Research Article

Competitive Advantage Analysis of Scarf Brands : A Comparative Study of Ash Scarf, Brand Botton Scarf, and Umama

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Abstract: This research examines the competitive advantages of scarf brands in Indonesia by comparing three cases: Ash Scarf, Brand Botton Scarf, and Umama. The study analyzes how each brand employs differentiation and digitalization strategies to achieve a competitive edge in the market. By applying Porter's generic strategies framework and the resource-based view, this research identifies the unique value propositions, target market focus, and digital marketing effectiveness of each brand. The findings reveal distinct approaches to competitive advantage, highlighting the importance of brand positioning, product innovation, and customer engagement in the online and offline landscape.

Keywords: Brand Comparison; Competitive Advantage; Differentiation; Digitalization; Scarf Brands

1. Introduction

The Indonesian Muslim fashion industry, particularly the scarf segment, has experienced substantial growth, driven by increasing consumer demand for diverse and fashionable products. This dynamic market presents both opportunities and challenges for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to establish a strong competitive position. The growth of this sector is supported by Indonesia's large Muslim population and the increasing awareness of modest fashion trends. This study aims to analyze the competitive strategies of three prominent scarf brands in Indonesia: Ash Scarf, Brand Botton Scarf, and Umama. By comparing their approaches to differentiation and digitalization, this research seeks to provide insights into how these brands achieve competitive advantage and cater to different consumer segments.

Ash Scarf, Brand Botton Scarf, and Umama represent a spectrum of business models within the Indonesian scarf market. Ash Scarf focuses on premium, exclusive designs, Brand Botton Scarf emphasizes trendy and affordable options, and Umama is known for its mass-market appeal with a wide variety of styles. This comparative analysis will explore the unique strategies employed by each brand to address the evolving needs and preferences of Indonesian Muslim consumers. The research will also consider the role of brand identity, meaning, image, and reputation (BIMIR) in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions, as highlighted by Hemsley-Brown et al. (2016).

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

2.1. Competitive Advantage

Porter's (1985) generic strategies of cost leadership, differentiation, and focus provide a foundational framework for analyzing how firms achieve competitive advantage. Cost leadership centers on efficiency and low-cost production, differentiation emphasizes uniqueness and distinctiveness, and focus targets specific market segments. These strategies

enable companies to outperform their rivals by offering superior value to customers or by providing products or services at a lower cost.

The resource-based view (RBV) emphasizes the role of a firm's internal resources and capabilities in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources enable firms to create unique value and outperform competitors. This perspective suggests that a company's ability to leverage its resources effectively is crucial for long-term success.

2.2. Differentiation and Digitalization in the Fashion Industry:

Differentiation in the fashion industry involves creating unique product offerings through design, materials, branding, and customer experience. Brands strive to distinguish themselves by appealing to specific consumer tastes and preferences. This can be achieved through various strategies, including product innovation, brand storytelling, and personalized customer interactions.

Digitalization has transformed the fashion industry, enabling brands to enhance their marketing, distribution, and customer engagement strategies. E-commerce platforms, social media, and digital marketing tools have become essential for reaching a wider audience and building brand awareness. Wahyudin (2015) highlights the influence of market orientation and product innovation on competitive advantage, and its implication towards Small and Medium Enterprises (UKM) performance.

3. Proposed Method

This comparative case study employs a qualitative approach to analyze the competitive strategies of Ash Scarf, Brand Botton Scarf, and Umama. Data collection methods include:

Brand website and e-commerce platform analysis: Examination of online product offerings, pricing, and customer experience. This includes evaluating the usability of the platforms, the range of products offered, and the effectiveness of online merchandising.

Social media analysis: Evaluation of brand presence, content strategy, and customer engagement on platforms like Instagram and Facebook. This involves analyzing the frequency and quality of posts, the level of interaction with followers, and the use of social media for branding and marketing purposes.

Marketing material review: Analysis of promotional materials, advertising campaigns, and brand messaging. This includes examining how each brand communicates its value proposition to customers and how they position themselves in the market.

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with brand representatives or industry experts to gain insights into brand strategies and market positioning. These interviews will provide valuable information about the decision-making processes, challenges, and future plans of each brand.

The data collected will be analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and differences in the competitive strategies of the three scarf brands. This will involve a systematic process of coding and categorizing the data to extract meaningful insights.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Ash Scarf

Differentiation: Ash Scarf positions itself as a premium brand, offering exclusive designs, high-quality materials, and meticulous craftsmanship. Their target market comprises affluent consumers seeking unique and luxurious products. The company focuses on maintaining a strong brand image associated with elegance and sophistication.

Digitalization: Ash Scarf utilizes Instagram to showcase its brand image, engage with customers, and drive online sales through its e-commerce platform. They emphasize visual storytelling and brand exclusivity in their digital marketing efforts. The brand also leverages social media to build relationships with key opinion leaders and influencers.

4.2. Brand Botton Scarf:

Differentiation: Brand Botton Scarf focuses on trendy and affordable scarves, targeting fashion-conscious young adults. They offer a wide variety of designs, colors, and patterns to cater to diverse tastes. The brand emphasizes staying up-to-date with the latest fashion trends and providing accessible options for its target market.

Digitalization: Brand Botton Scarf leverages social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok to promote its products, often collaborating with influencers to reach a wider audience. Their online presence emphasizes trendiness, affordability, and customer engagement. The brand utilizes user-generated content and interactive campaigns to foster a sense of community among its followers.

4.3. Umama:

Differentiation: Umama employs a mass-market strategy, offering a broad range of affordable scarves in various styles and materials. They cater to a large customer base with diverse needs and preferences. The brand focuses on providing a wide selection of products at competitive prices, making it accessible to a broad audience.

Digitalization: Umama utilizes a multi-channel approach, combining online and offline distribution channels. They have a strong presence in traditional retail outlets as well as online marketplaces, leveraging digital platforms for marketing and sales. The brand also uses digital channels to provide customer support and gather feedback.

4.4. Comparative Analysis

Tabel 1. Comparative Analysis

Feature	Ash Scarf	Brand Botton Scarf	Umama
Target Market	Affluent consumers	Fashion-conscious young adults	Mass market
Product Strategy	Premium, exclusive designs	Trendy, affordable options	Wide variety, affordable prices
Branding	Luxury, exclusivity	Trendy, youthful	Mass appeal, accessibility
Digital Marketing	Visual storytelling, brand exclusivity	Influencer collaborations, trend-focused content	Multi-channel, broad reach
Competitive Advantage	Product uniqueness, brand image	Trendiness, affordability	Price competitiveness, wide product range

5. Conclusions

This comparative study reveals that Ash Scarf, Brand Botton Scarf, and Umama employ distinct competitive strategies to cater to different segments of the Indonesian scarf market. Ash Scarf focuses on differentiation through premium branding and exclusive products, Brand Botton Scarf emphasizes trendiness and affordability, and Umama targets the mass market with a wide variety of affordable options.

The findings highlight the importance of aligning differentiation strategies with target market preferences and leveraging digitalization to enhance marketing, distribution, and customer engagement. Each brand's approach to competitive advantage reflects its unique value proposition and market positioning. Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of brand identity, meaning, image, and reputation (BIMIR) in shaping consumer perceptions and driving brand success in the fashion industry.

5.1. Research Implications:

SMEs in the fashion industry can achieve competitive advantage by tailoring their differentiation and digitalization strategies to specific target markets.

Understanding consumer preferences and market trends is crucial for developing effective branding and marketing strategies.

Digital platforms offer opportunities for brands to enhance customer engagement, expand market reach, and build brand awareness.

Building a strong brand identity and reputation is essential for creating lasting customer relationships and achieving long-term success.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research:

This study is limited by its focus on three scarf brands within the Indonesian market. Future research could expand the scope to include a larger sample of brands or explore other segments of the Muslim fashion industry. Additionally, quantitative research methods could be employed to measure the impact of differentiation and digitalization strategies on brand performance. It would also be beneficial to investigate the role of other factors, such as market orientation and product innovation, as discussed by Porter (1993) and Wahyudin (2015), in shaping the competitive advantage of fashion SMEs.

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