

MILLENNIALS' TARGETED-MARKET BRANDING STRATEGIES OF DENTAL CLINIC

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Abstract

Brand knowledge and perception of a clinic are very important in targeting a specific target market. In order to expand the target market, an old-style denturist centre is changing to futuristic dental clinic. Retargeting to the millennials segment means the clinic must get along with their behavior and evaluate their knowledge and perception of this clinic. Social media marketing as one of the branding tools has been conducted but shows no significant result. This paper will present the analysis of brand knowledge and perception of millennial patients in the clinic by using a quantitative semantic scale survey and qualitative thematic analysis. The results show 1) some of the clinic's characteristics are suitable for the millennials' behaviour, such as professionalism, design, and service quality, 2) the pricing strategy of the clinic might not be suitable with the millennials; 3) not all millennials know all the treatments that can be done in the clinic. From those interpretations, the researchers formulated 2 alternative branding strategies, which are rebranding and sister brand. The rebranding strategy will include repositioning, redesigning, and relaunching, while the sister brand will generate a new brand that maintains the value proposition of the main clinic but with a new pricing strategy. The study recommends the clinic to do brand concept testing to finally implement the strategy.

Keywords: Branding Strategy, Millennials' Behavior, Dental Clinic, Rebranding & Sister Brand.

1. Introduction

Riset Kesehatan Dasar (Riskesdas) 2018 showed that 57.6% of the Indonesian population experienced oral problems and only about 10.2% had received dental services. Many Indonesian people still rely on "tukang gigi-denturist" to solve their dental problems. They believe that denturists can solve their problems faster and less expensive than going to dentists. (Pratama et al., 2020) The history of denturists in Indonesia started from the Dutch colonization, when dentists only served the European and the rich. Denturists became the only choice for the citizens to treat their dental problems. (Pratama et al., 2020) In the 1970s, there was a famous denturist in Indonesia, especially in West Java, known as "*Tukang Gigi Simpang Lima*". This place was founded by Tjiang Brothers at Asia Afrika Street, Bandung.

As time went on, Tjiang's second generation graduated as dentists. In 1999, the first child graduated from dental school and started her first career being a dentist at Simpang Lima. Along with technological & human developments, "*Tukang Gigi Simpang Lima*" upgraded its service from denturists to Asia Afrika Dental Clinic. Firstly known as denturist, people know this place as the dentures-maker and its current market is targeting elderly. The CEO of this company wants to reach a broader market, especially the millennials. This retargeting goal must be in line with the branding strategy of the clinic.

Many branding strategies in order to reach the millennials target are focusing on social media, since all the millennials are social media users (Moro & Rita, 2018; Cham et al., 2020). This clinic had started the social media strategy to promote the clinic, but it showed no significant result. There might be several reasons including unrelated contents or the unawareness of the team about the millennial's behavior related to their knowledge and perception.

To understand how the branding strategy must be developed, the researcher must understand brand knowledge and perception of the millennials towards Asia Afrika Dental Clinic by answering these questions: 1) What the millennials know about Asia Afrika Dental Clinic? 2) How are the millennials' perceptions towards Asia Afrika Dental Clinic? 3) What are the alternative branding strategies to reach the millennials?

In this paper, the researchers will discuss the factors that might influence the branding strategy of a clinic, such as the brand knowledge and perception. The factors will be analyzed to propose some fresh solutions of branding strategies to reach the millennials market.

2. Review of the Relevant Literature

In this paper, the researcher needs to identify some of the terminologies that will be discussed and analyzed. These terms include: 1) Millennials' Behavior 2) Brand Knowledge & Perception 3) Branding Strategies.

2.1 Millennials' Behavior

From the statistics, it is shown that Z generation & millennials are the highest population in Indonesia around 50% (BPS, 2020). Purchasing power of this group is considered very big, also more connected and gives them easy access to the products and services they want (Silvia, 2019).

The generation with high technical knowledge, like the Z generation & millennials, will show an intense pro-active attitude when it comes to purchasing activity, searching for more information and sources before making a purchasing decision (Gesmundo et al., 2022). This knowledge and ease towards the diversity that summarizes this generation allows us to regard them as a group hard to reach since this knowledge gives them the assertiveness to question truthfulness in advertising communications (Fernandez, 2009; Lazarevic & Petrovic-lazarevic, 2007).

Decision making of the generation was affected by two main factors. The first one is the peer recommendations either directly or through social networks and might be influenced by their parents' spending habits. This current condition is implemented as this generation tends to search for peer acceptance to increase their self-trust and creating a sense of belonging within certain group or social context (Gesmundo et al., 2022; Fernandez, 2009).

2.2 Brand Knowledge & Perception

The healthcare context is one of the world's largest and most comprehensive developing industries that is moving from a disease-centric model to a patient-centric model (Siripipatthanakul & Sixl-Daniell, 2021). It is very important to hear patient's opinion and know how well patient's knowledge about the healthcare brand. A patient-centered brand creates a more engaging patient experience and fundamental practices for providing quality care that improve patient satisfaction ratings in hospitals that implement patient-centered care (Das, 2017).

Brand knowledge can be measured by the brand awareness and the brand image by knowing the depth & the breadth from the patients. The depth of brand knowledge can be described by spending more time with the patients to interview and focus group discussion with them, while the breadth can be known from the survey whether people know the brand or not (Aurier & Mejia, 2021).

On the other hand, brand perception is patient's belief toward a product or service. From the knowledge, and everything that the patients see, hear, or feel, patients will process them into a perception. Brand's perception is very important as the basis for making brand and marketing strategies. The bad perception might be the evaluation of the company to improve, while the

good perception will be the point of difference between the competitors (Cham et al., 2020; Helal et al., 2018).

2.3 Branding Strategies

A brand strategy is a framework that determines how businesses present themselves to customers and stand out among competitors. Branding strategy may be classified into functional and intentional branding (Al-Zyoud, 2018; Rao et al., 2004). In service design, functional branding involves creating or improving services with the aim of enhancing user experience. This will enable a company to differentiate by positively reinforcing the value of its brand through design. While intentional branding is more authentic, sincere, confident, and valuable that includes branding decisions that are made when developing the look and feel of a company to create the best identity that reflects its target market (Al-Zyoud, 2018; Rick, 2008).

Nowadays, branding strategy is majorly communicated through social media. Social media tools within the marketing frame appeared to be more intentional branding tool than functional, as it presented for the marketers all the needed tools to control the messages that reach their customers about the brand. On the other hand, the branding and marketing communication strategy must be aligned with the target audiences and their behavior. This is the reason why marketers should really understand their target market. Even before starting the branding strategy, the company should think first about business strategy while choosing the target market (Al-Zyoud, 2018; Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

3. Methods

To answer the research questions above, the research conducted mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative data collection. According to Palinkas et al. (2019), mixed methods is defined as research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry. Among the tools that have gained increasing attention in recent years in health services research and health promotion are designs that have been referred to as mixed methods (Almeida, 2018). Quantitative research in this paper was done by distributing questionnaires to 50 millennials (25-40 years old) patients in the clinic asking what kind of treatment that they knew or ever done in the clinic and the perception about design and atmosphere of the clinic. Qualitative research was done by interviewing 5 millennials patients about their knowledge and any recommendation for the clinic.

4. Data Analysis

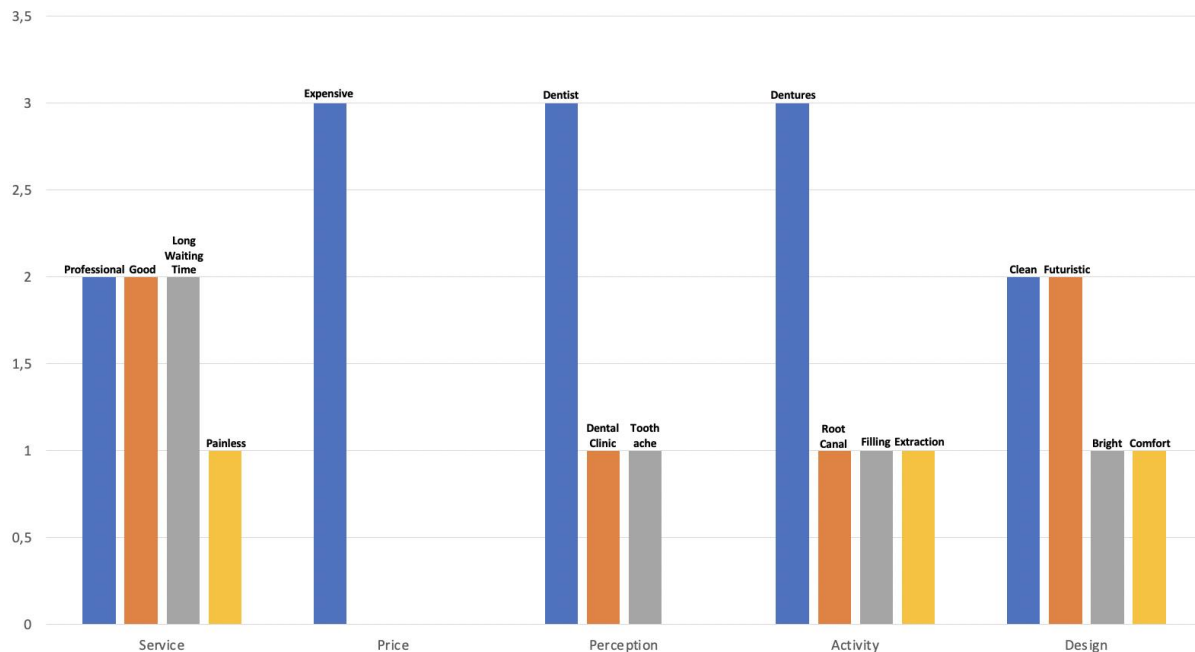
The questionnaires asked several questions by semantic differential scale to test the brand knowledge, such as the kind of treatments that can be done in the clinic and where did the respondents know the clinic. Beside the brand knowledge, there are questions asking the perception of design & atmosphere of the clinic, service quality, and value for money of the treatment. The results are shown on the following table.

Table 1: Brand Knowledge and Perception Questionnaire Result

Brand Knowledge	Brand Perception		
<i>Kind of Treatments</i>	<i>Design & Atmosphere</i>	<i>Service Quality</i>	<i>Value for Money</i>
4.90/8.00 (std dev = 2.64)	4.78/5.00 (std dev = 0.42)	4.74/5.00 (std dev = 0.56)	4.46/5.00 (std dev = 0.71)

The results show that the millennials only know 5 over 8 treatments that are served at Asia Afrika Dental Clinic, 100% of the millennials know the clinic from their relatives (parents or families). The millennials' perception about the clinic is quite good, while the value for money is considered not as worth as the design and service quality.

Beside surveying by semantic differential scale, interviews are needed to know deeply the perception of current millennial patients in the clinic. The interview results are analyzed by using thematic analysis. Thematizing meaning can be understood as related to the interpretation of data, illuminating the underlying or unspoken meanings embodied or hidden in lived experiences (Sundler et al., 2019). This method is used to analyze all phenomenas that might be felt by the millennials in this clinic. The researchers divide into service, price, perception, activity, and design clusters. Several clusters that were found from the interviews are shown on the following graph.



Graph 1: Thematic Analysis of Interviews Questions

The thematic analysis shows several things that the millennial patients perceive about the Asia Afrika Dental Clinic. The first cluster is service with perception of professional but long waiting time, a respondent said, *“the clinic consists of professional dentists and I was treated with root canal treatment with pain-free.”* The second cluster about the price appeared to be sensitive for the target market since the millennials have much spending and the pricing of the clinic is not really fit with the millennials. *“I know this place is the place for denture making from my mother and grandfather, they made their dentures here.”* Many of them know this clinic as the denture-maker place, but some of them also know that the clinic serves other dental treatments. From the interviews, it can be concluded that the millennials look at this clinic as professional and good dentist with most of them doing dentures treatment with clean and futuristic design and ambience. On the other hand, the millennials perceive the treatment price is considered too expensive for them and there are perceptions of long waiting times to be treated in this clinic.

From the survey and interviews that have been done, there are several things that can be interpreted:

1. Some of the clinic's characteristics are suitable with the millennials behavior and must be maintained, such as professionalism, design, and service quality.
2. Pricing strategy of the clinic might be not suitable with the millennials and must be adjusted to reach the millennials market.
3. Not all millennials know all the treatments that can be done in the clinic and all of them came to the clinic based on recommendations from relatives, mostly their parents or families.

The interpretation above leads to some of the alternative branding strategies that might resolve the problems of reaching millennials' market. The alternative branding strategies are as follows:

1. **Rebranding Strategy:** Rebranding is one of the ways that can be used to change some brand elements to stay in line with market needs. According to Mirza et al. (2020), in the case of hospital rebranding from Awal Bros to Primaya, several steps to do the rebranding strategy are redesign, renaming, repositioning, and relaunching. The hospital changed its name and logo, and also made a new slogan named "Here For You" with the meaning that the hospital will always be available for the patients. These strategies turned out to be successful while the brand awareness of this hospital was increasing and pulled brand loyalty towards Primaya Hospital.

The proposed rebranding strategy on this dental clinic might include market repositioning, redesigning, and relaunching. Several key actions that can be done are launching loyalty programs and referral cards and redesigning the logo and facade design. This strategy was made as the previous findings showed that all the millennials know and come to the clinic from the relatives' recommendation. Relaunching with millennials-marketing communication-approach, such as upgrading the social media and collaborating with millennial influencers, also become one of the rebranding strategies.

2. **Sister Brand Strategy:** Sister brand is one of the brand extension strategies which is related to the associative network memory model that comprises a set of nodes and links. A node can activate other nodes through the associations, when a brand is closely linked with a positive image, it might become a potential source of activation for the image node (Le et al., 2019).

This strategy on the clinic will generate a new brand that maintains the value proposition of the main clinic such as professionalism and design, but with a lower pricing strategy that will be suitable with millennials. The sister brand will offer simple and popular dental treatments that can be done by general practitioner such as consultation, scaling, dental filling, root canal treatment, and tooth extraction. On this second strategy, the millennials market will be moved to its sister brand, the main brand will just maintain the current market segment.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to examine the clinic's brand knowledge and perception of the millennial patients to finally formulate the brand strategies. This has been accomplished with a mixed method study of surveys involving 50 millennial patients and interviews involving 5 millennial patients. The study has verified the value proposition that the millennials need from a dental clinic perspective, which are professionalism and futuristic design. Furthermore, the brand's weaknesses have been discovered with the aid of thematic analysis, which are expensive price and long waiting time. The results have implications for the proposed alternative branding strategies, which are rebranding and building sister brand.

For further implementation, the firm needs to do brand concept testing in order to decide which strategy fits the best. This study might be related to other clinics that are going to target the millennial market.

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