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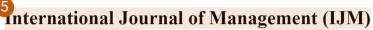**Excluded search repositories:**
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THE FORMATION OF BRANDING FOR TOURISM VOCATIONAL HIGHER INSTITUTION: INDONESIAN STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The literature on educational institution branding is still in development, so there are not many meaningful studies on higher education branding. The existing research is more of a quantitative nature that links branding with other variables and in particular, branding research is mostly done in the context of business organizations. This study aims to explore the formation of branding in vocational higher education institutions in the tourism sector in Indonesia. Data was collected using Focus Group Discussions and interviews from tourism stakeholders. This study uses a thematic analysis, namely open coding and axial coding. The results showed that there are main attributes in the formation of branding, namely identity, alumni, aspects of management, quality of human resources and products and competitiveness. With the formation of these branding attributes, this research contributes to measuring the branding of tourism vocational education.

Key words: Branding, Stakeholders, Tourism Vocational Institution

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1. INTRODUCTION

Quality improvement is one of the prerequisites for humans to enter an era filled with healthy and quality competition. Where the existence of Higher Education as an educational institution

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will not be separated from this global competition. For this reason, quality improvement is the main agenda in improving the quality of higher education in order to survive in the global era. TQM (Total Quality Management) or what we usually know as Integrated Quality Management is an integrated quality improvement concept in the field of management.

Globalization that has intensified has led to increased competition among human resources for knowledge, talent, economic improvement, investment, and others. In this quest, education becomes a marketable product and applies a branding strategy. After a theoretical review of the concepts of college marketing and branding, this article examines the contribution of education in general, and higher education, in particular, to college branding strategies. It is proposed to analyze the suitability of the tourism branding strategy and to investigate the role played by higher education in human resource improvement strategies.

Quality education is an institution that produces output according to the needs and wants of stakeholders. These institutions package their education with quality, competence, excellence, competitive and professional. Quality output is determined by the quality of inputs and processes. In general, there are two educational orientations in nation-building, namely individual orientation and community orientation. Individual orientation, education plays a role in the formation of educated people, namely through the process of developing self-potential. The abilities possessed by educated individuals are a means for self-understanding and the environment, adaptation efforts and participation in change, the main actors for change (innovators), and have a predictive and anticipatory orientation. Thus, educated humans can become role models for others (reference behavior) and have a share in building society (society building). For this reason, educated humans must have a participatory advantage for the realization of a comprehensive social transformation.

In fulfilling the development needs of the tourism industry, tourism higher education institutions are required to improve the quality of teachers, improve infrastructure, and improve teaching systems and curricula that can accommodate scientific needs, skills, and market share competencies. One of the problems faced is the low availability of educational personnel (instructors) who meet the qualifications applied by the government, especially for higher education levels in tourism. Thus, the development of the education system and the implementation of education programs specifically in the field of higher education are needed to improve the professionalism of human resources in the industry and overall competitiveness of tourism, as Alves (2010) states:

"…to enhance the employees' professionalism in the industry and the competitiveness of the hotel units, through the development of the education system and the implementation of specialized educational programs in higher education…".

This means that the purpose of implementing education programs specifically in the field of higher education is to maintain the long-term prosperity of the tourism industry through sustainable development that pays special attention to tourism human resources (HR) education, especially expertise which in turn will increase the professionalism of service delivery.

Several studies on stakeholder analysis have been carried out since Reavil (1998), including Brown (1999) reviewed the needs and expectations of stakeholders in higher education, and concluded that the relationship between universities and stakeholders is a pathway for maintaining higher education institutions. Furthermore, Burrows (1999) emphasizes the importance of understanding and mapping the character of stakeholders, so that it becomes important information for struggles in formulating strategies for institutions to increase their competitiveness until Baldwin (2002) emphasizes that stakeholder relations

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with universities significantly contribute. on the implementation of quality management in universities.

Specifically, Chapleo and Simms (2010) have described thirty types of stakeholders that have relevance to the University of Portsmouth (United Kingdom) that have been identified, with twelve groups that have 'special interests. Most of the results of the case study research provide a big picture of the linkages between universities and leading to a branding experience that is different from the college level. What kind of branding concept has been widely applied to products and services in tourism with the reason that the branding of tourism universities is still a relatively new phenomenon in the world of higher education both nationally and internationally (Syahrial&Badollahi, 2020; Amiruddin, 2020; Sharhan& Bora, 2020).

There is a significant development in the importance of branding in the context of education, but there is still little academic discussion about branding in higher education (Clark et al, 2020; Belanger et al., 2002; Bulotaite, 2003). Chen (2019) suggests that further research relating to higher education brands should be able to explore additional attributes to improve the quality of university management and their effects, and such research can identify factors that improve higher education branding outcomes. Therefore, this study contributes to branding in higher education in particular the factors forming branding in tourism vocational education institutions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Branding brings something ordinary and enhances it in ways that make it more valuable and valuable (Kotler, 2006: 3). For a company brand that represents a strong and long-lasting asset, the true driver of value that has increased the company's success. A brand is an effective tool for communicating the benefits and value of a product or service. Brand is a guarantee of quality, origin and performance, thereby increasing the value felt by customers and reducing risks in buying decisions (Kotler, 2006: 4).
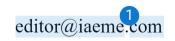
Practically (Balmer, 2001) defines branding as an attempt to introduce the attributes of organizational identity in the form of a well-defined branding proposition. Brand identity is all the parts that shape people's perceptions of a brand. There are various elements in the brand identity that are used to convey the character, commitment, and value of the product so that it is better known by consumers. In the context of higher education, Wæraas&Solbakk (2009) emphasized that branding is one way to overcome problems that exist in higher education due to competition and changes in budgeting and existing branding including the use of a vision statement, visual design and the core values offered.

The concept of branding in a higher education perspective can stand alone which can then be developed through certain methods and processes and if the branding is combined effectively with institutional communication by an educational institution it will help achieve strategically planned goals (Buono& Fortezza, 2017). Competition between higher education institutions appears more in the form of creating superior outputs or students. In order to avoid the risk of lower enrollment and income, higher education institutions are now driven by the renewal process, questioning themselves about their own results, by first analyzing the institution's brand reputation in relation to their target customers.

The branding of higher education institutions is triggered by increasing competencies in the education industry so that it requires a strategy in the management of an educational institution. Clark et al. (2020) concluded that increasing branding aims to increase the number of students, increase student loyalty, strengthen alumni networks, produce a competent workforce and obtain support from the business sector and differentiate these institutions from other higher

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education actors. In other words, this aspect is influenced by internal factors and external factors that provide quality and trust to customers and users of the educational institution. Higher education institutions must differentiate themselves by creating and fostering relationships in new ways with students, alumni and other stakeholders, for example using networking events, social media campaigns, tailored clothing, formal wear and so on, and building relationships between institutions and stakeholders (Dennis et al., 2016).

Branding in the education sector includes managing the brand identity, meaning, image and reputation of educational institutions. This means that these three elements have a close relationship in reflecting the quality of an educational institution. However, Hemsley-Brown et al (2016) have the view that the diversity of the higher education sector provides a confusing environment for the development and management of brand identity, meaning, image and reputation so that they view the study of the relationship between brand identity, meaning, image and reputation in the higher education sector is an important topic to be studied in depth. Based on these thoughts, in the context of branding, this study tries to explore exploratively the attributes that shape branding in higher education institutions in particular in vocational education.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a qualitative study using an explorative approach where this research has tried to explore data to produce attributes related to branding in vocational higher education in tourism. This research was conducted at one of the tourism vocational higher education institutions in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, namely the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic. The research subject is the formation of branding at the educational institution. The data taken came from Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and interviews with stakeholders including students, heads of industry associations, heads of professional associations, lecturers, parents, and alumni (Table 1 and Table 2). In conducting interviews, this study used semi-structured questions to explore informants' views of branding. The analysis used in this study used a thematic analysis consisting of open coding and axial coding. Open coding is done to produce indicators and axial coding is done to produce branding-forming variables for educational institutions. To confirm the wetness and reliability of the data and the results of the coding analysis, the second FGD was conducted with experts.

Table 1. Informants who Contributed during the FGD

No	Participant'sInstitute	Code
1	Member of the Regional Representative Council of South Sulawesi (Resource Persons)	**FGD01**
2	Chief ofIndonesian Hotel General Manager Association	**FGD02**
3	GM of AstonHotel	**FGD03**

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4	Chief ofAssociation of The Indonesian Tours And Travel Agencies	**FGD04**
5	Tourism Observer	**FGD05**
6	The representative of the Association of Indonesian Hotels and Restaurants in South Sulawesi	**FGD06**
7	The representative of the South Sulawesi Tourism Office	**FGD07**
8	Travel Agency Manager	**FGD08**
9	Chairman of the Indonesian Tourism Industry Association	**FGD09**
10	The representative of the Indonesian Tour Guide Association	**FGD10**
11	Lecturer 1	**FGD11**
12	Lecturer 2	**FGD12**

Table 2. Interview Informants

No	Types of Participants	Code
1	Lecturer 1	**WW01**
2	Lecturer 2	**WW02**
3	Vocational Middle School Teacher	**WW03**
4	Alumni / Industry 1	**WW04**
5	Alumni / Entrepreneur 2	**WW05**
6	Student 1	**WW06**
7	Student 2	**WW07**

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8.	Parents	**WW08**
9	Government 1	**WW09**
10	Government 2	**WW10**
11	Government 3	**WW11**

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis of the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic branding was carried out by extracting the qualitative data from the FGD and interview results into open coding and axial coding. Based on the results of the thematic analysis, the resulting axial coding is the variable that forms the branding of Makassar Tourism Polytechnic. Meanwhile, open coding is an indicator that forms these variables. This study found that there are 5 variables (axial coding) forming branding in tourism vocational education institutions, namely identity, alumni, aspects of management, quality of Human Resources and Products and Competitiveness. The results of the analysis of the forming indicators for each variable (axial coding) can be seen in the following analysis.

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of FGD and Interview Results about the identity of branding

No	The theme emerged from the Interview (Open coding)	*Axial coding*	Data Sources	Informant sources
1	Identity through symbols / designs / images	Identity	Interview	**WW01, WW03, WW06,**
2	Student appearance	Identity	FGD andInterview	**FGD05. FGD08, WW08, WW10**
3	Appearances of lecturers and staff	Identity	FGD andInterview	**FGD01. FGD09, WW03, WW18**

Branding identity can be depicted in certain symbols, designs or images that characterize a product. In particular, the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic also has an identity in the form of symbols, designs and images that give Makassar Tourism Polytechnic its own characteristics. This identity can be seen in the color symbols used and the uniforms that characterize the campus. 3 informants specifically expressed this theme, namely WW01, WW03 and WW06. Based on the interview, it is known that the Makassar Poltekpar has its own character through the uniforms used by lecturers and staff and students. FGD05. FGD08, WW08, WW10

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Table 4. Thematic Analysis of FGD Results and Interviews on Alumni Existence

No	The theme emerged from the Interview (Open coding)	*Axial coding*	Data Sources	Informant Sources
1	Alumni who have quality	Alumni Existence	FGD and Interview	**FGD03, WW04, PP01**
2	Strong alumni network	Alumni Existence	FGD and Interview	**FGD02, FGD04, FGD11, FGD12, WW04, WW05, WW08**
3	Alumni contributions	Alumni Existence	FGD and Interview	**FGD01, FGD02, FGD 05, FGD07, FGD08, WW04, WW05, WW06, WW07**

The data extracted from the FGD and interview results obtained 3 (three) themes that formed the Makassar Poltekpar branding in relation to the existence of alumni. Themes that form indicators of alumni existence consisting of alumni who have quality, strong alumni networks, and alumni contributions. As a vocational education institution, Makassar Tourism Polytechnic produces graduates who become alumni. The process of forming quality outputs is of course produced through an internal process in the implementation of education so that these outputs become alumni who have quality according to their respective fields. The quality of this alumni has become the criticism of several informants because the quality of the alumni is a significant indicator in forming the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic branding (FGD03). The alumni network is the main force to accommodate graduates from the Pawiisata Polytechnic (Makassar Tourism Polytechnic). The existence of alumni spread throughout Indonesia and specifically in South Sulawesi provides benefits for other alumni who have just graduated or other alumni who are about to change jobs because they support each other. The industry also sees that Makassar Poltekpar (Makassar Tourism Polytechnic) alumni support each other in terms of job information and other work-related opportunities. Based on the interview above, it is known that there are 3 things, which make Makassar Tourism Polytechnic still have the existence of alumni. First, the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic includes its alumni into the world of the tourism industry so that these people can become reinforcers. So that people can be sure of the quality. the second with the big name of the Ministry of Tourism has become a certain

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point here, and the third, the social activities carried out by the lecturers in terms of guidance or outreach have greatly felt the impact of the community.

Table 5. Thematic Analysis of FGD Results and Interviews on Management Aspects

No	The theme emerged from the Interview (Open coding)	*Axial coding*	Data Sources	Informant Sources
1	Brand communication to the public	Management Aspects	FGD and Interview	**FGD01, FGD02, FGD03, FGD06, WW02, WW08, WW09, WW10**
2	The vision and mission are recognized by the public	Management Aspects	FGD and Interview	**FGD02, FGD04, FGD05, FGD07, WW01, WW04, WW05**
3	High commitment to implementing the education program	Management Aspects	FGD and Interview	**FGD01, FGD03, FGD12, WW01, WW02, WW04**
4	Collaboration with stakeholders	Management aspects	FGD and Interview	**FGD01, FGD02, FGD07, WW01, WW02, WW04, WW09, WW10, WW11**

The results of axial coding get 4 (four) sub-themes that form the management variable. The sub-theme is open coding which consists of brand communication to the public, a vision and mission known by the public, high commitment in implementing educational programs and collaboration with stakeholders. The brand communication from the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic is not optimal. This is evidenced by the assumption from the community that studying at the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic is quite expensive because there are practical activities that require additional costs so that people feel that the burden of education costs that must be spent on accommodation costs is quite large. Furthermore, several informants said that the vision and mission of the campus needed to be known by the public so that they understood what the quality targets of the educational institutions were. Currently, Poltekpar Makassar's ability to convey the vision and mission to the public is still not optimal and it needs ways that are easier for stakeholders to understand.

As a campus that has been around for almost 30 years, the Makassar Poltekpar as a vocational education institution has become a contributing institution for human resources in the tourism sector in Indonesia and enthusiasts are increasing from year to year. Therefore,

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several respondents said that one of the components forming branding is a high commitment to organize vocational education in tourism. Industry and entrepreneurs are the main stakeholders in improving the quality of education. The industry also realizes that the Makassar Poltekpar has quite a close relationship because the Makassar Poltekpar always involves them to collaborate with them. Likewise, with other stakeholders such as the government, the campus is part of tourism development planning in the region through involvement in the tourism development master plan.

Table 6. Thematic Analysis of FGD and Interview Results on the Quality of Human Resources for Educators

No	The theme emerged from the Interview (Open coding)	*Axial coding*	Data Sources	Informant Sources
1	Quality of lecturers	Quality of human resources	FGD and Interview	**FGD02, FGD03, FGD08, WW04, WW05, WW06, WW07, WW10**
2	Lecturer individual abilities	Quality of human resources	Interview	**WW03, WW04, WW06,WW07**

The resulting open coding in relation to the quality of human resources consists of the quality of the lecturers and the individual abilities of the lecturers. One of the respondents stated that the Makassar Poltekpar teaching staff had the quality according to the competencies taught to students. However, this is also influenced by the individual ability of the lecturer. One of the informants also said that the Makassar Poltekpar was known by the community and other stakeholders because there were several lecturers who were directly involved in their independent activities with these stakeholders because they had individual abilities with certain competencies that other educators did not have.

Table 7. Thematic Analysis of FGD Results and Interviews on Products and Competitiveness

No	The theme emerged from the Interview (Open coding)	*Axial coding*	Data Sources	Informant Sources
1	Educational programs have competitiveness	Products and Competitiveness	FGD and Interview	**FGD01, FGD03, FGD12, WW01,**

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2	Educational products have their own characteristics	Competitiveness Products	FGD and Interview	**FGD01. FGD09, WW03, WW18**
3	The spirit of entrepreneurship is built into education	Competitiveness Products	FGD and Interview	**FGD02, FGD04, FGD11, WW04, WW05, WW08**
4	Various educational programs to accommodate stakeholder needs	Products and competitiveness	FGD and Interview	**FGD01, FGD02, FGD07, WW01, WW04, WW09, WW10, WW11**
5	Multitasking Content	Products and Competitiveness	FGD and Interview	**FGD02, FGD03, FGD08, WW04, WW05, WW07, WW10**
6	Cheap tuition fees	Competitiveness Products	FGD and Interview	**FGD01, FGD02, FGD03, FGD06, WW02, WW08, WW09, WW10**
7	Get a job quickly	Competitiveness Products	Interview	**WW01, WW03, WW06, WW07, WW08**

Based on the data extracted from the FGD and interviews, there are 7 (seven) sub-themes that form the product and competitiveness variables. According to the informants, these sub-

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themes are indicators in the Makassar Tourism Polytechnic branding, namely educational programs have competitiveness, educational products have their own characteristics, entrepreneurial spirit is built-in education, varied educational programs to accommodate stakeholder needs, multitasking content in education, education costs cheap and quick jobs.

Based on the results of the interview, it is known that the Makassar Poltekpar has high competitiveness products. One of the informants revealed that he wanted to study at this institution because he saw the education program that other tourism institutions did not have and the existing education program offered competencies that were really needed by the informants in accordance with industry demands. Furthermore, education products have their own characteristics because the education programs offered at this institution are more specific to their respective fields in the tourism business. According to one respondent, they can be led to one type of expertise even though they are also given general skills in the tourism sector. Furthermore, entrepreneurial skills can be used as branding because one of the informants saw that there were alumni who were successful in running a café business. However, the informant also emphasized that entrepreneurial ability is still not evenly distributed and strong for all alumni so that it needs strengthening in the education process on campus. The needs of stakeholders, especially users, really need competent and quality human resources. Some of the main informants from the industry saw that the campus had been able to provide internship students and graduates according to the competencies needed by the industry so that the industry no longer conducted special training for HR because Makassar Poltekpar was able to provide quality human resources.
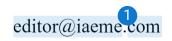
One of the alumni saw that multi-tasking is very much needed at this time even though there is a specific education program, but students need to be equipped with multitasking skills for students. The trend with the development of IT means that some work must be done simultaneously and requires one person to comply with multitasking abilities. Education costs are the main drawer for studying at an institution. As a state-owned educational institution, POltekpar Makassar actually offers an inexpensive education program. One of the informants emphasized that actually studying at the Makassar Poltekpar is very cheap because students have been covered by the costs of practicing in the lab and field practice but this has not been well socialized. The absorption of alumni after they graduate can be a branding force. Based on the results of a survey from the campus that almost 75% of the alumni got a job within 3 months and even about 40% of students got a job before they graduated. One of the informants also emphasized that studying at a vocational campus such as the Makassar Poltekpar provides competencies for students that they can apply directly so that they are ready to work and on average when they graduate or that before graduating they get a job offer or the application they submit can be accepted directly.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of the thematic analysis show that there are 4 (four) variables that form the branding of tourism vocational education, namely identity, alumni, aspects of management, quality of human resources and products and competitiveness based on stakeholder perspectives. By exploring qualitative data, indicators are also formed on each of the variables mentioned above. In the identity element, there are 3 (three) indicators, namely symbols/designs/images, student appearances and lecturers and staff appearances. In the element of alumni existence, there are 3 (three) indicators that can be used as a measure for this element, namely qualified alumni, strong alumni networks and alumni contributions. In the element of institutional management, there are 4 (four) measurement indicators, namely brand communication to the public, vision and mission known by the public, high commitment to implementing educational programs and collaboration with stakeholders. In the element of

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human resource quality, there are 2 (two) indicators that can be extracted, namely the quality of the lecturers and the individual abilities of the lecturers. Furthermore, in product elements and competitiveness, there are 7 (seven) indicators that can be used as attributes, namely educational programs have competitiveness, educational products have their own characteristics, entrepreneurial spirit is built into education, varied educational programs to accommodate stakeholder needs, multitasking content costs cheap education and get a job fast. The indicators mentioned above are in line with what Dennis et al (2016) expressed in order to create educational institutionsbrading through networking, social media campaigns, tailored clothing, formal wear, and so on, and building relationships between institutions and stakeholders.

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