Title   **The Definition, Development, and Dimensions of Corporate Identity**

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ได้รวบรวมแนวความคิดเรื่องอัตลักษณ์ขององค์กรโดยรวบรวมมาจากงานวิจัยของ นักวิชาการต่างๆ ตั้งแต่อดีตจนถึงปัจจุบันและแนวคิดอื่นๆ ที่มีความหมายใกล้เคียงกัน รวมถึงการศึกษา พัฒนาการและองค์ประกอบต่างๆ ของแนวคิดเรื่องอัตลักษณ์ขององค์กร นอกจากนั้นแล้วยังอธิบายถึงการใช้ แนวคิดเรื่องอัตลักษณ์ขององค์กรเป็นเครื่องมือด้านการจัดการเชิงกลยุทธ์ในการสร้างความได้เปรียบในการ แข่งขันขององค์กรธุรกิจ

คำสำคัญ : อัตลักษณ์ขององค์กร ความได้เปรียบในการแข่งขัน

Abstract

This paper reviews the concept of corporate identity from different authors and other concepts that related to corporate identity. It also concern about the development and dimensions of corporate identity. The paper provides the need of corporate identity as a strategic management tool for businesses in Thailand to develop sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords : Corporate Identity, Competitive Advantage

Introduction

The globalization of business affects the business competition it gives an opportunity for both competitive domestic organizations and foreign competitors. Firms have to compete with each others to attract high quality customers. The opportunities and threats challenge for Thai businesses to develop the competitiveness through the emphasizing on the corporate identity and create the unique characteristics. Moreover, companies have to effectively communicate these unique characteristic to their stakeholders. For these reasons, management teams have to understand how the vital role of corporate identity can increase the competitiveness and implement the corporate identity program as part of their strategic growth.

There are ten environment forces for managing corporate identity, which include acceleration of product life cycle, deregulation, privatization program, increased competition in both public and non-profit sectors, increased competition in service sector, globalization and the establishment of free trade areas, merger and acquisitions, shortage of high caliber personnel, public expectations for

corporate and social responsiveness and blurring of boundaries between internal and external aspect of the organization (Balmer, 1997).

The definitions of corporate identity

There are many definitions of corporate identity shown as table 1. Abratt (1989) said that corporate identity is a set of visual cues which included physical and behavior, it makes a firm identical from other and these cues were use to represent the firm. Whereas Gray and Balmer (1998) concluded that corporate identity is the distinct characteristic of the company. Ackeman (1988) gave the definition that corporate identity is a firm's unique capabilities. Likewise, Lambert (1989) also said that corporate identity is all distinctive manifestation of the firm. According to Olin (1990) corporate identity is consisted of the explicit management company's activities which are perceived. It composed of three things; who you are, what you do and how you do it. Gioia (2000) added that corporate identity is emphasized on corporate symbol and logo. More over, Gregory (1999) gave the definition that corporate identity is what the firm is and how the firm is perceived. In addition, Van Riel and Balmer (1997) view that corporate identity indicates the way a company present itself though behavior and symbol to internal and external audiences and express the firm's sameness overtime and distinctiveness. Van Rekom (1997) concluded that corporate identity is a set of meanings by which an object that allow people to describe, remember and relate to it. Furthermore, Margulies (1977) said that corporate identity is all the way a firm should to identify itself to its entire stake holder; community, customer, employee, stock holder and investment bankers. Similarly, Leuthesser and Kohli (1997) view that corporate identity is the way company reveals its philosophy and strategy through communication, behavior and symbolism. From Balmer (1993)'s view point, corporate identity is a fusion of strategy, communication and behavior and it come in to being when there is a common ownership of organization's philosophy. Alessandri (2001) pointed that corporate identity is the outward presentation of the company and pleasing corporate identity can produce positive corporate image.

Table 1: The definition of the term corporate identity

Years	Author	definition
1977	Margulies	All the ways company chooses to identify itself to all steak holders; customer, employee, stockholder, community, press and investment banker
1988	Ackerman	A firm's unique capability
1989	Lambert	All the distinctive manifestation of the firm
1989	Abratt	A set of visual cues; physical and behavioral that make the firm different and distinguish from other and this cues are use to symbolize and represent the firm

Table 1: The definition of the term corporate identity(Continue)

Years	Author	definition
1990	Olins	Consist of explicit management of the in which the firm's activities are perceive. It can project three things; who you are, what you do and how you do it
1993	Balmer	A fusion of strategy, behavioral communications. It is not preserve any one management discipline, but it drawn from several. It comes to being when there is a ownership of organization's philosophy
1997	Luethesser and Kohly	The ways the firm reveal its philosophy and strategy through communication, behavior and symbolism
1997	Van Rekom	A set of meaning by which the object allow itself to be known and through which it allow people to describe remember and relate to it
1997	Van Riel and Balmer	The way the company represent it self through behavior and symbolism to internal and external audiences. It rooted in the behavior of individual of the firm member expressing the firm's sameness overtime, distinctiveness and centrality
1998	Gray and Balmer	
1999	Gregory	The distinct characteristics of the firm
2000	Gioia	A plan visual element that distinguish the firm from all others
		Consistent and target representation of the firm with emphasis on the firm's symbolic and logos. It is a strategic both applied internally and externally

The development of corporate identity

There were three paradigm of the development of corporate identity which included graphic design paradigm, integrate communication paradigm and interdisciplinary paradigm as figure 1.
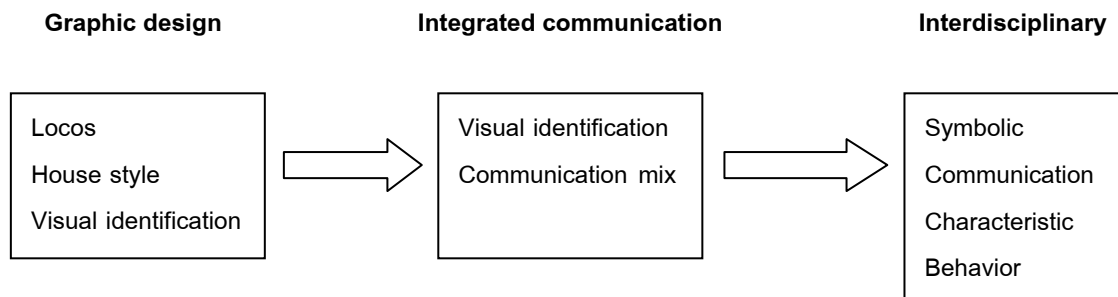
Graphic design	Integrated communication	Interdisciplinary
Locos House style Visual identification	Visual identification Communication mix	Symbolic Communication Characteristic Behavior

Figure 1: The development of corporate identity

Graphic design paradigm

Firstly, corporate identity focuses on logos, company house style and visual identification. Olin (1978) separate visual identity into three groups which included monolithic endorsed and branded. He also said that the visual identity was use to present organization's strategy, branding and communications policies.

Integrated communication paradigm

Secondly, Grunig (1993) pointed that corporate communication mix is different from marketing communication mix and effective communication to all stakeholders is also important. The communication is considered the bridge that connects the corporate identity with the image of the organization.

Interdisciplinary paradigm

Thirdly, Olin (1978) stated that the concept of corporate identity has grown broadly, is reveal through behavior, communication and symbolism. There was a scholar such as Van Rekom (1993), Balmer (1997) and Van Riel (1997) both of them agree that corporate identity refer to the organization's unique characteristic which comes from the behavior of the member in the organization. Many of the scholars also concluded that organizational identity is strategic important and can be approach by multidisciplinary. According to Balmer (1997), manager can reduce the gap between actual and prefer corporate identity by managing corporate identity mix which included communication, symbolic and behavior.

The different meaning among corporate identity, organizational identity, corporate image, corporate personality and corporate brand

There are many terms regarding to corporate identity such as organizational identity, corporate brand, corporate image, and corporate personality. However, they have their own specific meaning for each term. The paper summarized the meaning as table 2.

Corporate identity

Abratt (1989), Balmer (1998) Olin (1990) and Van Riel (1997), corporate identity focus on culture, strategy, structure, history, business activity and business scope. Corporate identity is the mix of elements which give the organization their distinctiveness. And the key questions are who are we, what are structure, strategy, business, reputation, performance, business and history.

Organizational identity

Dutton (1994) and Hatch and Schultz (1997), organizational identity is a key element that give distinctiveness to business identity. From Balmer (2001), organizational identity means to what employee feel and think about their organization. It emphasis on organizational culture, and its meaning close to corporate personality and corporate culture. Balmer (2001) added that

organizational identity concerned about the mix of subculture in the organization, employee relationship, culture, sexual identity and concerned about the question who are we.

Corporate brand

Balmer (1995), corporate brand refer to corporate reputation, corporate image and concern on perception. It focus on all internal and external stakeholders, and boarder mix than traditional marketing mix, and it require commitment from all staff, senior management as well as financial support. From Balmer (2001), the favorable corporate brand came from organizational identity. It also emphasizes on the promise that the brand communicate to the stakeholders. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the communication depends on the gab between the performance and promise.

Corporate image

Abratt (1989), Grunig (1993), and Van Riel (1995), there are three approached of corporate image which include psychology, graphic design and public relation. From Balmer (2001), the corporate image came from managing business identity. Moreover, corporate image related to immediate mental perception to the organization held by individual group. In conclusion, corporate image concern on the current perception of the organization.

Corporate personality

Olin (1978), explained that corporate personality was a key element that gave distinctiveness to business identity and also related to attitude and belief of stakeholders in the organization. Balmer (2001) concluded that corporate personality is the mixture of corporate, professional, regional and other sub culture in the organization and that mixture gives the distinctiveness to business identity. Corporate personality concerns on the question who we are.

Table 2: The different meaning among corporate identity, organizational identity, corporate image, corporate personality and corporate brand

Term	Meaning
Corporate identity	Focus on culture, strategy, structure, history, business activity and business scope
	Concern on organization's distinctiveness
	A mixture of many elements
	Concern on internal and external stakeholders
Organizational identity	A key of organization' distinctiveness
	Focus on how employee feel about the organization
	Emphasis on organizational culture
	Concern on internal stakeholders

Table 2: The different meaning among corporate identity, organizational identity, corporate image, corporate personality and corporate brand(Continue)

Term	Meaning
Corporate brand	Focus on corporate reputation and corporate image
	Concern on perception of internal and external stakeholders
	Broader than marketing mix
	Emphasis on the communication of the promise of the brand
	Come from corporate identity
Corporate image	Focus on psychology, graphic design and public relation
	Concern on immediate mental perception to the organization
	Come from corporate identity
Corporate personality	Concern on attitude and belief of the stakeholders in the organization
	A mixture of corporate, professional, regional and other sub culture
	A key elements of corporate identity
	Concern on who are we

Dimensions of corporate identity

Melewar (2006), there are seven component of corporate identity which included corporate communication, corporate design, corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate structure, corporate strategy and corporate art

1. Corporate communication

Van Riel (1995)'s view, corporate communication includes all the way that organization communicates with its stakeholders. All messages and all activities that organization sent to stakeholders will shape the stakeholder perception. Corporate communications have both controllable and non controllable items. Van Riel (1995), also added that all form of communication among all stakeholder have interdependent relationship. Hatch and Schultz (1997) added that organizational communication and marketing are act as a link between organizational image and strategic management. Favorable image and good reputation came from effective communication of organizational vision and mission of the company (Olin 1989).

2. Corporate design

Dowling (1994), Melewar (1998) and Topalian (1984), corporate design or visual identity composed of five elements: the organization's name, slogan, logos/symbol, color and typography. Visual identity can be display in way such as company's product, vehicle, location and architecture of its building. Balmer (1997) added that visual identity has two purposes: it represent the organization's value and philosophy and also support corporate communication.

3. Corporate culture

Melewar (2006), corporate culture is impacted by history of the company, the founder of the organization and country of origin of the organization. There is link between corporate culture and corporate history because the interaction among the group can develop culture. Melewar (2006) stated that the founder of the company can affect the corporate culture. Moreover, Foo (1999) pointed out that there is strong link between corporate identity and country of origin of the corporation such as "German efficiency" and "Japanese innovation". However, from Melewar (2006)'s view, the link between country of origin and corporate identity become weak when the organization grow international merger. Balmer (1997) concerned that belief, language and rituals guide the corporate culture and shape the organization identity.

4. Corporate behavior

Melewar (2005) stated that behavior is intangible part of corporate identity, corporate behavior includes employee behavior and management behavior and corporate behavior can affect the organizational identity in the long-run. More over, employee behavior can influence customer and other stake holder.

5. Corporate structure

Balmer (1995) mentioned that organizational structure and branding structure are the component of corporate structure. The strong brand can create identity in the market place and strength the customer loyalty. Olins (1990) pointed that brand structure can create product differentiate and corporate structure has strong impact on corporate culture.

6. Corporate strategy

Melewar (2006) mentioned that corporate strategy came from the firm's objective and strategy for competing in the industry and it determine the product, process, profit and perception of the company. Balmer (1997) also agreed that company's strategy, company's philosophy, company's culture and corporate design are major component of corporate identity.

7. Corporate art

Hatch and Schultz (1997) said that corporate art in business influence business in many ways such as perception, feeling and thinking of organization member, member share value, and employee senses of belonging to the organization. According to Olins (1990), corporate art play important role in symbolizing the company's traditional, core value, distinctive quality, activity and competencies. Balmer (1997) stated that corporate art can affect the company in communicating the company's core value to the outsider, differentiating the firm from its competitors and attracting new customers. Moreover, it can create atmosphere within the organization that stimulates employee's imagination, and motivates employees. From the study of Hatch and Schultz (1997), corporate art can also create a desirable impression of the company in the public mind, influence public's belief, feeling and picture in public mind. Corporate art helps the company become involve with the local community, demonstrate its commitment to social responsibility and giving back to public.

Conclusion

Their for, in order to get the competitive advantage in dynamic environment, Thai companies should invest on the corporate identity to be differentiated, to attract and to retain customer, to get strategic alliances, to better communicate with stake holder and to clearly define their image and character. The corporate identity should be the part of company's strategic concern and match with the company's strategy. The companies should pay attention to all corporate identity aspects; all corporate identity dimensions should be integrated and fit with each other. Corporate identity also has a vital role in the communication of important message to all internal and external stakeholders, for these reasons the Thai company should repetitively invest in advertising to be more recognizable. The Thai companies should invest in the activities that can sustain the corporate image such as re-design symbols and locos of the organization to be fleshy and re-design their facilities to be more attractive. The architecture and interior design should also be emphasized in order to communicate the identical characteristic. More over, the Thai companies should emphasis on knowledge management in order to maintain their unique organizational culture and distinctive corporate behavior. Lastly, due to imitated amount of empirical research in Thailand, the authors encourage the empirical research of corporate identity in this region especially on the strategic dimension.
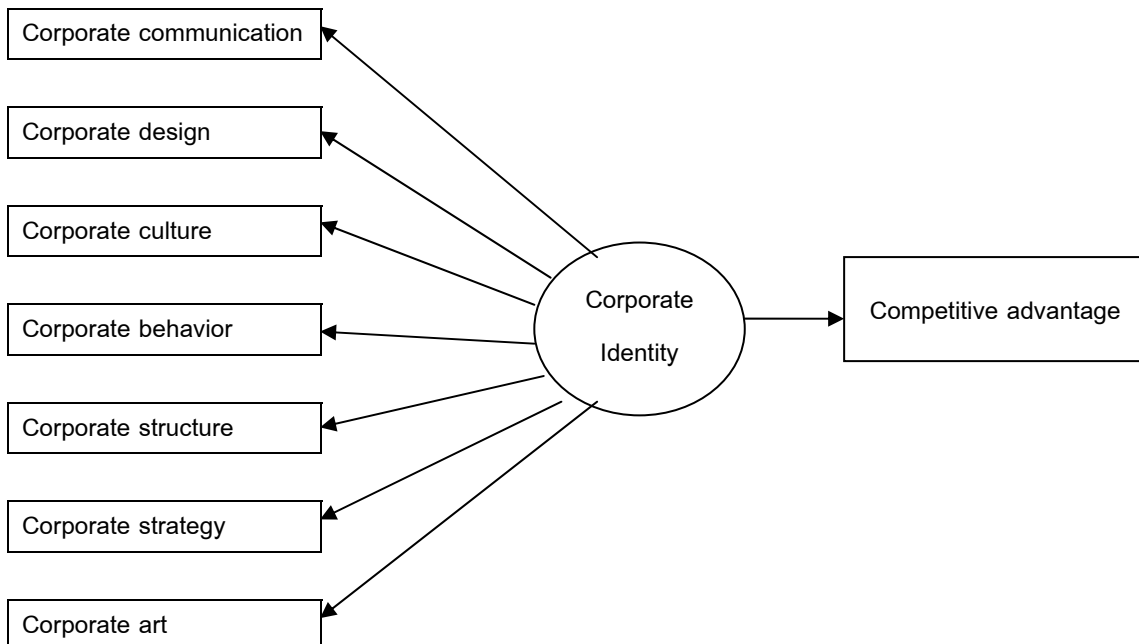

Figure 2: The relationships among corporate identity, corporate identity dimension and competitive advantage

Melewar, T.C. 2006. Seven dimension of corporate identity

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