

ABSTRACT

Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku is an MSME category restaurant engaged in food and beverages that serves the main menu of Steamboat and Yakiniku. In Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku, problems were found, namely low measurable brand performance from fluctuating revenues that tend to decline and not reach the target from June 2022 to June 2023, and the low performance of Instagram marketing communication media used measured by engagement rates compared to competitors. This study further explores that low brand performance is caused by several problems, including low market knowledge of restaurant brands, low customer engagement to restaurants, and promotional channels that have not been used optimally. Of these three problems, further research is needed to build competitive brand differentiation by designing Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku positioning improvements in the form of recommendations carried out based on perceptual map analysis. Perceptual map analysis was conducted based on the identification of Japanese restaurant attributes and the location of Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku and its competitors.

The method used in this study is multidimensional scaling (MDS) which produces a perceptual map output that visualizes the location of seven Japanese restaurants and their eight attributes based on consumer perception. A perceptual map analysis was conducted to provide recommendations for improving Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku's positioning.

In this study, sampling was conducted using non-probability sampling techniques with purposive sampling methods where the targeted respondents were Japanese restaurant consumers domiciled in Bekasi City and Bekasi Regency. Competitor branding is based on observation based on location, type of Japanese restaurant, and self-service concept. 112 respondents were asked to assess eight attributes, namely atmosphere, food quality, employee service, price, supporting facilities, location, menu variety, and brand reputation of seven Japanese restaurants in the Bekasi area, namely SOGOGI, Hanamasa, Shukaku, Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku, Shabu Yoi, Gyu-Kaku, and Shaburi & Kintan. The questionnaire data was then analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 203 software to produce a perceptual map that was used as a reference for analysis and improvement recommendations. MDS data processing produces a stress value of 0.153 and an R-square value of 0.979, this shows that the MDS model produces a valid and reliable goodness of fits test value. Data processing with MDS resulted in three competition areas, namely region A, region B, and region C. Based on the results of this perceptual mapping, Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku Restaurant is located in area B along with Shabu Yoi restaurant and Shukaku & Shuka Grill. The restaurants covered in region B have the advantages of strategic location, adequate supporting facilities, and affordable prices. This shows the mismatch of the unique value proposition

which becomes a brand identity that refers more to food quality and menu variety. Thus, the priority of positioning improvement is made based on the superior attributes of Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku Restaurant and benchmarking with brands that excel in the same attributes and a positioning improvement design is carried out.

MDS data processing of 112 respondents was carried out with a goodness of fit test using IBM SPSS software which produced R-square values and stress levels. Next, the nearest competitor is identified using the calculation of the Euclidean distance. The results of perceptual mapping based on consumer perception will be compared with the unique value proposition set by Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku. Further studies are carried out to design positioning improvements aimed at improving the brand to get positive consumer perceptions and have better competition.

In this study, three designs of Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku restaurant positioning recommendations were produced by communicating superior attributes through social media content uploads, optimizing the use of marketing communication channels, and building cooperation in the form of endorsements and promotions to expand the target market, as well as updating taglines to strengthen brand identity in accordance with the superior attributes of restaurants. This improvement recommendation is expected to improve the brand performance of Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku restaurants by increasing brand awareness and customer engagement that strengthens the restaurant's position among its competitors.

Keywords: *Multidimensional Scaling, Positioning, Perceptual Mapping, Kita Steamboat & Yakiniku*