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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE IDENTITY ELEMENTS AND CORPORATE IMAGE IN MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT-LINKED COMPANIES

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By

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Corporate identity as a management strategy has derived from the simple visual representation of an organisation to a more complex corporate strategy over the past thirty years. There is now considerable research to suggest that effective corporate identity management results in creating a positive image and simultaneously helps organisational members to align their work with the organisation's vision and , at the same time there are many factors that contributing in the decision making solely based on the corporate identity being implemented in the organization. For that reason, the objective of this study is to identify the application of the seven elements at several Government Linked Companies (GLCs) in Malaysia in terms of executive officers and their relationship to corporate image. There are seven elements of corporate identity management which is based on Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) are divided into namely corporate structure, corporate strategy, corporate culture, corporate communication, corporate behaviour, corporate design and industry identity. A total of 400 staff were involved as respondents in this descriptive study. Questionnaires were used to carry out this survey based on voluntary sampling method. The collected data was analysed using Descriptive Statistics and Multiple Regression Test. Based on the findings of this study, it is found that the descriptive analysis result for all of corporate identity elements and corporate image are at the average level. The Multiple Regression Test shows that out of the seven elements of Corporate Identity Management, only Management of Corporate Behaviour and Management of Industry Identity that contribute to the changes in the Organisational Corporate Image of the Government Linked Companies (GLCs). The result of this research suggests that both the elements mentioned earlier are given attention in order to improve the image of an organisation.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

PERHUBUNGAN ANTARA ELEMEN IDENTITI KORPORAT DAN IMEJ KORPORAT DI KALANGAN SYARIKAT BERKAITAN KERAJAAN DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

AIDA BINTI MUHAMI

Mei 2018

Pengerusi : **Profesor Madya Jusang Bolong, PhD**
Fakulti : **Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi**

Identiti korporat sebagai strategi pengurusan telah diperolehi dari perwakilan visual yang sederhana dari organisasi ke strategi korporat yang lebih kompleks dalam tiga puluh tahun yang lalu. Terdapat penyelidikan yang mencukupi untuk menunjukkan bahawa pengurusan identiti korporat yang berkesan menghasilkan imej yang positif dan pada masa yang sama membantu ahli organisasi menyelaraskan kerja mereka dengan visi dan matlamat organisasi. Walau bagaimanapun, pada masa yang sama terdapat banyak faktor yang menyumbang dalam membuat keputusan semata-mata berdasarkan identiti korporat yang dilaksanakan dalam organisasi. Oleh sebab itu, objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti penerapan tujuh elemen di beberapa syarikat berkaitan kerajaan (GLC) di Malaysia di kalangan pegawai eksekutif dan hubungan elemen tersebut dengan imej korporat. Terdapat tujuh elemen pengurusan identiti korporat berdasarkan Melewar dan Karaosmanoglu (2006) dibahagikan kepada struktur korporat, strategi korporat, budaya korporat, komunikasi korporat, tingkah laku korporat, reka bentuk korporat dan identiti industri. Sejumlah 400 orang kakitangan terlibat sebagai responden dalam kajian deskriptif ini. Soal selidik digunakan untuk menjalankan kajian ini berdasarkan kaedah persampelan sukarela. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis dengan menggunakan Statistik Deskriptif dan Ujian Regresi Berganda. Berdasarkan penemuan kajian ini, didapati hasil analisis deskriptif untuk semua elemen identiti korporat dan imej korporat berada pada tahap purata. Ujian Regresi Berganda menunjukkan bahawa daripada tujuh elemen Pengurusan Identiti Korporat, hanya Pengurusan Kelakuan Korporat dan Pengurusan Identiti Industri yang menyumbang kepada perubahan dalam Imej Korporat Perusahaan Syarikat Berkaitan Kerajaan (GLC). Hasil penyelidikan ini menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua elemen yang disebutkan tadi diberi perhatian untuk memperbaiki citra organisasi.

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Declaration by graduate student

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explain about the introduction to the study in which it will explain the background of the study conducted. It will also discuss the problem statement, the objective of the study, the question of the study, the justification of the study and the final will provide the scope and limitations of the study conducted.

1.1   Background of Study

Corporate identity through branding communication is a marketing concept that focuses on how companies can increase their visibility by creating memorable associations between a product and a group of customers it targets. Organizations started to realize the importance of corporate identity to achieve competitive advantage and maintain their position (Balmer and Lio 2006;5, Bunzel 2007: 152, Evans 1995, 7 .

Hammond, Harmon and Webster 2007:438, Richardson, Gillingham and Pettingale 2010:13, Speirs 2007:12. In order to do so, the organizations require managing their corporate identity strategically to grow and expands (Olins, 1995).

Regarding to Balmer and Wilson (1998), corporate identity is defined as the unique characteristics rooted in the behaviour of the employees. Corporate identity expresses the intention of the management to put all behaviours and communications of the organization under a specific concept that strategically planned to present the organization's behaviour. In his research Herbst (1998) explained that corporate identity is the guidelines of the organization's core statements than set the basic corporate values which are conveyed by the employees.

Thus, corporate identity is very important to an organization where it functions as an external or physical representation of an organization. An organization needs a clear corporate identity to make sure its reputation is ensured within the internal and external audiences of the organization. According to Balmer (2001), this identity must reflect the ethos, objectives and estimations of the association and show the differentiation on the competitive environment. The views expressed are in line with the wishes of each organization to reveal the distinctions and differences of an organization with other organizations.

According to Lambert (2007), just like individuals who can be recognized from each shape, color, size, tone of voice, behavior patterns and names, so that organizations have the characteristics that distinguish them. If these features are managed more

effectively than their competitors, it can provide a significant advantage in the sale of products and services as well as in recruiting and maintaining the employees. It is very important to understand the identity that is in the eyes of the executives, thus it becomes one of the requirements for managing perception in reality among the executives. According to Lambert (2007), corporate identity reveals itself through products or services, through the environment and communication - which is how you explain what you are doing. A good service is considered to be the added value and to be consistent with the service. This is indirectly, a broad concept that touches on all aspects of how a company or organization is managing by their executives. In fact, there is no management field which states that an understanding of corporate identity is not important.

Therefore, the organization needs a identity to continue operating. This identity builds on a positive image to enhance public confidence and trustees about the organization. The identity of the organization must be so clear that it becomes a physical appearance of companies that carry and show their products or services, their behaviors and measured. This means that organizational identity can not only take into account through slogans or other aspects but it must be clear, covering all aspects, real and visible among the executives in organization.

In addition, corporate identity is a major communication channel that present all of their organization's activities. It has become a major role and is very important for companies or organizations to have a strong corporate identity to stand firm as a primary competitor. In order to understand the true meaning of corporate identity which covers all aspects of the organization, organizations are not missed to effectively manage their corporate identity. Effective identity management will have a great impact on the organization's goodness. Corporate identity management will symbolize the real state of an organization. Furthermore, corporate identity will always be the core foundation of an organization's strategy hence it is important for organizations to have an initiative to have considered the executives' perception of the corporate image. Therefore, this research will explore the variety of impact the executives' perception has towards their corporate identity and its corporate image. The information gathered would focus on the executives' perspectives rather than the corporate marketing perspective.

1.2   Problem Statement

Corporate identity management is an increasingly important focus in organizational marketing and communication research writing (Van Riel & Balmer, 1997; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Ind, 1997; Balmer, 2001;

Balmer, 2003). Previous study suggests that effective corporate identity management creates a positive corporate image while at the same time helping their employees to align their responsibility with organizational goals (Balmer & Wilson, 1998; Scott & Lane, 2000). However, there is a lack of orientation about corporate identity towards

the executives, solely because most organizations are too focusing on what the customers are experiencing. It is important to make the executives aware of the corporate identity to maximize their potential for future innovations, decrease turnover and increase loyalty.

In today's competitive market, many organizations are competing to give quality services to their cuctomers. To achieve competitive advantage, it is very important for organization to be determined and willing to learn from their competitors. It is also important to monitor the competitor's activities and regularly check if there are new products or marketing tools they need to keep an eye for in order to have better opportunities over the competitive advantage. There are few problems that have been noticed in the competitive organization that have created gaps in the organizations.

The first gap is the failure to understand the important of executive's knowledge in Malaysian Government Liked Companies regarding corporate identity. Regardless of what is the product or industry, many forget how investing in the executive's wellbeing and better working environment will help boost the executive's motivation to be willing to maximize their potential for the benefit of the organization. Failing to understand the importance of executives knowledge regarding the element of corporate identity and corporate image, will results in prolong or even stop the executives to work more productively and efficiently to their maximum capabilities which eventually leads to executives retention and engagement. Organization with weak corporate identity will be unable to outshine their competitors (Aiken, Clarke, & Sloane, 2002). This problem has brought up the second gap, which is turnover, Johnsrud et al. (2000) have examined the factors employees who intend to resign, which include perceptions of work life and morale.

Organizations often neglects to strengthen its corporate identity due to investing more effort towards its customer whereas, when the executives are aware about their corporate identity they tend to work aligned with the organization and leads to the corporate image to be more cohesive in the customer's eyes. To benefit the organization, executives would be more likely to maximize the resources and thrived more to reach organization's goals. Therefore, corporate identity will always be the core foundation of an organization's strategy hence it is important for organizations to have an initiative to have considered the executives' perception of the corporate image. Thus, organization should be more transparent and comprehensive regarding its internal process and structures. The transparency take us to the third gap where the context in which quality assessment is occuring and improvements are being made, is dynamic and demanding (Adrian Thornhill, Phil Lewis, Mark N.K Saunders, 1996).

Therefore, this study will focus on and discuss elements in corporate identity management at several Government Link Companies (GLCs) in Malaysia in terms of executive officers and their relationship to corporate image. The corporate identity management to be discussed is divided into seven elements namely corporate structure, corporate strategy, corporate culture, corporate communication, corporate

behavior, corporate design and industry identity based on Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006). Subsequently, all of these corporate identity management elements will also be examined among executives as to how relevant or relevant to corporate image to an organization. It is important to know the perceptions of executives in GLCs on the management of corporate identity elements as well as their relevance to corporate image rather than to implement their own corporate identity in real business ethics in Malaysia.

1.3 Research Question

1. What are the elements in corporate identity management according to the perspective of executive officers in GLCs?
2. What are the executive officer's perspectives towards the GLC's corporate image?
3. What is the relationship between the elements of corporate identity management in terms of executive officers in GLC and corporate image?

1.4 Research Objective

1. Main Objective
1. To identify elements in corporate identity management in the context of GLCs executive officers and their relationship to corporate image.

2. Research Objectives in Detail
1. To identify elements in corporate identity management according to the perspective of executive officers in GLCs.
2. To identify the GLCs executive's perception on the corporate image of GLCs
3. To identify the relationship between the management of corporate identify elements and corporate image.

1.5 Importance of the study

The implementation of this study on the management of corporate identity among GLC executives brings many benefits not only to the executive itself but also to the benefit of the organization. These are the main roles of corporate identity as a front page or brand to the organization they live in. Without corporate identity, current operators may find it difficult to continue to compete with each other. To keep its integrity and identity, it is important for organizations to have corporate identity for the executives. It contributes in the creation of corporate reputation due to it being implemented on a daily basis by the executives. This is because executive's loyalty directly linked towards the external stakeholders', if the executives doesn't trust the

organization most likely they will share their thoughts and feelings which will be unfavorable for the corporate image (Dortok, 2006).

A study of corporate identity in terms of point of view and management will help these GLCs organizations to get a complete picture and a superior comprehension of the implementation of corporate identity management in their company. From this study, organizations can evaluate and define weaknesses and improve their internal affiliation ie staffing and organizational management. Furthermore, from the results of the study conducted, the organization may take action either to reorganize or make changes to meet the organization's needs in ensuring that corporate identity can be properly managed.

The benefits of this study are not only focused on GLCs organization but also can benefit many of the business environment in our country. A well-defined corporate identity by an organization of GLCs indirectly represents the first notion of outsiders against the image of our country. It will represent our country as well as the organization itself and in that way one can remember and construct impressions and interesting experiences of an organization.

1.6   Scope and limitations of the study

This study was conducted among GLC staff in Malaysia. Position among respondents must be at least as executive or manager in the GLC. Executives and managers are chosen because they are key people who can understand and give perceptions of corporate identity management and corporate image against their organization. The executives' will be asked to answer a Likert scale questionnaire according to what represents their best answer.

However, this study will only discuss and focus on seven management elements available in corporate identity and corporate image only. The findings of this study can not be generalized to all companies in Malaysia but the results of this study can be used to improve the management of corporate identity more effectively and improve the corporate image of the organization. The study also aims to see the extent of the relationship between the management of corporate identity elements and corporate image. In addition, this study does not examine any other aspects.

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