

Advertising Proposition as Effective Marketing Communication Tool

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ABSTRACT

Advertising as marketing communication activity is a widely used method of promotional activity in the world. Advertising can create impactful meaningful marketing communication activity that has been proven to provide results in changing opinion of its intended target audience and create a call to action from a degree of apathy. Advertising creation however is convoluted with many methods from traditional to post modern marketing communication methods. In this research, we are proposing a simplified advertising guideline, to create an advertising proposition to simplify the process of creating advertising in its most direct form that can be beneficial for marketers. Using phenomenological approach through inductive mindset, it is found that advertising proposition has an impact on creating meaningful marketing communication effort in form of advertising that is informative.

Keywords: *Marketing communication, advertising, advertising proposition*

1. BACKGROUND

To say that the world is build on bread is entertaining, but bore a sense of truth as carbohydrates are what human body use as fuel and to make it so humans able to do daily tasks. It has been recorded since the Pleistocene era that starchy source of food became staple to early human diet [1]. Cooked starch increases the energy transference and energy conversion from food to human activity, especially useful in the demand of high glucose as requested by the body to maintain healthy brain, and development of blood cells. The use of carbohydrate as source of energy was so important that the human body evolve to more effectively digest carbohydrate [2]. The use of carbohydrates allows for early humans to win in the evolution race by simply storing more energy in the digestive system and to spread its colony far away from food source using cooking practice near hunting spot.

As technology comes in the form of industrialization, food is also affected by it and become industrialized as well. Ready to eat meal, a practice that was started during war time became the norm in human daily lives. During the American Civil War in the late 1800s, canned food played an important part in the war effort on both sides as it allows for the soldiers on the field to get nutrition quickly and with less time to prepare than cooking ingredients [3]. As war time comes and goes, the industrialization of canned food

becomes the normal and becomes what we today know as instant foods.

Instant foods or convenience foods, of which are self-explanatory, are food that requires very minimal preparations. As the demand of modern life requires faster and faster process, time becomes a valuable asset for a person, thus shorting the process of daily activities such as preparing food is demanded as well. Preparing and eating instant food becomes accepted as daily routine across the globe [4]. Even though there are studies that warns the danger of instant food consumption daily, it can be mitigated by simply reducing the sodium intake that comes prepackaged in the related instant food [5].

In Indonesia, the most popular instant food is instant noodles. Despite the many variants of instant foods ranging from instant porridge, to instant vermicelli, no category of instant food so successful sales wise in Indonesia other than instant noodles. Instant noodle is so ubiquitous in Indonesia that it is consumed up to 10 billion package each year [6]. Indonesia ranks number two to China on the consumption of instant noodle compared to the rest of the world. Indonesia even beat India as the second most populous country in the world in term of instant noodle consumption in 2019.

Instant noodle allure in Indonesia is not without reason. With the best selling brand Indofood's Indomie, taking over 60% of the market share among the many brands of instant food in Indonesia [6].

Taste wise, instant noodles popularize the use of taste enhancers, so much so that research done in Oman acknowledged that instant noodles such as Indomie has better taste than its peers [7]. Indomie was launched in 1972, a couple years later than the first instant noodle in Indonesia, Supermi. Later, both brands are managed together as Supermi and Indomie is merged under PT. Indofood Sukses Makmur. Even though past research has indicated that Indomie has taste advantage as its key selling proposition, one activity in the marketing spectrum that Indomie thoroughly enjoy is the high rate of advertising effort PT Indofood poured in to maintain top of mind in the Indonesia market. In 2015, it was recorded that Indofood spend 723 billion Rupiah to advertise Indomie, followed by Mie Sedap, an instant noodle product of Wings Food at 571 billion Rupiah [8]. The consistent marketing communication effort from PT Indofood bears fruit as in 2016, Indomie maintains top selling instant food product in Indonesia market at more than 70% market share, with Mie Sedap taking distant second place at just 17% [9].

The use of marketing communication has been widely studied to have net positive impact on sales. Buyer of a certain product or service will enter a decision-making process, and one of the popular model was coined by Philip Kotler called the AIDA (awareness, interest, desire, action) model. As Awareness is the first step to acknowledging a product or service existence, a strong response created by marketing communication activity such as advertising is required to garner positive response [10]. Advertising then has the required job to change the opinion of a person from not knowing to knowing a product's existence and finally changing the attitude of the person from no reference to liking it [11].

The key point of research regarding the subject is to apply a novel model of advertising in case of selling instant noodle in Indonesia. If taste is more important, is there a correlation in the perception of Indonesian instant noodle consumers where Indofood extensive advertising spending creates a lead in market inline with how much the company spend. This research of the new model will determine proper marketing communication activity to make sure that advertising activity is the dominant factor in creating a lead in the instant noodle market in Indonesia.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

Marketing communication can be instilled by its two main elements, namely communication and marketing. Communication is the process of conveying thoughts and understanding between individuals or between individuals and organizations.

Deliberate communication is a process of selecting, and sending symbols from the sender to the receiver in a manner that helps the receiver to generate meaning from those symbols that is similar or exactly the same as the receiver intended it to be. Communication is also an effort whereby people create activities to get other people's responses in

accordance with the expectations of the sender of the message or the communicator. As such, interpersonal communication is a process of creating uniqueness, sharing meaning, but the impact of the statements conveyed depends on the thoughts of each active communicator [12].

Marketing on the other hand is a set of activities in which companies and other organizations exchange values between themselves and their customers. Marketing is a social process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through the creation, offering, and free exchange of value through its products and services. Marketing is done through the process of planning and implementing the concept, pricing, distribution and promotion of ideas, products, or services, to create something that meets personal and organizational goals [13]

Marketing communication then represents a combination of communication with all elements in marketing, thus creating opportunities for facilitating mutually satisfying exchanges. Satisfaction occurs because the exchange provides benefits in accordance with the expectations of the participants. Communication plays a role in conveying messages that evoke meaning or responses in the minds of the target audience, so that the target audience is moved to do the things that marketers want. The impact of communication, marketers succeed in convincing the target audience and marketing their products, while the target audience gets product or service to satisfy their needs and desires.

Advertising activities through available media are not always the most effective or financially efficient activity in achieving the advertiser's desired goals. However, this does not mean that advertising media will become unimportant or will soon become obsolete. The point being that advertising, important and proven as it is to generate sales [11] it is also important to carefully consider the use of other means of communication before deciding to only use advertising as a sole solution of marketing communication activity.

Marketing communication activities cover a wide range of activities beyond just using traditional advertising media. This activity must be carried out as a process of developing and implementing various forms of persuasive communication programs to the target audience on an ongoing basis. The use of marketing communications changes the traditional ways of marketing communications that have been carried out so far.

Marketing is more than just a simple act of informing and distributing brands or products from producers to consumers. Marketing includes all stages, starting from product creation, distribution, to after-sales service after the sales transaction itself occurs. One of the stages in marketing is product distribution. These stages are like links that are interconnected and the link will be broken if one of the links is weak. Thus, product distribution is a very important stage, as

important as any other link in the marketing process. The success of one link will determine the success of the other.

In marketing, behavioral change is the main thing that marketers want to impose on their target audience. The way to change this behavior is through changing the audience perception of the subject matter. When a product or service is seen as a solution to a problem for the audience, it will be adopted more easily than just stating facts. This concept stems from how individual sees information, sees it, organize it, and interprets it, to create a meaningful picture for themselves [14]. This perception underlies the segmentation of benefits perceived by consumers. Many marketers use the concept to understand the user of their solutions and to inform product development and marketing opportunities. Changing human behavior is considered hard and took a long path to get it right. However, the benefit outweighs the cost. Understanding these elements can, similar to behavioral segmentation, produce messages and products that really resonate with individual consumers.

An important link in marketing activities is the formation of a brand image in the minds of consumers. Brand image will provide a reference for consumers to act, therefore, brand image plays a role to support the success of the brand in winning the competition in the market, and a shortcut is used to build a brand image is to take advantage of consumer perceptions. Consumer perceptions are used as a way to assess their own brand image and the image of competitors or other brands.

Perceived brand image is an effective way to make marketing activities easier to operate. In addition to simplifying the message, this method is also useful for allowing marketers to make predictions about what is expected to happen in the future. Although perception is often assumed to be an imperfect shortcut, it can be used to understand and take the necessary actions to build a positive brand understanding. This shortcut is based on current conditions, as a reference for actions to be taken and predicting what will happen in the future according to marketers' expectations. The reference of these actions and predictions is to establish the expected image in the future. Thus, the real reference is the goal to be achieved in the future.

The image that is expected in the future is the result of the perception manifestation of the brand. Brand perception is the process through which individuals gain understanding by organizing and interpreting their sensory impressions of the brand. However, when every audience or consumer sees the same brand, it is very likely that they have very different perceptions of it. Mercedes is a prestigious car brand for one person, but for others, the use of Mercedes is simply an exaggeration because its functions and benefits can be substituted with other cars that cost more than half. Consumers interpret what they see and

perceive it, which then calls it reality, which is then used as a reference for taking action.

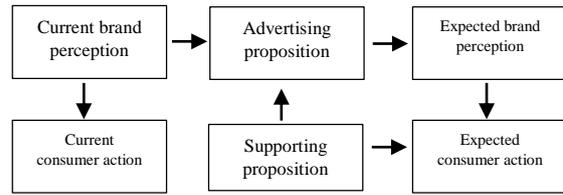


Fig. 1 Advertising proposition

To create an equation of perception, one way is to use the Advertising Proposition approach. An advertising proposition is a combination of two variables, which results in the formation of a new concept, which is a description of something that is able to make the consumer's mind distinguish uniqueness from something else in the same category. Variables are symbols of statements or descriptions that are variants or components of a concept.

In order to get an advertising proposition, the variables needed are the current brand image and the expected brand image after the advertising proposition is implemented. Advertising propositions provide learning to the audience to change the initial image that is in their perception at this time to turn into the image they expect in the future. Learning is any change in behavior whose changes are relatively permanent, these changes occur as a result of understanding and experience of something, resulting in changes in cognition (understanding), affection (feelings), and conation (behavior) [15]. Learning will further strengthen the possibility of shifting consumer perceptions, especially if the learning has relevance to consumer opinions, concerns, and interests.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to thoroughly explain about the problem being research and observed, especially the understanding of the target audience as a whole. This research aims to answer the questions posed through the formulation and identification of problems using focus group discussion as grouping method and using interpretation based on an inductive mindset, a method of reasoning in which the premises are viewed as supplying some evidence, for the truth of the conclusion and utilizing the phenomenological paradigm. Focus group discussion is taken, not only it is popular in the marketing communication field to explore respondents, it is a valid tool to uncover a range of perspective and experiences [16]. Furthermore, this approach is taken in context to better understand social phenomena about the behavior of the respondents on advertising and its impact in creating brand perception. 25 Participants were selected as there is point of diminishing return, where increasing the sample size no longer contributes to the evidence. The sample does not need to be large enough to support statements of prevalence or incidence. As such, qualitative samples for a single

study involving individual interviews only often lie under 50 respondents [17]. Although sample size is contingent on a number of factors relating to epistemological, methodological and practical issues, Sarah Elsie Baker and Rosalind Edwards agrees that 15 is the minimum number of interview sample to reach data saturation [18]. While Hennink postulate that 8 is sufficient number of respondents given the focused topic, this research will use 15 respondents as baseline. All respondents have a minimum of bachelor's degree, with median age of 32 years old.

The data in this study were processed by inductive methods and qualitative approaches. The purpose of this research is to reveal facts, circumstances, phenomenon, variables and circumstances that occurred during the research and function as is. This qualitative research will interpret and describe the data concerned with the current situation, attitudes and views that occur in marketing activities. Phenomenological approach has a purpose to illuminate a specific phenomenon, to identify it through how they are perceived by the person experiencing it. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, to emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom.

This empirical phenomenology approach involves the process of connecting individual experiences to acquire fundamental and comprehensive picture as a reflective structural analysis to summarize the essence of the discussion. Phenomenological research is a research design that comes from economics, especially management and psychology where the researcher describes a study of individual life experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants [19].

In-depth interviews provide the opportunity for researchers to take notes about personal experiences such as speculation, emotions, problems, ideas, thoughts, impressions and prejudices. To search for more complete information, researchers will also conduct participant observation and in-depth online interviews with participants using snowball technique, and conducted in Jakarta from June 2021 to July 2021.

4. DISCUSSION

Audiences learn to behave in order to get something they want or to avoid something they do not want. Through advertising proposition, the audience is believed to move from the current perception of the brand image to the brand image expected by marketers. For example, A, a brand of instant noodle made in Japan has an image by consumers today as instant noodles of the same quality as other brands of instant noodles. As a result of this perception, consumers cannot differentiate instant noodle brand A

from other brands, so consumers buy brand A or another brand whichever is available or the closest of what they can reach in the aisle. If this trend continues, instant noodles A brand will never become the consumer preference. Therefore, in the future, marketers expect consumers to take action to buy instant noodles A, compared to other brands. In order for consumers to buy brand A, the image that is expected in the future is A to be the brand of consumer preference.

As an instant noodle brand, A must be perceived as a better instant noodle compared to other brands of instant noodles. To bridge from the current brand image, which is identical to competing brands to become consumer preferences, instant noodle brand A is positioned as instant noodles which are the only authentic 'Tokyo style' or Japanese noodles (ramen). The new perception will relate brand A to Tokyo as a metropolitan city in Asia that inherits oriental cultural traditions combined with modernity, will provide a different taste sensation from other instant noodle brands. To strengthen the proposition of noodles with this Tokyo style, the support as noodles made in Japan will further emphasize this proposition.

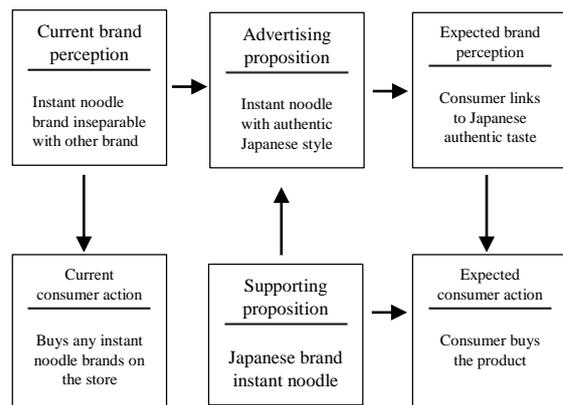


Fig.2 Advertising proposition for instant noodle

Through advertising proposition, the same instant noodle A will change in consumer perception (figure 8). Even if the same brand is seen and perceived in different ways, the brand image will change. This change in perception is very possible due to a number of factors that can influence perception. These factors are included in the consumer's cognition of the object or target seen; or in the context of the situation in which the perception occurs. Consumers when they see something try to understand and interpret it, using their cognitions, attitudes, personality, motives, interests, experiences, and expectations. The interpretation of what he sees is also influenced by situational factors. A number of situational factors such as psychological conditions, biology, location, weather can affect the formation of perceptions.

Perception affects consumer's assessment of brand image; therefore, the advertising proposition becomes an effective bridge that delivers brand image into the future in accordance with marketers' expectations of

the brand image formed at this time. Advertising proposition refers to a shift in attitude towards a particular object. The shift in perception is the result of consumer learning on the intensity of delivering advertising propositions and meanings that are relevant to public opinion, attention, and interest. Thus, a relevant advertising proposition will immediately get a response from consumers.

From observation on the respondents, all have been subjected to advertising effort from every brand of instant noodles in Indonesia, be it exposure from print media, online, radio and TV. When interviewed on the number one recalled brand of instant noodle, all respondents mention Indomie as the most recalled brand. Consistent ad placement on seasonal (fasting month) and even thematical event. Most respondents points out Indomie as the first instant noodle brand that puts an advertisement campaign of “staying at home” during the early days of the pandemic in Indonesia. By this factor alone, Indomie fulfilled the three-factor approach of brand familiarity, message complexity and message novelty in advertising [20]. The three-factor approach is an approach in advertising frequency, that companies might use to create a meaningful engagement from the audience and not just flooding the media channel with advertising alone. While flooding the media channel with advertising guarantees a recall of the brand or product or service, the call to action or willingness to act upon the advertising is minimal and tends towards resentment as the ad offers no valuable messaging outside of just information of the product existence. Although there are cases where raw frequency works, the case seemingly only works for low involvement products and more into a snap judgement cases [21]. The downside from flooding the media channel is also about the huge cost of advertising itself, thus the most suitable act of advertising is to create a meaningful message first to create engagement and relevant information, then if the budget allows, place it nonchalantly. Given Indomie sales numbers, it is given that the frequency of the brand to advertise itself is hugely advantageous.

All respondents agrees that advertising needs to have a meaningful message and become not just an information of the product’s existence, but also become a gateway of information that provides benefits. The respondents feels that advertising needs to be beneficial as their existence is often times considered as a detrement of their leisure time as advertising spots mostly placed on highly watched shows. Although most respondents dislike advertising, but they are open to the one that offers new insight, that offers clear information and benefit of a product or service. This is in line with past researches that advertising viewed as information is regarded highly than one that just displays a product or service existence without meaning [22] [23].

The frequency of the advertising spot and or placement of the media should be consistent enough to warrant a change of habit using Continuous

Opinion and Discrete Action model (CODA). CODA has been proven to change target audience habit given enough exposure to the marketing communication activity [24]. Marketing communication activity cost using CODA model might get expensive and the return of investment might get skewed as changing a habit is also applicable to competing solution. However, first mover advantage in marketing communication in majority of cases attributes benefit for the first party who pitch the initial idea [25]. Even though the respondents median age is 32 years old, they are still outside the age range when the Indomie was first advertised back in the late 1970s, meaning they did not know that Indomie came later than the first instant noodle in Indonesia, Supermie.

The concept of advertising proposition then needs to focus on presenting a unique selling proposition that is relevant for its intended target audience. The findings from the respondents means that advertising proposition works in creating opinion and creates distinct selling points as long as it is supported by the product itself.

Deception is never an option to consider when creating a good advertising, as the respondents strongly agree. Creating a proposition on top of lies or unsubstantiated truth means that when a product or service is claimed to be something that is not, when the target audience tested it and came out not as expected from it, then a negative response awaits [26]. There are moment when a product or service advertised can be seen misleading by a certain group of people, however outright misleading claims has never been tempted as there are laws that governs false claims in advertising as standard business practice all over the world. Thus in this context, advertising proposition must hold a credence of truth in its statements. Things that are quantifiable like amount of content in the packaging, or technical aspects such as horsepower of an engine, capability of certain items advertised needs to be as factual as it can be. Things such as taste, and general qualitative aspects, can be claimed as long it does not lead to certain claims that the quantifiable aspect can be measured which itself is considered a false claim.

5. CONCLUSION

Marketing communication activities is an extension of marketing mix that is aimed to create demand and call to action from the intended target audience of the product or service the company is aiming to profit from. Advertising as one of the tools of marketing communication activity, a function of promotional tools can be used effectively without having to resort to extensive frequency with the right proposition. Advertising can be used persuasively when it includes relevant information and delivers significant importance in its message. The advertising proposition model proposed in this research should help advertisers to create a relevant train of thought to arrive to a good proposition in their marketing communication activities.

Advertising proposition is not intended to create an advertising that is rigid and cannot be changed, it is actually the other way around. Advertising proposition allows the marketer to create an ever changing message that can fit with the target audience's change in social politic condition that is always fluid and ever changing. Advertising may change in the future, with new advent of media and social interaction, however until that day arrive, creating a meaningful message through advertising activity traditionally is still an effective way to promote a product or service

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