</p> <p>“We are in-house with ex-house training because it is part of increasing the capacity of lecturers, some both from outside and from within themselves, like we invite speakers.”</p>
	Multicultural	<p>“No, for example, if in terms of religion, yes, our religion of about sixty employees who are Christians is not 5% yes the majority of Muslims now while I am the rector, I am Christian, which means there is no problem there..”</p> <p>"Then in the policy, if the problem is like tribalism, people talk about ethnicity, I am not Javanese, I am Nias ..”</p> <p>“So we don't think there is a problem there, the policy on carrying out worship is also we facilitate the place as well as every worship meeting, whether Christmas then for Muslims halal-bihalal, recitation if during the fasting period we also give opportunities for them to move.</p>

Source: primary data, 2024

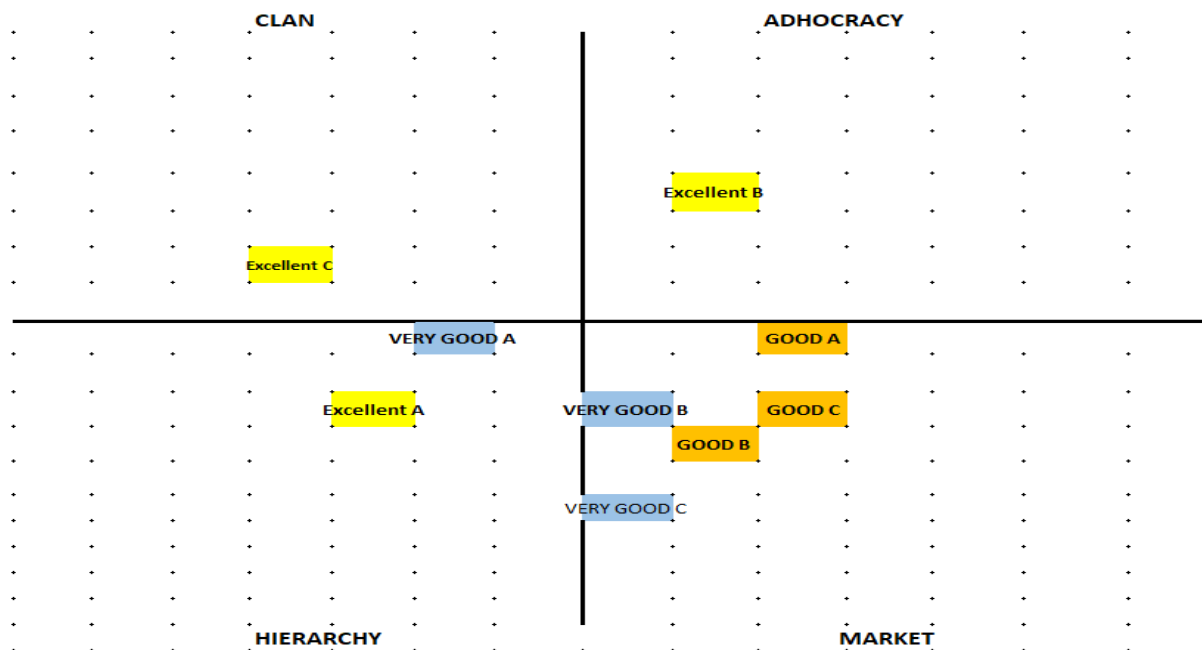


Figure 1. Mapping of Organization Culture Sample of Private Universities
 Source: primary data processed, 2024

On the hierarchy type that has characteristics, the leader type is coordinator, monitor, and organizer with quality strategies: error detection, measurement, process control, systematic problem solving, quality tools, and a very formalized and structured place to work. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is most critical. Formal rules and policies hold the organization together. The long-term concern is stability and performance with efficient, smooth operations. Success is defined as dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low cost. The management of employees is concerned with secure employment and predictability. On University Excellent X and University Very Good X. In the Market type of organizational culture, there are two Very Good Universities and 3 Good Universities. This is because the characteristics of this Market Organization Culture leader type are hard drivers, competitors, and producers. Quality Strategies for this Type include measuring customer preferences, improving productivity, creating external partnerships, enhancing competitiveness, and involving customers and suppliers. Be-

cause of this, five campuses are concerned with the specialization of graduate students.

Strategy for Implementing Private Higher Education

Private collages are higher education institutions whose management and regulation are carried out by the private sector. The implementation of private collages must comply with related laws and regulations and build a good quality control and assurance system (Steinmann et al., 2018; Yirdaw, 2016). In addition, the implementation of *Good University Governance* in the implementation and management of private universities, especially in educational services to the community, is very important. This includes participation, legal certainty, and good governance. The quality of private collages is also important, and improvement needs to be carried out. The PTS quality management system, including visionary leadership and lecturer performance, needs to be the focus in quality improvement efforts (Edy & Yuliejantiningih, 2021). In addition, private collages sustainability strategy also

needs to be considered. The implementation strategy for each private collages varies based on the challenges it faces. In this discussion, the strategy of implementing private universities is distinguished based on their accreditation, namely for accredited private universities of Excellent, Very Good and Good.

Excellent Accreditation Private Collages Strategy

Based on the management function (*planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling*), PTS that has excellent accreditation has a plan in its implementation to equate with public collages that is accredited superior as well. Private collages has been oriented to increase the number of professors and internationalization. Providing incentives to lecturers and increasing the submission of research grant proposals in the hope that it will increase publications and also the reputation of universities. This will facilitate the process of applying for a lecturer. This is one way to improve lecturer performance (Liu & Liu, 2022). Internationalization is achieved by establishing cooperation with foreign partners, international accreditation and opening international classes. Internationalization of higher education can make a major contribution in preparing universities to play a role in international associations and meet the demands of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Casillas & Moreno-Menéndez, 2014). The strategy of implementing superior accreditation private collages is explained in Figure 2.

Very Good Accreditation Private Collages Strategy

Figure 3 demonstrate the survival strategy of implementing Very Good accredited private collages. Unlike private collages has been excellent accredited, private collages accredited excellent still focuses on strengthening graduate speciali-

zation, brand awareness, and also the addition of Professors. This is because private collages accredited by Baik Once aims to increase public trust so that it becomes an option to continue higher education. As a private university, the number of students is very crucial. The increase in the number of students will greatly impact the implementation of private collages, on the other hand, it must still pay attention to the ratio of lecturers and students to maintain and even increase Accreditation. Superior Accreditation is one of the objectives of the implementation of these private collages, so adding Professors is something that must be done as well. Although not much, but private collages Accreditation Very Good continues to strive to add Professors.

Good Accreditation Private Collages Strategy

Figure 4 demonstrate the survival strategy of implementing a Good accredited private collage. In this category, the implementation strategy is not much different from private collages accredited Very Good. Where the focus of the implementation is on strengthening graduate specifications and brand awareness. The implementation of private collage is very dependent on students, so these two things are very important. Where when a university has a *tracer study* of alumni who have been successfully absorbed by the labour market and even have special skills obtained from other college graduates will be a special attraction. These private collages will still get interest from the community as an option to continue higher education. A good reputation in good accreditation private collages also greatly affects public trust in this private collages. This will greatly affect the sustainability of the implementation of PTS. Increasing Accreditation to Very Good or even Superior is not a priority of this private collage. So, the addition of Professors has not been the main goal. Private collage

Good Accreditation still focuses on how to encourage lecturers to conduct research, service and publications with very mediocre funding. Funding is very important for Good accredited private collages, this is because there is still a lot of attention for infrastructure development, human resources, research and publications.

The implementation of private collage plays an important role in the higher education system in Indonesia. They face

various challenges, including competition, management development, and improving the quality of education. The strategy of implementing private universities includes the development of the higher education sector, competitive strategies in the learning process, and evaluation of their position in competition. By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that private universities can continue to grow and make a positive contribution in the world of education.

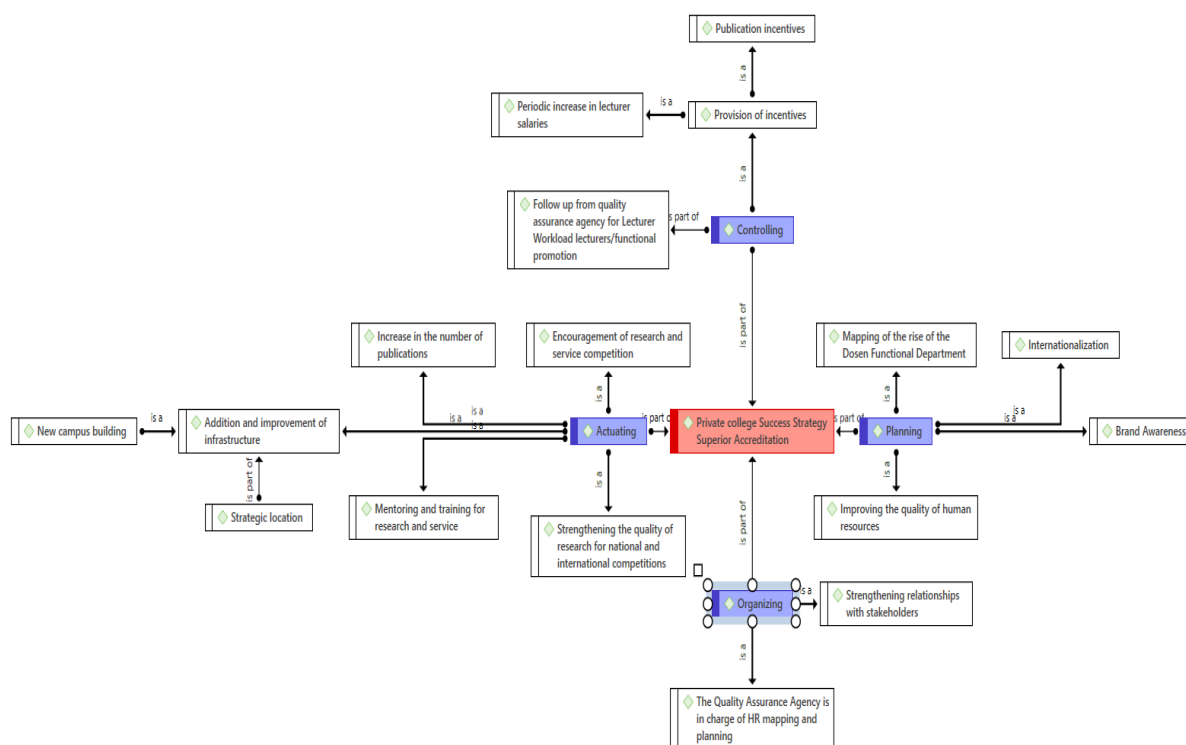


Figure 2. Strategy for the Implementation of Excellent Accreditation PTS
Source: primary data, processed (2024)

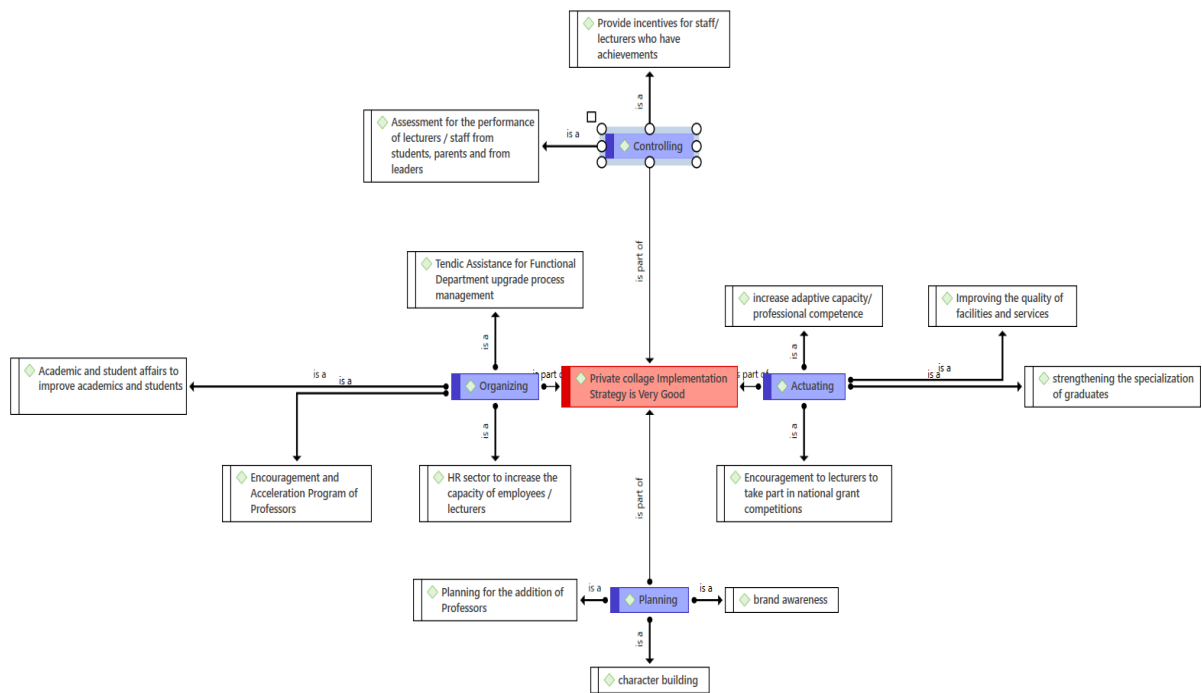


Figure 3. Survival Strategy for Implementing Very Good Accreditation PTS
 Source: primary data, processed (2024)

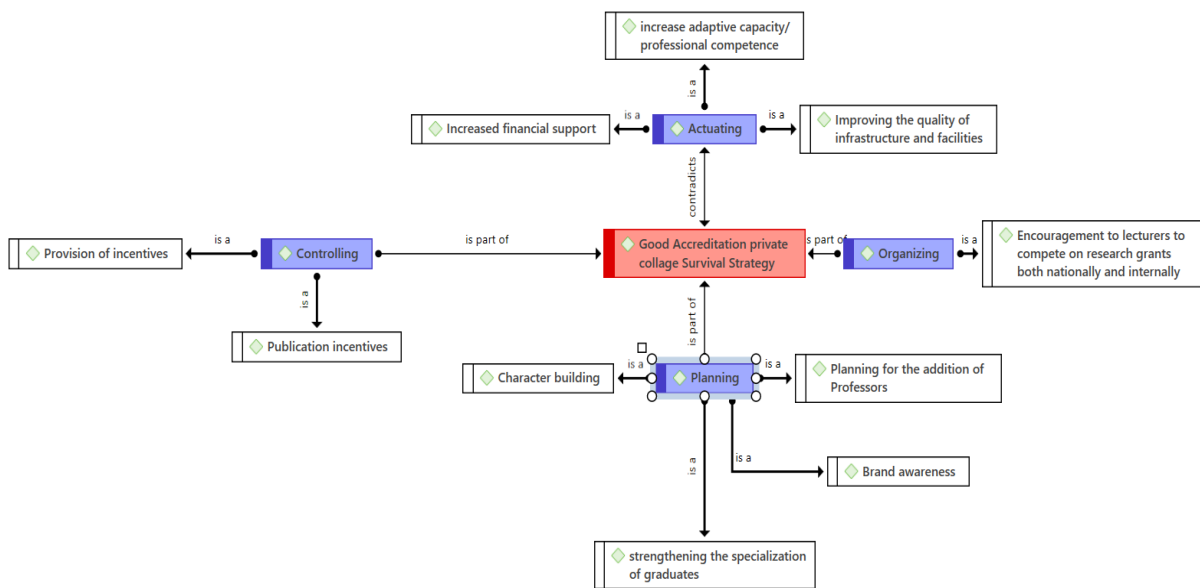


Figure 4. Good Accreditation private collages survival strategy
 Source: primary data, processed (2024)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Good performance in an organization is needed to improve the organization or institution. Organizational performance is inseparable from the organizational culture built by the leader of an organization. Higher education as an organization engaged in widening and educational services so that the role of the leader plays an important role in its sustainability. Private universities have a leadership style or character that is different from the leadership style of state universities. This is because the orientation and funding sources are different between the two types of universities. The leadership style of private universities in Central Java varies based on their accreditation. This difference is also due to the goals to be achieved by each private collage. Even so, all private collage has a visionary leadership style character, this is because the sustainability of private collage depends on the students who register.

The leadership style in a private collage also cannot be separated from the organizational culture built on the private collage. private collage with Superior accreditation has an organizational culture of Clan, Adhocracy, and Hierarchy, while private collage with Verry Good and Good accreditation has a Market-type organizational culture, this is because it still follows market demand. So that the successful strategy for superior accredited private universities that already have a good reputation is to increase attention both nationally and internationally by participating in research and service competitions and internationalization. As for private universities with excellent and good accreditation, it strengthens graduate speciation to increase brand awareness to survive.

Limitations of this study include that the informant of this study is the leader of a private university in Central Java. So, it needs to be deepened by getting more information from faculty and study

program leaders. In addition, information from lecturers and education staff is also important to explore related organizational styles and cultures. In addition, quantitative analysis needs to be done to see a measure of the extent to which organizational style and organizational culture affect organizational performance.

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