

Positioning Strategy Design of Online Travel Agent Applications Based on Perceptual Mapping

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ABSTRACT

Kliktrip is one of the online travel agent application brands with day trip and activity booking services in Indonesia which was established in 2018. In the last few years, Kliktrip has experienced several symptoms, including a decrease in revenue in the second year and the low level of brand differentiation of the Kliktrip online travel agent application based on customer perception compared to other online travel agent application brands. Based on the symptoms of these problems, it can be concluded that the brand of the Kliktrip online travel agent application is weak in customer perceptions of the online travel agent application because customers tend not to know the advantages offered by the Kliktrip online travel agent application brand. To be successful in facing competition with other business competitors, it is necessary to carry out sustainable development by building competitive differentiation by designing and improving positioning strategies. Based on the results of the perceptual mapping, there were 4 groups of competitive areas, the online travel agent Kliktrip application brand was in the same area as the Explorer.id online travel agent application brand which made it the main competitor of the Kliktrip online travel agent application brand. The objectives of this research are to (1) Design a strategy for improving the brand positioning of the online travel agent application and (2) Optimize the resources owned by the Kliktrip online travel agent application brand to implement a strategy for improving the brand positioning of the Kliktrip online travel agent application.

Keywords:
Kliktrip; Online Travel
Agent; Positioning;
Multidimensional Scaling;
SWOT

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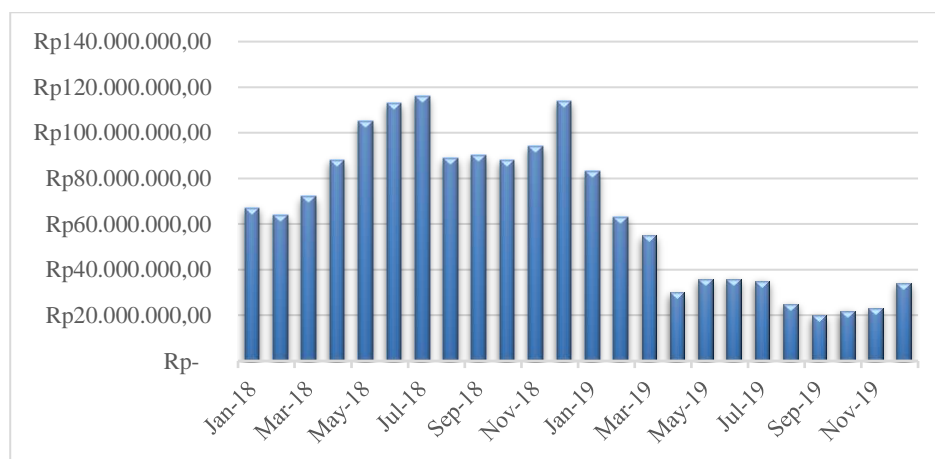
1. INTRODUCTION

Business in the tourism sector has an important role as a source of foreign exchange for the country to obtain various capital used in the production process where this sector can also encourage national economic growth through several channels, especially in creating jobs and increasing the productivity of a country. This business sector is also a strategic sector that needs to be utilized for tourism development which is a big part of national development [1].

Table 1 - Comparison of Foreign Tourist Visits

| Year | Number of Tourists | Total Foreign Exchange Receipts |
|------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2018 | 15810000 | Rp229,500,000,000,000 |
| 2019 | 16100000 | Rp280,000,000,000,000 |

Based on data from the Ministry of Tourism which can be seen in Table 1, There was an increase in the number of foreign tourists from 2018 with the number of foreign tourists from 15.81 million people to 16.1 million people in 2019, this led to an increase in the number of foreign exchange earnings that were projected to reach Rp 280 trillion in 2019 or an increase of 25% from the achievement of foreign exchange in 2018 [2]. This shows that the tourism sector is a very potential business sector to build the country's economy and improve people's welfare. Kliktrip is one of the online travel agent application brands with the type of day trip booking service and activity in Indonesia that was founded in 2018. In the first release year of the Kliktrip platform from January 2018 to the end of 2018, Kliktrip managed to collect around 1,100,000,000 IDR in revenue with more than 1,200 consumers and get good reviews with a percentage of 98%.

**Figure 1 - Total Kliktrip Revenue (Rp)**

It can be seen in Figure 1. that from the beginning of 2018 to the middle of 2018 in May and July, Kliktrip's income continued to increase, and then it continued at the end of 2018 until the beginning of 2019. However, if you look at the graphic image and the details in the second year, Kliktrip experienced a significant decrease in revenue by only collecting revenue of 261.194.000 IDR with a total of 120 bookings.

Table 2 - Number of Internet Users in Indonesia (2019-2020)

| Year | Grow per Year (%) | Number of Internet Users |
|------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2018 | 10,12% | 171100000 |
| 2019 | 8,9% | 196700000 |

Based on a survey conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII), which can be seen in Table 2, the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2019 reached 196.7 million. This number increased by 25.6 million or 8.9% compared to 2018 [3]. With the number of internet users in Indonesia that continues to increase, of course, it is also directly proportional to the development of e-commerce in Indonesia, especially in the field of tourism, namely online travel agents. This can be seen in the projected value of online travel agent transaction data in Southeast Asia from 2019 to 2025. Research conducted by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company project that the online travel agent market in Indonesia will still be superior when compared to other countries in Southeast Asia until 2025. This is based on the search rate for online travel agent application brands such as Traveloka, Tiket.com, or Airbnb whose growth reached 20% from the first half of 2018 to the first half of 2019. The growth in search rates for online travel agent application brands also affected the increase in transaction value in 2019 which reached US\$ 10 billion. User trust in online travel agent application brands is also a factor influencing the growth of this online travel agent market. The services and security provided by online travel agent application brands in Indonesia greatly affect

customer trust in these brands. Due to the rapid growth of the online travel agent market in Indonesia, each online travel agent application brand must provide a different value proposition from other online travel agent application brands. This can provide differentiation and competitive advantage between an online travel agent application brand and other online travel agent application brands, so it is important for an online travel agent application brand to find the factors that affect added value to customers [4]. Every online travel agent application brand needs to know the factors that influence customer desire to use the services that the online travel agent application brand offers because this can be an insight in developing excellence, increasing differentiation, and positioning the brand well in the minds of consumers [5].

The challenges faced by business actors in the tourism sector relate to the season or month of each year where several months are indeed the highest holiday period and vice versa where several months are indeed the lowest point for holiday. The highest period of tourism or what is commonly called the high season usually occurs at the end of the year or during the semester break, namely from May to July while the lowest period in tourism or what is commonly called the low season occurs in months other than the high season [6]. With the limited potential market that is carried out, the competition is also increasingly difficult for business actors in the tourism sector. In addition, the positioning strategy carried out by a brand is a factor in creating a consumer's impression and image of a product or service where it can affect consumer interest in a product or service offered [7]. To find out the main factors for the decline in Kliktrip's revenue, a comparison of the positioning of several other online travel agents was carried out as one of the way to identify problems with these main factors, which can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 - Competitor Positioning Comparison

| Online Travel Agent (OTA) | Positioning (tagline) | Excellence | Description |
|---------------------------|---|---|---------------------|
| Airbnb | Belong Anywhere | Availability of lodging in various countries | Emotional Approach |
| Traveloka | The No.1 Solution for All Your Travel Needs | Ease of operation of booking tourism needs | Functional Approach |
| Tiket.com | One App for Your Vacation Needs | Complete facilities offered for travel needs in one application | Functional Approach |
| Klook | Klook it, Worth it | Offers relatively low rates in tourism needs | Emotional Approach |
| Kkday | Adventure Like a Local | Ease of facilities offered for travel needs within the city | Emotional Approach |
| Kliktrip | Activities, Tours, Holidays as You Like! | Ease and flexibility in operating tourism packages | Emotional Approach |
| Explorer.id | Let Life Be More Meaningful | The convenience of application operation in tourism needs | Emotional Approach |

In Table I, it is shown that Kliktrip's positioning uses an emotional approach to the market, and the same thing is done by Airbnb, Klook, and Kkday. Meanwhile, Traveloka and Tiket.com use a functional approach as their positioning strategy. The positioning of Kliktrip is not strong enough when compared to its competitors because Kliktrip has not been able to position its brand well in the minds of consumers. Therefore, research is conducted on the formulation of the right positioning strategy.

To support the analysis related to the problem of the research object, a preliminary survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 33 respondents. The criteria for the targeted survey respondents are respondents who have carried out travel activities using the services of the Kliktrip Online Travel Agent application brand. The results of the preliminary survey can be seen in Figure 2.

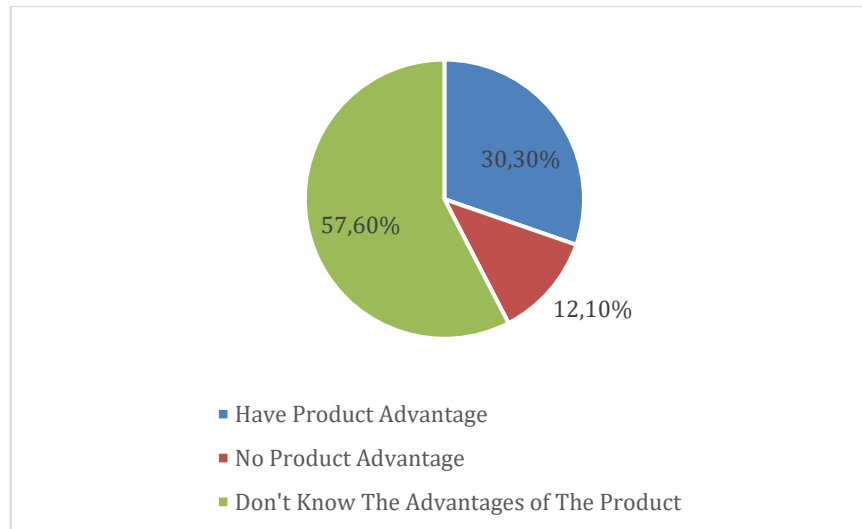


Figure 2 - Preliminary Survey

Based on Figure 2, it shows that Kliktrip users are not aware of the different advantages that Kliktrip has over other Online Travel Agent application brands. This is shown from 33 respondents who filled out the survey, only 30.3% were aware of the advantages of the Kliktrip Online Travel Agent application brand, 12.1% of respondents stated that Kliktrip had no advantages and as many as 57.6% did not know the advantages of Kliktrip's products. This is considered important because the positioning must be unique, which means the market can easily differentiate products or services from its competitors (Kartajaya, 2006). Based on the results of the preliminary survey, it is shown that Kliktrip is not different enough or unique enough when compared to other Online Travel Agent application brands. Based on the results of previous research literature studies, studies on the formulation of positioning strategies have been popularly carried out by previous researchers in various research objects, including Lee et al [8], Witek-Hajduk [9], Tongare [10], Hinson [11], Xie [12], and Chang [13]. Lee [8] conducted a positioning analysis study to see the suitability of the built image as well as mapping the positioning of the sports equipment provider brand with the perceptions captured by consumers. Meanwhile, Witek-Hajduk [9] conducted a positioning analysis study to identify and formulate a profile of hypermarket retail brand groups operating in developing countries.

Furthermore, Tongare [10] conducted a positioning analysis study to examine the shift in brand positioning strategy in India during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the study conducted by Hinson [11], the study covers the positioning strategy carried out by the hospitality business sector in Ghana. The next study conducted by Xie [12] analyzed the positioning strategy of foreign companies operating in the United States market. Another relevant study was conducted by Chang [13] by analyzing the positioning strategy applied by fashion retail brands in their impact on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In addition, studies on the formulation of positioning strategies are often carried out using the MDS method which has also been popularly carried out by previous researchers, including Kalia [14], Machado [15], Nakamura [16], and Balanzá-Martínez [17]. Kalia [14] applied the MDS method to visually analyze consumer assessments of the service quality of each brand of e-retailers. Meanwhile, Machado [15] applied the MDS method to analyze and classify the attributes of several objects in the solar system. Furthermore, a study conducted by Nakamura [16] by applying the method of MDS to visualize the scale of organizational culture in supporting management decisions in an organization. Another study conducted by Balanzá-Martínez [17] by applying the MDS method to analyze changes in behavior and lifestyles of people in Spain during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of the literature study show that there is a research gap in the study of positioning strategy formulation with the object of the online travel agent application brand and the use of SWOT Analysis as a submethod in designing positioning strategies. Research on the formulation of positioning strategies on OTA brand objects using MDS and SWOT analysis as methods is still very limited. Therefore, this research was conducted to fill the research gap and to provide at least two scientific contributions, namely (1) new object: the use of startup OTA as the object of research and (2) new application of method: the use of a combined method of MDS and SWOT as a positioning strategy design method. Through this research, it is expected that Kliktrip can position its brand well in the minds of consumers and can increase the company's revenue.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Framework

In this research, steps need to be carried out specifically. The research framework makes the research conducted to be structured and can be used as a reference in future research. This research framework is also compiled and adapted based on the stages in the data processing procedure using the MDS method. The research framework can be seen in Figure 3.

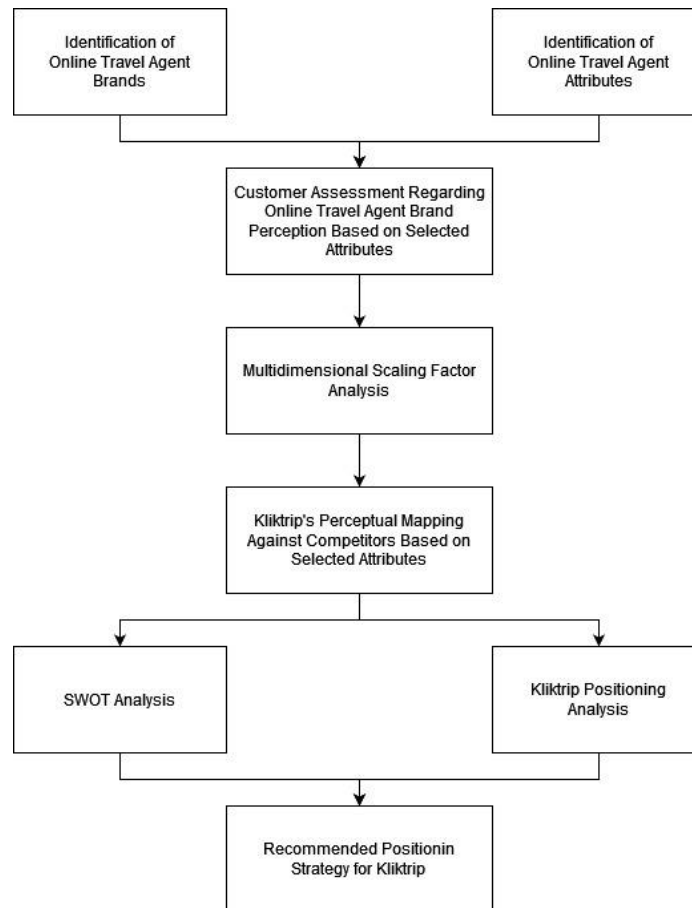


Figure 3 - Research Framework

The first stage of this research was to identify the online travel agent application brand to be analyzed. Identification was also carried out on the attributes of the online travel agent application brand that has been obtained through previous research and interviews. The brand attributes of the online travel agent application will then become the validity of the preparation of the questionnaire. The next stage was to provide an assessment of respondents' perceptions of the online travel agent application brands that have been identified based on the attributes collected in the previous stage. The results of the perception assessment will be used as input data for data processing using the MDS method. Perceptual mapping will describe the position of Kliktrip against its competitors based on the selected attributes. After understanding the position mapping of Kliktrip against its competitors through perceptual mapping, the next step was to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of Kliktrip itself. This was done to provide recommendations for improvements to Kliktip positioning strategy to have competitive differentiation and attract the attention of product users.

2.2 Data Collection

Data collection is divided into two types of data, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained based on the results of interviews with the Kliktrip management regarding marketing strategies that had been carried out previously. The secondary data obtained in this study is Kliktrip's existing data in the form of income data from January 2018 to December 2019, the number of Kliktrip followers on Instagram, as well as relevant literature studies.

2.3 Questionnaire Design

In this study, the questionnaire was compiled based on the results of the attributes that have been obtained from interviews with 20 respondents regarding the factors that make users make transactions on the online travel agent application. The design of this questionnaire will be the main input in making a perceptual map using the MDS method. The design of this questionnaire also consists of an assessment of 4 Likert scales for consumer perceptions and preferences of the Kliktrip online travel agent application brand and also its competitors. The scale range used is numbering from a scale of 1 to 4 with information as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Rating Level Likert Scale

| Scale/Rating | Description |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Strongly Agree |
| 2 | Agree |
| 3 | Disagree |
| 4 | Strongly Disagree |

2.4 Questionnaire Distribution

In this research, the sampling technique method and the sample used is non-probability sampling with purposive sampling. This technique is used with sampling that does not provide equal opportunities for each member of the sample to be assigned to the sample as well as a sampling technique with certain considerations [27]. The criteria for the respondents needed are respondents who are active users of the online travel agent application who have passed the previous identification stage. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out online through the Google Form platform. Target respondents are also considered in the process of distributing questionnaires based on sampling techniques and sample sizes that have been previously determined.

2.5 Data Processing

At this stage, data processing is carried out using the MDS method by selecting procedures, determining the number of dimensions used, labeling dimensions based on all predetermined attributes, and testing goodness of fit. After getting the results of data processing using the MDS method, the resulting data were formulated against a perceptual map and analyzed for each brand of online travel agent application. Furthermore, the results of the analysis can be used as a reference for the preparation of the Kliktrip positioning strategy which is presented using the SWOT analysis method.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Attribute Identification

The attribute assessment in this study was obtained based on previous research on online travel agent applications. The research that is used as a reference in this study is the research conducted by Kusumah et al [28], Urumsah [29], Cambodia [30]. The attributes obtained will be used as a reference in the third stage, namely the Simulation of External Influence stage in extracting the attributes of the online travel agent application. A collection of attributes from previous researchers can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5 - Brand Identification of Online Travel Agent Application

| No. | Application Selection Attributes of Online Travel Agent | Resources |
|-----|---|---|
| 1 | User Service Security | Kusumah, Piambudi dan Rosita (2018) |
| 2 | Ease of Use | Kusumah, Piambudi dan Rosita (2018), Urumsah (2015), Kamboj dan Rahman (2017) |
| 3 | Order Flexibility | Kusumah, Piambudi dan Rosita (2018) |
| 4 | App Design | Kusumah, Piambudi dan Rosita (2018) |
| 5 | Reliable Service Quality | Kusumah, Piambudi dan Rosita (2018) |

| No. | Application Selection Attributes of Online Travel Agent | Resources |
|-----|---|---|
| 6 | Informative App | Urumsah (2015), Kamboj dan Rahman (2017) |
| 7 | Trusted brand | Kusumah, Piambudi dan Rosita (2018), Urumsah (2015), Kamboj dan Rahman (2017) |
| 8 | Ease of Payment | Urumsah (2015) |

3.2 Data Processing of Multidimensional Scaling

At this stage, data processing was carried out using the MDS method to provide an overview of the position of the online travel agent application of Kliktrip to its competitors. The RSQ value generated in the MDS model of this study is equal to 0.98921 and the resulting S-Stress value is equal to 0.10499. This value is obtained based on the results of data processing on IBM SPSS 23. The results of perceptual mapping can be seen in Figure 4.

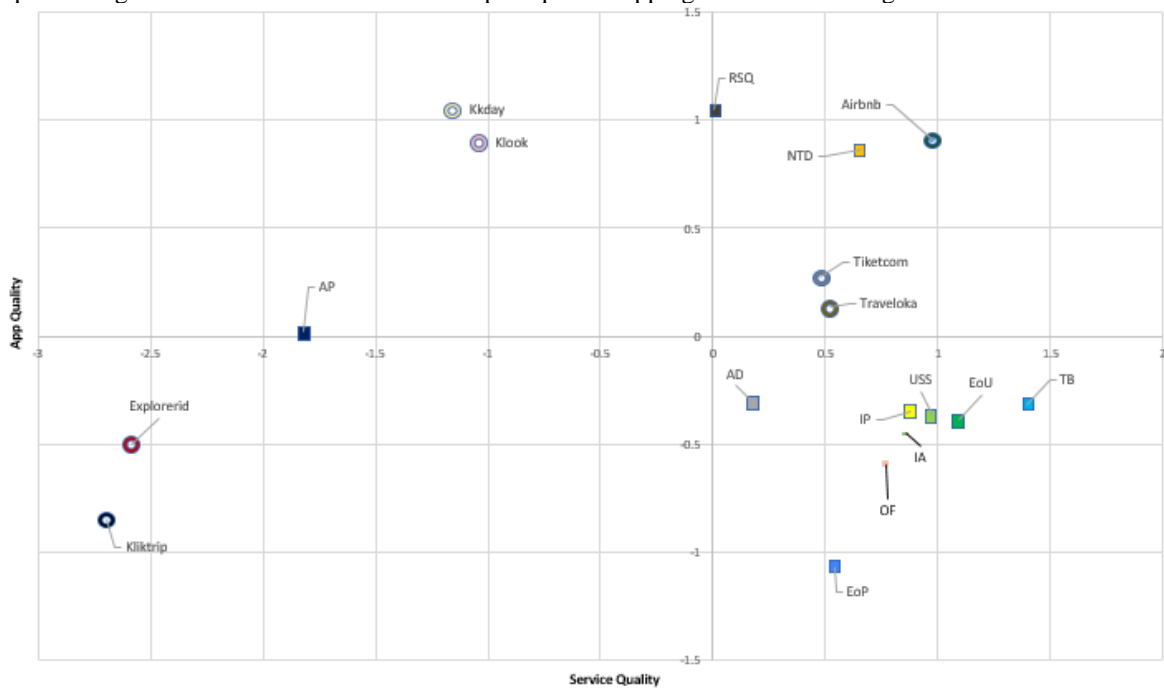


Figure 4 - Perceptual Mapping of Online Travel Agent Application

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| TB | Trusted Brand | EoP | Ease of Payment |
| EoU | Ease of Use | IP | Interesting Promotion |
| AP | Affordable Price | NTD | Number of Travel Destinations |
| USS | User Service Security | IA | Informative Application |
| AD | Application Design | OF | Order Flexibility |
| RSQ | Reliable Service Quality | | |

3.3 Perceptual Map Analysis of Online Travel Agent Application

At this stage, a perceptual map analysis was carried out to see the area of competition between the Kliktrip online travel agent (OTA) application brand and other online travel agent brands. Perceptual map is the result of processing questionnaire data using the MDS technique. The competition area is obtained after going through the data processing carried out in the previous stage. The competitive area on the perceptual map can be seen in Figure 5.

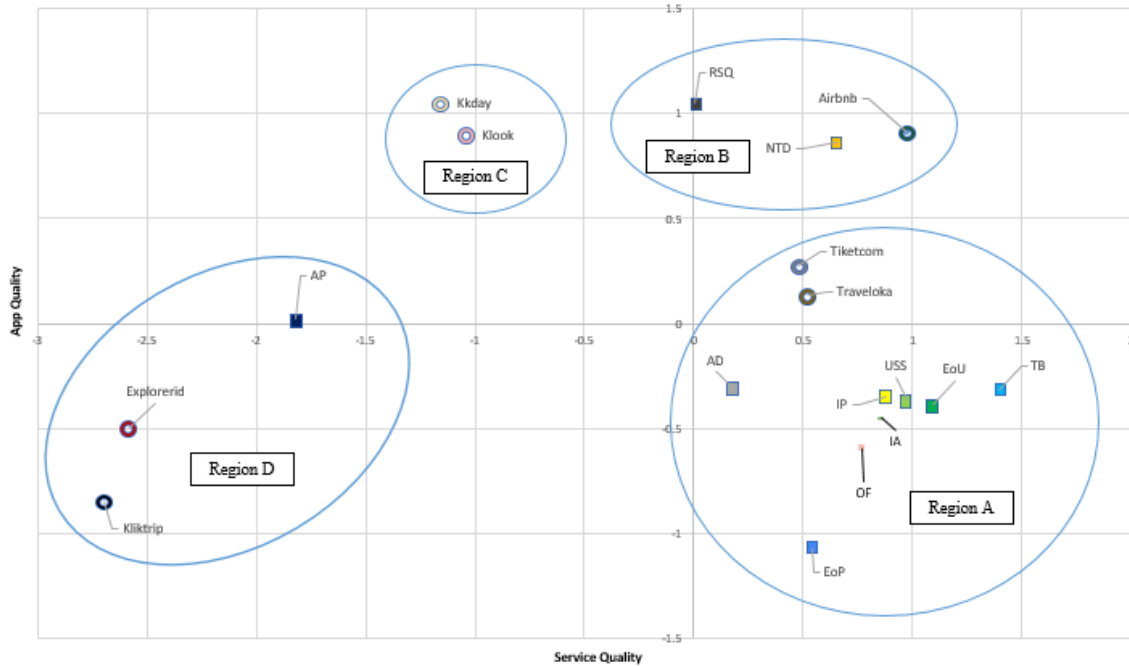


Figure 5 - Competition Area on the Perceptual Map

1. Region A

In region A, there are two online travel agent application brands, namely Traveloka and Tiket.com. The two brands of online travel agent applications have similar characteristics, so they are in the same competitive zone. Traveloka and Tiket.com can outperform each other in terms of brand trust, application design, attractive promotions, service security, ease of use, booking flexibility, and informative service.

2. Region B

In region B, there is only one online travel agent application brand, namely Airbnb. Airbnb has no direct competition with other online travel agent application brands. According to the analysis on the resulting perceptual map, Airbnb has its advantages in terms of the number of travel destinations and reliable service quality.

3. Region C

In region C, there are two online travel agent application brands, namely Klook and Kkday. The two brands of online travel agent applications have similar characteristics because they are in the same area on the perceptual map. Klook and Kkday can compete with each other in terms of reliable service quality and affordable prices.

4. Region D

In region D, there are two brands of online travel agent applications, namely Explorer.id and Kliktrip. Based on the analysis on the perceptual map, the two brands of online travel agent applications have similar characteristics, so they become direct competitors to each other. Explorer.id and Kliktrip can compete with each other at affordable prices. The results of the analysis on the competitive area of the perceptual map show that the online travel agent application brand of Kliktrip is included in the D competition area, namely the online travel agent application brand of Explorer.id as its main competitor. The two brands of online travel agent applications compete in terms of affordable prices and marketing programs that are on the X-axis. Therefore, a positioning strategy is formulated on aspects of affordable prices and marketing programs using the SWOT Analysis method.

3.4 SWOT Matrix

The results of the SWOT matrix in this research are used to design a positioning strategy which will then become a recommendation for improvement for the online travel agent application brand of Kliktrip. The SWOT matrix for the improvement attributes is presented in Table 6.

Table 6 - Competition Attributes SWOT Matrix: Affordable Prices

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| EFAS | Strength (S) | Weakness (W) |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">IFAS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kliktrip offers personnel features in the operation of travel packages to support price affordability. 2. Kliktrip has a local tourism network that can support cheaper booking rates. 3. Kliktrip offers flexibility in choosing travel destinations in one travel package to support price affordability. 4. Kliktrip offers free rates for cancellation of travel package bookings. 5. Kliktrip has a team with good experience and knowledge about tourism in Indonesia. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The terms of the package prices offered depend on the number of travel participants in one package. 2. The terms of the package price depend on the travel rates offered by the related tourist destination. |
| Opportunities (O) | Strategi S-O | Strategi W-O |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The increasing need for ticket sales access from local tourism services. 2. The increasing need for people to book digital-based city travel packages at affordable prices. 3. There are business investors in the tourism sector who can make it easier for Kliktrip to develop their business. 4. Many companies can be used as business partners in the tourism sector. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing feature policies that support customer benefits in making repeat orders on the Kliktrip online travel agent application. (S5, O1, O2) 2. Cooperating with banking companies related to providing discounts on payments via credit cards. (S5, O4) 3. Developing service features to support price affordability for customers. (S1, S2, S3, S4, O3). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing cooperation with local tourism providers who have not implemented digital-based business (W2, O1, O2). 2. Offering a choice of travel packages with economical tourist routes in a choice of city destinations (W2, O2). |
| Threats (T) | Strategi S-T | Strategi W-T |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many Kliktrip competitors provide more complete services at affordable prices. 2. Business in the tourism sector will not run optimally during a low visit period (low season). 3. Government policies related to activity restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic have reduced business income opportunities in the tourism sector. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintaining excellence in the affordability attribute to survive the threat of competitors (S1, S2, S3, S4, T1). 2. Creating virtual traveling content on Youtube & Instagram social media during the Covid-19 pandemic activity restriction (S5, T3). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing a price-cutting strategy on the purchase of travel packages for more than two travel participants during the low season period. (W1, T2) |

3.5 Online Application Brand Positioning of Kliktrip Travel Agent

The online travel agent application brand of Kliktrip has succeeded in positioning its brand as an online travel agent application that excels at the attribute of an affordable price. The affordable price attribute is also an attribute of competition in the regions that Kliktrip and its actual competitor, Explorer.id, get. The following are the steps that can be taken by Kliktrip to increase the affordable price attribute, which are as follows:

1. S-O Strategy: Implementing feature policies that support customer benefits in making repeat orders on the Kliktrip online travel agent application.
2. S-O Strategy: Kliktrip can cooperate with banking companies related to providing discounts on payments via credit cards.
3. S-O Strategy: Kliktrip can develop service features to support price affordability for customers.
4. S-T Strategy: Kliktrip can maintain an advantage on the affordability attribute to survive the threat of competitors.
5. S-T Strategy: Creating virtual traveling content on Youtube & Instagram social media during the Covid-19 pandemic activity restrictions.
6. W-O Strategy: Kliktrip can increase cooperation with local tourism providers who have not implemented digital-based businesses.
7. W-O Strategy: Offering a choice of travel packages with economical tourist routes in one city destination choice.
8. W-T Strategy: Kliktrip can apply a price-cut strategy on purchasing travel packages for more than two travel participants during the low season period.

3.6 Roadmap Strategy Positioning Kliktrip

In this study, a project plan is compiled which is summarized in a roadmap strategy that aims to describe the implementation of the recommendations within one year. This project planning is adjusted based on the company's ability to carry out each recommendation given. The roadmap strategy can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7 - Kliktrip Roadmap Strategy

| Q1 2022 | | | Q2 2022 | | | Q3 2022 | | | Q4 2022 | | |
|--|-----|-----|--|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|--|-----|-----|
| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Maintaining excellence on the price affordability attribute to survive the threat of competitors. | | | Creating virtual traveling content on Youtube & Instagram social media during the Covid-19 pandemic activity restrictions. | | | Offering a choice of travel packages with economical tourist routes in one city destination choice. | | | Implementing feature policies that support customer benefits in making repeat orders on the Kliktrip online travel agent application. | | |
| Increasing cooperation with local tourism providers who have not implemented digital-based businesses. | | | Developing service features to support price affordability for customers. | | | | | | Implementing a price-cutting strategy on the purchase of travel packages for more than two travel participants during the low season period. | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Cooperating with banking companies related to providing discounts on payments via credit cards. | | |

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, it was concluded that Kliktrip has not implemented an ideal positioning strategy because it cannot provide a unique differentiation in the minds of customers related to the services offered and does not have much effect on the company's revenue so it is necessary to design a positioning strategy improvement using the MDS method and perceptual mapping formulated with SWOT analysis to be able to increase the company's revenue and position its brand approximately to the market. The MDS method is used to represent respondents' perceptions and preferences spatially using a visual display and refers to the perceptions held by consumers on the perceptual map. Based on the results of the

data processing, it was found that Kliktrip has similar characteristics with the Explorer.id brand, which both compete in the affordable price attribute, which makes Explorer.id a direct competitor of Kliktrip. Attributes of affordable prices were analyzed more deeply with the SWOT analysis method which refers to the internal and external conditions of Kliktrip, and a recommendation for positioning improvement design with a SWOT matrix is formulated, including maintaining excellence at an affordable price, developing service features, creating traveling content visually, making choices of economical travel packages, increasing cooperation with local tourism providers, initiating cooperation with banking companies, implementing customer benefit feature policies, and implementing price-cutting strategies. The design of the Kliktrip positioning improvement strategy in this study can be implemented by optimizing the aspects of people and also the company methods in each of its positioning improvement strategy designs.

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