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Brand as a Strategic Asset and Its Competition in Consumer Product Industry (Empirical Study of the Brand Earned Indonesian Best Brand Award 2011)

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Abstract

Brand has an important role as a firm's strategic resource. Recently, they play not only for product identity, differentiating from others or as a logo, symbol; but also as a strategic asset by which the firm capabilities and core competence can increase. This research exlpore the brand as a firm strategic asset and focus on its dynamic of competition in industry. Specifically, this research aim to identify the role of brand as one of firm resources to catch up its competitive advantage. Using winner brands which follow the Indonesian Best Brand Award (IBBA), the research analyze with VRIN (Valuable, Rare, Inimitability, Non-substituability) framework. The result show that the winner are brands of company that have long history in industry. Not only, have an experience, those companies also have a tremendous money to promote through the intensive advertising. As a consequence, they facing a volatile competition in industry. From the VRIN framework, all brands become a strategic resource of their company.

Key words: Dynamic competition, brand, strategic asset, vrin framework

1. Background

The consumer product industry is a highly competitive industry (Comanor and Wilson, 1967; Sutton, 1974; Sutton, 1991; Robinson and Chiang, 1996), characteristized by the high intensity of advertising; every product has subsitutability and target market of every company is the same (Sutton, 1991). These made company in this industry not only has a variety of products and markets, but also has a variety of competition and high concentration. Beside that, as Porter (1974) said, since products in this industry are convenience goods, they has a short lyfe cycle and the difference between brand is not too wide. More specifically, consumer in this industry has repeat buying frequency more high than other product. As a consequences, company facing a challenge to influence the consumer in order to use the product more often. In this conditions, the product differentiation has a critical point to

influence the consumer preferences. In other side, consumer choices has depend on product attribute, which is brand image as one of many.

Doyle (2011) highlight that in consumer product industry competition, one of strategic decision that company must made is having invest in brand. By doing this, company expect enhance the revenue more than their cost of capital, increase the cash flow and leverage the growth. Having those strategic decision like that, company make the brand as a strategic asset. It means that brand is a company wide matters, not only marketing departement but also all of the departement (Aaker, 2003; Miller & Muir, 2004; Wreden, 2005). More specifically, Doyle also mention that brand become one of the resource of company, together with other tangible assets such as technology, culture organization; people and so on. As a consequence, company has to change their perspective about brand and align all departement into brand (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Farquhar, 2005; Bendapundi and Bendapundi, 2005) so their investment to the brand will have more impact, especially on their competitive advantage. Therefore, brand become a resource that must be managing comprehensively and professionally, so it can give a significant result on firm perform and it competitive advantage (Doyle, 2001). This resources, if efectively managed will create a core capabilities of company.

1.1. Research Aim

Indonesia's consumer product industry has a highly competition. It is because most of the company in this industry has either a strong capital or strong experience. According to MARS research on 2000 – 2007 the competition is hard and intensive – especially for foods, pharmacy and toiletris product. This situation, company make they must have a tremendous energy to compete. According to the research, the major player in this industry know very well that to win or still exist, the choice is only having invest on brand. It is because they realize that the brand is not only a value asset, but also a strategic asset; and more potential than tangible assets, such as building, machine and so on. As Wertime (2003) said that in the era of image economy, brand plays the important role. In addition, Doyle (2001) argue that as a strategic asset, brand should be view not only as a goal, but also as a strategy, which means as a way to create value for a company. In this context, Doyle was used Resource-based Theory of the Firm (RBT) perspective, which is assume that brand is one of the resource that can leverage company's core competence and core capability by invest on advertising and marketing communication.

In addition, Cerruti (2005) brand strategy and management was a business strategic fundamental, in both manufacturing industry and service industry. The brand strategic decision is not merely a marketing chief executive departement's responsibility; all leaders in all departement have to responsible and involve in managing brand as a company asset.

This research has two aims, first to identify the role of brand as one of firm resources to catch up its competitive advantage; second, how company managing their brand so they can earn the Indonesia's Best Brand Award (IBBA).

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This research basically use Resource-Based Theory as a fundamental. It is because, the author categorize brand as one of company's resource which will influence the sustainable competitive advantage of the firm.

1.3. Resource-based Theory

Resource-based theory become the important mazhab in strategic management field study because it can explain the determinant factor of firm's competitive advantage (Wernerfelt, 1983; Amit and Schoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1993). More specifically, this theory use the inside-out perspective, that is the internal aspect of the firm such as resources, while crafting the strategy. Powell, also believe, that this theory was one of the source of firm's competitive advantage (2001), beside the other approach which have outside-in orientation – SCP (structure conduct performance) (Bain/Mason, 1950; Porter 1981).

Resource in this theory means everything tangible or intangible that can be a strong or a weak aspect of the firm, such as brand names, knowledges, technological, skill, capabilities, capital, system and procedures and many more. Accoding to Barney (1991), firm's resources include all assets, capabilities, competences, organizational procedures, attribute, information, knowledges that firm can

control and enable it to create and implement the strategy in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, Barney state that firm can achieve their sustainable competitive advantage only if they create a value strategy with their resources. More specifically, the firm's resources should have a value, rareness, immitability, organization – known as VRIO framework.

One of the firm's goal with the brand investment is the brand equity. As a brand equity, it means that brand become an assets and liability of the firm (Aaker, 1991). It include a name and symbol which firm can add or reduce its value. Brand equity is the high level of the brand – that will achieve by firm if their brand already at the five categorize: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associtions in addition to perceive quality and other proprietary brand assets – patents, trademarks, channel relationships (Aaker, 1991: 16).

Brand equity will give more value not only for the firm, but also for the customer. For the customer, the value of the brand equity will help consumer processing and keep the information of the product and the brand; in addition, brand equity will enhance the customer satisfaction too. For the firm, brand equity will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the marketing program, gain the customer loyalty and profit margin; it can push firm to extend the brand, and most importantly, help to achieve the competitive advantage of the firm. In addition, brand equity will impact the product and service of the firm in the long term. It is because brand equity is a message medium for consumer's persception (Townsend, Calantone and Cavusgil, 2007). Brand equity also as a main tool for firm to gain unique position in the market (Srivastave and Shocker, 1991).

One of the prequisite of brand equity is firm must align the brand with all the element of the organization. Brand alignment means that the integration of brand in organization so the brand management become the concern and spirit all level and departement – from CEO to front liners. Farquahar (2005) said that there are five principal areas in brand alignment: leadership actions, organizational structures, people practices, internal communications dan performance measures and incentives.

1.4. Leadership actions

This is related with leader's actions in managing brand. Leader should take the responsibility to manage the brand. It means that brand management not only the marketing departement responsibility, but more importantly also the leader. Those responsibility include maintaining and securing the brand, especially the component of brand equity. The key is to control firm's core brand centrally as a stategic asset.

1.5. Organizational structures

It related with the organizational change that firm should do in order to create organizational behavior that care, interest and have sense of belongin to brand. Some firm – especially multinational – already setting and arrange global brand councils. This councils contains stakeholder from vary division, business unit and geographic area. The main duty of the councils is not only to develop strategy and policy of brand management, but also to review the plan and solving some differences in managing brand.

People practices related with the effort of firm to encourage employee involve in brand management. This is more than an internal branding program. This principle is important since that between leader and brand manager often disharmony in executing the brand strategy. So, it will syncronized between planning and execution.

Internal communications is an effort to build brand align in organization by heightened three element such as clarity, coherence, dan authenticity. Clarity related with the company wide understanding about brand attribute and it promises; Coherence related with the embeddedness of brand attribute and it promises in all organization element; Authenticity related with the reliability especially the external communication.

Performance measures and incentives is the organization effort to make sure the implementation of brand alignment. It have a specific impact, specifically on firm performance and profitability.

Hatch dan Schultz (2001) stated that brand alignment involve three important element in organization – what they called strategic stars. Those element are vision, culture and image. The message is the same that brand should be the organization matters and concern all the members. Vision is connected with the leaders insipiration; culture with organizational values, behavior and

attitude; and image with the perception of stakeholder. At this point, alignment become very strategic, especially if firm want their brand become a main tool or driver to achieve the sustainable competitive advantage and long term positive performance.

1.6. Research Design

This research using empirical study that is descriptive analytical to explain the role of brand as a strategic asset and its dynamic competition. More specifically, the research analysis the Indonesia's brand on consumer industry. Data was collected from secondary resource which is from SWA Magazine, in particularly the winner of Indonesian Best Brand Award (IBBA) 2011. IBBA is an annualy award event hold by SWA Magazine with MARS school of research which are give an appreciation to brand with high score on some aspects such as perceived quality, brand awareness and so on. More specifically, the data are brands which earn IBBA more than 10 years. The data was analysis using VRIN frame work, those are **value, rarity, immitability and non-subsitutability**, to measure if they can categorize as a strategic assets.

2. Result

2.1. Brand as a Strategic Asset

Brand is a firm representative that consumer use as a guide of their purchasing decision. With it logo, symbol or trademark, brand play as an identity for firm product or service. Firm's perceptive on brand so strategic and important, that made they have a huge investment on it, especially on advertising expenses – locally or globally (Gregory, 2001; Wreden, 2004) as we can see on Table 1.

Top 10	op 10 Multinational Advertisers (Ad Age Global Marketing Report Nov 10, 2003)		
1.	Procter & Gamble Co. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$4,479 million		
2.	Unilever. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$3,315 million		
3.	General Motors Corp. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$ 3,218 million		
4.	Toyota Motor Corp. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$2,405 million		
5.	Ford Motor Co. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$2,387 million		
6.	Time Warner. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$2349 million		
7.	Daimler Chrysler. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$1,800 million		
8.	L'Oreal. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$1,683 million		
9.	Nestle SA. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$1,547 million		
10	. Sony Corp. Worldwide periklanan expenditure US\$1,513 million		
Sour	e: International Advertising Research		

Table-1. TV-ad Budget of Multinational Company

Moreover, Table 2 below show the same situation which is Indonesia's firm has a big investment on brand. More specifically, the budget increase every year between 15 percent up tp 30 percent.

The data on those table prove the author argument that brand is not only a part of organization anymore, but also obviously as a company wide concern. This condition inline with Miller and Muir (2004) argument that brands are moving up the corporate agenda. The role of brand beyond the spectrum of businesses activity of the firm, which is means that from the function of human resource departement to the product development departement and target market and the value of customer. Kluyver dan Pearce (2006) also stated that brands are a strategic assets that can help firm maintain their revenue and leverage barriers to entry in industry. As the information and communication technology develop faster in last decade, brand become more and more strategic.

In addition, according to Miller dan Muir (2004), brand in a business context should contain with this five aspects :

- brand will increase the value of product and service, more than it generic function; therefore it can support the firm's target sales achievement;
- brand is a connection tool between organization and it stakeholder; it can become a glue of sustainability and trust;
- brand is an outcome of organizational behavior which means every firm's decision will impact

on it brand performance;

- measurement of brand existence is through consumer's perception;
- brand can be a guidance and goal for the firm, and in addition, as a resource of interest and motivation of stakeholder.

Table-2. Total Ad-Budget Indonesian Companies (1999 – 2004)					
Year	Total (trillion rupiahs)				
1999	4,9				
2000	7				
2001	9,8				
2002	12,74				
2003	17				
2004	20.4 - 20.75				

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Source: Harian Umum Kompas, 17 November 2000; 14 Januari 2002; Harian Umum Pikiran Rakyat, 12 November 2003

Regarding to its role, brand strategy, therefore, is the business strategy itself. This is the reason, recently many companies have been invest regularly and intensively on their brand (Miller and Muir, 2004; Wreden, 2005). In addition, Wreden (2005) stated that there are three main goal that company pursue through their invest brand, those are profitability, accountability dan sustainability

Profitability is the fundamental goal and aspect of every investment decision, more specifically using marketing communication as a major tool to inform the brand to the market. More specifically, Wreden argue that the combination of brand and profitability will give more benefit than if it let alone, especially about brand survival. This is because profitability is an easy and relevant measurement that can be understand by investor and organization, including the bottom level of organization. As a consequence, the key indicator of the success of a brand should not only on market share achievement, but also on the growth of profitability.

Accountability is a strategic imperatives of a brand. Without it, organization resource is useless. According to companies in Times 1000, 57 percent CFO (Chief of Finance Officer) belive that marketing investment – including brand investment – is the important decision for the companies growth in the long term. Therefore, firm need to define the tool to control and monitor the achievement of their goal, especially in brand strategy related to the target profit.

The profitabiliy and accountability will lead firm to the third of brand strategic imperative, that is Sustainability. It related with the sustainability of brand in the market. This element is crucial since that about 80-95 percent of new product launch fail to have a strong brand, even the strong brand can lose their focus. In addition, brand have a short life cycle since that 75 percent of consumer purchasing is only once and after that they maybe never have consume again.

2.2. **Brand as a Strategic Asset in Indonesia**

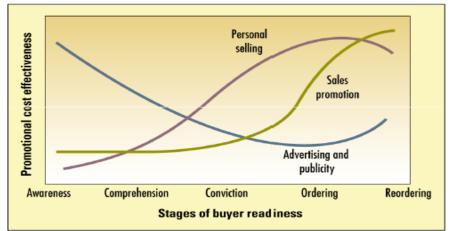
Marketing communication has a significant role in building the brand as a firm's strategic asset in Indonesia, especially advertising through electronic channel media such as television, radio etc. According to Ishadi (2003), this phenomenon has been already happen when first teve commercial program launch by TVRI (Televisi Republik Indonesia - the government's television station), Manasuka Siaran Niaga in 1970.

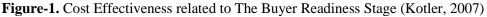
Some brands, such as, Bata (shoes), ABC (ketchup), Susu Bendera or Frisian Flag (milk), Teh Dua Tang (tea), Hoya (children toys), Prodent (tooth paste) and ABC (syroop) was advertise on that program. In 1989 when the private television has operated for the first time (RCTI – the first private television in Indonesia), the firm's advertising budget - especially on television - was increase tremendous. By the 1994, there were 5 private television (beside RCTI, SCTV, TPI, Anteve and Indosiar) the firm's budget increase 800% (Ishadi, 2003).

This condition was directly influence the competition on tv advertising; the 'pie' was merely more fewer than before. And it means that the dynamic competition among brands was very strict and intensive. In other side, the bargaining position of the television has more stronger. TV advertising as a communication channel of the firm was the one of strategic way. Not only because the cost usually huge, but also because the target market have made the television as their main entertainment media in

home (this specially market such as housewife with the main activity at home). For example, according to Nielsen report on 2011, at the first quarterly TV was the main channel for the firm's commercial communication. More specifically, the TV ad share 62% from total, or about 9,672 trillion rupiahs. It means, the TV ad budget was increase 21% compare to last year for the same period (Nielsen, 2011). In addition, the report also show that the budget has been allocate for print media too, that is about 5,45 trillion rupiahs or 35% from the total budget. It was grow 20% compare to the last year. Meanwhile, budget share for magazine and tabloid was 3% of total advertising budget or 468 billion rupiahs (Sindo Newspaper, Mei 2011).

As Kotler and Keller (2009) stated advertising is the effective channel to create and building the brand awareness of the firm's brand. Nevertheless, it cost more higher than other promotion tool such as personal selling, public relatios and so on (see figure 3.2). As show on that figure, TV ad is the effective tool, not only at the first stage (awareness), but also at the whole stage until the last stage that is the conviction stage. This is because TV ad has a huge impact – more specifically persuasive impact – on consumer's buying decision by it ability to have a animation, audio and video. Nowadays, there are some TV ad using story or movies to present the message.





2.3. Indonesian Best Brand Award (IBBA)

The Indonesian Best Brand Award is annualy award aim to give appreciation for the brand that compelling some variable as shown at Table 3.3. This annualy award was also conduct as a response to the intensively of TV ad, start on 2001 focus on consumer industry brand.

Table-3. The Variable of the IBBA
Brand awareness
Ad awareness
Brand value
Customer satisfaction & loyalty index
Market share
Gain index
Source: SWA.2011

This program will beneficiary firm in terms of not only the information about variable that create the awareness and its relation to the customer satisfaction and loyalty, but also about the its relation to the increase of sales volume. By knowing these variable, firm can actively invest on their brand.

This research analyse some of brands in IBBA 2011, specifically brands in consumer industry, such as toiletris product, food and beverages. Those brands has been already won the award for ten years, as shown in Table below.

Number	Brand	Product Category
1	Lifebouy	Soap
2	Pepsodent	Tooth Paste
2 3	Formula	Tooth Brush
4 5	Laurier	Panty liners
5	Viva	Face
5	Citra	Hand & Body Lotion
7	Pond's	Whitening
8	Teh Botol Sosro	tak bersoda)
9	Aqua	Water
10	Kapal Api	Coffee

Table-4. Brands with IBBA for 10 years

Source: SWA Magazine, 2011

By using brands with IBBA for ten years, this research argue that those brands have a consistent brand value. Brand value is a sum of point all variable (brand awareness, ad popularity, customer satisfaction and loyalty).

2.4. Analysis

The data analysis in this research use the VRIN - valuable, rare, imitability dan nonsubstitutabality – framework (Barney, 2003) and aim to identify whether brand become a firm's strategic asset or not. The analysis scheme shown at Table 3.5. VRIN is obviously very related to the firm's resources. As RBT (resource-based theory) stated, the firm's resources is vary – including the input factors (usually the tangible), the intangible resources, such as brand names that developed for many years and hard to imitate (Collis & Montgomery, 2005). In addition, resource can classified to three category: tangible assets, intangible assets and organizational capability.

In order to assess the valuability of the firm's resources, the factors that create those valuability must be define first. As Collis dan Montgomery (2005) stated, the value of the resources can be define by the rate of demand, the resources is hard to replicate and the profitability.

	Tabel-5. VRIN Framework
V	valuable resources, through which any organization or firm can create new strategies for enhancing its effectiveness and also the efficiency
R	rare resources, as the name suggests, these are those resources that are unavailable for the competitors
Ι	imperfectly imitable resources that mean these cannot be copied in order to look as personal belongings of other firm
Ν	non substitutable resources that cannot be substituted from any of the available resources
Source	Parmay 2002

Source: Barney, 2003

The valuable resources has had a significant contribution to the customer's need at the price that consumer willing to pay. This means that firm must have the resources that can be give them a value by fulfilling the customers need; and not only the resource can help firm fulfill the customers need, but also by using this resources they can outperformed their rivals (Collis & Montgomery, 2003).

Beside that, firm must realize that sometimes the valuability of the resources easy to imitate. Therefore, firm facing the challenge how to create and develop not only the valuable resources, but also the difficult to imitate resources. It means that the resource is must rare, because if the resource is rare then it difficult to imitate by firm's rivals. There are four characteristics if resource can categorize as a difficult to imitate: (1) its unique physically; (2) causal ambiguity (it hard to identify its advantage); (3) have an economic deterrence (the condition occur when market leader want to replicate the resources but because the market is too small, they choose not to do that); and (4) have a path depedency (firm gain the uniqueness and advantange of its resources from the time and path). More specifically, brand can categorize have a path depedency means that those brand have been built

Table-6. VRIN Analysis								
No	Brand	VRIN FRAMEWORK				Competitive		
		V	R	Ι	Ν	Dynamic		
1	Lifebouy	Yes	No	No	No	High		
2	Pepsodent	Yes	No	No	No	High		
3	Formula	Yes	No	No	No	High		
4	Laurier	Yes	No	No	No	High		
5	Viva	Yes	No	No	No	High		
6	Citra	Yes	No	No	No	High		
7	Pond's	Yes	No	No	No	High		
8	Teh Botol Sosro	Yes	No	No	No	High		
9	Aqua	Yes	No	No	No	High		
10	Kapal Api	Yes	No	No	No	High		

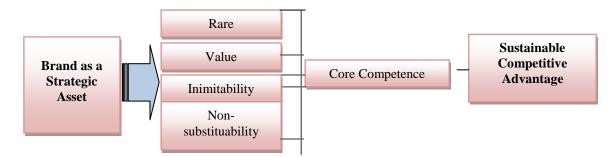
not only long time and effort with huge investment or promotion cost, but also by experience and consumer's preference. The whole analysis is explain in Table 6.

According to Table 6 we see that all the ten brands that won IBBA 2011 can not categorize have a rare, inimitability dan non-substituability criterion. It because the characterics of those brands are not unique, easy to imitate and it prove there are some brand can subtitute. To show that those brands have a low in VRIN criterion, Table 3.7 show the brands of the rivals those ten brands. The low of RIN – rare, inimitability and non-substituability – impact the dynamic of competition in industry. The competition become hard and high. **Eventhough, those ten brands have a valuable criterion. It because according IBBA's grading, they can satisfy customer and made the customer loyal them.**

As those brand succeed earn IBBA 2011, the author analyse below. Firstly, the intensity of promotion through TV ad was one factor that made them can earn the award. It means that the promotion budget is huge. Collis and Montgomery (2005) noted that brand can achieve the competitive advantage if they have a big advertising expenditure.

Secondly, the popularity of the brand will increase when they are promote intensively. This is because the advertising expenditure have a positive linear relationship with the popularity of product and, of course, the brand.

Figure-2. The Scheme Analysis of Brand as A Strategic Asset



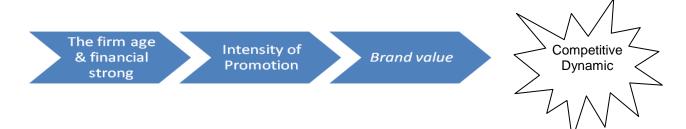
If we analyse from the perspective of the company of the those brands, we can see that all are the established company with more than ten years experience in industry – PT Unilever Indonesia (Lifebuoy, Pepsodent, Citra, Pond's) is the multinational company that has been already in the industry since hundred years a go; PT Sosro (Teh Botol Sosro) is the pioneer in bottling tea; PT Aqua Golden Missisipi (Aqua) is also the pioneer company in bottled water; and PT Santos Jaya Abadi (Kopi Kapal Api) is the established company with positive grow. With the characteristic of that company like that, they can invest on their brand more big than other company in the industry. In other word, we can say that to maintain the brand as a strategic asset, firm must invest intensively, not only in time, but also in the amount of the investment. By maintaining, company will achieve the sustainable competitive advantage and brand become one of their core competence (Figure 2).

3. Conclusion

This research have two conclusion regarding to brand as a strategic asset. The first is about **the criterion of the firm,** that are : (1) the age of company is more than five years, and or they have a strong financial. It will influence their ability to invest on their brand; (2) the ability to invest will influence the intensity of promotion, more specifically on TV ad.; (3) the intensity of promotion will affect the brand value as a whole; (4) as a result, the promotion intensity will influence the industry dynamic competition.

This research also have conclude about brand as a firm's strategic, as the second conclusion. (1) The brand has to integrate on the VRIN framework and as a company wide concern, so brand will become a core competence of the firm; (2) Firm have to manage, maintain and develop the brand more often, so the brand become the firm's capability to achieve their competitive advantage (Figure 3).

Figure-3. Research Conclusion Scheme



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