

The Influence of Image Differentiation Strategy and Innovation Product to Competitive Advantage Creative Industries in Cimahi City

Muhammad Agung Dharmajaya

Universitas Mathla'ul Anwar, Pandeglang, Indonesia

Email: agungdharma@unmabanten.ac.id

Abstract

The creative industry plays a strategic role in driving economic growth in the region, particularly in Cimahi City, known as one of the centers of creative industry development in West Java. Facing increasingly fierce competition, creative industry players strive to improve or maintain sustainable competitive advantage. This study aims to analyze the influence of image differentiation strategies and product innovation on the competitive advantage of the creative industry in Cimahi City. The research method used is a quantitative method with a descriptive and verified approach. Data were obtained through distributing questionnaires to creative industry players in Cimahi City. The data analysis technique used multiple linear regression analysis to test the partial and simultaneous effects between variables. The results show that image differentiation strategies have a positive and significant influence on competitive advantage, product innovation also has a positive and significant influence on competitive advantage, and simultaneously image differentiation strategies and product innovation have a significant influence on the competitive advantage of the creative industry in Cimahi City. These findings indicate that strengthening a unique image and sustainable product innovation are important factors in increasing the competitiveness of the creative industry.

Keywords: *Image Differentiation Strategy, Innovation Products, Competitive Advantages, Creative Industry.*



A. INTRODUCTION

The creative industry is an economic sector based on creativity, ideas, and innovation as the primary source of added value. Technological developments, market globalization, and changes in consumer behavior drive the creative industry to continuously adapt to increasingly competitive dynamics (Abdullah, 2023). This situation requires creative industry players to not only produce quality products but also to create unique and differentiated value to survive and thrive in a competitive business environment (Rofaida et al., 2019).

The increasingly fierce competition in the creative industry requires businesses to possess a sustainable competitive advantage as the primary foundation for maintaining their business existence (Agustina et al., 2025). Competitive advantage serves not only as a tool for winning market competition but also as a long-term strategy for creating added value for those who can differentiate their business from its competitors (Krisna, 2024). Creative industry players with a competitive advantage will be better able to attract consumers, build customer loyalty, and sustainably improve business performance. On the other hand, without clear and consistent advantages, creative industry players tend to produce homogeneous and easily

imitated products, making it difficult to differentiate themselves in the market (Mardikaningsih, 2023).

One strategy that can be used to create a competitive advantage is a differentiation strategy. According to Sulistiani (2013), indicators of a differentiation strategy include product differentiation, service quality differentiation, convenience, and image differentiation. Image differentiation relates to a company's efforts to build a positive, unique, and distinct perception in the minds of consumers through brand identity, visual quality, emotional value, and reputational efforts. Through image differentiation, customers can shape a company's image in the community, so the company must create a positive impression (Tampi, 2015). Therefore, companies must design their identity to shape a corporate image in the community by meeting customer needs and desires. Kotler & Susanto (2001) state that image can directly influence a company's image, derived from the public's perception of the quality of the company's products. In the context of the creative industry, a strong and distinctive image is a crucial asset because the products produced are often symbolic, aesthetic, and creatively based.

In addition to the image of differentiation, product innovation is also an important factor in increasing competitive advantage. Product innovation according to (Sukirman, 2017) can be defined as something that is sufficiently understood by consumers or customers, so that a sign of excellence can be provided in a sustainable manner. Meanwhile, another opinion according to (Ernawati, 2019) states that product innovation has a direct influence on the competitive advantage of ikat woven products and management has the greatest direct influence on competitive advantage, while the product innovation variable has the smallest direct influence on competitive advantage. This means that management strengthens the development of competitive advantage, so it is necessary to maintain consumer strength to management to always be a consideration every time product innovation is carried out. Product innovation includes the development of ideas, designs, new functions, and improving product quality to suit the needs and tastes of the ever-changing market (Abdillah, 2016). The cybercriminal industry is creative and able to present innovative products continuously that will more easily attract consumer attention and maintain customer loyalty.

As Cimahi City experiences growth in the trade and services sectors of the Creative Industry, with its abundant human resources, the Cimahi City Government is striving to develop the Creative Industry as a new economic development model. The Cimahi City Government is developing the Creative Industry using a four-cluster approach: the crafts industry cluster, the textile and textile product industry cluster, the food/beverage industry cluster, and the telematics industry cluster. With its strategic and accessible location, the Cimahi City Government hopes and strives to become a Center for the Development of Business Areas and Creative Industries. To support the development of the Creative Industry, the Cimahi City Government has provided the facilities and infrastructure needed to achieve this goal. This is not merely wishful thinking, but also includes the development of Cimahi Technopark

and Baros Information Technology and Creative (BITC) as centers for Creative Industry development.

Based on these conditions, an in-depth empirical study is needed to analyze the extent to which image differentiation and product innovation strategies influence the competitive advantage of the creative economy in Cimahi City. This empirical study is important because it provides concrete evidence of the effectiveness of implementing these two strategies in increasing business competitiveness amidst increasingly fierce competition. Through this study, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the strategic factors that play a role in shaping the competitive advantage of creative industry players, both in terms of consumer perception and performance efforts, can be obtained. Furthermore, the results of this study are also expected to provide a basis for consideration for creative industry players and related stakeholders in formulating policies and strategies for developing the creative industry at the local level in a more targeted, effective, and sustainable manner.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Image Differentiation Strategy

Image differentiation strategy is a marketing strategy focused on creating a unique, positive, and distinct perception in the minds of consumers compared to competitors. Image differentiation relates not only to visual aspects such as logos, packaging, or product design, but also encompasses values, brand identity, reputation, and consumers' emotional experiences with a product or company (Wulandari & Murniaty, 2019). Through this strategy, companies strive to build a strong and consistent image to create a deeper impression and increase consumer trust. A distinct and easily recognizable image makes it easier for consumers to identify a product and forms the basis for purchasing decisions (Angio et al., 2022).

In the context of business competition, image differentiation strategy plays a strategic role in creating sustainable competitive advantage. A strong image that is difficult for competitors to imitate can be a tangible asset that adds value to a company (Firmansyah et al., 2019). For the creative industry, image differentiation is crucial because the products produced often possess strong symbolic, aesthetic, and emotional characteristics. By implementing an image differentiation strategy effectively and consistently, businesses can strengthen their brand position in the market, increase customer loyalty, and reduce direct price competition, thereby maintaining long-term competitiveness (Hakim & Faizah, 2018).

2. Product Innovation

Product innovation is the result of a company or industry's development process for existing products and the creation of new products. This innovation process can involve creating a completely new replacement product or developing an existing product to be more modern, relevant, and in line with current trends, thereby increasing consumer interest and meeting consumer needs and desires in purchasing decisions (Dwanto et al., 2015). Innovation does not arise by chance; rather, it is the

result of deliberate inspiration and planning as part of a development strategy to ensure product appeal and added value in the market (Prasetyo, 2020). Product innovation is further viewed as a key component of successful business operations because it can provide added value and create a competitive advantage for the company.

Continuous innovation enables companies to improve product quality and adapt to changing market dynamics, thereby enabling them to compete with other companies (Abdjul et al., 2018). Product innovation can also be understood as changes in a set of information and resources aimed at increasing product utility through modification processes, the creation of new materials, and the integration of various sources. These strengths become more productive product specifications. This innovation process is influenced by considerations of risks, benefits, and implementation time, and is carried out as a strategic effort to achieve competitive advantage. Furthermore, innovation encompasses several dimensions, namely product innovation, process innovation, follower innovation, and resource innovation, which collectively play a role in driving company competitiveness (Suhaeni, 2018).

3. Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is a condition when a company owns the ability to create and offer product goods or services that have a higher mark compared to its competitors, especially in fulfilling the needs and preferences of the target market served (Saiman, 2014). Competitive advantages are reflected from the company's ability to present unique products, superior quality, competitive prices, and design attractive and suitable products with consumers' appetite. Indicators become the main differentiator that allows the company to get a stronger position in the market. With superiority clear competition, companies can increase Power pull their products, expand market share, as well as build long term connections with customers through higher levels of satisfaction (Lestari, 2019).

However, the competitive advantage nature is dynamic and cannot always be maintained in term long time. McGrath (2013) in draft Transient Advantage states that change behavior customers and intensity tough competition predicted cause competitive advantage tend nature while, so that companies sued For Keep going to create new strategies in building and exploit the advantages it has. In line with view said, Porter (1990) in Mardiyono (2015) emphasized that competitive advantage can be obtained through effective strategies, including Work together and management source Power optimally to create greater value excel in the market. With Thus, the competitive advantage No only play a role in creating maximum profit, but also contribute in increasing customer satisfaction, strengthening market position, as well as ensuring the sustainability of business life in the long term (Saiman, 2014).

C. METHOD

This research employed a quantitative study method with a descriptive and verification approach. The descriptive objective was to provide a systematic description of the current state of image differentiation strategies, product innovation, and competitive advantage in the creative industry. Meanwhile, the verification approach was used to empirically test the relationship and influence between image differentiation strategies and product innovation on competitive advantage. The population in this study comprised all creative industry companies operating in Cimahi City. Based on this population, the sampling technique used was simple random sampling, ensuring that each member of the population had an equal opportunity to be selected as respondents. A total of 93 respondents were selected as respondents.

The data collection method in this study was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire used was a closed-ended questionnaire, providing respondents with alternative answer choices, thus simplifying the data entry and processing process. Respondents' responses were measured using a Likert scale to evaluate their level of agreement with the statements. The collected data were then analyzed using SPSS software version 25.0 for Windows. The analysis stages included instrument validity and reliability testing, classical assumption testing, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing to obtain accurate and scientifically reliable conclusions.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Validity Test

In this study, validity testing is used to evaluate the extent to which the measuring instrument used can provide results that are in accordance with the variables or concepts to be measured.

Table 1 Validity Test Results

Variables	Code	Mark	Information
Image differentiation strategy (X1)	X1.1	0.757	Valid
	X1.2	0.772	Valid
	X1.3	0.672	Valid
Innovation product (X2)	X2.1	0.773	Valid
	X2.2	0.836	Valid
	X2.3	0.693	Valid
	X2.4	0.765	Valid
	X2.1	0.772	Valid
Competitive advantage (Y)	Y1	0.811	Valid
	Y2	0.896	Valid
	Y3	0.762	Valid

Based on the information in the table, it can be concluded that all indicators in the study are considered valid. This conclusion is based on the validity coefficients used by the researchers, all of which exceed 0.5. This value indicates an adequate level of validity according to the criteria applied in this study.

2. Reliability Test

A variable is said reliable if given Cronbach Alpha value > 0.60 and Cronbach Alpha if item deleted $<$ Cronbach Alpha.

Table 2 Reliability Test Results

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Cross of Value	Information
Image differentiation strategy (X1)	0.721	0.60	Reliable
Innovation product (X2)	0.765	0.60	Reliable
Competitive advantage (Y)	0.633	0.60	Reliable

Table 3 shows that all variables study This have mark Cronbach alpha > 0.6 and value Cronbach alpha if item deleted $<$ Cronbach alpha, so stated reliable.

3. Assumption Test Classic

a. Normality Test

To evaluate the normality of data distribution, one method that can be used is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. This test aims to evaluate whether the residuals in a regression model approach or are identical to a normal distribution.

Table 3 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

		Standardized Residual
N		93
Normal Parameters ^{a, b}	Mean	0E-7
	Standard Deviation	.31513469
	Most Extreme Differences	.097
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Absolute	.097
	Positive	-.090
ZAsymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Negative	.338
		.790

Based on the results shown in Table 3, the residual significance value was 0.338, which is significantly greater than the significance limit of 0.05. These results indicate that the residual data is normally distributed. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model used meets the assumption of normality and is suitable for use as a basis for decision-making.

b. Autocorrelation Test

Detection autocorrelation can done using the Durbin Watson test. If the Durbin-Watson value is less from one (1) or more from three (3), things This show existence autocorrelation.

Table 4 Autocorrelation Test Results

Model	Durbin-Watson
1	1,603

In this study, Table 4 shows a Durbin-Watson value of 1.603, indicating no autocorrelation. Therefore, it can be concluded that this regression result is reliable for decision-making.

c. Multicollinearity Test

Detecting the presence of multicollinearity in a regression model study can be done through a multicollinearity test. If the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value is less than 10, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity.

Table 5 Multicollinearity Test Results

Variables	Tolerance	VIF
Image differentiation strategy (X1)	0.898	1,113
Innovation product (X2)	0.898	1,113

The results in Table 5 show that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value for each independent variable is 1.113, which is below the tolerance limit of 10. This indicates that there are no multicollinearity issues between variables in the research model. Thus, the regression model used meets the multicollinearity assumption and can be relied upon as a basis for research decision-making.

d. Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity can be detected using the Glejser test. If the significance value is > 0.05 for all variables, it can be concluded that the residual variance is homogeneous.

Table 6 Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variables	Tolerance
Image differentiation strategy (X1)	0.099
Innovation product (X2)	0.519

Table 6 shows that the significance value is greater than 0.05 for the second variable, namely 0.099 for the image differentiation strategy variable (X1) and 0.5189 for the product innovation variable (X2). This indicates that there is no indication of heteroscedasticity, and the regression results can be considered suitable for use as a basis for decision-making.

4. Multiple Linear Regression Test

Regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the impact of image differentiation strategy (X1) and product innovation (X2) on competitive advantage (Y), both separately and simultaneously.

Table 7 Analysis Results Multiple Linear Regression
Coefficients ^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.358	.377		3.602	.001
Image differentiation strategy (X1)	.385	.092	.382	4.244	.000
Innovation product (X2)	.299	.079	.337	3.753	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive advantage (Y)

In table 7 it is known that coefficient regression and obtained a regression model as following: $Y = 1.358 + 0.385X1 + 0.299X2$. Based on the analysis model above, we can conclude that if the image differentiation strategy variable (X1) increases by one Likert scale unit and the other variable, namely product innovation (X2) remains constant, then the superior competitiveness (Y) increases by 0.384. If the product innovation variable (X2) increases by one Likert scale unit and the other variable, namely image differentiation strategy (X1) remains constant, then the superior competitiveness (Y) increases by 0.298. The image differentiation strategy variable (X1) has a greater value of 0.384, while the product innovation variable (X2) is 0.298 so that the image differentiation strategy variable (X1) has a greater influence than the product innovation variable (X2).

5. Hypothesis Testing

a. Simultaneous Test (f Test)

In this study, the F test is used to evaluate the level of significance of the impact of independent variables collectively on the dependent variable (in a simultaneous context).

Table 8 Simultaneous Test Results (F Test)

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	4.777	2	2.394	23.582	.000 ^a
Residual	9.136	90	0.103		
Total	13.924	92			

a. Predictor: (Constant), innovation product (X2), differentiation strategy (X1)

b. Dependent variable: competitive advantage(Y).

Table 8 shows an F value of 23.582 with a significance level of 0.000 and the smallest significance value of 0.05. This indicates the influence of the independent variables, namely the image of the differentiation strategy (X1) and product innovation (X2) on the dependent variable, competitive advantage (Y) simultaneously or together.

b. Partial test (t-test)

The t-test is used for test significance connection between variables X and Y, whether variables X1 and X2 are truly influential to variable Y in terms of separated or partial.

**Table 9 Partial Test Results (t-test)
Coefficients ^a**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.358	.377		3.602	.001
Image differentiation strategy (X1)	.385	.092	.382	4.244	.000
Innovation product (X2)	.299	.079	.337	3.753	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive advantage (Y)

From the results of the statistical analysis contained in Table 9, it can be concluded that the statistical significance for the image differentiation strategy variable (X1) and innovation product (X2) is 0.000, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. This result indicates that individually, both the differentiation strategy variable and the innovation product variable have a significant influence on the competitive advantage variable (Y). This means that changes in the image differentiation strategy variable and innovation product can be partially linked to significant changes in superior competitiveness. Therefore, this finding strengthens the conclusion that the implementation of differentiation strategy and innovation product performance-based system policies have a positive impact on superior competitiveness.

6. Coefficient Test Determination (R²)

Coefficient determination (R²) was carried out for measure how much far model capabilities in explain variation variables tied.

**Table 10 Coefficient Test determination
Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimate
1	.586	.343	.328	.31861

Based on the results shown in Table 7, the values coefficient determination (R²) of 0.344. This value show that amounting to 34.3% of the variation in the variable bound, namely superiority competitive, can explained by variables free consisting of from differentiation strategy image (X1) and innovation product (X2) in this study. Meanwhile that, amounting to 65.7% variation competitive advantage influenced by other factors outside variables studied.

Based on the results of partial hypothesis testing, the differentiation strategy image variable demonstrated a significance level of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 level. This result indicates that differentiation strategy image has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage in the creative industry in Cimahi City. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that differentiation strategy image has an effect on competitive advantage is accepted. This finding indicates that the better the implementation of differentiation strategy image, the higher the level of competitive competence possessed by creative industry players.

The positive influence of differentiation strategy image on competitive advantage indicates that a strong, unique, and consistent image can create added

value that differentiates creative industry products from competitors. An effective differentiation image helps shape positive perceptions in the minds of consumers, increases trust, and strengthens brand identity. In the creative industry, where products often have relatively similar characteristics, a distinctive image is a crucial factor in attracting consumer attention and maintaining customer loyalty. This ultimately contributes to an improved competitive position in the market.

The results of this study align with the theory of competitive advantage, which states that differentiation is a key strategy in creating sustainable competitive advantage. A differentiation strategy that is difficult for competitors to imitate can become an intangible asset that provides long-term benefits for a company. Therefore, creative industry players need to consistently build and manage their business image through product quality, visual identity, marketing communications, and inherent brand values. With the right image differentiation strategy, the creative industry in Cimahi City can increase its competitiveness and maintain business sustainability amidst increasingly fierce competition.

Based on the results of partial hypothesis testing, the product innovation variable demonstrated a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 level. This result indicates that product innovation has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage in the creative industry in Cimahi City. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that product innovation itself influences competitive advantage is accepted. This finding indicates that the higher the level of product innovation created by creative industry players, the greater the competitive advantage they can achieve.

The positive influence of product innovation on competitive advantage confirms that the ability of creative industry players to create, develop, and update products is a crucial factor in winning market competition. Product innovation enables companies to offer added value through more attractive designs, better quality, and features tailored to consumer needs and preferences. In the creative industry, innovation serves not only as a means of updating products but also as a strategy to differentiate themselves from competitors and increase their appeal to consumers.

The results of this study align with the theory of competitive advantage, which states that innovation is a key source of sustainable competitive advantage. Companies that consistently innovate will be more adaptable to changing market preferences and evolving business environments. Therefore, creative industry players need to make product innovation an integral part of their business strategy, whether through design development, technology utilization, or product quality improvement. With continuous innovation, the creative industry in Cimahi City can strengthen its competitive position, increase customer satisfaction, and maintain long-term business sustainability.

Based on the results of simultaneous hypothesis testing, an F-value of 23.582 was obtained with a significance level of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. These results indicate that the image of differentiation strategy and product innovation simultaneously have a significant effect on competitive advantage in the

creative industry in Cimahi City. Therefore, the hypothesis that the simultaneous influence of image of differentiation strategy and product innovation on competitive advantage is accepted. This finding confirms that both variables independently play a significant role in shaping the competitive strength of creative industry players.

The simultaneous influence of image of differentiation strategy and product innovation indicates that competitive advantage cannot be built solely on one strategy but requires a combination of a strong image and continuous innovation capabilities. Image of differentiation strategy plays a role in building positive perceptions, brand identity, and product uniqueness in the minds of consumers, while product innovation functions to create innovation, added value, and product alignment with market needs. The synergy between these two strategies enables creative industry players to create products that are not only visually and emotionally appealing, but also relevant and functionally superior.

The results of this study are in line with the theory of competitive advantage, which states that differentiation and innovation are the main sources in creating sustainable competitive advantage. In the context of the creative industry, the implementation of an image differentiation strategy supported by consistent product innovation will strengthen market position, increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and reduce the level of price-based competition. Therefore, creative industry players in Cimahi City need to strategically integrate image differentiation strategies and product innovation in managing their efforts to be able to increase competitiveness and maintain long-term business sustainability.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussions, it can be concluded that image differentiation and product innovation strategies play a significant role in enhancing the competitiveness of the creative industry. Partial testing results indicate that image differentiation strategies have a positive and significant impact on creative competitiveness. This confirms that efforts to create a strong, unique, and consistent image can create added value and differentiate creative industry products from competitors, thereby strengthening their competitive position in the market. Furthermore, product innovation has also been shown to have a positive and significant impact on creative competitiveness. These findings indicate that the ability of creative industry players to continuously develop and update products is a key factor in facing market dynamics and changing consumer tastes. Product innovation enables the creation of added value, improved quality, and higher product appeal, which ultimately contributes to increased business competitiveness. Simultaneously, image differentiation and product innovation strategies have a significant impact on creative industry competitiveness. These results confirm that creative competitiveness cannot be built partially, but requires synergy between efforts to create a strong image and sustainable innovation capabilities. By effectively integrating these two strategies, creative industry players in Cimahi City can increase competitiveness, expand market share, and maintain long-term business sustainability.

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