



Branding Strategy Analysis at Ngudi Waluyo University

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Abstract

This study focuses on the importance of branding strategies in the education sector, with specific emphasis on Ngudi Waluyo University (UNW), a new private university in Semarang Regency. The objective of the research was to analyze and identify brand positioning strategies, brand identity strategies, brand personality strategies, and brand communication strategies employed by UNW. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing interviews, observation, and documentation as sources of direct, descriptive data. UNW's brand positioning strategy is built upon its vision and mission. The brand identity strategy centers around the symbol of UNW, which signifies sincerity, neutrality, and a cultured attitude in the university's contribution to national education, aiming for a glorious Indonesia. The brand personality strategy involves collaboration with competent stakeholders. UNW's brand communication strategy encompasses the establishment of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with various agencies, particularly schools in Central Java and Tri Dharma, as well as practice areas and government institutions such as the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of Central Java and the Government of Timor Leste. These MoUs also incorporate the KOKY program. To enhance its branding, UNW is advised to strengthen its position through innovative initiatives. By consistently improving the quality of education, UNW can establish a strong brand image and increase its competitive advantage in the education sector.

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INTRODUCTION

Branding has become a critical factor in the success of organizations across various

industries (Clark et al., 2020). In the competitive landscape of higher education, branding has emerged as an essential strategy for universities and institutions to differentiate themselves and attract prospective students, faculty, and stakeholders. Effective branding not only enhances the institution's reputation but also plays a pivotal role in establishing a distinct identity, fostering trust, and cultivating long-term relationships. Higher education institutions face unique challenges when it comes to branding. Unlike traditional commercial entities, universities are multifaceted organizations with a diverse range of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and funding bodies (Demin, 2019). Each stakeholder group may have different expectations, values, and perceptions of the institution, making it imperative for universities to develop comprehensive and cohesive branding strategies that resonate with their target audiences.

Furthermore, in today's dynamic educational landscape, where global competition is intensifying, universities must continually strive to improve the quality of their education and offerings (Dubey & Sahu, 2022). Branding can serve as a powerful tool to communicate the institution's values, strengths, academic programs, research achievements, and unique selling propositions, enabling them to stand out amidst the crowded marketplace.

This study focuses on the domain of higher education branding, with specific attention to Ngudi Waluyo University (UNW), a new private university in Semarang Regency. By examining UNW's branding strategies, including brand positioning, brand identity, brand personality, and brand communication, this research aims to shed light on effective branding practices in the context of the education sector. Branding is a basic part of marketing activities that is important to understand as a whole. Branding strategy is a choice of marketing strategy to build an identity or character so that it looks superior and different from other universities. Branding does not only make our marketing targets choose us in competent markets, but branding makes our marketing prospects the only ones who can

provide solutions to consumer needs. So, for the branding strategy to be successful, we must understand the needs and wants of consumers and prospects for potential customers.

Strategy is a process that indicates the direction to be taken by the organization as a driving force and other main factors that will help organizational managers determine products, services, and markets for the organization in the future (Broucker et al., 2021). In general, strategic activities begin with planning, formulation, implementation, and evaluation of their implementation. Strategy really requires accuracy, so starting from the preparation to the implementation of the strategy requires coordination of the various existing elements to achieve a goal optimally (Fay & Zavattaro, 2016).

The theory of branding strategy consists of brand positioning strategy, brand identity strategy, brand personality strategy, and brand communication strategy. The strategic steps mentioned by Gelder also apply to Higher Education (PT) which will develop its institutions. Brand positioning is a company's method of placing its image in the eyes of consumers or even the general public and judging the value of its advantages and the superiority of the products or services they offer in comparison with other competing brands. Brand identity is a set of aspects that build a brand's representation, background, principles, goals, and ambitions. Brand personality is developed to enhance the appeal of a brand to consumers, meaning that a developed brand personality is useful for adding to the attractiveness of a brand in the eyes of consumers (Matzler et al., 2016). Brand communication is the company's effort to be able to communicate its brand to prospective customers.

In this modern era, apart from the institutional building factor, there are other factors, namely the branding factor, which is important in the formation and functioning of an institution (organization). At this time, branding is the spearhead used to attract consumers and strengthen a brand. Branding strategies are needed for all corporate and institutional sectors,

especially in the education sector (Girard et al., 2020). Universities must take steps and use methods to determine their strategy to build institutional branding. Marketing and branding are needed by universities to be accepted and embedded in the minds of society. A good branding strategy will create products that can influence people's views.

In general, strategic activities begin with planning, formulation, implementation, and evaluation of their implementation. Strategy really requires accuracy, so starting from the preparation to the implementation of the strategy requires coordination of the various existing elements to achieve a goal optimally (Garipağaoğlu, 2016). All factors that support the implementation of the strategy must be formulated into strengthening data when developing the strategy so that it becomes effective and efficient (Subbarayalu, 2022).

The latest data for 2020 from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) states that in Central Java Province there are 272 tertiary institutions with a classification of 9 PTNs and 263 PTS. The total number of tertiary institutions includes institutes, high schools, academies, and polytechnics. Meanwhile, Ungaran has four PTS and one of them is Ngudi Waluyo University (UNW). Researchers are interested in conducting research at UNW because the campus is still classified as a new university, even though it has previously established a higher education institution since 1994, under the name Nursing Academy (AKPER).

The strategic steps mentioned by Gelder also apply to Higher Education (PT) which will develop its institutions. Researchers use Gelder's theory to analyze brand strategy at UNW. The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze brand positioning strategies, brand identity strategies, brand personality strategies and brand communication strategies at UNW.

In addition to the importance of brand image in a higher education institution, UNW also has its own brand strategy. UNW's brand image is still known for its health college, even though it already has many non-health study programs. UNW has a study program that is

suitable for today's millennial generation. These study programs include retail management and digital business. However, despite these problems, there is a distinct uniqueness to the UNW campus compared to other campuses. UNW's vision is to promote a campus with a healthy culture. This is a unique characteristic of UNW. This vision relates to the UNW curriculum, which is related to healthy culture.

METHOD

In this study, a methodology was used using a qualitative approach with natural characteristics (natural setting) as a direct, descriptive data source. Analysis in qualitative research tends to be carried out by means of inductive analysis, and meaning is essential in qualitative research. Qualitative research aims to explain phenomena in depth through data collection. The type of research used is field study, namely an intensive description and analysis of certain phenomena or social units such as individuals, groups, institutions, or society. Data obtained from interviews, observation and documentation. In this study, researchers need data about the opportunities and challenges faced in the branding process and how the branding strategy is carried out by internal stakeholders towards Ngudi Waluyo University as well as other supporting data. To obtain data, the researcher interviewed several stakeholders at Ngudi Waluyo University using the interview method supported by various tools, such as cell phones as recorders. In fulfilling the validity of this research, data triangulation was carried out with sources, methods, and time. In this study, findings are revealed in the form of a description of an object that was previously unclear and what it is, which then becomes clearer and conclusions are drawn. This conclusion is to answer the formulation of the problem at the beginning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the analysis of branding strategies in this study are four strategies:

positioning, identity, personality, and communication.

Analysis of Branding Positioning Strategy

Brand positioning is a company's method of placing its image in the eyes of consumers or even the general public and judging the value of its advantages and the superiority of the products or services they offer in comparison with other competing brands. UNW has a vision and mission, namely excellence, healthy culture, and international reputation. In UNW's vision, there are three variables: excellence, healthy culture and international reputation. Superior, namely having highly competitive power, meaning having an advantage compared to other tertiary institutions. Having a healthy culture is the key to achieving excellence, as this university is the embryo of health education at the Nursing Academy (AKPER). A healthy culture must be achieved in all its components, from healthy behavior to healthy work to healthy interactions. So healthy here is not only physically, but also psychologically and socially. International reputation, namely being able to compete at the international level, where the quality of education is also expected to have an international reputation.

UNW's vision is to become a superior university with a healthy culture and international reputation. Superior, namely having high competitive power, meaning that it has an advantage compared to other tertiary institutions. Having a healthy culture is the key to achieving excellence and being healthy in all aspects. The mission of Ngudi Waluyo University is as follows:

- a) Organizing education and teaching in various fields of science, technology and art that are superior, have a healthy culture, and have an international reputation.
- b) Carry out innovative research and community service in various fields of science, technology and art that are superior, have a healthy culture, and have an international reputation.
- c) Building a university management system that has accountability, acceptability, and a healthy organizational culture.

- d) Building a healthy and mutually beneficial cooperation network with domestic and foreign stakeholders

The UNW goals are as follows:

1. Obtain recognition as a university with an international reputation by compiling and developing national standards for higher education towards international standards.
2. Producing ethical and healthy human resources for community development
3. Improve the competitiveness of all educational products by developing a structured and sustainable higher education quality assurance system.
4. Have a healthy academic life based on national cultural values and UNW identity.
5. Having and developing a research culture among lecturers and students in accordance with their respective scientific fields
6. Implementation of community service activities based on research results to solve actual problems in society based on social responsibility to the community.
7. Forming cooperation with other relevant institutions or agencies both domestically and abroad to broaden the horizons of the institution
8. Have an organizational governance system that implements healthy cultural values.

UNW comes from two words that have their own meaning, namely *Ngudi*, which means looking for, and *Waluyo*, which means healthy, healthy here not only physically but psychologically and socially. UNW's tagline is Healthy Culture UNW. Having a healthy culture is a key to achieving excellence, which is UNW's embryo, namely from the Health Education Academy of Nursing (AKPER). The healthy culture to be achieved is in all its component aspects, for example, healthy behavior, healthy work, and healthy interactions.

On the other hand, the meaning of the name *Ngudi* is seeking, and *waluyo* is healthy. Healthy not only physically but also psychologically and socially. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNW sent the most volunteers compared to other universities such as UGM, UNNES, and UNDIP. This is a reflection of the healthy culture of the UNW campus.

UNW's tagline is Healthy Culture. Having a healthy culture is a key to achieving excellence, which is UNW's embryo, namely from the

Health Education Academy of Nursing (*AKPER*). The healthy culture to be achieved is in all its component aspects, for example, healthy behavior, healthy work, and healthy interactions.

Analysis of Branding Identity Strategy

Brand identity is a set of aspects that build brand representation, brand background, brand principles, and the goals and ambitions of the brand itself. UNW has a meaningful symbol, namely that UNW is based on sincerity and a neutral and cultured attitude in participating in educating the nation so as to achieve a glorious Indonesia. The UNW symbol has a meaning according to its motif, namely the image of a world map in Indonesia, symbolizing the presence of UNW as a global institution in Indonesia. The inscription UNW in a circle represents the abbreviated name of the higher education institution, namely Ngudi Waluyo University. The color of the symbol is yellow, which symbolizes glory and nobility in improving people's welfare. It is used for the basic color of the symbol; black represents a neutral and authoritative attitude; it is used for UNW's writing color; golden symbolizes brilliantness; it is used for the basic color of images of the Indonesian archipelago; and white symbolizes institutions that play an active role in developing science and technology to improve people's welfare. UNW comes from two words that have their own meaning, namely *Ngudi*, which means looking for, and *Waluyo*, which means healthy, healthy here not only physically but psychologically and socially.

On the other hand, UNW has non-health study programs with nursing study program accreditation that got an A and the others are good or very good. The D4 Retail Business Management study program and the Digital Business S1 study program are two new study programs that are UNW's breakthroughs in the current era, an era where everything is digital, which is suitable for millennial students.

Meanwhile, academic quality at UNW is always maintained, from lesson planning to implementation. During the implementation period, monitoring is always held three times.

Monitoring is carried out at the beginning, middle and end of implementation. So to improve or maintain the quality of learning when there are obstacles, don't wait until the implementation is complete; this can be conveyed during monitoring.

Academic quality at Ngudi Waluyo University (UNW) is always maintained, starting from lesson planning to implementation, because UNW has a routine agenda, namely monitoring. UNW's vision is to become a superior university with a healthy culture and international reputation. In addition, UNW Campus Accreditation is B, while for the nursing study program it is A, and for other study programs that is good and very good. Study programs at UNW are not only in health; there are already many non-health study programs ranging from education, law, management, and others.

Analysis of Personality Branding Strategy

Brand personality is developed to add to the attractiveness of a brand in the eyes of consumers. Ngudi Waluyo University (UNW) has several competent and accomplished stakeholders. In 2022, Prof. Dr. Subyantoro, M. Hum., as the Chancellor of UNW, received an award for Indonesian achievement figures from the National Achievement Care Forum (FPPB). He was covered several times as an inspirational figure in education by the *Wawasan* and *Jateng Pos Award* newspapers. Homebase Prof. Dr. Subyantoro, M. Hum., namely Semarang State University, is known as an expert in psycholinguistics and forensic linguistics.

Another outstanding UNW stakeholder is the Chairman of the Ngudi Waluyo Foundation (YNW), namely Prof. Dr. DYP Sugiharto, M.Pd., Kons., who was once the Coordinator of Kopertis Region VI Central Java, where previously he was Chair of LP3 and Chair of the Unnes Senate. In 2012, he became Coordinator of Kopertis Region VI Central Java, where he is still an active teacher. In the same year, he started the Ngudi Waluyo College of Health Sciences (STIKES) to become Ngudi Waluyo University. Prof. Dr. DYP Sugiharto, M.Pd., Kons., has joined Ngudi Waluyo since the inception of

Ngudi Waluyo; he has been a lecturer at Ngudi Waluyo.

UNW has a program that other campuses don't have, namely a scholarship program for students who are less intelligent and can't afford it. The scholarship program is OK Work, Yes College (KOKY). In this program, UNW collaborates with 58 companies around the campus. Those who enter the program can be assisted in getting a job on campus. Before plunging into the collaborative work, they will be given training. The training is in collaboration with the Job Training Institute (LPK).

Meanwhile, UNW also cooperates with schools. This collaboration involves teachers in Central Java or even at the national level. The collaboration is carried out four times in one semester.

Analysis of Branding Communication Strategy

Brand communication is the company's efforts to be able to communicate its brand to consumers, which is also included in the brand strategy. In 2022, there will be 50 UNW Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) for partner schools from areas around Semarang, for example, Cepu, Blora, Temanggung, Purworejo, Purbalingga, Banyumas, Kendal and so on. As for practice or service land, there are 100 lands spread throughout Indonesia, for example, in Danacita, Kemenkumham, and so on. In 2023, there will be 10 MOUs with partner schools, and for tri dharma, there will be as many as 21. An example is with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in Central Java, PT. Pungkook Indonesia and others (attached). UNW also has an MOU with the Government of the State of Timor Leste, this is done in order to carry out UNW's branding at the international level.

UNW has a strategy to attract prospective students. PMB UNW has two strategies, namely an active strategy and a passive strategy. The active strategy is promotional, namely through many things such as social media, billboards, and all other promotional strategies, including promotions to several schools, especially those that have collaborated with UNW. Mobile registration is also carried out like an expo event.

Everything is done to produce. With this, UNW is hyperactive in taking students.

UNW carries out promotions through print media both regionally and nationally, as well as through regional radio. UNW is also collaborating with the Central Java Provincial Education Office. In addition, promotions are carried out through alumni. Alumni are lifelong brands that can go anywhere and are not limited by time. With this, the campus strives to provide maximum service so that they have good opinions and share these opinions with the public (Hadisoebroto & Subandoro, 2022). Alumni also have a network with campuses, namely through alumni careers. Alumni career is a place to provide various types of information, including information on job openings and information on social services.

Various scholarships owned by UNW, namely scholarships from the government, include *Bidikmisi*, *Kartu Indonesia Pintar* (KIP) and Kemendikbud scholarships. Meanwhile, UNW has an employee training program. Employee classes can be scholarship classes, regular classes, employee classes, or KOKY classes. It can be seen from the data from the New Student Admissions (PMB) section that there were 479 students participating in the KOKY program and 63 scholarship students.

Branding is done by advertising on all media, from campus social media for all UNW residents and study programs to faculties that have their own social media accounts. Everything that PMB UNW did, starting from how students get students, staff get students, agency systems, and social media systems. Meanwhile, UNW has a channel, namely UNW TV, a kind of podcast about UNW. For each study program, the faculty will get a schedule to promote each section. Various breakthrough programs also have a high chance. It can be seen from the data from the New Student Admissions (PMB) section that there were 479 students participating in the KOKY program and 63 scholarship students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has provided insights into the branding strategies employed by Ngudi Waluyo University (UNW) in Semarang Regency. UNW's brand positioning strategy is anchored in its vision and mission, striving to become a superior university with a healthy culture and international reputation. The university emphasizes the importance of maintaining and improving academic quality through regular monitoring.

The brand identity strategy at UNW centers around its symbol, which reflects the values of sincerity, neutral and cultured attitude, and the pursuit of a glorious Indonesia through education. The logo itself holds significant meaning through its colors and patterns, further contributing to UNW's brand identity. Additionally, UNW offers study programs tailored to the needs of the millennial generation.

Brand communication plays a crucial role in UNW's branding strategy, with the university actively engaging in Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with various agencies, schools, and government institutions. These partnerships, along with the KOKY program, contribute to the university's outreach and collaboration efforts.

Based on the research findings, the brand communication strategy emerged as a prominent aspect of UNW's branding. To further strengthen the brand, it is recommended that UNW increase its visibility and engagement on social media platforms. Creating daily vlogs or producing millennial-oriented content related to UNW can help foster a stronger connection with the target audience and enhance brand recognition.

By implementing these recommendations and leveraging their existing branding strategies, UNW can continue to build a strong brand image, attract talented students and faculty, and establish its position as a reputable institution in the higher education landscape.

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