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# Optimization of Corporate Branding Strategy in Higher Education as the Marketing Sustainability: Study at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (UPN) "Veteran" Jawa Timur

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## Abstract

The rise of the phenomenon of state institutions which are required to become independent both financially and management are forced to be competitive with each other, both from domestic and foreign private institutions. It's forcing the institution to improve the competitiveness both in terms of services and achievements to hold its existence in the current of global markets. UPN "Veteran" Jawa Timur is one of the new state institutions, which is expected to be independent in both, financial and management, and they use the brand "bela Negara" as the corporate branding strategy. As a higher education institution have to improve tri dharma services. Corporate branding is a strategy to increase the market value of an organization. The three stages in corporate branding strategy are the goal (vision), culture, and externalization. This research focuses on identifying the vision of how awareness among users. Two independent variables, namely brand association and brand reputation, are taken from the theory of corporate branding strategy. While the brand image variable as a moderator and brand awareness as an independent variable. Samples were taken from 411 UPNVJT students by purposive random sampling. The questionnaire as the instrument research which uses a Likert scale. All item and variable indicators are tested both reflective and formative with the SmartPLS 3 software. From the results of the outer and inner model, it is found that the brand image as a moderator has the most influence on brand awareness. Overall, it shows that it supports the existing hypothesis, and the variable which has the smallest influence on brand awareness is the brand association.

**Keywords:** Corporate Branding, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, Higher Education

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduce the Problem

The brand has a very important role for the organization because it is an invisible asset that can become the identity of an organization and increase loyalty and higher margins in the long run (Kotler, Philip. Armstrong,

2012). A brand is a form of business strategy or other organization to communicate the personality and core of the organization both visually and non-visually (forbes communication council, 2018). The brand is at the forefront of communicating products and services. Organizational value can grow or decrease exponentially through brands (Berens, 2004). This is a challenge that needs to be studied and developed from various parties, both business and non-business organizations (Hatch, 2003). Where during the last decade, many organizations have begun branding themselves as a form of organizational differentiation from one another, whether it is strengthening their profile in the public, through websites, advertisements, media issues, and other forms of communication (Richard, 2012).

In the current era of globalization, branding strategy is not only applied in business organizations, but also extends to various sectors of the organization (Joseph and Abidemi, 2016). In the non-business sector, for example, the emergence of various city branding, even country branding to promote the existence of a city or country in the eyes of the world (Balmer, 2013). Efforts to strengthen branding in an organization are often referred to as corporate branding strategies. Corporate branding is a strategy to increase the market value of an organization (Berens, 2004). Basically, there are three main stages in corporate branding strategy, namely: goal (vision), culture, and externalization. In previous studies of (Siti Ning Farida, 2019) has been carried out at the vision stage, which emphasizes the internalization of a brand. So that in this study, more focused on the identification and culture stages for later research aimed at external. Corporate brand culture forms the core values of a brand and creates an organizational identity and has values that become the competitive advantage of an organization (Maden, 2013). Corporate brand culture is developed through several variables that influence between brand association, brand image, and brand reputation (Berens, 2004). Prior to the culture stage, previous research (Banerjee, 2008) showed the need for corporate brand awareness in community organizations. Brand awareness in this context is the awareness of members of the organization of the corporate brand stated in the vision and mission of an organization by leaders at the managerial level.

Since 6 December 2018 UPN "Veteran" Jawa Timur (UPNVJT) have officially become universities with Public Service Agency (BLU in Bahasa) by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia. It means UPNVJT has been considered capable of managing finances independently and is demanded to improve *tri-dharma* education services (pers UPN, 2018). This requires an institution to improve competitiveness in terms of both service and performance achievements. UPNVJT was previously a private tertiary institution under the ministry of defense, driven by the increasing need for tertiary institutions so that UPNVJT was encouraged to become a state university by carrying out its identity as a "bela Negara" campus. Seeing the inauguration with the identity of "bela Negara" not long ago formed, it is interesting to do a more in-depth study related to how to optimize the "bela Negara" brand at UPNVJT as a form of corporate branding strategy.

### *1.2 Explore the Importance of the Problem*

Based on the gap phenomenon, thus, this study has the aim to examine the related corporate branding of corporate brand awareness. So this research is entitled "optimization of corporate branding strategy as a form of sustainability marketing: a study at the" Veteran "National Development University (UPN) of East Java. The formulation of the problems that are the focus of this research are as follows:

1. How corporate branding (brand association and brand reputation) affects brand awareness at UPN "Veteran" East Java?
2. How corporate branding (brand association and brand reputation) affects brand awareness by mediating the brand image at UPN "Veteran" East Java?

### *1.3 Describe Relevant Scholarship*

#### **Corporate Branding**

Corporate branding is one form of brand building strategy from organizations to create their brand perspectives in society (Ajike, 2016). Corporate branding refers to the mindset that comes from within the organization to the outside, which means experience, encounter, and company perceptions in the eyes of customers or the wider community (Berens, 2004). According to (Hatch and Williamson, 2003) Corporate branding describes the company, sending messages to users about the quality and other attributes of the product or service. Corporate

branding can be seen as a systematic, planned, and implemented process aimed at creating and maintaining a positive image and reputation for the entire organization (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011).

The important role of corporate branding can be seen from the organizational behavior and culture that is formed. Based on the research of (Hatch, 2003) incorporate branding strategy, attention needs to be paid to 3 main points, namely: strategic vision, organizational culture, and corporate image (figure 1). Corporate brands have different roles in consumer perception. This means that evaluation is needed, whether the perceptions in the organization are the same as the perceptions held by consumers (Berens, 2004). The corporate brand emphasizes on the image formed, reputation, and association of the organization and all existing stakeholders (Ajike, 2016).

### **Brand Image**

Brand image has long been known as an important concept in marketing (Keller, 2013), but it also has an important role in building a brand in an organization (J, Mao, 2010). (Aaker, 1996) Defines brand image as a set of brand associations associated with whatever memory to a brand, usually in a meaningful way and can be defined as a combination of consumers' perceptions and beliefs about a brand (Akhmedov, 2016). Furthermore, Kotler and (Kotler, Philip., et al., 1999) define brand image as "a set of beliefs that consumers have about something related to the brand's uniqueness. (Bivainiene L, 2007) in (Piehler *et al.*, 2016) defines brand image as "a multifunctional collection of tangible and intangible features, which enable consumers to do product identification."

### **Brand Reputation**

The term reputation and image are often used together so that they are relatively difficult to distinguish between in establishing corporate branding (Chun, 2005). However, further studies find the difference between the two, brand reputation is consumer perception based on experience with services or the use of a product (Kimpakorn and Tocquer, 2010), while brand image is consumer perception based on information or opinions from various sources giving rise to perceptions prior to experience ( Yang & sing, 2008). Meanwhile, Gray and Balmer (1998) say the difference between brand image and brand reputation is whether the individual is able to describe an organization without having experience with the organization while brand reputation is more profound, based on personal experience. In (Pinson & Ford, 2012) stated that brand reputation is defined as a form of collective representation of several images that are formed from time to time based on organizational identity, programs, and performance (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004). Another study found that reputation is a set of perceptions held by external parties or stakeholders because it focuses on reputation, credibility, legitimacy in an organization (Bromley, 1993; Davies & Mil, 1988)

### **Brand Association**

Jamil & Wong (2010) are of the view that brand association is defined as the strength of benefits offered by brands. Krishnan (1996) considers that "brand association" can be used as a general term to represent the relationship between two nodes, which suggests brand association in the customer's mind (Chen, 2014). Brand associations will help consumers find and respond to information (Boisvert, 2011). In addition, brand associations will provide consumers with purchase reasons, because most brand associations relate to brand attributes, consumer target markets, and benefits consumers need, so they form the basis of brand loyalty and consumer purchasing decisions (Len T.W, Cindy M, 2007).

### **Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness is the ultimate definition of brand recognition, meaning that the potential for existence is easy to remember, information, and ideas about products are easily recognized (Bilgili, B., & Ozkul, 2015). (Ekhveh, A & Darvishi, 2015) show that brand awareness is associated with information nodes in memory; The customer's ability to recognize a brand in various conditions reflects their awareness of that brand. (Jamil, B., & Wong, 2010) Define brand awareness as brand recognition and brand withdrawal from a brand. Brand awareness creates a large association in memory about certain brands (Malik, M. E., Ghafoor, M. M., Hafiz, K. I., Riaz, U., Hassan, N. U., Mustafa, M., & Shahbaz, 2013). Brand awareness is one of the main factors in creating brand

added value and is also considered as one of the key factors that influence consumer-level knowledge about brands (Chinomona, 2017).

#### 1.4 State Hypotheses and Their Correspondence to Research Design

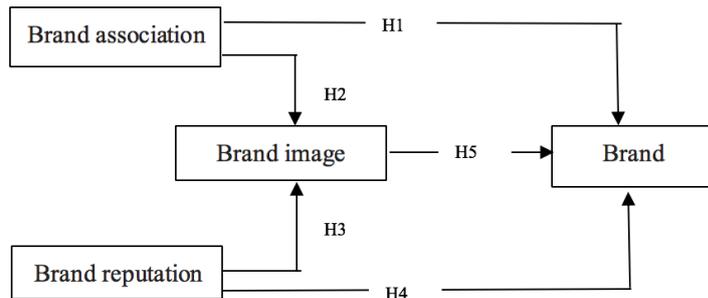
H1: Corporate Brand Association has a positive effect on corporate Brand Awareness

H2: Corporate Brand Association has a positive effect on corporate Brand Image

H3: Corporate Brand Reputation has a positive effect on corporate Brand Image

H4: Corporate Brand Reputation has a positive effect on corporate Brand Awareness

H5: Corporate Brand Image has a positive effect on corporate Brand Awareness



Picture 1. Model of corporate branding research thinking

Sources: Data Processed (2019)

## 2. Method

The research method used in this study is a quantitative approach. In the quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires. The interview is used to make more consideration depth related to conditions in the field.

### 2.1 Scale Operation

Measurement of variables using a Likert Scale that allows respondents to answer each question item that is able to describe how their attitudes and behavior (Zimund, W.G. Babin, B.J & Griffin, 2013). Variable measurements are based on prior research, corporate brand association (BA) is measured by a number of 15 indicator items referring to research (Bohrer, 2007), (Alexandris, Douka, Papadopoulos, & Kaltsatou, 2008), and (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010). The corporate brand image (BI) variable refers to (Chen, 2014) a number of 4 items. Corporate Brand Reputation (BR) there are 14 item indicators based on research (Catalin, 2014). Then the corporate Brand Awareness (BAW) of 4 items based on research (Bohrer, 2007) and (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010).

### 2.2 Data Collection and Sampling Procedure

A population is an object or subject in a group of individuals who have the same characteristics (Creswell, 2012). The population in this study were all UPNVJT students totaling 10,796 (forlap dikti, 2018 / '2019). Data collection techniques using purposive random sampling to be able to represent the entire population. There are two techniques used by revolutionary distribution, manually and online. In total, 444 questionnaires were distributed, and then the questionnaire selection process could be used in a number of 411 respondents. The sample size is sufficient to represent a population of ten thousand in number using the Yamane approach (1967) with a precision level of  $\pm 5\%$  and a confidence level of 95%.

## 3. Results

The respondents of the survey had some characteristics, as described in Table 1. Overall, 411 participants were obtained, of which 213 respondents were obtained manually, and 198 others were obtained from online distribution. The demographic picture of the research respondents is 152, while the number of men is 259. Most of them are in the fourth semester with the most 160, the same number of respondents are from the faculties of

social and political science. 308 of them have taken national defense courses, and 237 of them are active students in organizations.

Table 1. Demografi responden mahasiswa UPN “Veteran” Jatim

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Male	152	1 Social Politics Dept.	160
Female	259	2 Technique Dept.	96
Amount	411	3 agriculture dept.	27
<b>Semester</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
2 (second)	106	4 economic and business dept	82
4 (forth)	160	5 architec and design dept.	6
6 (sixth)	68	6 law dept.	15
8 (eight)	76	7 computer science dept	23
10 (tenth)	1	8 magister dept	1
Amount	411	Amount	411
<b>Take course of “Bela Negara”</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Active on organization</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Yes	308	Yes	238
Not yet	103	No	173
Amount	411	Amount	411

Sources: Data Processed (2019)

### 3.1 Scale Accuracy analysis

Accuracy scale on the variables used in the study was tested using smart PLS software, with a focus on several focus on reflective measurements namely outer loading, AVE, CR, Cronbach alpha and formative measurements seen from the level of the outer weight. Outer loading is an external standard value with a variant size of not less than 50%, so in this study, a minimum value of 0.5 and indicator items that have values below 0.5 are removed. Next is the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which shows the level of convergent validity where the minimum value limit of 0.5 indicates the value of the variable used indicates more than half when compared to other variables. Composite reliability (CR) to measure internal consistency in the model, where the minimum value is 0.6, if the value is below 0.6, it can be concluded that the variables used are less reliable. Cronbach alpha is used to strengthen the reliability test of a variable, where the minimum value is 0.6, this is the same as the minimum value in CR. Furthermore, formatively viewed from the level of outer weight in each item idator, in general, the value of outer weight is always lower than outer loading, because outer weight is the result of multiple regression (hair et al., 2015). Outer weight is used to evaluate the contribution of item indicators and their relevance.

The results of the scala item test in the study showed that the entire load was obtained values of more than 0.5 (minimum limit), using several item indicators, read: B.AW4, BA 1, BA 2, BA 4, and BA 11. available can be withdrawn Item indicators meet the criteria and can be continued in the next test. Outside weight values look reasonable compilation of values outside of outside loading, and there is no limit to outside weight because this only shows the contribution of each item. AVE all variables determine the value above 0.5 unless BA has not been assessed very close, and if the round has fulfilled 0.5 then, in this case, it can be concluded that all variables are valid. CR and Cronbach alpha shows the value of the level of reliability of the variables in this study all variables have a value of more than 0.4 then it can be concluded that all the variables that are already quite reliable.

Table 2. Indicator scale test results for each variable

Variable	Outer loading	Outer weight	Scale		AVE	CR	Cronbach alpha
			Original	Final			
<b>B.AW</b>			4	3	0.640	0.842	0.720
<b>B.AW1</b>	0.862	0.489					
<b>B.AW2</b>	0.765	0.386					
<b>B.AW3</b>	0.770	0.368					
<b>BA</b>			15	11	0.488	0.912	0.894
<b>BA3</b>	0.611	0.126					
<b>BA5</b>	0.642	0.116					
<b>BA6</b>	0.676	0.112					
<b>BA7</b>	0.563	0.098					
<b>BA8</b>	0.616	0.104					
<b>BA9</b>	0.738	0.125					
<b>BA10</b>	0.732	0.123					
<b>BA12</b>	0.716	0.135					
<b>BA13</b>	0.755	0.153					
<b>BA14</b>	0.816	0.164					
<b>BA15</b>	0.775	0.162					
<b>BI</b>			4	4	0.607	0.860	0.784
<b>BI1</b>	0.740	0.302					
<b>BI2</b>	0.797	0.318					
<b>BI3</b>	0.832	0.376					
<b>B14</b>	0.743	0.283					
<b>BR</b>			14	14	0.601	0.955	0.948
<b>BR1</b>	0.815	0.100					
Variable	Outer loading	Outer weight	Scale		AVE	CR	Cronbach alpha
			Original	Final			
<b>BR2</b>	0.808	0.094					
<b>BR3</b>	0.805	0.094					
<b>BR4</b>	0.814	0.106					
<b>BR5</b>	0.694	0.086					
<b>BR6</b>	0.803	0.094					
<b>BR7</b>	0.749	0.092					
<b>BR8</b>	0.646	0.058					
<b>BR9</b>	0.822	0.095					
<b>BR10</b>	0.763	0.093					
<b>BR11</b>	0.836	0.102					
<b>BR12</b>	0.706	0.088					
<b>BR13</b>	0.757	0.087					
<b>BR14</b>	0.812	0.095					

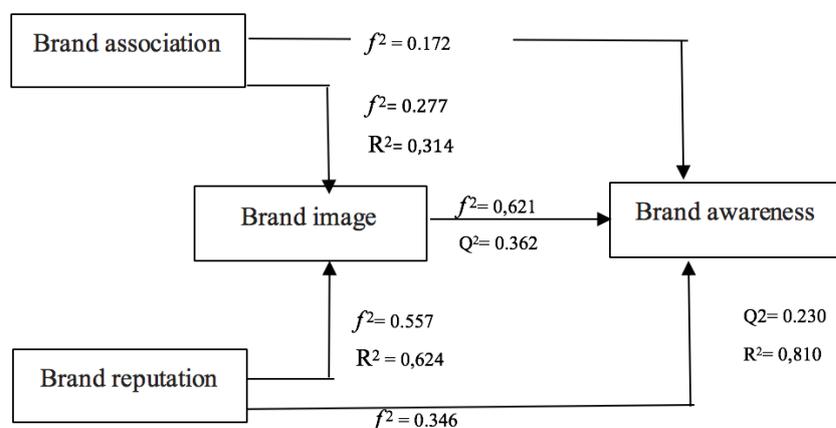
Sources: Data Processed (2019)

### 3.2 Hypothesis Testing

After the item scale test both reflectively and formally is declared valid and reliable, so that the inner model of the bootstrapping model can be continued to estimate the path coefficient values, which include: R2, f2, and Q2.

The value of  $R^2$  is an evaluation measure of the effect of the independent variable with the dependent variable, with values  $> 0.67$  (substantial),  $0.33$  (moderate),  $0.19$  (weak). The value of  $f^2$  represents the level of influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable, where the value  $< 0.02$  (weak influence),  $< 0.12$  (enough influence),  $< 0.35$  (strong influence).  $Q^2$  shows the values in the construct have predictive relevance if the value of  $Q^2 > 0$  then it is proven, and vice versa.

Based on Figure 2, it can be seen the results of bootstrapping and blindfolding test from smartPLS software, the level of influence of the independent variable  $BA \rightarrow BAW$  is  $0.172$  indicating the level of influence is enough,  $BA \rightarrow BI$  is  $0.277$  showing enough influence,  $BR \rightarrow BAW$  is  $0.346$  indicating moderate influence,  $BR \rightarrow BI$  is  $0.557$  shows a strong influence and  $BI \rightarrow BAW$  shows a strong influence of  $0.621$ . Then  $r^2$  is indicated by the dependent variable  $BI$  of  $0.314$  by  $BA$ , meaning  $BA$  has a moderate effect on  $BI$ , whereas  $BI$  by  $BR$  is  $0.624$ , which means it has strong or substantial. The level of  $Q^2$  by the dependent variable respectively,  $BI = 0.362$  and  $BAW = 0.81$ , when  $Q^2 > 0$  it can be concluded that the values examined have been constructed well and have good predictive relevance too.



Picture 2. Blindfolding test results of the inner model  
Sources: Data Processed (2019)

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

This research focuses on strengthening brand awareness through corporate branding strategy, which consists of two independent variables (brand association and brand reputation) and two dependent variables (brand image and brand awareness). Based on the results of hypothesis testing, the results of brand associations, or things related to the brand, will affect brand awareness, this is evidence that the first hypothesis is acceptable and in accordance with previous research (Chinomona, 2017) which states that brand association helps improve brand awareness by users. While brand reputation is at a fairly strong level of brand awareness which proves that the fourth hypothesis and this is also supported by previous research (Nguyen *et al.*, 2016) which shows that brand awareness is built on brand reputation. Then the second hypothesis test between brand association to brand image shows a sufficient relationship and supports the hypothesis that was predicted at the beginning, this is also based on research conducted by (Chinomona, 2016) which discusses related brand image that is influenced by things related to the brand (association) both physically and non-physically. Furthermore, the third hypothesis was also successfully proved by the level of the relationship between brand reputation and brand image, showing a strong relationship that is in accordance with the research (Alhaddad, 2015) which is in accordance with these results.

In theory, the results of this study prove that brand awareness can be built by several factors, namely brand image, brand association, and brand reputation, practically this research can be used as a reference when an institution builds brand awareness, it must start by making associations and reputations related to the brand, and building a brand image that supports brand awareness building up perfectly.

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that brand awareness is influenced by brand image, brand association, and brand repairs, both directly and indirectly. Brand image as mediation has a significant influence because it has the most dominant influence on brand awareness. Whereas the least dominant influence on brand awareness is brand association. So based on the current research, which was taken empirical studies at UPN VJT, sequentially from the most dominant, brand awareness is influenced by brand image, brand reputation, and brand association. Then the brand image as a dominant mediator is influenced by brand repairs rather than brand associations.

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