

Green Human Capital as The Competitive Advantage of Private Universities in South Sumatra

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Abstract

This article aims to explore how private universities in South Sumatra leverage green human capital to enhance their competitive positioning. It investigates the strategies employed to integrate environmental sustainability into their educational and operational frameworks, thereby attracting students, faculty, and partnerships aligned with green values. Green human capital refers to the environmentally-focused knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values possessed by university staff, faculty, and students. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, including in-depth interviews, focus groups, and document analysis, insights were gathered from various stakeholders, including university administrators, faculty members, students, and sustainability officers.

Findings reveal a growing recognition of the importance of sustainability issues among stakeholders, though the level of institutional commitment varies. Challenges such as financial constraints, a lack of expertise in green technologies, and resistance to change were identified. However, universities that effectively integrate green practices report significant benefits, including cost savings from energy-efficient technologies, enhanced reputations attracting environmentally-conscious individuals, and the formation of strategic partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The study underscores the importance of developing comprehensive sustainability policies, integrating sustainability into the academic curriculum, and fostering a culture of environmental awareness on campus. By strategically leveraging green human capital, private universities in South Sumatra can attain a significant competitive advantage while contributing to broader environmental sustainability goals.

The strategic use of green human capital is essential for advancing ecological sustainability and serves as a significant economic asset that can enhance the competitive edge of private universities in South Sumatra. The insights from this research provide a valuable framework for higher education institutions seeking to integrate sustainability into their core strategies and operations, thereby contributing to a more sustainable future while achieving institutional excellence.

Keywords: *Green Human Capital, Competitive Advantage, Sustainable Campus Operations, Resource Based View (RBV), Strategic Positioning, Private Universities*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, rapid technological development, increasing customer demands, Amid global economic turmoil, companies are looking for new solutions to survive in a highly competitive market. To achieve and maintain competitive advantage, companies must utilize resources more effectively and develop new technologies. A specific knowledge-based intangible resource is intellectual capital (IC). Numerous studies have shown that IC is a major source of competitive

advantage in the knowledge economy. But new crises and economic changes political structures require companies to review their strategies to ensure this, sustained competitive advantage. Increased awareness and special interest in the environment. Investment in sustainable management leads to investment in intellectual greenness capital (GIC) can be an effective strategy to gain competitive advantage (Bombiak, 2023).

Digital economy brings new opportunities and threats to modern reality, covering almost all the fields of life of the population, including education especially the private universities. Digital economy opens up new strengths and weaknesses of a university. In this regard, a relevant task is to determine a set of goals for the development of the university and ensure movement towards these goals. University purposes to provide complete, updated and regular facts on their key fact of property to their many customers through diverse virtual offerings and communicate channels. Key college property included people, studies results, instructional courses, and studies projects. The primary issue lies with inside the inner fragmentation and variety of facts on key property is scattered across numerous facts repositories, facts is frequently duplicated and hard to in shape because of variations in format, meta data, conventions and terminology used (Safiullin, 2019).

In the current global landscape, educational institutions are increasingly being called upon to address environmental challenges while maintaining academic excellence and market competitiveness. The concept of sustainability is no longer limited to industries like manufacturing or agriculture; it has also permeated the higher education sector, where universities are now expected to foster sustainable development both within their operations and through the education they provide. One key element in achieving this is the development of green human capital.

Green human capital is a resource of a company that can improve the implementation of green policies. Lopes de Sousa Jabbour et al., 2019 said Green man capital includes the skills, abilities, know-how and experience of the employees who have been trained effective implementation of green practices. Studies show that knowledge, skills and Employee skills are essential to the successful implementation of sustainable practices (Neyati etc., 2017) and constitute a competitive advantage. Sustainability and environmental protection have become a global concern. Growing environmental concern encourages the implementation of environmental management in organizations (Ouyang et al., 2019; Singjai et al., 2019), because companies operate in a competitive global environment. Economy in which they must be not only efficient but also responsible, especially environmentally responsible. In fact, implementing environmental management is very essential for your organization. This is because responding to external changes increases customer demand for an organization's products or services and strengthens its competitive position (Pham et al., 2020).

Green human capital refers to the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and competencies that individuals possess to address environmental issues, promote sustainability, and innovate toward greener practices. In the context of higher education, green human capital encompasses faculty, staff, and students who are not only well-versed in their respective academic fields but are also advocates and practitioners of sustainability principles. This includes promoting energy efficiency, reducing waste, encouraging responsible consumption, and embedding environmental ethics into daily university operations and curriculum design.

For private universities, which often face fierce competition for students, resources, and reputation, green human capital represents an untapped source of competitive advantage. Universities that invest in the development of green human capital can position themselves as leaders in sustainability, attract eco-conscious students and faculty, and differentiate themselves from other institutions. However, the concept of green human capital and its impact on competitiveness remains underexplored, particularly in the context of private universities in regions like South Sumatra, Indonesia (Arizqa Setiadi et al., 2022.).

To achieve a competitive advantage, an organization can analyse internal and external factors that help the organization specially universities. The internal factors behind the company's competitive advantage are important for success. The notion of competitive advantage through management actions during the management of structure, processes, culture and people. Organizations can identify and improve analysis of their competitive advantage resources, skills and key capabilities develop a strategy that uses assets to create value for customers and earn a competitive advantage over competitors (Irayani et al., 2023).

In this complex environment, organizations must strategically leverage these multifaceted strengths to ensure long-term sustainability and achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Rouf et al., 2022). This study explores the complex network of relationships that combine sustainability, technological investment and government action, focusing on their collective impact. The impact on a company's competitive advantage in the context. We mainly focus on the critical moderating roles of these factors, especially intellectual capital (Abdelfattah et al., 2024).

Based on the resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theory (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) said in order to implement and thrive within business models, firms must use and combine their specific resources and capabilities (e.g. organizational procedures, technologies) in such a way as to outperform their competitors (Hitt et al., 2016). Therefore, resources and capabilities, including decisions must be reconfigured to help firms adapt to their market environment (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Sustainable campus operations, universities adopting green building standards and certifications. Implementing comprehensive recycling and composting programs. Academic Programs, Degree programs in environmental science, sustainable business, and renewable energy. Interdisciplinary courses that incorporate sustainability into business and social sciences (Amin et al., 2022)

In the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education, institutions are increasingly seeking innovative strategies to achieve and maintain a competitive edge. Among the various approaches, the concept of green human capital has emerged as a pivotal factor in fostering sustainability and enhancing institutional reputation. Green human capital refers to the integration of environmentally sustainable skills, knowledge, and practices within an organization's workforce. For private universities in South Sumatra, Indonesia, harnessing green human capital presents a unique opportunity to distinguish themselves in a competitive market while contributing to broader environmental goals (Agyabeng-Mensah & Tang, 2021).

In today's competitive academic environment, private universities must continuously seek ways to differentiate themselves and create lasting value. One approach is through the development of green human capital, which refers to the combination of environmental awareness, sustainability-driven skills, and green leadership qualities possessed by individuals within an institution. Green human capital not only enhances the university's contribution to global sustainability but also strengthens its position as a leader in the education sector.

The region of South Sumatra, with its diverse ecosystem and growing urban centres, faces significant environmental challenges, including deforestation, pollution, and climate change. As educational institutions, private universities have a critical role in addressing these issues through education, research, and the implementation of sustainable practices. By embedding green human capital into their strategic framework, these universities can lead by example, promoting environmental stewardship and sustainability. These initiatives not only contribute to ecological sustainability but also offer competitive advantages such as cost savings from efficient resource management, enhanced institutional reputation, and increased attractiveness to prospective students and staff who prioritize environmental values.

Despite the clear benefits, the integration of green human capital in private universities in South Sumatra is not without challenges. Financial constraints, limited expertise, and resistance to change are some of the barriers that institutions must overcome. However, with effective leadership and policy support, these challenges can be addressed, enabling universities to capitalize on the strategic advantages offered by green human capital.

The study will assess the existing strategies that universities employ to promote environmental responsibility and how well these initiatives are integrated into the university's broader educational mission and investigate the ways in which green human capital enhances a university's ability to attract students, faculty, and funding, as well as its capacity to form strategic partnerships with industries and governments focused on sustainability. The research will explore how universities that excel in this area differentiate themselves from competitors and create unique value propositions in the higher education market.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study's theoretical framework is built on the principles of the natural resource-based view (RBV) and resource-based view theories (RBV). The RBV theory explains how a firm can create

bundles of strategic resources and/or capabilities to achieve competitive advantage. According to the RBV, a firm can maximize sustainable competitive advantage when its resources are rare, inimitable, valuable, non-substitutable and non-tradable (Barney, 2001). The RBV theory encourages firms to develop and protect resources that can be identified with these attributes (Crook et al., 2008) and focus on using its resources to develop unique “core competencies,” “dynamic capabilities” and “imitable capabilities” (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). Green human capital is regarded as a core strategic resource for sustainable competitive advantage for firms (Yong et al., 2019).

The concept of “green human capital,” which is described as the collective knowledge, skills, attitudes, and leadership capacities that support sustainability, is comparatively underexplored, despite the rising corpus of research on sustainability in higher education. Most research tends to concentrate on how colleges might lessen their carbon footprint or on green initiatives (such as energy-saving plans or recycling projects). There is a dearth of research on human capital development, especially when it comes to the strategic value that human capital with an emphasis on sustainability can have in higher education.

By examining the creation and application of green human capital as a competitive advantage for South Sumatra's private colleges, this study directly fills this gap. It investigates how colleges might use the abilities and expertise of their teachers, staff, and students to create a competitive edge in a crowded educational market, going beyond merely looking at environmental measures.

A large portion of the literature on sustainability in higher education concentrates on reputable, frequently public colleges in industrialised nations. There is a knowledge vacuum about the sustainability strategies used by private universities in poor nations, especially in areas like South Sumatra, as these studies typically focus on sizable establishments with ample funding. Private universities may take a different approach to sustainability and the development of green human capital than their larger counterparts because of their financial limitations and particular competitive problems in these areas.

2.1 Resource Based View (RBV)

This study is based on the resource-based view (RBV) theory of the firm. The RBV theory of the firm originated in the early 1980s and became progressively more visible in the 1990s playing an important role in legitimizing the importance of HRM to strategy research. According to the RBV of the firm, a competitive advantage can be attained when organizations use their resources to leverage internal strengths and neutralize weaknesses in their external environment. The extent to which an organization possesses and manages such resources determines the height of a firm's performance. It includes education, experience, attitudes, knowledge, professional skills, mental abilities, competencies, and creativity. The results of Wright et al. (1994) demonstrated that having strong human capital is advantageous to organizations as it is not only valuable but also very difficult to imitate (Haldorai et al., 2022).

A foundational concept in strategic management, the Resource-Based View (RBV) asserts that companies can obtain a competitive edge through the acquisition and efficient application of uncommon, precious, unique, and non-replaceable resources. RBV contends that when carefully created, intangible assets like human capital can give private colleges a sustainable competitive advantage. This theory, when applied to green human capital, shows how faculty, staff, and students with sustainability-oriented knowledge, skills, and behaviours may make a significant difference in the fiercely competitive education market.

RBV theory demonstrates that organizations that make continuous efforts to increase intellectual capital can heighten their long-term growth and performance. IC has traditionally been categorized into three components: “human capital,” “structural capital,” and “relational capital” (Roos et al., 1997). “Human capital” refers to the skills and knowledge that an organization's employees have generally acquired during their working life and Firms can achieve sustainable competitive advantage through the accumulation of strategic assets that are hard to imitate, substitute or trade (Eloranta & Turunen, 2015)

Looking at economic units in terms of their resource endowments has a long tradition in economics. The analysis is typically confined, however, to categories such as labour, capital, and perhaps land. The idea of looking at firms as a broader set of resources goes back to the seminal work of Penrose (1959), but, apart from Rubin (1973), has received relatively little formal attention. The

reason, no doubt. is the unpleasant properties (for modelling purposes) of some key examples of resources, such as technological skills. The mathematics used by economists typically require that resources exhibit declining returns to scale, as in the traditional theory of factor demand (Wernerfelt, 1984).

Resource-based theory (RBT) is understood as a resource-based theory. A theory for analyzing the competitive advantage of companies that shows economic or learning outcomes Benefits of relying on intangible assets. This RBT believes that the company has superior financial performance and superior competition because it is in control. Possess and utilize important strategic resources (Wernerfelt, 1984). Call Connection Tone Discuss how Source Energy Ownership Companies and Companies Manage Source Energy The original ownership power company has total assets, properties, knowledge of technology, information, organizational processes, etc. (Barney, 1990) The theory is consistent with green intellectual capital, and the application areas are as follows: The source of intellectual power based on the environment will have the best positive effect. A complete superior company (Kilicli, 2022)

Building on RBV by examining conditions underlying sustainable economic rents. They emphasize the fact that uncertainty about which future scenarios may prevail (Schoemaker, 1991) gives rise to idiosyncratic managerial decisions across firms. This in turn creates asymmetries as to which R&C firms develop, and thus can become a source of sustainable economic rent (Amit & Schoemaker, 2016).

RBV focuses on internal and institutional factors, emphasizing the slow evolutionary paths by which firm-specific resources and capabilities typically develop and two important extensions of RBV strategies are currently emerging, namely: (1) the role of network based capabilities that are only partly owned and controlled by the firm; and (2) the increasingly important role of business models in which a focal firm leverages its own R&C with those of its partners (Ahmar & Astuti, 2023).

Additionally, green human capital cannot be replaced. Universities may try to replace this with other intellectual or physical capital (such as new research programmes, technology, or infrastructure investments), but these resources fall short of the benefits that come with having green human capital. A cutting-edge campus building with cutting-edge technology, for instance, might be a showpiece for sustainability, but the investment is wasted if there are no academics and staff members dedicated to teaching students how to extend and use these technologies sustainably. Similarly, private colleges lose out on developing green leadership when they only provide environmental studies programmes without encouraging a sustainable culture. Other resources cannot match the expertise, experience, and values that green human capital brings to the table.

2.2 Competitive Advantage

Michael Porter, the charge of strategic management, introduces five power to lead university leaders. It must be adopted and observed by adopting a business approach and competitive advantage. it is very important to consider politicians considering technology and globalization fury. Competitiveness excellence includes powerful incentives for competition and establishment partnerships between universities. Therefore, higher education institution must design a more effective strategy by understanding the gap between the levels between the level. It is considered a company that produces and sells. The development of research on innovation-based competitive advantages indicates high interest among academics and practitioners in this topic and the capabilities of institutions to perceive and respond strategically to opportunities and threats (David et al., 2023).

Competitive advantage is a concept that has been extensively studied in the fields of business and management. It refers to the unique attributes or capabilities that a firm possesses, which enable it to outperform its competitors and achieve superior performance in the market. Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance." Porter defined competitive advantage as a firm's ability to create a unique and sustainable position in the market that allows it to outperform its competitors. This concept is central to strategic management and is often linked to a firm's ability to create value for its customers and stakeholders (Eloranta & Turunen, 2015).

Competitive advantage is a relational term between a focal firm and rival(s) within a specific context of competition. Competitive advantage is not a universal, general, and overall characterization of a firm or certain aspects of a firm. Similar terms to competitive advantage could be found in competence and strengths, which seem to be generally regarded as firm-specific traits, but are also

argued to be meaningful primarily within a certain context. We first discuss the situational nature of these terms and then explore the context-specific nature of competitive advantage (Ma, 2000) .

To build a competitive advantage, a hospitality company needs to build unique competence and strategic resources that create superior customer value (Kovaltchuk et al., 2022.) According to resource-based view (RBV, Barney, 1991, Barney, 2001), green intellectual capital, which includes green human capital, green structural capital, and green relational capital, is often viewed as strategic resources of a hospitality company because a hospitality company that possesses green knowledge, skills, experience, organizational structure, organizational culture, Haldorai et al. (2022). Management system, and relationship network is more likely to form green capabilities that help establish competitive advantage (Liu, 2010, Yong et al., 2019). In other words, managers of a hospitality company can use a strategic orientation that focuses on green innovation to guide and encourage the company to seek and build green intellectual capital and then use these strategic resources for green innovation to establish a competitive advantage (Chen, 2008, Yusliza et al., 2020).

Finally, it was mentioned that green human capital helps institutions maintain their long-term strategic positioning. Universities were prepared for a future in which environmental stewardship would be a critical element of organisational success by cultivating staff and students who were focused on sustainability. It is believed that sustainability is not just a trend, it's the future. It is putting itself in a successful long-term position by making this investment in green human capital now. When all institutions are required to be sustainable, it will be ahead of the curve. Several interviewees endorsed this long-term outlook, it emphasized that sustainability was about developing resilience and adaptation in the face of future problems, such as tighter environmental restrictions or changing student preferences, rather than only about achieving quick wins.

2.3 Green Human Capital

Green human capital refers to the intellectual and social capital that individuals possess, which can be leveraged to drive innovation, collaboration, and sustainability within institutions. This concept encompasses the knowledge, skills, and values that faculty and staff bring to the table, such as expertise in environmental sustainability, digital literacy, and community engagement. Green human capital is knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, Action, wisdom, creativity and employees Commitment to environmental protection (Y. - S. Chen, 2008). Even though technological development is accelerating, human resources still remain important in determining the value of a company and its ability to grow and survive.

Many researchers argue that human capital characteristics will be a valuable tool. All Companies must hire environmentally sustainable human capital. Build robust and difficult to imitate green human capital (GHC) (Jackson et al., 2004; Zada et al., 2022). Malik (2020) reports that GHC will transform workers into strategic assets due to their environmental impact. Knowledge and dedication. These employees can give your company a competitive advantage. Kong and Thomson (2009) argue that human capital should be a key feature of strategic human resource strategy and management. GHR plays an important role in creating green and environmental awareness among employees by promoting deep organizational engagement (Shoaib, 2021). This knowledge to improve human resource policies for environmental management (Huang et al., 2011; Khan et al. as. , 2022). GHC service companies embrace green HR strategies and support organizations. Recruit the best human capital (Chang et al., 2012). Many scholars believe that companies should improve their environmental capabilities and prepare their employees to integrate them. The company's GHR strategy to implement corporate environmental ethics in practice (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Tees, 2014).

Green intellectual capital is a type of intellectual capital. It is described as the entire knowledge the organization has and employs in environmental management. Similarly, Liu has defined GIC as the integration of the green and environment knowledge sources and knowing capability of companies for improving a competitive advantage. On the other hand, Chen has described green intellectual capital as the kinds of knowledge, capabilities and relationships about environmental protection or green innovation at the individual and the organization levels.

Although the value of sustainability in higher education is becoming more widely acknowledged, the strategic influence of green human capital has not been thoroughly studied in empirical research. The majority of this field's research stays theoretical, concentrating on issues such as the significance

of sustainability and the best ways for universities to advance it. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of empirical data demonstrating the real returns on investment (i.e., increased student enrolment, better institutional performance, or improved reputation) from investing in green human capital. Although the value of sustainability in higher education is becoming more widely acknowledged, the strategic influence of green human capital has not been thoroughly studied in empirical research. The majority of this field's research stays theoretical, concentrating on issues such as the significance of sustainability and the best ways for universities to advance it. Nevertheless, factual data demonstrating the real benefits of investing in green human capital such as enhanced institutional

3. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the strategic utilization of green human capital for achieving competitive advantage in private universities in South Sumatra, Indonesia. The methodology consists of several stages: research design, data collection, data analysis, and validation of findings. **Data Collection Methods using Semi-Structured Interviews:** In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. This method allows for flexibility in exploring various aspects of green human capital while maintaining a consistent line of inquiry. **Interview Guide:** An interview guide was developed, consisting of open-ended questions that explore participants' understanding of green human capital, its implementation, challenges faced, and perceived benefits. **Duration:** Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes. **Recording and Transcription:** Interviews were recorded (with participants' consent) and transcribed verbatim for detailed analysis. **Document Analysis:** Relevant documents such as university sustainability reports, strategic plans, and curriculum outlines were reviewed to gather contextual information and triangulate interview and focus group data.

Research Design The research adopts an exploratory qualitative design, suitable for gaining in-depth understanding of complex phenomena such as the integration of green human capital in educational institutions. This approach allows for a detailed examination of the perceptions, experiences, and strategies of various stakeholders involved in the process. In addition to interviews, document analysis was conducted to gather further insights into the universities' sustainability policies, green initiatives, and internal reports on human capital development. Documents such as strategic plans, sustainability reports, and training materials were reviewed to corroborate the information gathered in interviews and to provide context for each university's approach to sustainability.

The interviews were designed to explore how green human capital is fostered within each institution, how it contributes to institutional competitiveness, and what challenges or opportunities are associated with its development. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling participants to express their views freely while ensuring that the key themes related to the study's objectives were covered.

4. RESULTS/ DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

Universities which effectively leveraged green human capital reported numerous strategic advantages, including cost savings from energy-efficient technologies and waste management systems. Enhanced institutional reputations attracted environmentally-conscious students and faculty, contributing to increased enrollment and recruitment efforts. Strategic partnerships with governmental agencies, and private sector organizations provided additional resources and collaborative opportunities, further strengthening the universities' competitive positioning. Resistance to change among faculty and staff, rooted in traditional practices, posed challenges to the adoption of new, environmentally-friendly approaches.

Stakeholders exhibited varying levels of awareness regarding sustainability issues, with some displaying a strong commitment to integrating green practices into university operations. Institutional commitment to sustainability initiatives varied across private universities in South Sumatra, with some institutions leading the way in implementing comprehensive green policies and programs.

The significant potential of green human capital as a competitive advantage for private universities in South Sumatra. Despite challenges, institutions that strategically leverage their green resources and capabilities stand to gain substantial benefits, including cost savings, enhanced reputations, and strategic partnerships. By embracing sustainability as a core value and investing in green human capital, private universities can not only strengthen their competitive positioning but also contribute to broader environmental sustainability goals.

The value of green leadership came up repeatedly in the interviews. As part of the institution's goal, university authorities stressed the need for leaders who not only understand sustainability but also actively promote it. As one administrator put it, "We need green leadership." We enable our employees to spearhead change within their areas and encourage them to take responsibility of sustainable efforts. Sustainability coordinators were hired by certain colleges with the responsibility of supervising and directing the adoption of eco-friendly measures throughout the school. It was said that this leadership position was essential to coordinating the university's sustainability objectives with day-to-day activities. Several challenges faced by private universities in South Sumatra in developing green human capital.

The improved reputation that institutions acquired as a result of their dedication to sustainability was one of the main competitive benefits that was found. Green initiatives, according to administrators and faculty, have enhanced the public's impression of their respective universities. One administrator put it like way: "Our university's identity now revolves around sustainability. Students that care about the environment and wish to attend a progressive university are drawn to it.

4.2 Discussion

A competitive advantage is the ability of a company to outperform its competitors. In modern economies, the main factor of a competitive advantage is intellectual capital (IC), which is viewed as the principal strategic asset and the key source of economic value. Unanticipated changes in the economic structure of an industry may make what was, at one time, a source of sustained competitive advantage, no longer valuable for firm, and thus not a source of any competitive advantage.

Private universities should prioritize efforts to raise awareness about sustainability issues and embed environmental considerations into their institutional values and strategic planning. Building a strong reputation for sustainability can differentiate universities in the competitive higher education landscape, attracting individuals who prioritize environmental responsibility in their academic and career pursuits.

Financial constraints, a lack of expertise in green technologies, and resistance to change pose significant challenges to the effective implementation of green initiatives. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning, external funding opportunities, and investment in staff training and development. Competitive advantage is sustained does not imply that it will last forever. It only suggests that it will not be competed away through the duplication effort of other firms especially private universities in South Sumatra.

Green human capital has been identified as a significant contributor to the competitive advantage of private universities in South Sumatra. This concept refers to the intellectual and social capital that individuals possess, which can be leveraged to drive innovation, collaboration, and sustainability within institutions. In the context of private universities, green human capital encompasses the knowledge, skills, and values that faculty and staff bring to the table, such as expertise in environmental sustainability, digital literacy, and community engagement. By fostering a culture that values and develops green human capital, private universities in South Sumatra can differentiate themselves from competitors and attract students and talent who share similar values and goals.

The integration of green human capital into the strategic planning of private universities in South Sumatra can have a profound impact on their competitive advantage. For instance, institutions that prioritize green human capital can develop innovative programs and services that address pressing environmental and social issues, such as sustainable development, climate change, and social justice. This can lead to enhanced reputation, increased student enrollment, and improved alumni engagement. Furthermore, the emphasis on green human capital can also foster a sense of community and shared purpose among faculty, staff, and students, which can drive collaboration, creativity, and entrepreneurship. By leveraging green human capital, private universities in South Sumatra can not only

enhance their competitive advantage but also contribute to the broader goals of sustainability and social responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant potential of green human capital in achieving a competitive edge for private universities in South Sumatra. While there are challenges to overcome, the strategic advantages are substantial, including cost savings, enhanced reputation, and new partnership opportunities. By adopting comprehensive sustainability policies, developing green curricula, and fostering a culture of sustainability, universities can not only contribute to environmental goals but also strengthen their competitive positioning in the higher education landscape.

The development of green human capital, particularly in the form of sustainability-focused training for faculty and students, remains underutilized as a strategic tool. Institutions that do invest in green human capital are positioned to attract eco-conscious students, enhance their reputation, and build partnerships with organizations that prioritize sustainability.

Moreover, the research highlights that green human capital provides a clear competitive edge by differentiating universities from their peers, not only in terms of educational offerings but also in their commitment to global sustainability efforts. Universities that excel in this area tend to perform better in university rankings, secure more research funding, and enjoy stronger community support.

The implications of these findings are twofold. First, private universities in South Sumatra should prioritize the development of green human capital as a core component of their long-term strategic planning. This involves embedding sustainability into their curriculum, faculty development programs, and campus operations. Second, policymakers and education leaders should recognize the role of green human capital in shaping the future of higher education, promoting its integration across the sector to ensure that universities contribute meaningfully to both local and global sustainability goals.

In conclusion, this study provides a clear roadmap for private universities seeking to leverage green human capital as a source of competitive advantage. By aligning educational initiatives with sustainability and environmental stewardship, these institutions can not only meet the demands of today's students and society but also position themselves as leaders in the future of higher education.

By improving reputation, reducing operational costs, opening up opportunities for collaboration, integrating sustainability in the curriculum, establishing a strong environmental culture, and gaining higher recognition, universities can position themselves as leaders in sustainable and innovative education. Investing in green human capital is not only a smart move for a more sustainable future but also an effective strategy to achieve long-term competitive advantage.

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