



Child Friendly School Policy and Student Wellbeing as Strategies for Strengthening Brand Image and Institutional Competitiveness

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Abstract: Child-Friendly School (CFS) policy has increasingly become an important component of educational management because schools are expected to provide safe, inclusive, participatory, and supportive environments while maintaining educational quality and institutional competitiveness. This study aims to explore how CFS policy is implemented at MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban and how its implementation contributes to student wellbeing, school brand image, and institutional competitiveness. A qualitative comparative case study design was employed, involving semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. Participants included school leaders, counseling personnel, and student representatives who were directly involved in CFS implementation and student development. The findings indicate that both schools have implemented CFS since 2019, yet they demonstrate different institutional approaches. MAN 1 Lamongan emphasizes a humanistic and relational model through communication, dialogue, guidance, counseling, extracurricular activities, and student discussion forums, while SMAN 2 Tuban applies a more structural and administrative model through formal regulations, counseling coordination, project-based learning, differentiated learning, and organized student participation. Both approaches contribute to safer and more comfortable learning environments, increased student participation and motivation, strengthened public confidence, positive institutional image, and sustained competitiveness. The study concludes that CFS policy can function beyond child protection by becoming an integrated institutional strategy connecting student wellbeing, educational quality, school identity, public trust, and competitiveness.

Keywords: Child Friendly School, Student Wellbeing, School Brand Image, Institutional Competitiveness, Educational Management

INTRODUCTION

Education represents a fundamental component of human development and national progress because educational institutions are responsible not only for transmitting knowledge but also for creating conditions that enable learners to develop their intellectual, social, emotional, moral, and personal capacities. In Indonesia, the right to education is constitutionally guaranteed for every citizen, regardless of social status, ethnicity, gender, or religion, while the national education system is directed toward developing individuals who possess faith, piety, noble character, knowledge, health, creativity, independence, democratic attitudes, and responsibility (Alpian et al., 2019; Republic of Indonesia, 2003). This orientation establishes a broad understanding of educational quality in which academic achievement must be accompanied by the



fulfillment of students' rights and the provision of supportive learning environments. Schools therefore carry responsibility for ensuring that learning takes place within environments that protect students from physical and psychological harm while simultaneously providing opportunities for participation and personal development. The need for such an environment becomes increasingly important because violence against children remains a significant challenge within educational institutions. Violence may affect children physically and psychologically, interfere with emotional development, and create conditions that undermine the educational process (Ariani & Asih, 2022).

The continuing occurrence of violence and violations of children's rights in educational settings has strengthened the need for policies that place child protection, participation, and development at the center of school management and educational practice. The Child-Friendly School (CFS) policy emerged as an approach intended to establish educational environments that fulfill children's rights through appropriate institutional policies, learning processes, relationships, and forms of protection. UNICEF developed a national policy foundation for child-friendly schools through a prototype designed to provide concepts, principles, and characteristics that could be adapted to different educational environments (Amrina et al., 2022). The policy was subsequently strengthened through the Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia No. 8 of 2014 concerning Child-Friendly School Policy. Child-friendly schools emphasize the principles of protection, provision, and participation while placing non-discrimination at the center of efforts to fulfill children's rights. Such an approach requires schools to provide learning environments in which students are protected, supported, respected, and given opportunities to participate in decisions and activities affecting their educational experiences (Ambarsari & Harun, 2018; Rangkuti & Maksum, 2019; Wuryandani & Senen, 2018; Na'imah & Widyasari, 2020).

Student wellbeing provides an important perspective for examining the consequences of a child-friendly educational environment because students' educational experiences are influenced by their emotional conditions, interpersonal relationships, resilience, optimism, and satisfaction with school life. Student wellbeing encompasses positive emotional conditions, constructive relationships with peers and teachers, resilience, optimism, and satisfaction with learning



experiences, while wellbeing more broadly concerns the ability of individuals to manage physical, emotional, and cognitive conditions within different situations (Fisher et al., 2024; Kellock, 2020). These dimensions demonstrate that creating a child-friendly school involves more than eliminating violence because students also require supportive relationships, opportunities for participation, psychological assistance, and meaningful experiences that strengthen their sense of security and belonging. Evidence from MAN 1 Lamongan illustrates this relationship through the availability of extracurricular activities, counseling services, and discussion forums that provide students with opportunities to develop skills and address personal problems. These activities were associated with increased student motivation and participation in school activities, indicating that student wellbeing can become an important outcome of child-friendly educational practices.

The development of student wellbeing within a safe and supportive school environment may also contribute to the formation of a positive institutional brand image because parents and communities increasingly consider students' safety, comfort, physical welfare, and psychological wellbeing when evaluating educational institutions. Educational institutions with positive reputations are expected to gain greater public trust and attractiveness, while institutional image is shaped by perceptions of educational quality, services, student experiences, and the ability of schools to respond to stakeholder expectations (Azizah & Setiawan, 2022; Mu'minah et al., 2024). A positive educational experience can therefore become an important element of institutional reputation because students who feel protected, respected, and supported may develop stronger attachment and more favorable perceptions toward their schools. The research context indicates that the implementation of child-friendly school policy contributes to the creation of safe, comfortable, and inclusive learning environments, conditions that can strengthen public confidence and establish schools as institutions that prioritize children's development. This relationship positions child-friendly school policy not only as a mechanism for fulfilling children's rights but also as a potential institutional strategy for strengthening school identity and reputation.

Institutional competitiveness becomes relevant to this discussion because educational institutions operate within an increasingly competitive environment in which reputation, educational quality, achievements, and public trust influence the attractiveness of schools to prospective students and communities. Educational institutions continuously develop strategies to



strengthen their competitive position, including improvements in management, service quality, innovation, and institutional image (Cheng et al., 2019). Within this context, child-friendly school policy and student wellbeing can function as distinctive elements of educational service because they demonstrate an institution's commitment to creating meaningful, safe, inclusive, and supportive learning experiences. The research data indicate that MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban have implemented child-friendly school policies since 2019. MAN 1 Lamongan emphasizes a humanistic and relational orientation through communication, guidance, and psychological support, whereas SMAN 2 Tuban applies a more structural and administrative orientation through clear regulations, documented procedures, counseling coordination, and disciplined implementation. These different approaches provide an important basis for understanding how child-friendly school policy can be operationalized through distinct institutional practices while pursuing common objectives related to student development, institutional reputation, and competitiveness.

Previous studies identified in the research material have examined child-friendly school policy from perspectives involving child rights, school culture, stakeholder coordination, strategic management, educational quality, character development, violence prevention, and curricular and extracurricular implementation. Rangkuti and Maksum (2019) emphasized the importance of coordination among local government, schools, parents, and communities in implementing child-friendly school policy, while studies concerning school culture and educational quality have demonstrated the relevance of child-friendly practices for improving educational environments and student development. The research material also indicates that strategic management, educational quality management, school branding, and institutional reputation are relevant to the development of competitive educational institutions. Nevertheless, the available material provides an opportunity to examine more closely how child-friendly school policy operates through the interconnected dimensions of student wellbeing, brand image, and institutional competitiveness. The comparison between MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban is particularly relevant because both institutions have implemented child-friendly school policies but demonstrate different approaches to implementation, with MAN 1 Lamongan emphasizing humanistic and



psychological dimensions and SMAN 2 Tuban emphasizing structural and administrative dimensions.

The comparative conditions of MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban provide a meaningful context for understanding child-friendly school policy as an institutional practice that connects child protection, student wellbeing, school reputation, and educational competitiveness. Both institutions have developed programs and practices that encourage safe learning environments, student participation, counseling, extracurricular engagement, and positive educational experiences. MAN 1 Lamongan demonstrates the use of counseling, extracurricular activities, and discussion forums, while SMAN 2 Tuban integrates project-based learning, differentiated learning, counseling services, student forums, and organizational participation into its child-friendly educational environment. Documentation within the research material further indicates positive developments in student achievement, public confidence, school reputation, accreditation, and institutional recognition, providing empirical indications of the broader organizational significance of child-friendly policies.

The present study therefore aims to explore how child-friendly school policy is implemented at MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban and how such implementation contributes to student wellbeing, school brand image, and institutional competitiveness within their respective educational contexts. A qualitative approach is employed to understand the processes, practices, experiences, and institutional meanings associated with child-friendly school policy rather than statistically testing causal relationships among variables. The study specifically examines the ways in which school policies are translated into daily educational practices, how students' wellbeing is supported through institutional programs, and how these practices contribute to perceptions of school reputation and competitiveness. The comparison of the two institutions is expected to demonstrate how different organizational approaches can support similar strategic objectives while reflecting the specific characteristics of each educational setting. Through this perspective, child-friendly school policy can be understood not merely as a regulatory requirement for protecting children but as an integrated educational management strategy that connects student protection, wellbeing, institutional identity, and competitiveness.



METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative comparative case study design to investigate how Child-Friendly School policy was implemented and experienced within the institutional contexts of MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the research sought to understand policy implementation through institutional practices, stakeholder experiences, school environments, and documentary evidence rather than through statistical measurement of relationships among predetermined variables. The comparative case study perspective enabled the researchers to examine each school as a distinct institutional context while identifying similarities and differences in the implementation of Child-Friendly School policy. The research focused on the implementation process, student wellbeing, student participation, school brand image, and institutional competitiveness. The use of case study methodology is appropriate when researchers seek to understand contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts and when contextual conditions are important to interpretation (Yin, 2018).

The two research sites were selected because MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban had implemented Child-Friendly School policy since 2019, providing an appropriate longitudinal context for examining institutional implementation and its perceived implications. The source document records that both institutions had maintained the policy for approximately six years when the research was conducted, making them relevant cases for examining sustained implementation practices. MAN 1 Lamongan represented an institutional context in which Child-Friendly School implementation emphasized humanistic, relational, communicative, and psychological approaches. SMAN 2 Tuban represented a context characterized by more structural, administrative, regulatory, and discipline-oriented implementation. This comparative configuration enabled the research to examine how different organizational approaches addressed similar objectives involving safe learning environments, student participation, wellbeing, institutional reputation, and competitiveness.

Research Setting and Participants

The selection of participants was based on their direct involvement in school leadership, student guidance, Child-Friendly School implementation, and student participation, allowing the



research to obtain information from institutional and student-oriented perspectives. The participants included the Head of Madrasah at MAN 1 Lamongan, the Chairperson of PIK R at MAN 1 Lamongan, the Head of SMAN 2 Tuban, the BK Coordinator at SMAN 2 Tuban, and the Chairperson of PIKR at SMAN 2 Tuban. These participants were relevant because their positions provided direct access to information concerning institutional policy, student services, counseling, participation, and the implementation of child-friendly practices. The available research material identifies an interview with the Head of Madrasah at MAN 1 Lamongan on August 30, 2024, followed by an interview with the Chairperson of PIK R on September 3, 2024.

The data collection at SMAN 2 Tuban involved interviews with the Head of School, BK Coordinator, and Chairperson of PIKR, accompanied by institutional documentation collected during the field research period. The Head of School was interviewed on September 3, 2024, at 09:00 WIB, while the BK Coordinator was interviewed at 10:15 WIB and the Chairperson of PIKR was interviewed at 10:00 WIB on the same date. Documentation concerning SMAN 2 Tuban was also collected on September 3, 2024, at 10:00 WIB. These sources were used to obtain information concerning policy implementation, student wellbeing, counseling, participation, learning activities, school facilities, institutional vision, performance, and reputation. The use of multiple participant categories supported a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data Collection Techniques

The research collected empirical evidence through semi-structured interviews, direct field observations, and document analysis, allowing institutional statements to be examined alongside observable practices and available school records. Interviews provided information regarding leadership perspectives, implementation strategies, student wellbeing programs, disciplinary approaches, student participation, and perceptions of institutional reputation. Field observations were used to examine the physical and social learning environment, including facilities, student activities, classroom conditions, counseling spaces, extracurricular activities, and opportunities for student participation. Documentary analysis was used to examine institutional information concerning vision and mission, performance statistics, achievements, and other materials relevant to school image and competitiveness. This combination of techniques enabled the researchers to



construct a contextual understanding of Child-Friendly School implementation across the two research sites.

The interview process specifically explored how Child-Friendly School principles were translated into institutional practices and how these practices were perceived to influence students and the wider school community. At MAN 1 Lamongan, interview information indicated a shift from authoritarian disciplinary practices toward communication, dialogue, and guidance, with teachers emphasizing humanistic relationships and collaborative development. Observation further identified conducive facilities, including classrooms, a library, a prayer room, and garden areas, while extracurricular activities, counseling services, and discussion forums created opportunities for student development and problem-solving. At SMAN 2 Tuban, interviews and observations identified project-based learning, differentiated learning, counseling services, laboratory facilities, multimedia rooms, children's play areas, and OSIS discussion forums as elements supporting student participation and wellbeing.

Data Analysis

The qualitative analysis followed a systematic process of organizing, reducing, categorizing, comparing, and interpreting empirical information according to themes emerging from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence. The analysis was directed toward understanding the meaning and implementation of Child-Friendly School policy within each institutional context rather than calculating statistical effects between variables. Data were organized around themes including policy implementation, student wellbeing, student participation, learning environment, school brand image, public trust, and institutional competitiveness. The researchers then compared findings between MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban to identify common patterns and distinctive institutional characteristics. The thematic analysis approach was consistent with qualitative procedures that emphasize systematic movement between data condensation, data display, interpretation, and conclusion development (Miles et al., 2014).

The comparative interpretation emphasized the different institutional mechanisms through which Child-Friendly School policy was operationalized while examining their connections with student wellbeing, institutional reputation, and competitiveness. MAN 1 Lamongan was interpreted through its emphasis on communication, dialogue, psychological support,



extracurricular activities, counseling, and student discussion forums. SMAN 2 Tuban was interpreted through its structured regulations, administrative procedures, counseling coordination, project-based learning, differentiated learning, and student participation mechanisms. The findings were subsequently connected with documentary evidence concerning school performance, public perceptions, institutional achievements, and reputation. The research material reports that both institutions experienced strengthened public confidence and institutional image, while academic and non-academic achievements contributed to their competitive positions within their respective educational environments.

Trustworthiness and Data Validation

The credibility of the qualitative findings was strengthened through triangulation of data sources and collection techniques involving school leaders, teachers, student representatives, observations, and institutional documentation. Source triangulation enabled information obtained from one participant category to be compared with information provided by other participants, while methodological triangulation enabled interview statements to be examined against observations and documentary evidence. Such procedures are important in qualitative inquiry because credibility depends upon the consistency, contextual adequacy, and interpretive transparency of the evidence used to construct findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). At MAN 1 Lamongan, interview information concerning student wellbeing and disciplinary practices was examined alongside observations of the school environment and documentation concerning institutional performance and public image.

The validation process also compared evidence concerning student participation, wellbeing, institutional reputation, and competitiveness across both research sites to identify convergent and divergent patterns within the empirical material. At SMAN 2 Tuban, information concerning counseling, student participation, learning activities, and school facilities was examined alongside documentation concerning academic and non-academic performance. The comparison indicated that both schools pursued safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments while applying different implementation orientations. The methodological approach therefore allowed the study to preserve the contextual characteristics of each institution while producing a systematic



comparison of Child-Friendly School policy implementation and its perceived contribution to student wellbeing, school brand image, and institutional competitiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Child-Friendly School Policy at MAN 1 Lamongan

The implementation of Child-Friendly School (CFS) policy at MAN 1 Lamongan demonstrates a sustained institutional transformation in which child protection, student participation, psychological support, and educational quality have gradually become integrated into the daily culture of the madrasah rather than remaining isolated administrative requirements. The institution has implemented CFS policy since 2019, providing a sufficiently long period for the policy to become embedded within school management, teacher-student relationships, student services, extracurricular activities, counseling, and institutional development. The empirical evidence indicates that the implementation is strongly characterized by a humanistic and relational orientation, particularly through communication, dialogue, guidance, and psychological development. The transformation is visible in the shift from authoritarian disciplinary practices toward approaches that prioritize conversation and student development. Teachers do not merely enforce rules but are encouraged to understand student circumstances and provide developmental guidance.

The transformation of disciplinary practices at MAN 1 Lamongan indicates that the meaning of child-friendly education extends beyond physical safety because the emotional quality of teacher-student interaction constitutes an important component of the school environment experienced by students. The research findings show that teachers previously tended to employ authoritarian approaches, whereas current practices increasingly emphasize communication, conversation, and guidance. The policy is therefore interpreted as a process of developing students rather than simply regulating their behavior. This finding corresponds with Yosada and Kurniati (2019), who conceptualize child-friendly schools as educational environments that protect children from violence and discrimination while simultaneously creating opportunities for children to participate in planning, policy, learning, supervision, and complaint mechanisms. The practice at



MAN 1 Lamongan demonstrates that the principle of child participation can be operationalized through everyday communication rather than only through formal institutional structures.

The physical environment observed at MAN 1 Lamongan further reinforces the implementation of the policy because classrooms, library facilities, prayer spaces, and garden areas contribute to an educational atmosphere perceived as conducive to student learning and development. The physical environment is supported by extracurricular programs, counseling services, and student discussion forums that provide opportunities for students to develop skills and address personal problems. The research material indicates that students expressed satisfaction with wellbeing-oriented programs and that participation in extracurricular activities, counseling, and discussion forums contributed to increased learning motivation and participation in school activities. These findings indicate that child-friendly education is constructed through an interaction between physical facilities, interpersonal relationships, student services, and opportunities for meaningful participation.

The integration of child-friendly principles into student activities at MAN 1 Lamongan illustrates how school culture can become a mechanism for sustaining policy implementation because students encounter the policy through repeated experiences involving communication, participation, counseling, extracurricular activities, and supportive learning environments. Rusmana (2017) argues that Child-Friendly School development requires attention to school culture because school culture constitutes an important foundation for the way institutional values are practiced by members of the school community. His study at SMPN 3 Bayongbong Garut emphasizes that CFS development needs to be adapted to the social conditions and existing cultural characteristics of the school. The findings at MAN 1 Lamongan reinforce this perspective because the policy has been adapted into the existing humanistic orientation of the madrasah rather than being implemented through a completely detached bureaucratic structure.

The leadership dimension at MAN 1 Lamongan also emerges as a significant factor in sustaining the policy because institutional commitment is reflected in the school's objective of creating a comfortable, safe, and supportive learning environment for students. The research material indicates that the Head of Madrasah considers CFS policy an important component of the educational strategy focused on student development and the strengthening of Islamic character.



This finding is consistent with Baharun et al. (2021), who found that leadership plays an important role in creating child-friendly educational environments, with implementation involving school analysis, school branding, CFS development, and continuous improvement. The leadership role at MAN 1 Lamongan similarly connects child-friendly principles with broader institutional development rather than treating them as a stand-alone program.

Implementation of Child-Friendly School Policy at SMAN 2 Tuban

The implementation of Child-Friendly School policy at SMAN 2 Tuban demonstrates a comparatively more structured institutional model in which formal regulations, administrative procedures, counseling coordination, student participation, and learning innovation are organized within a broader system of school management and educational development. The school has implemented CFS policy since 2019 and has incorporated child-friendly principles into its educational vision, learning activities, counseling services, extracurricular programs, student organizations, and physical environment. The findings indicate that the school emphasizes a systematic approach characterized by clear rules, documented procedures, and strong coordination involving the BK unit. This structure contributes to an orderly, safe, and conducive school climate while simultaneously creating opportunities for student participation.

The structured orientation of SMAN 2 Tuban should not be interpreted as an approach that prioritizes institutional control at the expense of student autonomy because the school simultaneously provides mechanisms through which students can participate in learning, extracurricular activities, and school organizations. Project-based learning, differentiated learning, counseling services, OSIS discussion forums, and student participation in interest and talent development demonstrate that administrative structure is accompanied by opportunities for student expression. This finding corresponds with Wati et al. (2021), whose study identified socialization, teacher development, habituation, and integration of child-friendly values into learning as important strategies for implementing CFS. The evidence from SMAN 2 Tuban indicates that structured implementation can remain child-centered when institutional procedures are directed toward student development and participation.

The integration of CFS principles into project-based and differentiated learning at SMAN 2 Tuban represents an important mechanism for translating child-friendly policy into classroom



practice because students receive opportunities to engage actively with learning according to their interests, abilities, and developmental needs. The presence of counseling services further strengthens this model by providing students with institutional support for personal and educational difficulties. Field observations identified laboratories, multimedia facilities, and children's play areas, while OSIS discussion forums demonstrated that students were provided with opportunities for active participation within school life. Such findings correspond with Putri and Supriyanto (2021), who emphasize that child-friendly school policy should be reflected in child-friendly learning, relevant curricula, teacher-student relationships, creative learning strategies, and the teacher's role as a guide and model for students.

The findings at SMAN 2 Tuban also demonstrate that the implementation of CFS involves both psychological and physical dimensions because student wellbeing depends on an environment that provides emotional support while maintaining safe and appropriate facilities. The school's modern facilities, counseling programs, extracurricular activities, and participatory student organizations operate together as elements of a broader learning environment. Students reportedly felt more motivated and comfortable when participating in wellbeing programs, while involvement in school policy development strengthened their sense of importance within the educational environment. This finding supports the argument of Yosada and Kurniati (2019) that child-friendly education requires safe, healthy, supportive, and participatory environments rather than merely the construction of additional physical facilities.

Student Wellbeing as an Outcome of Child-Friendly School Implementation

The empirical findings from both institutions indicate that student wellbeing develops through a combination of safety, supportive relationships, participation, counseling, meaningful learning, extracurricular engagement, and opportunities for students to express their interests and concerns within the school environment. The research material reports that both MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban created safer and more comfortable educational environments and that students demonstrated increased motivation and wellbeing through participation in academic and non-academic activities. This finding indicates that wellbeing should be interpreted as an institutional outcome emerging from multiple dimensions of school life rather than as an isolated psychological variable.



The connection between CFS implementation and student wellbeing is supported by research demonstrating that child-friendly programs can create positive educational experiences and strengthen student development when they are integrated into everyday school practices. Nuraeni et al. (2019) found that the implementation of Child-Friendly School programs had a positive and significant relationship with character development among young learners. Their findings demonstrate that increases in CFS implementation were associated with improvements in student character, indicating that child-friendly environments can influence developmental outcomes beyond the immediate prevention of violence. The present findings extend this interpretation by demonstrating how wellbeing-oriented practices at the two secondary schools are associated with motivation, participation, comfort, and institutional engagement.

The role of participation becomes particularly important because students' sense of wellbeing can be strengthened when they perceive themselves as legitimate members of the school community whose interests and perspectives are recognized. At MAN 1 Lamongan, discussion forums, extracurricular programs, and counseling provide opportunities for students to communicate their needs and address personal challenges. At SMAN 2 Tuban, OSIS forums, extracurricular activities, project-based learning, differentiated learning, and student participation in school development create additional opportunities for agency. These practices are consistent with Yosada and Kurniati's (2019) emphasis on student participation as a fundamental component of child-friendly school development.

The wellbeing dimension is also closely associated with the prevention of violence because a supportive environment can reduce conditions that permit bullying, intimidation, discrimination, and other harmful behaviors to become normalized within school culture. Salsabila et al. (2024) found that CFS programs can support anti-violence education through socialization, fulfillment of CFS indicators, monitoring and evaluation, cooperation with parents, comfortable classrooms, and mechanisms designed to prevent bullying and other forms of violence. The findings from MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban demonstrate similar patterns because both institutions emphasize safe environments, student participation, counseling, and supportive educational relationships while reporting improvements in student comfort and reduced violence.



The relationship between student wellbeing and school participation becomes particularly visible when students are provided with activities that connect educational experiences to personal interests, social relationships, and opportunities for achievement. At SMAN 2 Tuban, participation in extracurricular activities and school policy development was associated with students feeling more motivated and comfortable, while MAN 1 Lamongan used extracurricular activities, counseling, and discussion forums to support student development. Wati et al. (2021) similarly reported that child-friendly school implementation can contribute to students' enjoyment of learning and increase parental involvement in educational processes. These findings demonstrate that wellbeing emerges through relationships among students, teachers, parents, and institutional programs.

Child-Friendly School Policy, School Culture, and Institutional Identity

The findings indicate that the implementation of CFS policy gradually becomes part of institutional identity when its principles are consistently reflected in school culture, leadership practices, teacher behavior, student participation, and organizational routines. The experience of MAN 1 Lamongan demonstrates this process through the transformation of disciplinary culture, while SMAN 2 Tuban demonstrates it through structured policy implementation and integration with the school's educational vision. The policy consequently operates as an institutional identity rather than merely a government program because students, teachers, leaders, and other stakeholders encounter its principles through repeated educational experiences. Rusmana (2017) emphasizes that school culture constitutes a critical foundation for developing CFS because implementation must be adapted to the specific social and cultural characteristics of each institution.

The institutional identity created through child-friendly practices becomes particularly important when schools seek to differentiate themselves within competitive educational environments because parents increasingly evaluate schools through combinations of academic achievement, safety, student services, character development, and institutional reputation. At MAN 1 Lamongan, documentary evidence indicates increased positive public opinion, while the implementation of CFS and student wellbeing programs was identified as contributing to the madrasah's brand image. SMAN 2 Tuban similarly demonstrates a connection between CFS



implementation, academic and non-academic achievements, institutional reputation, and school image.

The relationship between institutional identity and school reputation is strengthened when leadership explicitly connects child-friendly practices with broader institutional development and public trust. Baharun et al. (2021) demonstrate that CFS implementation can involve school analysis, branding, development, and continuous improvement, with implementation producing more conducive learning and increased parental trust. The experience of the two research sites provides comparable evidence because child-friendly education is connected with public perceptions, school image, student wellbeing, and institutional performance. This suggests that CFS can operate as a form of organizational differentiation when its implementation produces experiences that stakeholders recognize as meaningful and distinctive.

Child-Friendly School Policy and Educational Quality

The findings demonstrate that educational quality within a child-friendly framework cannot be reduced to academic achievement because the quality of the institution also depends upon how effectively it protects students, supports development, facilitates participation, and creates appropriate learning environments. At MAN 1 Lamongan, educational quality is supported through counseling, extracurricular activities, discussion forums, conducive facilities, and changes in disciplinary practices. At SMAN 2 Tuban, quality is supported through project-based learning, differentiated learning, counseling, student participation, facilities, and systematic management.

The implementation of CFS across curricular and extracurricular dimensions provides evidence that educational quality is constructed through the interaction of classroom practices, teacher behavior, student services, school facilities, and organizational culture. Sale and Yusuf (2023) found that CFS implementation at SMP Negeri 14 Kendari occurred through curricular activities, extracurricular programs, and other school activities, including child-friendly learning, relevant curricula, teacher-student relationships, sports, arts, scouting, physical environment management, complaint mechanisms, character development, teacher training, and facilities. The findings at MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban display comparable multidimensional implementation patterns.



The importance of systematic policy development is also demonstrated by Dewi (2020), whose analysis of CFS policy at MTsN 6 Sleman identified stages involving agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, implementation, bureaucratic structure, communication, human resources, infrastructure, finance, and institutional disposition. The evidence from the present study confirms that CFS implementation requires organizational coordination because policy principles need to be translated into resources, programs, learning practices, student services, and institutional routines. SMAN 2 Tuban particularly demonstrates this structural dimension through clear procedures and BK coordination, while MAN 1 Lamongan emphasizes more strongly the relational dimension of implementation.

Child-Friendly School Policy and School Competitiveness

The relationship between Child-Friendly School policy and institutional competitiveness becomes evident when child-friendly practices contribute simultaneously to student wellbeing, educational quality, public confidence, institutional reputation, and measurable school performance. The findings indicate that both MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban experienced increased public confidence and stronger school images, while both institutions achieved accreditation A and received recognition such as Adiwiyata and ISO. These achievements strengthened their positions within the competitive educational environment of Lamongan and Tuban. The findings therefore suggest that competitiveness develops through accumulated institutional qualities rather than through promotional activity alone.

The competitive dimension of CFS implementation is strongly supported by Agustini et al. (2023), whose review identifies strategic management as the most frequently represented indicator of organizational competitiveness within Child-Friendly School literature, while innovation appears as a comparatively weaker dimension. This perspective is relevant to the present study because both MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban have transformed CFS policy into institutional strategies rather than treating it exclusively as a compliance requirement. MAN 1 Lamongan uses humanistic development and student wellbeing as elements of its institutional strategy, while SMAN 2 Tuban integrates CFS into structured management, learning innovation, counseling, and student participation.



The findings at MAN 1 Lamongan demonstrate that competitiveness can emerge from relational quality because communication, counseling, student participation, and supportive teacher-student relationships contribute to a positive educational experience that strengthens institutional image. Documentary evidence indicates that the madrasah developed positive public opinion and that CFS and wellbeing programs contributed to brand image and regional competitiveness. This pathway suggests that institutional competitiveness does not necessarily depend upon highly formalized management structures because relational quality itself can become a distinctive organizational resource when consistently practiced and recognized by stakeholders.

The findings at SMAN 2 Tuban demonstrate a complementary pathway in which competitiveness is supported by organizational structure, learning innovation, student services, facilities, and performance outcomes that collectively strengthen institutional reputation. The school's documentation indicates continued academic and non-academic performance, while the implementation of CFS contributes to the perception of the institution as a high-quality educational organization. Agustini et al. (2023) similarly argue that strategic management represents a major indicator of organizational competitiveness in CFS institutions. The present findings provide empirical illustration of this relationship through the structured practices observed at SMAN 2 Tuban.

The connection between competitiveness and child-friendly educational quality becomes clearer when institutional reputation is understood as the cumulative result of stakeholder experiences rather than solely as a communication product. CFS practices can strengthen competitiveness when students experience safety and support, parents observe responsible institutional management, teachers participate in constructive school culture, and communities recognize academic and non-academic achievements. The two research sites demonstrate this cumulative process through stable student demand, improved public perceptions, institutional achievements, accreditation, and recognition. This pattern indicates that child-friendly education can function as a strategic resource for institutional differentiation.

Comparative Discussion of MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban



The comparative evidence demonstrates that the two institutions have developed different pathways for implementing Child-Friendly School policy while maintaining similar strategic objectives concerning student protection, wellbeing, participation, educational quality, institutional reputation, and competitiveness. MAN 1 Lamongan emphasizes humanistic and relational mechanisms through communication, dialogue, guidance, counseling, extracurricular activities, and student forums, whereas SMAN 2 Tuban emphasizes structural and administrative mechanisms through formal regulations, documented procedures, BK coordination, differentiated learning, project-based learning, and organized student participation.

The difference between these institutional approaches should not be interpreted as evidence that one model is superior because the findings indicate that both approaches produce complementary forms of educational value and institutional development. The humanistic model provides strong relational and psychological support, while the structural model provides consistency, predictability, and systematic coordination. Both approaches create opportunities for student participation and support positive perceptions of the school environment. This finding supports Rusmana's (2017) argument that CFS development needs to be adapted to the specific culture and conditions of each school rather than imposed through an identical institutional formula.

The comparison also demonstrates that child-friendly policy becomes strategically powerful when schools connect protection with educational development rather than treating them as separate objectives. At MAN 1 Lamongan, child protection is integrated with communication, student wellbeing, character development, and institutional culture. At SMAN 2 Tuban, child protection is integrated with structured management, learning innovation, counseling, participation, and achievement. The two institutional models therefore illustrate different mechanisms for achieving an integrated form of educational quality in which student safety and institutional performance are mutually reinforcing rather than competing objectives.

The findings further reveal that school competitiveness is strengthened when child-friendly practices become visible through tangible educational experiences and institutional outcomes because stakeholders can recognize the connection between policy, student wellbeing, learning quality, and institutional performance. Both institutions have maintained CFS implementation



since 2019 and demonstrate positive developments in student participation, school image, public confidence, achievement, and institutional recognition. These outcomes suggest that the strategic value of CFS lies in its capacity to connect the internal quality of student experience with the external reputation of the institution.

The overall findings demonstrate that Child-Friendly School policy at MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban operates as a multidimensional institutional strategy through which child protection, student wellbeing, school culture, educational quality, institutional identity, and competitiveness become interconnected components of school development. The evidence supports the interpretation that successful CFS implementation requires sustained leadership commitment, supportive school culture, student participation, teacher involvement, appropriate facilities, counseling, learning practices, and institutional coordination. The differences between the two schools reveal that effective implementation can be achieved through different organizational pathways, provided that child protection and student development remain central to institutional decision-making.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings contribute theoretically to the understanding of Child-Friendly School policy by demonstrating that policy implementation can be interpreted simultaneously as a protection mechanism, a school-culture intervention, a student-wellbeing strategy, and an organizational competitiveness strategy. Existing studies have demonstrated relationships between CFS and character development, anti-violence education, participation, school culture, and educational quality, while the present findings connect these dimensions with institutional reputation and competitiveness. Nuraeni et al. (2019) demonstrate positive effects on character development, Salsabila et al. (2024) emphasize anti-violence education, Wati et al. (2021) identify improvements in learning experiences and parental involvement, and Agustini et al. (2023) place strategic management at the center of organizational competitiveness.

The practical implications indicate that schools seeking to strengthen competitiveness should not regard child-friendly policy as a compliance-oriented program because its strategic value depends upon integration into leadership, school culture, classroom practices, counseling, student participation, and institutional quality management. The evidence from MAN 1 Lamongan



suggests that relational and humanistic approaches can become institutional strengths when consistently supported by leadership and student services, while the experience of SMAN 2 Tuban suggests that systematic structures can strengthen CFS implementation when they are connected with participatory learning and student development. These findings provide a basis for developing context-sensitive CFS strategies that preserve institutional uniqueness while maintaining common principles of safety, participation, protection, and student development.

The empirical evidence ultimately indicates that Child-Friendly School policy can strengthen institutional competitiveness when its implementation creates meaningful educational experiences that are recognized by students, parents, teachers, and the wider community as evidence of educational quality and institutional responsibility. The cases of MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban demonstrate that competitiveness emerges through a cumulative process involving safe environments, student wellbeing, participatory culture, learning innovation, institutional achievement, positive public perceptions, and sustained leadership commitment. The findings therefore position CFS not merely as a protective educational policy but as a strategic framework through which schools can develop distinctive institutional identities while maintaining their primary responsibility for protecting and supporting students.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that Child-Friendly School policy at MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban has developed into an institutional practice that integrates child protection, student participation, psychological support, educational quality, and school development rather than functioning merely as an administrative policy. Both schools have implemented CFS since 2019 and have translated its principles into learning environments, counseling services, extracurricular activities, student participation, institutional routines, and supportive interpersonal relationships.

The comparative evidence reveals distinctive implementation patterns that reflect the organizational characteristics of each institution while maintaining shared commitments to safety, comfort, inclusion, participation, and student development. MAN 1 Lamongan demonstrates a humanistic and relational orientation through communication, dialogue, guidance, counseling, extracurricular activities, and discussion forums, while SMAN 2 Tuban demonstrates a structural



and administrative orientation through formal procedures, counseling coordination, project-based learning, differentiated learning, and organized student participation. These differences indicate that effective CFS implementation does not require a uniform institutional model, provided that child protection and student development remain central to school management.

The study also establishes that student wellbeing represents an important pathway through which CFS policy generates broader institutional value because safer environments, supportive relationships, meaningful participation, counseling, and developmental activities create educational experiences that encourage motivation, comfort, engagement, and participation. These experiences are associated with stronger institutional identity and positive public perceptions, while documented achievements, accreditation, recognition, and sustained student demand reinforce the competitive position of both schools. The findings consequently position CFS as a potential strategic resource through which educational institutions can distinguish themselves by demonstrating commitment to students' holistic development and educational experience.

The principal implication of this study is that school competitiveness should be understood as an accumulated outcome of educational quality, student wellbeing, institutional culture, public trust, reputation, and organizational performance rather than as a product of promotional activities alone. MAN 1 Lamongan and SMAN 2 Tuban demonstrate that child-friendly educational practices can connect internal improvements in student experience with external recognition and institutional reputation when supported by sustained leadership, appropriate facilities, teacher involvement, counseling, participatory mechanisms, and systematic school development. CFS policy therefore provides a strategic framework for strengthening competitive educational institutions while preserving the fundamental responsibility of schools to protect, respect, and support every student

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Generative AI Use

The authors declare that no generative AI was used in the preparation, writing, analysis, or development of this manuscript.



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