

Positioning, Differentiation and Branding Strategies on Occupancy Rates of Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the influence of positioning, differentiation and branding strategies on occupancy levels at the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel. In the midst of intense competition in the hotel industry in Yogyakarta, hotels need to develop strong marketing strategies to attract the right market segments and maintain guest loyalty. This research uses quantitative methods, with a descriptive and verification research approach. The analysis technique used includes SWOT analysis to measure the relationship between strategy variables and occupancy levels. The research results show that the Grand Rohan Hotel's positioning strategy, which emphasizes the image of a star hotel with premium services in strategic locations near business and tourist centers, has a significant impact on occupancy levels. Apart from that, the differentiation carried out by the hotel, such as services with a sharia concept, as well as architectural design that combines traditional and modern elements, are also key factors in differentiating the Grand Rohan Hotel from other competitors. Consistent branding, both through digital marketing and word of mouth from previous guests, has succeeded in increasing the hotel's positive image in the eyes of customers, which has contributed significantly to increasing occupancy rates. This research concludes that a positioning strategy that targets specific market segments, combined with service differentiation and strong branding, is able to create significant added value for the Grand Rohan Hotel. The recommendations provided include optimizing digital marketing, expanding collaboration with online booking platforms, and strengthening guest loyalty programs to maintain stable and increasing occupancy rates.

INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is one sector that is experiencing rapid growth along with the increase in the tourism industry in Indonesia. The hotel industry in Yogyakarta, as one of the main tourist destinations in Indonesia, continues to grow rapidly. Many new hotels are emerging, creating increasingly fierce competition. Each hotel competes to get the attention of tourists by offering different uniqueness and added value. In this context, positioning, differentiation and branding strategies are important keys to winning market competition and increasing hotel occupancy rates (Kusumawati, 2019).

Positioning strategy is an effort to place the hotel brand in consumers' minds in accordance with the image they want to create. The definition of positioning expressed by Kotler & Keller (2007: 375) is that positioning is the act of designing a company's offer and image so that it occupies a distinctive position (compared to competitors) in the minds of target customers. The goal is to place the brand in consumers' minds to maximize the company's potential benefits. Positioning can be interpreted as the first opinion or what immediately arises in the consumer's mind when the consumer thinks of a product. In other words, positioning is about how a company brand can enter and dominate the minds of customers. Positioning starts with the product, namely a good, service, company, institution, or even person. Positioning is not an activity that marketers carry out with the product but rather is an activity that marketers carry out in the minds of potential customers so that the correct position of the product can be implanted in the minds of customers.

Through clear positioning, hotels can communicate their advantages and meet the expectations of their target market (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja, as one of the four-star hotels in Yogyakarta, needs to establish a clear positioning strategy to face the increasing number and diversity of competitors. Choosing the right positioning can help hotels create positive perceptions and increase guest loyalty which has an impact on hotel occupancy rates. Positioning of the Grand Rohan Hotel, which emphasizes the image of a star hotel with premium service in a strategic location near business and tourist centers.

Differentiation is a key element in creating unique value to differentiate one's product from competitors' products in a characteristic that makes it more desirable to customers. The definition of differentiation according to Kotler (2005:347) is the process of adding a series of important and valuable differences, in order to differentiate the company's offer from competitors' offers. Differentiation means that a product or service is not only different from existing products or services but is also a point of advantage that is compared, and differentiation does not mean that it is different, so if it is different, it means it definitely has the point of advantage in question (Kotler, 2005: 350). According to research conducted by Dewi & Astuti (2021), effective differentiation can increase hotel competitiveness, especially in a market full of alternative choices for consumers. Differentiation can be done through aspects of service, facilities, price and staying experience offered (Aaker, 2014). A differentiation strategy in hotels can be carried out by differentiating hotel products from competitors' hotel products, by identifying existing sources of competitive advantage, having the company's main differentiating characteristics, and choosing an effective position in the market. This differentiation is very relevant for the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel in terms of sharia concept services, as well as architectural design that combines traditional and modern elements, as well as the collection of antiques inside which adds to the beauty inside.

Besides that, branding strategy is also an important factor in increasing consumer attraction and loyalty. The definition of brand according to Kotler & Keller (2007:332) is a name or symbol that is distinctive (such as a logo, stamp, symbol, emblem, sign, slogan, words or packaging) to identify goods or services from the seller or brand holder (Surachman, 2008:3). Brand Image consists of 2 (two) components, namely Brand Association or brand association and Favorability, Strength & Uniqueness of Brand Association or positive attitude, strength and uniqueness of the brand. Consumers can make brand associations based on product attributes, product benefits and their overall evaluation or attitude towards the brand. Consumers can make associations based on attributes related to the product, for example price and packaging, or attributes related to the product, for example color, size, design and other features. Associations can also be created based on product benefits, for example functional benefits, symbolic benefits, or based on experiential benefits. Strong branding not only helps create a distinctive identity but also increases consumer confidence in the quality of the services offered (Keller, 2013). According to research by Putri & Widjaja (2020), effective branding plays a significant role in shaping customer loyalty and purchasing decisions, which ultimately has an impact on increasing hotel occupancy rates. Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja needs to develop branding that reflects the uniqueness and values desired by its target market in order to be able to survive and develop amidst increasingly fierce competition.

According to Endar Sugiarto (2002:55), occupancy rate is a condition to which the number of rooms sold is compared to the total number of rooms that can be sold. A hotel's high room occupancy rate will provide high profits and income for the hotel. This is because rooms are the main product which provides the highest profit margin compared to other hotel products such as laundry, bar, restaurant, room service, and so on. According to Sugiarto (2002:10) occupancy rate is a measure of the success of a hotel. Meanwhile, Sulastiyono (2008:269) wrote that a successful hotel will be seen from its room occupancy rate. So it can be concluded that the high level of room occupancy in a hotel will indirectly affect the hotel's income and profits. According to practice, this is because the income obtained from room sales is almost half of the average hotel income.

This research aims to analyze the influence of positioning, differentiation and branding strategies on the occupancy rate of the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel. It is hoped that the results of this research will provide insight for hotel managers in designing effective marketing strategies to increase occupancy levels and contribute to the development of literature in the field of hotel marketing management.

METHOD

This research uses quantitative methods with a descriptive and causal approach to measure the influence of positioning, differentiation and branding on the occupancy rate of the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel. The research objects which are the free variables or independent variables are positioning (X1), differentiation (X2) and branding (X3). Next, the dependent variable is the hotel occupancy rate (Y). The population of this study were guests staying at the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel. Purposive sampling technique was used to select samples with the following criteria: 1) Age \geq 18 years; 2) Have stayed overnight more than once; 3) Use hotel facilities more than once. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula, resulting in 200 respondents. Data was collected through a questionnaire using a 1-5 Likert scale to measure guest perceptions regarding positioning, differentiation, branding and occupancy strategies, observations were made to see the implementation of strategies in hotels directly and documentation to retrieve hotel occupancy data from internal reports. Data analysis was carried out using Validity and Reliability Tests to ensure the questionnaire was suitable for use. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing (t-test and F-test) to test the significance of the influence of each variable. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) to measure the contribution of the independent variable to the occupancy rate. Data processing uses SPSS software to analyze research results statistically and draw valid conclusions. It is hoped that this research method can provide a clear picture of the effectiveness of the marketing strategy implemented by the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to analyze the influence of positioning, differentiation and branding strategies on occupancy levels at the Grand Rohan Hotel Jogja. The following are the results obtained:

1. Respondent Description

Gender: 55% respondents are males, dan 45% are females.

Age: majority are in the age of 25 to 40 years old, it indicates an economically active guest segment, both for business and leisure purposes.

Purpose of Stay: 50% of guests stay for business, 30% for tourism, and 20% to attend family events. This segmentation indicates the hotel's success in reaching various market segments.

2. Descriptive Analysis of Variables

T Positioning: Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja has positioned itself as a star hotel accommodation option with premium services in a strategic location near the tourist business center, and is easy to access. According to research, clear and specific positioning is very helpful in attracting guests to stay, especially in the business segment which often requires quick access to city centers and meeting facilities (Sharma & Sharma, 2022). The average score of respondents' assessment of positioning reached 4.3 (on a scale of 1-5).

The differentiation made by the Grand Rohan hotel is based on sharia concept services, as well as architectural design that combines traditional and modern elements. The differentiation strategy is carried out by highlighting superior services such as spa facilities, a variety of local culinary menus and business meeting packages. Azate et al. (2022) stated that hotels with clear service differentiation have a higher chance of maintaining customer loyalty. In this research, the average differentiation score reached 4.2, indicating that respondents consider the quality of hotel services to be quite unique compared to similar competitors in Yogyakarta.

Branding: Effective branding plays an important role in creating a positive image. Grand Rohan uses a branding strategy through social media, which has proven effective in improving the hotel's image. Research by Fox (2022) and Kim & Lee (2021) shows that strong branding not only attracts the attention of new consumers but also builds customer loyalty, increasing retention and word of mouth recommendations. The branding score reached an average of 4.1, indicating good consumer acceptance of the hotel brand image.

3. Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test shows that all items in the questionnaire have a correlation above 0.30, indicating high validity. The reliability test with Cronbach's Alpha produced values above 0.70 for all variables, indicating good consistency in measurement.

4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The regression results show a significant model with the following equation:

$$Y = 0,35X_1 + 0,40X_2 + 0,30X_3 + \epsilon$$

Positioning (X_1): Coefficient 0.35 shows a significant influence on occupancy levels. This is in accordance with research by Javadpour & Joseph-Mathews (2023), which found that hotels with a clear positioning strategy tend to be more successful in attracting guests.

Differentiation (X_2): With a coefficient of 0.40, differentiation is the most dominant variable in this model. According to Kotler & Keller (2016), differentiation that focuses on consumer experience creates unique value, thus increasing consumer preference for the hotel.

Branding (X_3): Coefficient 0.30 shows that branding also has a significant effect. Effective branding increases awareness and creates emotional attachment with customers (Azate et al., 2022; Fox, 2022).

5. Hypothesis Testing

The t test shows that the significance value for all variables is below 0.05, indicating that positioning, differentiation and branding have a significant effect on individual occupancy levels.

The F test produces a calculated F value of 45.67 with a significance of 0.000, which shows that these three variables simultaneously influence the hotel occupancy rate.

6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

An R^2 value of 0.68 means that 68% of the variation in occupancy levels can be explained by positioning, differentiation and branding, while the remainder is influenced by other factors such as price, service quality and promotion.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that differentiation strategy has the greatest influence on occupancy rates, followed by positioning and branding. clear service differentiation such as exclusive amenities and personalized service helps hotels stand out in a competitive market. meanwhile, consistent branding increases guest loyalty, which is supported by the findings of Javadpour & Joseph-Mathews (2023) and Fox (2022). With the right positioning, Hotel Grand Rohan Jogja is able to target relevant market segments, strengthen competitiveness and increase occupancy rates significantly. Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that positioning, differentiation and branding strategies have a significant influence on occupancy levels at the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel. This research supports existing findings in the literature that these three elements are key factors in attracting and retaining customers.

Clear positioning helps the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel to target certain market segments and build an image that is easily recognized by consumers, especially in the business segment (Javadpour & Joseph-Mathews, 2023).

The differentiation of services offered with a sharia concept, as well as architectural designs that combine traditional and modern elements of personalized service, have proven to play a major role in increasing guest satisfaction and customer loyalty, which in turn contributes to higher occupancy rates (Azate et al., 2022).

Strong branding, especially through social media and effective digital communications, plays an important role in increasing consumers' positive perceptions of hotels and strengthening loyalty, which ultimately results in increased occupancy rates (Fox, 2022; Kim & Lee, 2021).

Overall, the combination of appropriate positioning, innovative differentiation and consistent branding can increase competitiveness and provide competitive advantages for the Grand Rohan Jogja Hotel. Hotel management is advised to continue developing these three strategies simultaneously to maintain and increase hotel occupancy levels in the future.

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