



# Forced to Survive: Examining Low-Cost Private Lower Secondary Schools in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Low-cost private lower secondary schools in Indonesia, having forced to survive. Although they have the flexibility to develop, especially from a financial perspective, the quality of private schools is still much below that of public schools. This study aims to describe to describe the management and sustainability of a very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School. This research is qualitative research using case study method. The study was carried out at very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School. The research subjects were determined by purposive sampling, with key informants were the Headmaster, Teachers, Staff and Students. Data collection techniques using interviews, observation, and documentation. Data Validity Check Techniques are done by triangulation of sources. Data analysis using Miles and Huberman. The results showed that the problems faced by schools to survive are related to institutional, financial, school facilities, school culture, human resource development, school reputation and branding created by schools. These problems prevent low-cost private lower secondary schools from competing with public schools.

**Keywords:** education · school · low-cost private

## 1 Introduction

The seriousness of the government to be able to improve the quality of education in Indonesia can be seen from the various policies that have been issued. One example of this is the issuance of the compulsory education program policy. The 9-Year Compulsory Education Program is listed in government regulation Number. 47 of 2008 concerning Compulsory Education which is the implementation of the National Education System Law (National Education System) Number. 20 of 2003.

As a continuation of the 9-year Compulsory Education program, in 2012 the Central Government launched the 12-Year Compulsory Education program or better known as or Universal Secondary Education (PMU). This PMU program are legalled by the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number. 80 of 2013. This program is intended to maintain the continuity of the successful implementation of the 9-year Basic Education Compulsory Education program while at the same time preparing Indonesia's golden generation 2045.

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Lower Secondary School according to the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 17 of 2010 concerning the management and implementation of education, namely formal education which provides general education at the basic education level as a continuation of Elementary School, or other forms of equivalent or continuation of learning outcomes recognized as equal or equivalent to School Basic [1]. The number of lower secondary schools in Indonesia based on data from the Ministry of Education in 2020/2021 there are 41,717 schools with a composition of 23,815 public lower secondary schools and 17,902 private lower secondary schools [2].

The gross enrolment rate (GER) for Lower Secondary School education in Indonesia in 2020 is 101.32 while the net enrolment rate (NER) for education in Indonesia is 77.21. GER is the simplest indicator to measure the absorption of the school-age population at each level of education. The NER shows the school participation of the school-age population at a certain level of education. Like GER, the NER is also an indicator of the absorption capacity of the school-age population at every level of education [3].

Lower Secondary School achievement in Indonesia is still dominated by public lower secondary schools. The results of the 2019 UNBK (Computer-Based National Examination) in public schools in the subjects of Indonesian: 66.72, Mathematics: 50.59, English: 46.48, and Science: 50. While the average 2019 UNBK scores in private schools in Indonesian subjects: 66.44, Mathematics: 51.99, English: 45.42, and IPA: 47.85 [4]. But in other data, based on data from the top 100 who won the 2019 UNBK average score from 100 schools, 51 public Lower Secondary Schools and 49 private Lower Secondary Schools. Based on these data, we can see that the quality of private schools is not inferior to public schools. However, the 49 private schools that are included in the top 100 UNBK in 2019, are elite private schools.

Good quality education can be achieved if educational organizations are able to manage and empower resources properly. Resource management determines the achievement of the vision and mission of the institution. Another factor that can determine quality education is through input, process, output, and outcome [5]. Input can be defined as quality teachers, quality students, quality curriculum, facilities, and various aspects of quality education providers. The process is defined as the learning process while in school. Educational output means graduates who have the required competencies. As well as quality educational outcomes, namely graduates who can continue to higher education levels or are absorbed in work.

Quality education is influenced by several supporting factors including adequate facilities, infrastructure and costs, proper management, and a supportive environment [6]. The condition of private schools in Indonesia, there are still those that do not meet the above factors. So that there are still many private schools in Indonesia whose quality is still below the state schools.

The management of private schools in Indonesia is still far from ideal. Because even though they have the flexibility to develop, especially from a financial perspective, there are still many whose quality is below state schools. This condition causes society prefer to go to public schools compared to private schools. If private schools want to compete with public schools, they must improve the quality of at least equal to public schools, or better.

Although the quality of private schools has improved, the quality of private schools has not improved evenly. Public schools have support from the government to develop through BOS. School Operational Assistance (BOS) is one of the government's efforts to provide free education, to support 9-year compulsory education. One way to improve the quality of education can be through BOS. It is hoped that with this BOS program it will provide educational facilities by freeing levies for financing school operations. However, the BOS funds received by private and public schools are different.

This study writes about the struggle of private schools to survive and provide educational services even with limited students and funding. This research will focus on a private school that has been around for almost 100 years. This study will look at the internal struggles carried out by very old private schools in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School and the competition with other schools with different ideologies and the school's efforts to survive.

## **2 Research Methodology**

This research uses case study method. The research was conducted in very old private schools in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School. The school has been around for 99 years. The research subjects were determined by purposive sampling, with the key informants being the Principal, Teachers, and Students. Data collection techniques using interviews, observation, and documentation. Data Validity Checking Technique is done by triangulation of sources. Data analysis using Miles and Huberman was carried out interactively and continuously until it was completed, so that the data was saturated.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

Private schools have obstacles to survive. The first problem faced by private Javanese schools in Yogyakarta was the difficulty of getting new students. This condition is because people prefer to enroll in public schools. The government, through zoning policies, gives a signal to the community that every individual has the same opportunity to obtain a proper education. However, this condition directly affects private schools. Private schools every year have challenges to continue to survive.. Based on field data, the number of new students in 2021 is only 40 students. Even though the school has two groups that can be filled by 74 participants, it means that the number of students accepted is only 54% of the school's target.

To overcome this problem, the school made various efforts to attract new students. Schools regularly carry out promotions by giving building allowances, tuition fees, free uniforms. In addition, the school also sent a team to carry out direct promotions to the community. Direct promotion is usually carried out in public schools that are implementing PPDB. If the prospective student is not accepted in a public school, he hopes to enroll in the private school.

The second problem faced by old private schools in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School is related to school financing. State schools are fully funded by the government from the School Operational Assistance (BOS). School Operational

Assistance (BOS) is used to measure improve the quality of Indonesia's education system [7]. It is hoped that with this BOS program it will provide educational facilities by freeing levies for financing school operations.

The cost of education is one of the very important input instrumental components in the implementation of education in schools [8]. In contrast to public schools that receive BOS funds from the government, private schools carry out their school operations through budgets from foundations and business entities owned by the school. Therefore, private schools are required to be able to manage finances and find other sources of income for school operational activities.

The school operational assistance that can be received by private schools is only the number of students registered as Family Towards Prosperity (KMS) students. Private schools, Madrasahs and Pesantrens are at a disadvantage due to limited access to public funds and less public funds than public schools. [9] Very old private schools in Yogyakarta, namely: Javanese Benevolence School based on the results of interviews, cannot get help from outside parties, because schools cannot receive binding assistance from other parties.

Because the very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School is not a religious school, the money is also very small. Whereas Javanese Benevolence School will never take binding assistance. For example, a school received an offer to get funding but the Very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School had to change the ideology developed at the school.

In addition, those owned by foundations and schools cannot fully support school operational activities. These conditions directly impact on the facilities that can support learning activities. Minimal school facilities, causing learning activities cannot run optimally, so that it indirectly affects school achievement.

Schools make funding efforts through various means. According to an interview with (R2), funding can be done by collecting funds from alumni which are not binding. While what is expected from such a model is the existence of cross- subsidies from alumni funding for students who are less fortunate, while those who can afford are not assisted like the less fortunate. This kind of thing certainly strives for schools to be independent in terms of funding, not depending on the foundation.

The third problem is related to community stigma against private schools with low fees. People think that the quality of private schools is not better than public schools. Stigma comes from a term that refers to a body sign that shows something that is considered unusual. Thus, stigma is a relationship due to the presence of an attribute or characteristic [10]. The stigma in this study is the public's perspective on private schools.

The public's view of the quality of these private schools can be based on real conditions in the field. Bappeda DIY data from 2018 to 2021 describes the number of public and private schools that are considered appropriate and not feasible. Based on these data, it provides an overview of the condition of Lower Secondary Schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta.

Based on the Table 1, the number of private Lower Secondary Schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is more than that of public Lower Secondary Schools. However, of this number, more private Lower Secondary Schools are not feasible. This inadequacy is viewed from the quantity and quality of education. The quality of education in the

**Table 1.** Number of Appropriate and Appropriate Public and Lower Secondary Schools in Special Region of Yogyakarta

| <i>Years</i> | <i>Number of Public Middle Schools</i> | <i>Appropriate</i> | <i>Unappropriated</i> | <i>Number of Public Middle Schools</i> | <i>Appropriate</i> | <i>Unappropriated</i> |
|--------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 2018         | 249                                    | 227                | 22                    | 298                                    | 144                | 154                   |
| 2019         | 246                                    | 227                | 19                    | 304                                    | 154                | 150                   |
| 2020         | 245                                    | 230                | 15                    | 279                                    | 195                | 84                    |
| 2021         | 245                                    | 230                | 15                    | 279                                    | 195                | 84                    |

Special Region of Yogyakarta is also determined by the results of the ASPD (Regional Education Standardization Assessment). Based on data from the ASPD results of the Special Region of Yogyakarta in 2021, the majority of those who won the 50th rank are still dominated by state schools and elite private schools. Private schools with low fees, rank at the bottom. In fact, this school is ranked 294 out of 408 schools.

Seeing the condition of schools with not so good academic achievements, private schools with funding need to develop education with another focus. Education is a process of forming fundamental skills both intellectually and emotionally towards nature and fellow human beings [10]. Education is an attempt to teach life skills in human life. In addition, education also aims to shape one's mentality and character in social life because the most important elements of education are school, parents and society.

Very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School develops its school culture. School culture includes patterns of values, principles, traditions and habits that are formed in the long journey of school, developed by the school over a long period of time and become a guide and are believed by all school members so as to encourage the emergence of attitudes and behaviour of school residents [12]. School culture is a form of agreement and is applied to solve the difficulties and problems faced by schools in producing graduates who are smart and of good character. School culture that is firmly held by the school community will provide a different identity from other schools.

The identity of a very old private school in Yogyakarta, namely: Javanese Benevolence School, can be seen in learning activities at school, both curricular and extra-curricular. The educational process is not only focused on intellectual development, but also the character and skills of students to be able to live in society. The development of character values in subjects according to school culture can be seen in Table 2.

Based on the data above, we can understand that schools have alternative efforts that can be done to improve the competence of students. The development of character values in accordance with school culture, aims to create graduates who have good competence and character. The hope is that students who graduate get jobs that can compete with high-cost public and private schools.

**Table 2.** Example of Potential Material for Developing Character by School Culture

| <i>Subject</i> | <i>Material</i> | <i>Characters Value</i> | <i>Learning Activities</i> |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2018           | 249             | 227                     | 22                         |
| 2019           | 246             | 227                     | 19                         |
| 2020           | 245             | 230                     | 15                         |
| 2021           | 245             | 230                     | 15                         |

Development activities through extracurricular activities are one of the character development of students. The very old private schools in Yogyakarta are: The Javanese Virtue School has several extracurricular activities including music, dance, pencak silat (traditional martial arts), painting, futsal, sports, and scouts. Extracurricular activities are carried out on a scheduled basis. There are two compulsory extracurricular activities, namely dancing and pencak silat.

Dance extracurricular is mandatory for female students and pencak silat is mandatory for male students. Dance art and pencak silat are extracurricular that are featured and become the specialties of Very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School. Learning art aims to flex the creativity, taste, and intention in a person. The hope is that every behaviour is not rash, words are pleasant to hear. “(R-6, line 15–21).

Self-development activities are one of the implementations of developing school culture-based character values at Very Old Private Schools in Yogyakarta, namely: Javanese Virtue School. According to the diverse talents of students, the school provides opportunities for students to develop academic, artistic and sports activities. Activities are carried out in curricular and extra-curricular learning. This activity not only aims to develop intellectual intelligence, but also emotional intelligence and skills.

The art developed at Very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School is based on culture. This does not mean we behave tribalism. But instead it provides awareness of the cultural diversity of the Indonesian people. We happen to live in Yogyakarta based on Javanese culture. Because of that we develop Javanese art and culture. (R7, lines 10–16).

Based on this explanation, all self-development activities are based on Very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence School characters. Extracurricular has an important role in shaping the character of children. Extracurricular activities are students outside of class hours, aimed at expanding knowledge, understanding the interrelationships between various subject matter, channeling talents and interests, national awareness and stateless, and virtuous. Extracurricular activities contain good habituation in a more pleasant atmosphere [13].

Not all teachers understand the views, vision and mission of the foundation. As a result, the school cannot develop according to the original purpose of the school. The school has the principle of nationality, the principle of culture, the principle of independence, the principle of humanity and the principle of nature. However, only a

few teachers really understand the concept. Not all teachers understand the views vision and mission of the foundation. As a result, the school cannot develop according to the original purpose of the school. The school has the principle of nationality, the principle of culture, the principle of independence, the principle of humanity and the principle of nature. However, only a few teachers really understand the concept. (R3).

If only a small part of the teachers understands the meaning, principles and initial goals of the school that was founded, then the educational process that takes place will not be optimal to achieve the goals to be achieved. Therefore, it is important for an organization to continue to carry out regeneration and education for cadres so that they can understand and interpret the goals of the organization. In addition, teachers as an important resource in the school environment are also required to continue to develop according to the times. To overcome these problems, the school held training and refresher for teachers. The training is usually carried out at the beginning of a new academic year or in conjunction with a foundation event. The training is not only aimed at reminding teachers of the vision and mission of schools and foundations, but also efforts to improve the social, spiritual, and pedagogical abilities of teachers.

Although low-cost private schools have difficulty surviving, very old private schools in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence have always strived to contribute to national education for 99 years. Schools and foundations are making various efforts to survive. These efforts are carried out internally or involve non-binding external parties.

## 4 Conclusion

Very old private school in Yogyakarta namely: Javanese Benevolence during its development until now it has always experienced ups and downs. As a private school with low fees, the school encountered several obstacles to continue to survive. The first obstacle relates to the acceptance of new students. The number of public and private Lower Secondary Schools in the hundreds makes it difficult for schools to find students because they must compete with state schools. Public schools are generally considered to be of better quality than private schools with lower costs. In addition, public schools have greater funding facilities through BOS compared to private schools which only rely on student tuition and assistance from donors and foundations. Based on these conditions, private schools with low tuition fees need to develop a different education than schools in general. The development of school culture as an identity in accordance with the vision and mission of institutions and foundations can be an alternative. Learning activities in schools are not only focused on developing academic abilities, but also developing soft skills and characters needed by students to be able to face the challenges of the times. In addition, teachers also have an obligation to upgrade their knowledge and skills. The goal is that the learning activities delivered by the teacher are truly in accordance with the needs of students. Teachers can also create innovations that can attract the interest of students and parents.

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