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The Effect of Brand DNA on the Interactive Marketing: Perspective of Junior Lecturers from the Faculty of Economics of a Catholic University

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Abstract

The competition among higher education institutions is getting tougher, especially in the era of globalization with the changing society overtime. As an established university, University X is facing the same problem. The main issue is how the university can sustain in the competition. Research work from Ford (2007) showed that creating unique differentiation is a substantial solution in order to survive the competition through finding the brand DNA (or its uniqueness) of the organization. How University X should focus on the uniqueness and enables it to stand out of the competition. The research focuses on finding brand DNA elements from the student and relates the brand DNA elements to the effort of promoting the university through interactive marketing. To answer the purposes, this research used qualitative approach in exploring the uniqueness. Further, this research conducted the in-depth-interview to 10 respondents who were the junior lecturers from the Faculty of Economics of University X. In analyzing the verbatim data, the authors used the data reduction model from Miles & Huberman (1994) with some modifications into five stages of analysis with data generalization. The results of the research shown that the most affecting brand DNA of University X were good education quality, good kinship, discipline, honesty, and Catholic, but lack of the value implementation. The higher involvement of the respondent determined the familiarity with the brand DNA of University X. The research also suggested that 'good' brand DNA determined the good interactive marketing activity which led to a higher sustainability of University X in the upcoming year.

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, the competition among higher education institutions in Indonesia becomes more and more competitive. Higher education institutions in Indonesia are competing to get more students as a way to survive in the competition. Each and every one of them has their own competitive advantages and uniqueness that make them different from other institutions.

There are 3.813 in total of public and private higher education institutions in Indonesia that compete to get students according to Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture in April 2013. This data consists of both older and newer higher education institutions in Indonesia. Among these higher education institutions, older institutions need to improve their uniqueness in order to maintain their position from the threat of the newer institutions. All of them need to continuously improve themselves to be on top of the competition.

Due to this evolution in higher education scope, the impact is also felt by the older university such as University X as one of the most prestigious private universities in Indonesia. A significant impact was felt in the decrease in the total number of students who applies at University X.

As one of the oldest institutions in Indonesia, University X, which is a Catholic university, needs to state itself through marketing elements to become a more competitive institution. People's perception of the institution is one of the most important elements to be improved to maintain the long term competitive advantage. This perception can be made from the easiest element to be seen such as the brand of 'University X' to the most subtle element such as the brand identity as a 'Catholic university' and the core value and the essence of the brand itself.

Rankin (2009) explained that brand is an important intangible asset which will give a long term competitive advantage. The importance of brand is defined in a more specific term from the brand equity concept. Given that, the identity of the brand needs to be shaped in a more specific value of the brand which will be focused more in the brand DNA of University X.

Brand identity as explained by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) has the core identity and brand essence which describes the organization itself. In his book, Ford (2007) also explained the code as the essence and soul of the organization. Kasali (2007), in his book focused on explaining how to change the DNA to make a new and better organization. Through these definitions, brand DNA is the main essence and core value that can be felt and it distinguishes an organization differently from the others.

Mainly, the brand DNA is felt by the employees of the institution itself. In academic institution, the most determinant employees arguably are the lecturers. Senior lecturers usually have conservative mind which make them hard to adapt to the values of the organization. Meanwhile, junior lecturers are more agile and flexible. They need to adapt to the new environment better from the beginning to shape a good value as the brand DNA. Therefore, the perception from junior lecturers will be important in delivering the brand DNA through interactive marketing such as lectures and attitude towards the students which is the main marketing element in junior lecturers.

From the background that has been explained, the author intended to conduct a research about this matter with the following title: *The Effect of Brand DNA on the Interactive Marketing: Perspective of Junior Lecturers from the Faculty of Economics of a Catholic University*.

2. Theoretical foundation

2.1. Literature review

To answer the main issue of sustainable university, this research proposes an idea to adjust its brand equity as a strategic move (Kapferer, 1997; Kasali, 2007). Moreover, this research is about to explore the brand DNA of University X which is the essence of the organization and how the brand DNA affects the interactive marketing of the junior lecturers from the Faculty of Economics. The theories used in this research mainly are the brand identity theory with the brand DNA as a development of brand identity and interactive marketing as a way to communicate the brand DNA for long term outcome (Ford, 2007; Kasali, 2007; Keller, 2003; Anissa & Lukito Budi, 2014).

Ford (2007) introduces his work in several non-profit organizations on how they managed to survive through their changes according to their own organizational values. The original value, Ford argued, can be compared as DNA definition since it reflected the true value of the organization; it is very specific and valid for the organization

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