

ABSTRAK

Kompetisi dalam industri pendidikan yang kian berkembang membuat Sekolah Murid Merdeka Kotabaru–Yogyakarta melakukan strategi *brand positioning* untuk menunjukkan eksistensi diri di antara kompetitor dan memperluas citra institusi kepada *target market*. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis penerapan *brand positioning* yang dilakukan oleh Sekolah Murid Merdeka Kotabaru–Yogyakarta dalam membangun *brand awareness*. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *brand positioning* Sekolah Murid Merdeka Kotabaru–Yogyakarta diawali dengan perumusan *frame of reference* kemudian mendefinisikan *point of parity* dan *point of difference* lalu merangkumnya ke dalam *brand mantra* yang menjadi landasan komunikasi merek dalam membangun *brand awareness*. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa tim Sekolah Murid Merdeka Kotabaru–Yogyakarta menegaskan *brand positioning* kepada *target market* melalui *social media marketing*, *brand activation*, dan komunitas akar rumput. *Digital campaign* yang dikemas dengan gaya *story telling* menjadi strategi unggulan untuk memperluas jangkauan *brand positioning* dan sehingga *brand image* muncul beriringan dengan *awareness target market*. Penelitian ini juga menggarisbawahi peran *e-word of mouth* sebagai faktor eksternal dalam pembentukan *brand awareness* dan *brand image* terhadap *positioning* sekolah.

Kata kunci: *Branding, Brand Positioning, Brand Awareness*

ABSTRACT

Competition in the growing education industry has made Sekolah Murid Merdeka Kotabaru-Yogyakarta carry out a brand positioning strategy to show its existence among competitors and expand the institution's image to the target market. This study aims to analyze the application of brand positioning carried out by Sekolah Murid Merdeka Kotabaru–Yogyakarta in building brand awareness. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the study show that the brand positioning of Sekolah Murid Merdeka Kotabaru-Yogyakarta begins with the formulation of a frame of reference then defines the point of parity and point of difference and then summarizes it into a brand mantra which is the foundation of brand communication in building brand awareness. This study also found that the Kotabaru-Yogyakarta Independent Student School team emphasized brand positioning to the target market through social media marketing, brand activation, and grassroots communities. Digital campaigns that are packaged with storytelling are a superior strategy to expand the reach of brand positioning and so that the brand image appears in tandem with the awareness of the target market. This study also underlines the role of e-word of mouth as an external factor in the formation of brand awareness and brand image for school positioning.

Keywords: *Branding, Brand Positioning, Brand Awareness,*