# Brand equity analysis study of International Women University and the implementation strategy to the Social Media Communication.

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## ABSTRACT

The availability of selections on higher education institutions in Bandung has created a rigid competitiveness in its market. Offering a suitable academic curriculum and facilities becomes inadequate. International Women University (IWU) is the first university in Indonesia that focuses on women empowerment while offering international program as its brand value. Even though it is categorized as new, IWU has a strong brand image on women and internationality. The analysis of IWU's brand equity was done by qualitative (in-depth interview) and a quantitative method applied in order to observe the basic information regarding the type of social media they use the most, the time consumption, as well as their attitude towards celebrity endorser (3 sets of question regarding digital media consumption). 3 different group of stakeholders such as potential students (high school students), parents, alumni, are chosen as the respondents with total number of 30 people. 3 (three) different group of respondents have similarity in perceiving IWU to be distinctive and unique. While the 3 (three) of them also recognize the international program offered by IWU. Moreover, potential students and parents think that IWU is an institution that accept "women only" perceiving from the name given. While alumni think IWU as credible. And lastly, the 3 groups would likely recommend IWU to their friends, relatives, families, etc. The usage of digital media is summarized as 5-8 hours per day for both potential students and alumni, with Instagram as the social media used the most. Meanwhile, parents use internet on average of 1-3 hours on their daily basis, with Facebook as the social media they consume the most. 3 groups think that endorsers play important role in representing products.

*Keywords- Branding, Integrated Marketing Communication, Digital and Social Media Communications.*

## 1. Introduction

Building a resilient brand has been a challenging assignment for advertiser or marketers. Aaker (2010) mentions that brand creator could be constrained by significant force and obstructions, internally and externally. Especially in today's market, with its rapid technology development that could change within a second. The old style of marketing strategy does not give the same impact anymore. The presence of digital media communication has changed the way consumers' think and behave. Hence, branding does not only involve in creating the brand itself, but how to fit its equity to consumers' mind that has been affected by the new media communication. Young (2014) mentions that the selection of media is more than engaging consumers but sending extraordinary, interactive, and emotional events with brand. Meanwhile, Marketing Communications function as a set of information and show consumers how and why a product is used, as well as linking the brand to people, places, events, experiences, etc. (Keller, 2009).

Higher education has been contributing to the function of society and economy of a country. The competition between them has been found and possess an important role in labor market (Dimitrova and Dimitrova, 2017). Additionally, a high number of universities or college in Bandung with variety of offer challenges International Women University to struggle in providing sufficient curriculum whilst giving a fair price so everyone can afford a higher education for the future.

This research study was conducted to gain the brand equity insight from consumers of International Women University of Bandung. The outcome of this research is expected to be able to provide a suggestion in building a stronger brand that could worth a lifetime (Aaker, 2010). And, to find a suitable implementation in selecting the right media approach.

## 2. Literature review

An organization must define its competitiveness in order to position and able to determine its competitors in the market. Highlighting the SWOT analysis in this case helps to identify the characteristics, qualities, service offered, or even additional value (Dimitrova and Dimitrova, 2017). In addition, identification of brand equity helps marketer to pinpoint how the brand of an organization is actually perceived by consumer as a brand meaning (Berry, 2000).

### 2.1 Brand Equity

Aaker (1991) suggests that asset is a thing possess by a firm including brand name, whereas skill is an effort of the organization in doing better than existing competitors including marketing-advertising or even manufacturing. The brand equity itself is known as a set of brand properties and liabilities that is related to a brand, the name, and symbol that adds or subtract from the real value given by a product or service. Brand equity offers a figure that could interpret the marketing strategies and determine how a brand value can be exploited to benefit the organization (Keller, 2009). The elements of brand equity could be found on a table 2.1.1. Williams (2019) states that a strategic branding that has a high consistency would likely lead to a strong brand equity.

Berry (2000) mentions that brand is relevant to services, and its development is fundamental especially for differentiating product. Kapferer (2008) suggests that there are 4 (four) indicators for brand assets (equity) such as: aided brand awareness, spontaneous brand awareness, evoked set or consideration set, and consumption of the brand.

### 2.2 Integrated Marketing Communication

Keller (2009) states that marketing communications is an organization attempt to inform, persuade, and reminding consumers (direct-indirectly) about what is sold. Marketers need to understand the selections of marketing communications program that would work towards company's goal. In addition, the integration of Marketing Communication is presented to provide a consistent message on the promotion mix available. The first step of IMC tactic shall be started by the company, where e.g. sales, direct marketing, advertising, operations are to synergize the goals so the message intended could be easily understood by consumers. The second approach is redefining communications with customer-centric priority. The third is to apply the information of consumer behavior, attitudes, etc. that could turn into customer knowledge information (Kitchen

and Burgmann, 2010). With an intense media changes through the past years, the old media has lost its control on consumers due to the rising of new media.

2.3 Digital and Social Media Consumption

Digital media provides another level of interaction and own a nature of personalized experience. Wee (2016) proposes that the new digital media provides the users an independency as they are enabled to select the content wanted. The media business always able to shape the evolution of advertising and both are intertwined (Young, 2014). Keller (2009) mentions that in this era, consumers are in control and have more options in choosing which media to see. Thus, in order to communicate effectively, marketers need to follow where consumers go.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Sampling and Method

This research uses *judgment sampling* as the method for its qualitative study with a purpose of exploring brand equity attributes from 3 different group of stakeholders such as potential students (high school students), parents, and alumni (Marshall, 1996). 30 respondents were selected for this study with 10 people of potential students who have applied to the university (age ranges between 17-19), 10 parents of both potential and alumni (age ranges between 40-65), 10 people of alumni (age ranges between 23-35). An in-depth interview was done within 3 (three) days with 1 (one) different of group every single day.

### 3.2 Measurement

There are 2 (two) parts of interview in this research with 2 approaches as following as Brand Equity and Digital Media Consumption. Aaker (2010) suggests that, brand equity comprises 5 components that builds up the *Brand Equity Ten* such as Loyalty (price premium and satisfaction), Perceived Quality (perceived value and leadership/popularity), Awareness (brand awareness), Associations (perceived value, brand personality, organizational associations), and lastly Market Behavior (market share and price& distribution coverage) which was not utilized during the study. The framework of Aaker (2010) could be seen from figure 3.1.1 below. Those components are operated as a guideline for questions and statements used in the interview and accomplish the insight from respondents. Respondents were given questions and were asked to describe the feelings toward those 5 variables of brand equity.   Another part of interview contains simple questions regarding digital media consumption with 3 sets of questions with multiple choices. The questions stated are: phone average time spent (1-3 hours, 3-5 hours, 5-8 hours, 8-12 hours), social media used the most (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube), and importance of endorser for a product (Very important, Important, Not Important).

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1 Potential Students

Part 1:

Awareness: Potential students think that International Women University (IWU) is *distinctive* and *fair* for its own product class that they also categorize in a medium level. They could not give any reference of other university that concentrates on women empowerment, but several institutions that own similar price range. Perception: IWU is perceived to offer the best international environment for those who would like to develop themselves in global market. From the statement of "The First International Women University", respondents believe that IWU is an innovative university, like no others. Associations: With its "Women" name, IWU has created an image of university for women only, respondents found it interesting but somehow misleading for men as the institution accept both sexual categories. Loyalty: Most respondents emphasize that they would not pay for other university rather than International Women University as its already offer fair price as well as competitive quality such as in general curriculum and international program. On the satisfaction section, respondents would likely to recommend the university for their relatives, friends, and family if the result of their first semester meets their expectations.

Part 2:

Potential students spent 5-8 hours of time on their phone, with Instagram as their social media platform checked the most, and they think that endorser plays a very important role for products they choose.

### 4.2 Parents

Part 1:

Awareness: Most parents did not notice of the university brand after their kids gave them the information. They could not mention other institution that offer "women empowerment" since they have noticed the attribution of women is hardly seen anywhere. Perception: Respondents think that IWU is a good university that will allow their kids to be ready in the global competitive market with its internationality offer. Associations: Male parents were hesitating to send their kids to IWU as it seems to entitle Women only-university with its name. Loyalty: They also think that the price offered is highly reasonable and competitive compare to other institutions. They would likely to recommend IWU to their friends, relatives, families, etc.

Part 2:

Parents use 1-3 hours of time on their phone, and uses Facebook the most in their free time. They think endorser is important for a product.

### 4.3 Alumni

Part 1:

Awareness: IWU is the first international university that empower women and is very unique in its product class. They also could not give any reference of other institutions that offer similar uniqueness. Perception: Since they have experienced studying in IWU and the international program such as double degree and exchange student, they believe that the university had allowed them to experience one of the best moments in their life. It is simplified that IWU has a high quality in giving opportunity for students to gain more experience that seemed unreachable before. Associations: Respondents believe that IWU is very different from other university. They believe

that this institution is solid in its cooperation with universities abroad, and that makes it to be credible. <u>Loyalty:</u> They think they had spent their money well on IWU and would likely to recommend it to their family, relatives, friends, etc.

Part 2:

Alumni spent 5-8 hours of time on their phone, and Instagram also is the social media platform they checked the most. These alumni also think that endorser plays a very important role for a product.

## 5. Conclusion

The research findings propose that brand equity has different value on each beholder. For the study of International Women University, the researchers suggest that the institution shall create an integrated marketing communication campaign for 3 different target with 3 different messages and platform in order to be able to create a stronger brand equity. Thus, it corresponds to the proposition from Whelan & Wohfeil (2006) who mention that higher education shall be treated as a commercial brand. The researchers also suggest that an improvement on service quality, infrastructure image, accessibility on brand, advertising campaign, and brand quality perception must be considered as a significant marketing tools in promoting IWU (Taleghani and Almasi, 2011).

As the new media are acknowledged as an open technology platform, users, creators, as well as distributors are allowed to create any interaction in making and consuming the content (Wee, 2016). Therefore, the role of digital media also represents an imperative consideration in creating a solid digital campaign with credible endorsers as the tool in developing an effective persuasive communication that could motivate the shareholders to be attracted to IWU.

## 6. Suggestion

Dimitrova & Dimitrova (2017) suggest that competition is a tool that could be a motivating force of the growth on economic. For the further research, competitiveness analysis shall be analyzed in order to explore the competency of IWU so another development for the whole aspects of the university, internally and externally. Because, university is not simply a brand, but an experiential brand (Chapleo, 2010).

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