# RED OCEAN VS BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN CREATING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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***ABSTRACT***

*In an increasingly competitive business world, companies are required to innovate in order to maintain a competitive advantage. This article aims to analyze the comparison between Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies in creating competitive advantage. The research method used is a literature review, by collecting and analyzing related literature from various sources, including scientific journals and research reports. The results of the study indicate that the the Red Ocean Strategy focuses on competition in existing markets, encouraging companies to increase efficiency and product differentiation, but often traps them in price wars. In contrast, Blue Ocean Strategy offers an innovative approach by creating new market space that reduces the intensity of competition, allowing companies to build advantages that are difficult to imitate. Understanding these two strategies is important for determining strategic directions that are in accordance with dynamic market conditions.*

***Keywords:*** *Red Ocean Strategy; Blue Ocean Strategy; Competitive Advantage; Strategic Management*

## INTRODUCTION

In a dynamic business world, competition is an inevitability that cannot be avoided. Companies are required to continue to innovate in maintaining their existence and achieving competitive advantage amidst tight market competition (Qomariyah, 2022). One approach that is widely used to understand the dynamics of this competition is through the concept of Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies. Red Ocean Strategy describes a saturated market condition, where companies compete in existing market space, while Blue Ocean Strategy offers an approach to creating new, untapped market space, thereby reducing the intensity of competition (Zainurrafiqi & Amar, 2021).

The Red Ocean strategy focuses on efforts to win existing competition by increasing product excellence, improving efficiency, and reducing production costs (Izzaty et al., 2024). In this context, competitive advantage is achieved by beating competitors through differentiation or cost leadership. However, this often leads companies into costly price wars and lowers profit margins. In contrast, Blue Ocean Strategy emphasizes the creation of new value through innovation, which allows companies to bypass direct competition and open up vast, untapped market opportunities (Wardiman et al., 2020).

Both approaches have their own characteristics, advantages, and challenges in their implementation. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of both is important for companies in determining the strategic direction that best suits their internal and external conditions (Meidita et al., 2023). Comparative analysis between Red Ocean and Blue Ocean Strategy not only helps to identify success factors, but also reveals potential risks that may be faced in the effort to create and maintain competitive advantage.

This article aims to analyze the comparison between Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies in the context of creating competitive advantage. By reviewing various relevant literature and case studies, this article is expected to provide insight into how companies can choose, adapt, or even combine the two approaches in developing a more effective business strategy amidst the rapid changes in the business environment.

A deep understanding of Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies is becoming increasingly relevant, especially as companies strive to find new ways to create value and meet the ever-changing market needs (Iruthayasamy, 2021). Previous research shows that companies that successfully implement the Blue Ocean Strategy are not only able to avoid price wars but also create new demand that was previously unimaginable (Bella et al., 2024). Therefore, further exploration of both strategies, including the factors that influence the success of their implementation, becomes essential to provide guidance for companies in formulating adaptive and sustainable strategies in an era of increasingly complex competition.

Previous research according to Clayton Christensen's theory of disruptive innovation provides valuable insights into the dynamics between Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies. It highlights how smaller companies with limited resources can succeed in established markets by offering simpler, more affordable products, thereby transforming the industry landscape (Christensen, 1997). By leveraging disruptive innovation, they can identify overlooked market gaps, fostering sustainable growth. Thus, understanding the interplay between Blue Ocean strategies and disruptive innovation is essential for companies to develop adaptive and proactive strategies that shape the future of the industry (Cressman, 2021).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Nazairin et al.,'s (2024) findings show that the combination of Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies provides Gojek with a significant competitive advantage. The Red Ocean strategy helps (Gojek to survive in fierce competition by leveraging its internal strengths and operational efficiency. On the other hand, the Blue Ocean approach allows Gojek to create new value through service innovation and product diversification, ultimately expanding its customer base and increasing their loyalty. This research concludes that the combination of Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies can serve as an effective model for other companies in the online services sector that wish to remain competitive and innovative in an ever-changing market. The practical implications of this study include strategic recommendations for Gojek's management and the online services industry as a whole, encouraging the implementation of comprehensive and sustainable marketing approaches.

Nuraeni et al.,(2022) findings the results of the research show that Ramen Jangar 69 has a stable position with an IFE value of 3.12 and EFE of 2.73. This research identifies eight internal and external factors that influence, as well as producing eight alternative strategies through SWOT analysis. By applying the Blue Ocean Strategy, Ramen Jangar 69 is expected to break out of the intense competition and create a new market. Two main recommended strategies are the development of promotional media and the organization of talk shows to strengthen branding. This research emphasizes the importance of product innovation and market evaluation to maintain competitiveness.

Strategy is effective in creating value for organizations by avoiding intense competition in existing markets (red ocean) and opening new market spaces (blue ocean) (Rezeki et al., 2019). This strategy allows companies to create products or services with unique features that meet unmet market needs. A humanistic approach that encourages employee involvement in the innovation process is also key to success (Chairunnnisa et al., 2023). In addition, the use of systematic tools and frameworks is essential for translating blue ocean thinking into economically appealing offerings. A change in mindset to identify new opportunities and explore untapped market potential is also greatly needed.

## METHOD

This research uses a literature research method, namely a method carried out by collecting and analyzing various literature related to the Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategy concepts in an effort to create competitive advantage (Sulistyani & Mulyono, 2022). The sources reviewed include scientific journal articles, conference proceedings, and previous research reports obtained through searches in the Google Scholar academic database (Ridwan et al., 2021).

The selection of literature is focused on publications relevant to the topic of business strategy innovation, competition dynamics, and the development of competitive advantages in various industrial sectors. The analysis is carried out qualitatively through content synthesis techniques (Manimozhi & Srinivasan, 2018), with the aim of identifying key concepts, comparing the characteristics of the two strategies, and drawing theoretical conclusions that can be used to enrich business strategy studies. With this approach, the research is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of innovative business strategies amidst changes in the global competitive landscape.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In facing increasingly tight business competition, companies are required to choose the right strategy to maintain and improve their competitive advantage. Nazairin et al., (2024). Two approaches that are often used as references in the world of strategic management are Red Ocean Strategy and Blue Ocean Strategy. Red Ocean Strategy focuses on competition in existing markets through efforts to defeat competitors, while Blue Ocean Strategy emphasizes the creation of new, untapped market space to avoid direct competition (Hamid et al., 2024; Kumar, 2023b). A deep understanding of these two strategies is important to determine which approach is more effective in certain situations. Therefore, this section will comprehensively discuss the characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, and relevance of each strategy in the context of creating competitive advantage in the modern business era.

In the study of strategic management, understanding Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies is crucial for analyzing the dynamics of competition in the market. Therefore, when we want to start or are already running a business, we can formulate more effective policies and learn about the business being conducted. This approach helps minimize risks and behaviors in facing challenges and identifying opportunities, serving as an alternative to navigate the ever-changing landscape of the business.

**Red Ocean Strategy**

Red Ocean Strategy, or what is known as the red ocean, is the name for this strategy. In 2006, Kim and Mauborgne introduced a theory that aims to improve people's perception of overall competitiveness. They developed a mechanism for designing strategies that focused on eliminating competition, until finally finding a strategy-making method that makes the existence of competition no longer relevant (Fitriyah & Nurfaizah, 2022). Red Ocean is a crowded market area, where factors such as price, cost, competition, and differentiation play a significant role in squeezing a company's profit margin (Tenri et al., 2025). This condition often triggers fierce, fierce competition, with each business player trying hard to gain greater profits (Artanto et al., 2021).

Red Ocean Strategy describes a situation where an organization operates in the same market with many competitors (Nazairin et al., 2024). In this condition, a large number of business actors compete intensely for existing market share (Safitri & Jarkawi, 2022). The high number of competitors makes the competition very tight, creating a "bloody" competitive condition. Each position in this market has its own advantages and disadvantages. In the Red Ocean Strategy, business actors compete to outperform competitors and seize the position as market leader. As a result, the competition that arises is often unhealthy, marked by the practice of bringing each other down and even trying to eliminate competitors (Rizqiyana, 2021). However, in today's business world development, a company's success is no longer solely measured by its ability to defeat competitors in fierce competition like in Red Ocean.

In the context of Red Ocean Strategy, the marketing approach used tends to follow a common pattern and is widely applied by competitors. This strategy focuses on competition in existing markets, where many companies compete to use similar marketing methods to capture market share (Abra, 2024). In terms of competition, Red Ocean Strategy operates in an existing market with a large number of competitors, so companies must try harder to win direct competition (Kumar, 2023). Meanwhile, in its activity system, Red Ocean Strategy requires companies to choose betwseen pursuing product differentiation or reducing production costs, not combining both simultaneously

(Hamid et al., 2024). This choice places the company in a strategic position that emphasizes one aspect of surviving amidst fierce market competition.

Strategy Red ocean has several main characteristics that distinguish it in the competitive business world. First, this strategy focuses on competition in existing markets, where companies must face competitors who offer similar products or services directly. Second, in the Red Ocean Strategy, companies are involved in tight competition to capture the same market share, so that maximum effort is needed to maintain their position. Third, this strategy seeks to take advantage of existing market demand, without creating new market space. Fourth, companies are required to negotiate the exchange between value and cost in order to maintain profitability levels amidst tight competition (Kumar, 2023). Finally, all business activities are integrated by making strategic decisions between offering product differentiation or reducing costs as the main step in winning the competition and focusing on costs (Nazairin et al., 2024).

Red Ocean Strategy has the advantage of giving companies the opportunity to compete in an established market with relatively stable demand, so that the direction, size of the market, and consumer behavior are easier to predict. In addition, this strategy allows companies to take advantage of industry best practices to strengthen their competitive position (Nazairin et al., 2024). However, the Red Ocean Strategy also has a number of weaknesses, such as very high levels of competition that often drive price wars, reduce profit margins, and limit the space for innovation because companies tend to be trapped in the same competitive patterns (Maheshwari, 2024).

As a result, company growth can stagnate and be more vulnerable to market changes. In today's modern business context, the Red Ocean Strategy is still relevant, especially for sectors that are already established and have a strong market structure, such as the manufacturing industry, retail, or conventional services. However, in facing the dynamics of the global market that is rapidly changing and driven by innovation, companies that only rely on the Red Ocean Strategy risk being left behind by competitors who are able to create new market space through innovative approaches such as the Blue Ocean Strategy (Novianto et al., 2025).

The theory supporting the Red Ocean Strategy is supported by Michael Porter's competition theory, which states that to achieve competitive advantage, companies must choose between a low-cost strategy or differentiation (Kumar, 2023). In the context of the Red Ocean Strategy, companies strive to outperform competitors by selecting one of these two strategies. Porter also introduced the five forces analysis that can influence the attractiveness of an industry, namely the threat of new entrants, the threat of substitute products, the bargaining power of buyers, the bargaining power of suppliers, and the rivalry among existing industry players (Kumar, 2023). This theory is relevant in explaining why companies become trapped in fierce competition in an established market.

Then, from the perspective of product life cycle theory, this theory explains that every product goes through the stages of introduction, growth, maturity, and decline (Purwanti & Diana, 2024). In the Red Ocean Strategy, companies often operate at the maturity stage, where competition becomes very intense and product innovation becomes crucial for maintaining market share (Samson & Philip, 2024). Understanding the product life cycle can help companies formulate appropriate strategies to remain competitive.

**Blue Ocean Strategy**
In the introduction to his work Blue Ocean Strategy, Kim and Mauborgne state that blue ocean strategy is a planning concept that encourages companies to leave the red ocean which is full of fierce competition (Bastian & Ali, 2018). This strategy directs companies to create new, untapped market space, making competition irrelevant. Unlike red oceans that focus on competition between market players, the blue ocean approach emphasizes creating new demand and avoiding direct competition. Thus, companies are directed to innovate and build new markets that provide growth opportunities without having to get caught up in fierce competition (Amaliyah & Lismawati, 2023).

Blue Ocean Strategy the concept of "value innovation," which combines differentiation and low cost, allowing companies to unlock new demand and achieve profitable growth (Harianto & Lookman, 2021). It contrasts "red oceans," characterized by fierce competition and shrinking profits, with blue oceans that offer untapped opportunities (Nazairin et al., 2024). Through various case studies, the strategic principles and frameworks presented serve as a guide for organizations aiming to foster innovation and sustain long-term success (Kim & Mauborgne, 2014)

**a. Value Innovation**
To create a blue ocean, companies need to innovate value. The process of creating value innovation can be aided by a four-step framework, which includes: eliminate, reduce, increase, and create (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). These four actions include:
1. Eliminating, namely identifying factors that have been accepted in the industry but are actually no longer relevant and need to be eliminated.
2. Reducing, namely determining factors that must be minimized because industry standards are too high without providing commensurate added value (Zahara et al., 2023).
3. Enhance, which is increasing certain factors to exceed industry standards to provide more value to consumers.
4. Creating, namely finding new elements that have never been offered by competitors, thereby increasing the value of the product or service (Fadjri et al., 2021).

**b. Strategy Canvas**
Before implementing this four-step framework, companies need to first create a strategy canvas. The strategy canvas serves as a diagnostic tool for designing an effective blue ocean strategy, with two main dimensions: a horizontal axis that shows the competitive factors in the industry, and a vertical axis that represents the level of competitive offers accepted by buyers in the market (Wulandewi & Mahyuni, 2022). Through the strategy canvas, companies can read and understand the existing value curve that reflects the current strategic conditions while providing an overview of the direction of business development in the future (Kardana & Lahindah, 2022).

There are three main qualities that are indicators in the application of the Blue Ocean Strategy framework. The first is focus, which is when a company concentrates its efforts on the core elements that are truly important in competition, without spreading resources evenly across all aspects of the market. The second is divergence, which reflects the company's ability to move away from the mindset and approach of competitors. This is achieved not by simply comparing itself to competitors, but by exploring and exploiting unexplored alternatives. The third is a binding motto, which is statement or slogan that not only conveys a message clearly and straightforwardly, but also honestly represents

the value and superiority of the company's product or offering (Nasikah et al., 2022). These three aspects emerge in the context of building a strategy canvas in Blue Ocean Strategy, the goal of which is for companies to clearly describe how they position themselves in new markets with minimal competition.

### c. Six Principles of Strategy

To implement Blue Ocean Strategy, companies need to follow certain principles summarized in the Six Step Framework (Harianto & Lookman, 2021), namely:

1. The first is to evaluate alternative industries. Companies must realize that competition is not limited to existing competitors, but also involves alternative product or service choices that may differ in form and function, but still meet the same needs.
2. Second, companies need to examine strategic groups within the industry, understanding that this segmentation is generally based on two main aspects, namely price and performance level (Riasari, 2020).
3. The third step is to trace the buyer chain, namely by identifying differences in value perception among buyers, users, and those who influence purchasing decisions. Going beyond conventional habits in determining target markets can pave the way to creating blue oceans.
4. Fourth, companies are advised to examine complementary products and services offered in the market, because competitors often provide similar products that have not really created differentiation.
5. Next, in the fifth step, companies need to understand whether the appeal offered to buyers is emotional or functional, because these two types of value influence price perceptions and purchasing decisions differently.
6. Finally, companies must consider the time factor, understanding that inactivity to technological change can lead to delays in responding to new opportunities. By proactively managing time, companies can create opportunities to shape new markets and secure positions in the blue oceans of the future (Giovanni et al., 2023).

Blue Ocean Strategy offers the main advantage of being able to create new market space without direct competition, allowing companies to gain large profits and build advantages that are difficult to imitate, this strategy also encourages value innovation, combining differentiation and cost efficiency simultaneously (Hawa et al., 2024). However, the drawback lies in the high risk and uncertainty in creating new markets, considering that companies must invest heavily in research, development, and market education without any guarantee of success. In the context of modern business, Blue Ocean Strategy is very relevant because current market dynamics require companies to continue to innovate and adapt to technological changes, consumer needs, and increasingly fierce global competition (Wulandewi & Mahyuni, 2022). Creating new market space is an important key to surviving and growing amidst rapid digital disruption and transformation (Tanushev, 2022).

Supporting theories in Blue Ocean Strategy, disruptive innovation theory introduced by Clayton Christensen, this theory explains how innovations that are initially perceived as inferior can disrupt established markets (Caldwell & Anderson, 2017). In the context of Blue Ocean Strategy, companies that create new products or services that meet unfulfilled needs can create new markets and avoid direct competition (Caldwell &

Anderson, 2017). This theory supports the idea that value innovation is key to creating blue oceans.

Customer Value Theory emphasizes the importance of creating value for customers as the core of business strategy (Rintamaki & Saarijarvi, 2021). In the Blue Ocean Strategy, companies focus on creating new value that not only meets customer needs but also creates a unique experience. By understanding what customers find valuable, companies can design products and services that differentiate them from competitors.

Business Ecosystem Theory explains that companies do not operate in isolation, but as part of a larger ecosystem that includes suppliers, customers, and partners (Gao, 2021). In the Blue Ocean Strategy, companies need to consider how they can collaborate with various stakeholders to create new value and expand market space. This indicates that the creation of blue oceans relies not only on internal innovation but also on interactions with the broader ecosystem.

## Difference between Red Ocean Strategy and Blue Ocean Strategy

The fundamental difference between Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategies lies in their approach to markets and competition. Red Ocean Strategy focuses on competing in existing market space, where companies seek to outcompete competitors to gain market share. This strategy exploits existing demand, and forces companies to choose between creating value through differentiation or cutting costs to achieve a price advantage (Kumar, 2023). In contrast, Blue Ocean Strategy encourages the creation of new, untapped market space, rendering competition irrelevant. This approach emphasizes the creation of new demand, and integrates differentiation and cost efficiency together to create innovative value that is difficult for competitors to imitate (Zulfa & Wening, 2021).

While companies implement a variety of strategies and management tools, investing time, energy, and resources to survive and secure their market position, Michael Porter highlights the importance of generic and competitive strategies for market competition. The Blue Ocean Strategy offers a fresh perspective on competition through innovation, aiming to discover new markets (Blue Oceans Strategy) that are free from rivals, unexplored, easily dominated, and/or rapidly growing. Some Blue Oceans Strategy may not be directly related to existing industries, although many emerge from Red Oceans, where companies compete fiercely against one another (Lauer, 2019). Blue Ocean Strategy focuses on launching innovative products and services that gain consumer acceptance and tap into new market niches, emphasizing that companies should move away from direct competition to achieve success (Araya et al., 2022).

Moreover, the strategic mindset underlying Red Ocean and Blue Ocean strategiy significantly influences how companies approach innovation and customer engagement. In a Red Ocean environment, firms often prioritize short-term gains through competitive tactics, which can lead to a zero-sum game where one company's gain is another's loss. This mindset can stifle creativity and limit the potential for breakthrough innovations. Conversely, Blue Ocean Strategy fosters a culture of innovation by encouraging companies to think beyond traditional boundaries and explore new value propositions. By focusing on customer needs and preferences, businesses can create unique offerings that resonate with consumers, thereby generating new demand. This shift not only enhances customer loyalty but also positions companies as leaders in their respective markets. As organizations navigate the complexities of modern business landscapes, embracing the principles of Blue Ocean Strategy can be crucial for long-term sustainability and growth, allowing them to thrive in an increasingly competitive world.

## Case Study

First, real case examples such as Cirque du Soleil and Apple demonstrate how companies can successfully implement Blue Ocean Strategy by creating new markets and avoiding direct competition (Fahreza, 2005). Additionally, a risk analysis is also necessary, considering that Blue Ocean Strategy often involves high investments (Arwani, 2019), while Red Ocean Strategy can lead to a loss of market share due to intense competition. The role of innovation becomes crucial in both strategies, where companies must foster a culture of innovation to remain relevant (Nazairin et al., 2024).

Technological advancements also impact both strategies, particularly in creating new Blue Oceans through digitalization. Customer engagement and their feedback can help companies formulate more effective strategies, both in the context of Red Ocean and Blue Ocean (Abra, 2024). Furthermore, a global perspective needs to be considered, as companies from various countries implement these strategies in different market contexts. The integration of sustainability principles and corporate social responsibility is also important, creating value not only for shareholders but also for society. Finally, changes in consumer preferences and behaviors must be taken into account, as these can affect the effectiveness of each strategy in facing the ever-changing dynamics of the market (Zhang & Chang, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

In the face of increasingly fierce competition, companies must be careful in choosing between Red Ocean Strategy and Blue Ocean Strategy. While Red Ocean strategy offers opportunities in existing markets with relatively stable demand, Blue Ocean strategy provides the opportunity to create new, innovative market space and avoid direct competition. A combination or adaptation of these two approaches can be the key to achieving and maintaining competitive advantage amidst rapid changes in the global business environment by leveraging the strengths of both strategies, companies can navigate the complexities of the market, foster innovation, and respond effectively to evolving consumer preferences, ultimately positioning themselves for long-term success.

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