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Mapping the quality competitiveness of human resource management programs: A positioning analysis

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Abstract
Purpose: This study aims to assess the quality competitiveness of Human Resource Management (HRM) departments at four universities in the Soloraya region of Indonesia through a positioning strategy based on student perceptions of service quality.
Research Methodology: Using a quantitative survey method, data were collected from 400 purposively selected students. Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) analysis was applied to ten dimensions of service quality, including trust, quality of education, academic integration, social integration, and various forms of commitment. Validity and reliability tests confirmed the suitability of the instrument, and the data were processed using SPSS software.
Results: The analysis revealed three competitive quadrants: Sebelas Maret University in the relatively excellent quadrant, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and Batik Islamic University in the challenger quadrant, and Widya Dharma University in the economic cluster quadrant. The results demonstrate clear differentiation in the competitive positioning of HRM programs, influenced by both qualitative and quantitative service quality attributes.
Conclusions: Findings highlight the importance of mapping perceptions to identify institutional strengths and weaknesses. Universities with lower positioning need to improve campus facilities, academic environments, and service quality to compete with leading institutions.
Limitations: The research scope was limited to four universities in the Soloraya area, and the findings rely solely on student perceptions, which may limit generalizability across other regions or disciplines.
Contribution: This study contributes to higher education competitiveness research by applying MDS to HRM programs, offering a novel model for positioning analysis. The results provide strategic insights for university administrators to develop targeted marketing, resource allocation, and quality improvement strategies.

Keywords: *HRM Programs, Mapping, Positioning, Quality Competitiveness, Student Perceptions*

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1. Introduction

Business competition is at the core of an institution's success or failure. A competitive atmosphere can spur institutions to determine the right strategy for the entity concerned. Innovation strategies in competition for higher education services must be created to achieve and maintain a position of

competitive excellence for higher education institutions, protecting them from future competitors (Sudarya, 2007). Higher education competitiveness is a dynamic process that goes beyond the amount of input and output produced; it includes efforts to achieve superior quality in processes. The potential competitiveness of a university can be seen from its resources, the managerial skills of its leaders, lecturers, and academic staff, as well as the progress of its academic facilities. The higher the quality of a university's potential resources, the easier it is to choose and implement strategic plans. Examples include the implementation of strategic plans that produce high-quality graduates, graduates' ability to be absorbed in various fields of employment with a strong alumni network, superior service to students, and a high capacity to master technology, which will strengthen the university's reputation in the public's mind (Arwildayanto & Suking, 2020).

A university's competitive position can result from the leadership of individuals within the institution, particularly regarding cost leadership and differentiation. University stakeholders, including lecturers, academic staff, students, parents, and the community, can gain economic benefits from effective leadership. Achieving an A (excellent) accreditation rating is a source of pride for the entire academic community and enhances the self-esteem of all parties regarding the quality of learning services provided. When a university's potential and competitive position are optimally utilized, stakeholders benefit from superior service, cost efficiency, and competitive excellence, producing quality graduates through Tridharma intellectual product output. All activities contribute to a high level of satisfaction, loyalty, wider service areas, and high profitability for the university, ultimately enhancing the welfare of the academic community (Hidayat, 2013).

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia determines that the competitiveness of a university can be measured by the quality of management, student activities, research, and lecturer publications (Setiawati, 2012). Apart from quantitative aspects, university competitiveness can be assessed through the stability of tuition fees, quality of graduates, infrastructure improvements, and increased community participation in higher education literacy. High competitiveness increases public and government trust in these institutions (Radiman, Purnama, Prayogi, Jufrizen, & Sari, 2022). Currently, competition for new undergraduate students in Indonesian higher education has become extremely fierce, entering what is known as the 'red ocean' era. The quality of learning at all university levels is a significant public concern (Martono, 2021). Designing a competitive position map for a university's learning quality is a branding effort that creates a unique brand in the minds of consumers. Analyzing competitive quality positions helps universities win competitions and identify their unique advantages compared to others. According to Cronin Jr and Taylor (1992), testing a competitive quality position involves three stages: discriminant analysis, factor analysis and multidimensional scaling (MDS).

The user community and the Indonesian Government expect an increase in the quality of graduates with skills and knowledge suited to the practical demands of the workforce. This suitability is supported by performance contingency theory, which underpins the competency concept. This theory explains the alignment of organizational and individual factors with job demands to achieve optimal performance and commitment (Kristof-Brown, Schneider, & Su, 2023). Individual capabilities, as explained by Azalia, Sudiman, and Maryati (2021), include personal vision and values, knowledge, life and career competencies, interests, and style. Job demands are defined as responsibilities, roles, and tasks. Organizational environmental aspects influencing job competency include culture and climate, structure and systems, industrial maturity, strategic position, and economic, political, social, and religious factors. This study examines the role of the Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) model in assessing the competitive quality of university accounting programs in Soloraya, Indonesia. In Klaten Regency In 2023, Muhammadiyah University of Klaten emerged as a competitor to Widya Dharma University in terms of student admissions. The novelty of this research lies in modifying the model using multidimensional scaling to observe universities with superior HRM programs in Soloraya, Indonesia.

The research problem is: "Which variables shaping student perceptions based on educational service quality can form a map of the competitive superiority of HRM departments at universities in Soloraya,

Indonesia?". This study aims to test a model of excellence in the competitive quality of HRM departments at universities in Soloraya, Indonesia. Specifically, it seeks to determine students' perceptions regarding the attractiveness of HRM departments in the region for further study related to strategic management. This study highlights student preferences for the superior quality of four HRM programmes at each university using a multidimensional scaling test. It provides insights for developing marketing strategies for new student admissions teams. Understanding the competitive position of each accounting program's service quality can guide strategic management and marketing.

The findings benefit higher-education practitioners by identifying the competitive position of each university's HRM department. This competitive position informs the marketing, planning, and development strategies for HRM programs. This research also provides valuable input for university admissions teams to enhance the quality of higher education services to meet institutional goals. Positioning studies complement each other, forming a synthesis that addresses the research gaps. This study focuses on the superior competitiveness of HRM programs at universities in Soloraya, Indonesia. To ensure better services and maintain quality towards globally competitive HRM programmes, universities need to implement a control management concept that maps the competitive quality position of each HRM programme. Competencies of HRM graduates in the Global Industry 4.0 era include analytical and innovative thinking, critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, logical reasoning, systems analysis, leadership, social influence, and technological skills (Mayasari, Anjelina, & Irsutami, 2020).

The objective of measuring learning performance at four universities that organize HRM study programs in Soloraya has never been studied, thus creating a research and phenomenon gap. Hasanah et al. (2022) conducted an explorative mapping study with a focus on the quality of Islamic higher education based on student service satisfaction in a narrower environment, namely a faculty with six study programs at one Islamic higher education institution (IAIN) in Ambon City. Despite the growing competition among higher education institutions in Indonesia, there is a lack of research examining the quality, competitiveness, and positioning strategies of HRM education programs. This study aims to address this gap by assessing the positioning of HRM departments at universities in the Soloraya area based on students' perceptions of service quality dimensions.

This research involved various academic expertise to ensure objectivity. The outcomes include: 1) identification of the competitive quality position of each university's HRM program in Soloraya, and 2) development of marketing strategies based on student preferences for the competitive position of each HRM program. By understanding the competitive position of HRM program service quality, universities can develop marketing, planning, and development strategies for the sustainability of their programs. This research provides input for admissions teams to enhance higher-education services, address gaps in positioning research, and contribute to the competitiveness of HRM programs in Soloraya, Indonesia.

2. Literature review

Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) involves creating a map to determine the position of an observed object relative to other observed objects based on their similarities (Hafsah, Labibah, Fitrianto, & Jumansyah, 2024). MDS, also known as a multilevel scale position in research, visually and spatially describes people's perceptions and consumer preferences. The connection between objects is perceived as a psychological relationship between stimuli, represented geometrically through various points in a multidimensional space. This geometric representation can be depicted in a spatial map, with the axes of these maps emerging from domain-based assumptions in psychology. Researchers use these basic dimensions to form a map of perceptions and preferences for an object's stimulus. MDS is widely used in marketing research to identify institutional competitiveness (Lembang, Leunupun, & Talakua, 2016).

The MDS concept assumes that a set of stimuli, such as brands, products, and services, can be presented as points on a map or in a multidimensional space. This concept aims to transform consumer assessments of similarities or preferences, such as preferences for certain brands, institutions, or products, into a graphic representation with layout and distance in multidimensional space (Lembang

et al., 2016). Perception is an individual process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting stimuli to provide meaning to an image (Latar & Rummahlewang, 2020). When two individuals receive the same stimuli, their recognition, selection, organization, and interpretation of these stimuli depend on their needs, expectations, and value. Perception is a diverse psychological process involving various aspects. This process begins with selecting, organizing, and interpreting stimuli so that individuals can understand the meaning of an object (Hasanah et al., 2022).

Perception begins with stimuli absorbed by an individual's five senses, a phenomenon known as sensation. The sources of stimuli are diverse, with various studies examining both external and internal origins. External stimuli can influence consumer choices, with factors such as contrast, intensity, novelty, object size, repetition and movement affecting these choices. This research aims to identify the perception map of HRM study programs among universities in the Soloraya area and determine competitors' positions using a mix of university service quality marketing variables. In the purchasing process, an important factor influencing consumers is the marketing mix, alongside other factors such as the university's image. A university's image, a combination of various service quality dimensions, influences students' perceptions and enrollment decisions. These variables can identify perception mapping and determine competitor positions using an MDS test model. The MDS map can identify similarities or dissimilarities among the attributes of each HRM study program's service quality at each university.

Building on previous positioning research on tourist villages in Purworejo Regency (Nugroho et al. (2022), this study formulates a model for mapping the competitive position of accounting study programs at five universities in the Soloraya area using the MDS test on six dimensions: brand image, quality of education, tuition fees, campus facilities, academic environment, and quality of teaching staff, with question attributes modified according to field needs. The ultimate goal is to enhance the competitiveness of accounting study programs at universities, enabling them to face fierce competition in the future and navigate an era of significant disruption and change.

3. Methodology

The population consists of all objects that can be researched and have certain identifiable characteristics. These characteristics can be studied, and conclusions can be drawn (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). The population in this study comprised all accounting study program students in the Soloraya region at five universities. The sample was a subset of the population. Researchers have the right to select samples, even though the research conclusions are generalized based on agreed-upon rules. Samples should be collected with characteristics that represent the entire population. If the sample does not represent the population's characteristics, the research results will likely be biased (Hair et al., 2019). Given the uncertainty in population size due to time and methodological constraints, the researchers chose the Bernoulli method to determine the sample size for this study. The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling through purposive sampling. With an error rate (α) of 5% and a confidence level of 95%, the Z-value is 1.96, and the e-value is 10%. The probability that any given population member was not included in the sample was 0.5. Based on these calculations, the minimum sample size required was 400 student respondents from four universities in the region.

The data collected in this study were analyzed in two stages: primary and secondary data analyses. Primary data were obtained directly from interviews or questionnaires (Hair et al., 2019). These data are typically referred to as respondent data and can be found in compilation form or as files. For this study, primary data were collected by distributing questionnaires to accounting study program students at four universities in the Soloraya region, using purposive sampling to select 400 students. The consideration of selecting a sample of 400 respondents, a sample size greater than 30 and less than 500, is sufficient for most studies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The criteria for the purposive sampling technique were that the respondents were students at five universities studying in the HRM study program and they had been in semester 3 and above with the consideration of having felt the quality of learning services for at least one year of study so that they were eligible to provide assessment responses.

The selected respondents were adults with sufficient understanding to evaluate the quality of HRM study programs at universities. In the second stage, secondary data analysis was conducted, involving the analysis of sources from journals, the Internet, books, and other relevant literature. Initially, questionnaires were distributed, and the data were tested for their validity and reliability. Data are considered valid if they have a minimum Cronbach's alpha of 0.6; however, if Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.4 to 0.6, the questionnaire can still be used (Borg, Groenen, & Mair, 2018). Once the attribute items are validated and reliable, the data can be processed through a Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) procedure. In this study, validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE) based on CFA. The pre-survey results of the questionnaire items obtained valid questionnaire items with a validity test of Cronbach's alpha of 0.68. After the proposed attribute items are validated, the data can be processed in the next stage using the multidimensional scaling procedure.

The MDS processing stage consists of five steps (Borg et al. (2018): problem formulation with data input assumptions, MDS procedure test, assuming the number of dimensions, interpretation configuration test, and validity and reliability tests. In the first stage, a problem formulation test was conducted to align the MDS processing objectives. The second stage involved obtaining data and inputting them into the model. This was done in three ways: an indirect perception test, a direct perception test, and a preference test. Indirect perception refers to a student's perception of a criteria-based object formed in their mind. Direct perception refers to a student's perception of a university with which they are familiar based on additional criteria. The preference map is a student's assessment of the HRM study programs at four universities based on the service quality formed in their minds.

The ten dimensions–trust, quality of education, emotional commitment, cognitive commitment, goal commitment, social integration, academic integration, commitment to non-university activities, family commitment, and job commitment–were chosen based on their relevance to the quality competitiveness of HRM education programs. These dimensions capture various aspects that influence student perceptions and decision-making processes when selecting an HRM programme. Based on the entire activity, the perception analysis calculations were processed using SPSS 21 software, which explains the average value of students' perception preferences. The attributes in the questionnaire, including trust, quality of education, emotional commitment, cognitive commitment, goal commitment, social integration, academic integration, commitment to non-university activities, family commitment, and job commitment, were validated beyond internal reliability. These attributes can shape the position of a university's HRM study program, differentiating it from other universities based on the horizontal and vertical axes. These two axes can be assumed to represent service quality for student loyalty, the competitive advantage of HRM study programs from a qualitative aspect, and service quality from a quantitative aspect.

The output of this activity implicitly or explicitly answers the proposed objectives, namely identifying the perception map of service quality and competitive superiority of the Unwidha Institution's HRM study program based on community preferences, compared to three competing universities: UMS, UNS, and UNIBA. The method should include a description of the population, sampling method, data measurement and data collection. Furthermore, this section explains the procedure and tools used to test the hypothesis. Present the materials, methods, survey, questionnaire, etc., used in the study. Authors should explain whether this study is experimental, review, simulation-based, or survey-based. The software and hardware used during the study are discussed with their brand names. Mention all research conditions, assumptions, and theories. This section should be easy enough for any reader to repeat the study under similar conditions.

4. Results and discussions

These Respondent characteristics were used as narratives to form a profile of the research object.

4.1. Respondent's Age

The age distribution of the respondents is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Age

Age	Total	Percentage
18 – 21	120	30%
22 – 25	280	70%
Total	**400**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

The distribution of student respondents was between the ages of 22 and 25 years (70%) and 18 -21 years (30%). This means that most respondents were students in the 4th semester period and above, meaning they already had experience and various information related to the quality of learning and competitiveness of HRM study programs at four universities.

4.2. Monthly Pocket Money

The distribution of respondents' pocket money per month is described in Table 2.

Table 2. Income/Pocket Money

Income	Total	Percentage
< 700,000 Rp	40	10%
700.000- 2.000.000 Rp	320	80%
>2.000.000 Rp	40	10%
Total	**400**	**100%**

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

The distribution of respondents based on monthly pocket money found that most respondents had middle-to upper-income. Monthly pocket money was less than 700,000 per month (10%), 700,000 to 2 million per month (80%), and above 2 million per month (10%). This can be interpreted as follows: even though students in the Soloraya area have sufficient purchasing power to pay for college, it is proven that they receive monthly pocket money from their parents or have worked at a standard that meets or exceeds the Regency Minimum Wage for the Soloraya area.

4.3. The Validity Test

The validity test was used as a measurement tool to test the reliability of the questionnaire in measuring what it should measure. The validity measurement in this study shows the amount of variance in the indicators extracted by the latent variables/constructs that have been developed. According to the expert panel, the variance extracted value is acceptable if it is above 0.50. In this study, 60 respondents' answers to pre-survey activities were initially tested, with the results outlined in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3. Validity test

Indicators	R count	R required	Status
Trust			
P1	0.717	0.500	Valid
P2	0.840	0.500	Valid
P3	0.794	0.500	Valid
P4	0.706	0.500	Valid
Quality of education			
P1	0.696	0.500	Valid
P2	0.758	0.500	Valid
P3	0.623	0.500	Valid
P4	0.738	0.500	Valid
P5	0.750	0.500	Valid
P6	0.707	0.500	Valid
P7	0.722	0.500	Valid
Emotional commitment			
P1	0.754	0.500	Valid

P2	0.677	0.500	Valid
P3	0.661	0.500	Valid
P4	0.615	0.500	Valid
Cognitive commitment			
P1	0.715	0.500	Valid
Goal commitment			
P1	0.790	0.500	Valid
Social integration			
P1	0.680	0.500	Valid
P2	0.789	0.500	Valid
P3	0.654	0.500	Valid
Academic integration			
P1	0.790	0.500	Valid
P2	0.829	0.500	Valid
P3	0.704	0.500	Valid
Commitment to university activities			
P1	0.990	0.500	Valid
Family commitment			
P1	0.780	0.500	Valid
Job commitment			
P1	0.790	0.500	Valid

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

The results of the validity test on the indicators in Table 3 show that all items are valid. This primary data test proves that the questionnaire items can measure what should be measured based on the learning quality excellence instrument items so that the research model can be generalized.

4.4. Reliability Test

Reliability testing aims to determine the extent to which a measuring instrument can be relied upon or trusted. It can also be interpreted as the extent to which a measuring instrument can provide relatively the same results if repeated measurements are made on different objects. In this study, the reliability test used the reliability construct value. The minimum reliability value of the indicators forming latent variables that can be accepted by the panel was 0.70. The research results were obtained from the reliability test results in Table 4**.**

Table 4. List of Reliability Test Tables

Indicators	R count	R required	Status
Trust	0.875	0.700	Reliable
Quality education	0.999	0.700	Reliable
Emotional commitment	0.891	0.700	Reliable
Cognitive commitment	0.885	0.700	Reliable
Goal commitment	0.882	0.700	Reliable
Social integration	0.855	0.700	Reliable
Academic integration	0.882	0.700	Reliable
Commitment to nonuniversity activities	0.887	0.700	Reliable
Family commitment	0.890	0.700	Reliable
Job commitment	0.895	0.700	Reliable

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

As shown in Table 4, the research reliability test shows that the construct reliability value for each latent variable is above 0.7. The findings of this test concluded that each latent variable's measuring instrument was reliable. Based on the explanation of the activity test, all the questionnaire items were stated to be reliable. This primary test proved that the questionnaire could be tested repeatedly at different times while still having the same or consistent results.

4.5. Multidimensional Scaling Test Results

Research activities at the next stage were in the form of multivariate multidimensional scaling (MDS) multivariate tests using the SPSS 21 software program (Hair et al., 2019). The positioning test output is shown in Figure 1.

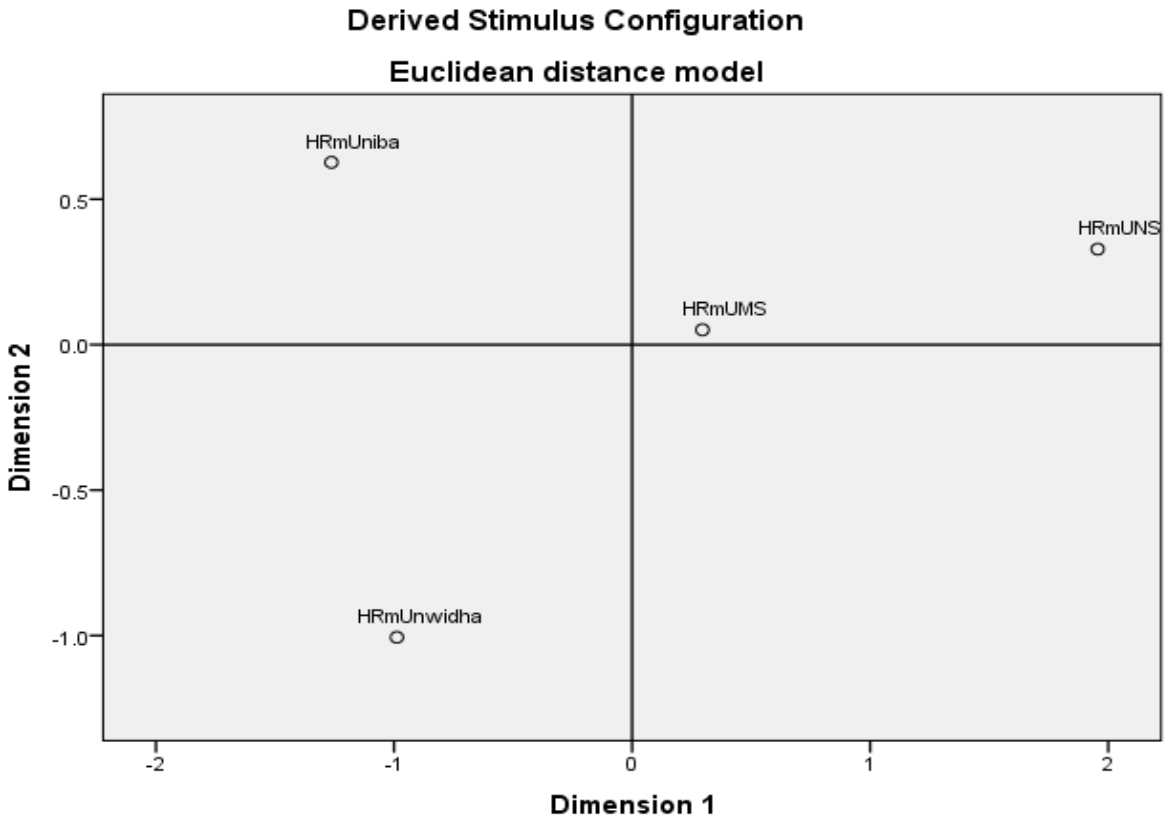

Figure 1. Map of the position of the four HRM departments

Based on Figure 1 of the spatial map, it can be seen that the position of the UNS (Sebelas Maret University) HRM Study Program is in quadrant I. Quadrant I indicates excellence in the quality of accounting study program services, which is relatively the best in both the qualitative and quantitative aspects. FEB UNS has a reputation for excellence in its study programs and a superior reputation as a state and established university in the Soloraya region regarding higher education quality. Consequently, the response from students in the Soloraya region places the UNS HRM study program in quadrant I, or the relatively excellent quadrant.

Quadrant IV is occupied by the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS) and Batik Islamic University (Uniba) accounting study programs. This quadrant includes universities that excel in several dimensions with their respective characteristics. UMS and Uniba have accounting study programs with BAN Excellent (A) accreditation. Quadrant III is occupied by the Unwidha (Widya Dharma University) HRM program. The location of Unwidha in the Klaten district influences people's perception of its geographical aspects, as it is outside Surakarta. Quadrants III and IV were categorized as economic cluster universities in communities experiencing rapid economic growth in the Surakarta-Yogyakarta region. This could be expanded by explaining whether student perceptions correlate with actual program and performance indicators in the future. Universities in quadrants III and IV can be categorized as challengers. These universities strive to match the quality of higher education services for excellent HRM study programs, such as those with a superior reputation, such as UNS. Unwidha, in quadrant III, with B accreditation, differs from the other universities in the quadrants, which have A (Excellent) accreditation. The two universities must work hard to improve the quality of learning so that they can catch up with the positions of UNS and UMS in quadrant I, namely, performance excellence in qualitative and quantitative aspects.

4.6. Positioning Excellence Competitiveness of University Accountancy Departments in the Soloraya Indonesia area

Multidimensional Scaling is a model test using a dimensional map according to student perceptions regarding the quality of learning in four HRM Study Programs so that the coordinate points of excellence in learning quality can be found from both qualitative and quantitative aspects. Unwidha has an advantage in cost leadership on specific indicators of cheap UKT fees. Currently, a perception has begun to emerge in the community that studying at a State University has superior quality but with the burden of tuition fees charged to students being more expensive than private universities. The research results prove that the position map based on the Multidimensional Scaling test can place each university's HRM study programme in three quadrants based on student perceptions. Higher education plays a major role in shaping individual character to enhance a nation's competitiveness (Rezaei et al., 2017; Singh, 2018). Higher education institutions that offer HRM study programs must provide quality education. The more dynamic and competitive higher education services become, the higher the public's demand for institutions providing quality services in HRM. Society increasingly expects universities to play an important role in preparing professionals with applicable HRM knowledge for the workforce (Cheung, Yuen, Yuen, & Cheong Cheng, 2011; Dehghan, Dugger, Dobrzykowski, & Balazs, 2014).

The quality of higher education services offering HRM study programmes must be regularly and thoroughly assessed so that universities can maintain and improve the quality of their services (Teeroovengadum, Kamalanabhan, & Seebaluck, 2016). The positioning of each HRM study program is based on the performance of each university as assessed by the community itself. HRM study programs that have a poor position in terms of quality competitiveness, both qualitatively and quantitatively, must improve their performance to move to a better quadrant. They must utilize all their resources to achieve competitive excellence (Diez-Busto, Palazuelos, San-Martin, & del Corte, 2023). The findings regarding the competitive excellence positions of the four universities' HRM study programs align with the research findings from observations in various retail businesses (Amanah, Harahap, & Agustini, 2023; Nasihardani, Satrio, Khairullah, Abdurahman, & Pambengkas, 2023; Walundungo, Paendong, & Manurung, 2014). These observations are particularly relevant to this research, especially regarding the theme of higher-education service quality (Hasanah et al., 2022). The ability of the positioning model based on the mathematical concept of multidimensional scaling to predict various objects of observation makes these findings significant in strategic marketing science research. This model has strong characteristics according to the principles of scientific research (Sekaran and Bougie Sekaran and Bougie (2016), including purposiveness, rigor, testability, replicability, precision and confidence, objectivity, generalizability, and parsimony.

The positioning results suggest that Widya Dharma University should focus on improving aspects such as campus facilities and the academic environment to enhance its positioning and attract more students to the HRM department. Specific strategies include investing in modern infrastructure, enhancing student support services, and fostering a more vibrant academic community through extracurricular activities and industry collaborations. Multidimensional scaling-based positional maps are dynamic. The competitiveness map of each university's HRM study program can shift according to changes in consumer preferences. The aggressiveness of each university in pursuing quality also influences its position in the rankings. Increasingly high consumer demands require university managers to offer superior accounting learning services and adopt a proactive mindset (Sudarya, 2007). The demands in this disruptive era regarding the business model of higher education in HRM necessitate increasingly aggressive approaches to improving the quality and competitiveness of higher education institutions in the Soloraya region. Learning in the realm of higher education in HRM is a variable that university administrators do not control. The findings of this study indicate that students at the four universities have strong confidence in assessing the performance of each university. In the future, their demand for optimal service will pose an ongoing challenge for study program managers offering superior HRM education.

Interest in continuing higher education is an individual's tendency to be interested in college and the prospects of study programs that colleges offer (Setiaji & Rachmawati, 2017). One of the factors that triggers prospective students' interest in college is that students have made career plans from the start.

Career planning is something that individuals do to plan a good career according to their expectations and those of their parents. Birama and Nurkhin (2017) show that interest in continuing education at university is influenced by career planning by 11.5%. Sya'diyah and Fachrurrozie (2020) show that the peer environment and career planning have a positive and significant effect on interest in continuing education to university through learning motivation as a mediator. Universities that can motivate individuals to continue learning through "long life learning" will further improve the quality of the university's performance. An increase in the quality of university performance must be accompanied by an increase in the quality of HRM. All of this is reciprocal; an increase in the quality of university learning will further improve the quality of graduates. The increase in the quality of graduates will bring positive branding of the university in the community, which will lead to an increase in the public's enthusiasm to send their children to school at the university in question. The third policy-level strategy of universities can be carried out through curriculum-based interventions, Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE), namely creating a curriculum that provides differentiation and uniqueness for alumni so that they are able to create a brand for graduates to get jobs quickly after graduating from college (He et al., 2024).

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the quality competitiveness of HRM departments at four universities in the Soloraya area of Indonesia through a positioning strategy based on students' perceptions of service quality. Multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis revealed distinct positioning quadrants, with Sebelas Maret University occupying the relatively excellent quadrant, reflecting its superior reputation and service quality. Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and Batik Islamic University were positioned in the Challenger quadrant, indicating their potential to match the quality of leading institutions. Widya Dharma University occupies an economic cluster position, suggesting opportunities for improvement in specific service quality dimensions. Cost leadership strategy must be maintained by Unwidha, Unwidha with cheap UKT burden for students, accompanied by quality improvement. At this time, the economy in Indonesia is experiencing a decline in economic growth, so parents will consider cheap UKT costs as the main factor for their children to study at higher education.

These findings have significant practical implications for university administrators and policymakers in the higher education sector. Universities can leverage these results to develop targeted marketing strategies, identify areas for quality improvement, and align their resources and efforts to enhance the competitiveness of their HRM departments. For example, universities in the challenger or economic cluster quadrants may improve aspects such as campus facilities, academic environment, or teaching staff quality to enhance their position and attract more students. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature on strategic positioning and quality competitiveness in higher education, specifically in the context of HRM education. The application of the MDS technique and consideration of multiple service quality dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for assessing and mapping the competitive landscape of HRM departments.

Although this study offers valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. First, the findings are specific to the Soloraya area of Indonesia, and their generalizability to other regions and countries may be limited. Additionally, the study relies on student perceptions, which can be subjective and may change in student perceptions or comparative studies across different disciplines or geographical regions. Moreover, future studies could incorporate additional factors that may influence the quality competitiveness of HRM departments, such as industry collaboration, research output and alumni networks. Qualitative approaches could also be employed to gain deeper insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each university's HRM department, complementing quantitative positioning analysis. Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of quality competitiveness and positioning strategies in the context of HRM educatios. By providing a comprehensive assessment of service quality dimensions and mapping the competitive landscape, the findings can guide universities in strategic decision-making, resource allocation, and quality improvement efforts to enhance the competitiveness of their HRM departments

This study aimed to assess the quality competitiveness of HRM departments at four universities in the Soloraya area of Indonesia through a positioning strategy based on students' perceptions of service quality. Multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis revealed distinct positioning quadrants, with Sebelas Maret University occupying the relatively excellent quadrant, reflecting its superior reputation and service quality. Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and Batik Islamic University were positioned in the Challenger quadrant, indicating their potential to match the quality of leading institutions. Widya Dharma University occupies an economic cluster position, suggesting opportunities for improvement in specific service quality dimensions.

These findings have significant practical implications for university administrators and policymakers in the higher education sector. Universities can leverage the positioning results to develop targeted marketing strategies, identify areas for quality improvement, and align their resources and efforts to enhance the competitiveness of their accountancy departments. For example, universities in the challenger or economic cluster quadrants may improve aspects such as campus facilities, academic environment, or teaching staff quality to enhance their position and attract more students. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature on strategic positioning and quality competitiveness in higher education, specifically in the context of HRM education. The application of the MDS technique and consideration of multiple service quality dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for assessing and mapping the competitive landscape of HRM departments. Although this study offers valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. First, the findings are specific to the Soloraya area of Indonesia, and their generalizability to other regions and countries may be limited. Additionally, the study relies on student perceptions, which can be subjective and may change in student perceptions or comparative studies across different disciplines or geographical regions.

Moreover, future studies could incorporate additional factors that may influence the quality competitiveness of HRM departments, such as industry collaboration, research output and alumni networks. Qualitative approaches could also be employed to gain deeper insights into the specific strengths and weaknesses of each university's HRM department, complementing quantitative positioning analysis. Universities in a lesser position are required to catch up on the quality of learning to be able to shift to a more superior position on the MDS map. Continuous research is needed in the future regarding the test of the quality model of higher education learning in the HRM Program through mixed-research and by adding mediating and moderating variables. Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of quality competitiveness and positioning strategies in the context of HRM education. By providing a comprehensive assessment of service quality dimensions and mapping the competitive landscape, the findings can guide universities in strategic decision-making, resource allocation, and quality improvement efforts to enhance the competitiveness of their HRM departments.

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