



## The Indirect Comparison of Brand Image Perception of *Share a Coke* with Campaign

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### Abstract

*The success of the marketing campaign of "Share a Coke With" has been globally known as one of the personalized campaigns with some popular individual names. This act of corporate communication has made the Coca-Cola Company even stronger as a multinational company. The usage of individual names has created a stronger bond between the brand and the audience. This qualitative research examines to what extent the brand image of Coca-Cola has affected the perception of its audience as it will have the implications of the economic and the social effects to the brand. The qualitative approach is used through the content analysis technique to some residents who were born and raised in Surabaya as of 2024, with 6 participants participating by the purposive sampling. This research examines the brand image by its favourability, strength, and uniqueness associated to Coca-Cola as a brand. Results has indicated a significant influence to the brand image and the personalized campaign. This research has underscored the importance in building consumer relations, strengthening the marketing strategy, and shaping brand image in a more complex world full of messages.*

## Introduction

Although building a brand reputation is part of business, it is still required some perspectives from the communication studies as it discusses how the company communicates with its audience and how the public perceives how a brand looks like. This will affect how a brand will interact with its audience to engage more and, by the end of the unending process, generate more revenue to the company (Lane Keller, 2013). From the very beginning of the trading practiced by the humanity, comparing products is inevitable as we always want to have the best for us, that fit to ourselves at its finest (Wijatno, 2009). However, comparing products has been getting deeper when we have invented branding in the trading activities as brands are getting vocal in delivering their values in order to stand out in the marketplace (Sugandini et al., 2019). One of the brand comparison methods we always practiced is through comparing the ads they launched. When collaborated with another activities, such as product design and brand activation, they all make up a campaign that enhances the message the company needs to deliver. All of these promotional activities persuade the consumers by drawing their attention to the product and brand (Grewal et al., 1997; Egede, 2013; Graeff, 1996).

Through indirect comparison, we do not directly pronounce the competing brand but we create indirect references through different suggestions. We have known different forms of direct comparative ads and we show the ads, including the advantages and the differences, between two brands in a positive or negative way. Brand comparison is essential to improve the ads quality as it can transform the perception that the consumers have towards a brand image (Malik et al., 2013; Dehghani & Tumer, 2015). In another hands, comparing the advertisement

is an effective way to create the intended perceived image differences (Mehra & Jain, 2021) stated that consumer consider the rewards of the products before making a decision, suggesting that brand image is the summary of all the representations and perceptions, of the products and services, that the consumers have within their mind. In addition, they stated that brand image is an image that the consumers memorize to provide a good impression towards the regarded brand, encompassing the what consumers believe regarding the intangible characteristics that a brand has, rather than its functional characteristics (Syed Alwi et al., 2016; Cho et al., 2015; Sahney, 2016). The characteristics built by the social and psychological needs constitute the image content image is the summary of associations. Different abstract areas created by the association creates the connections between them (Liu et al., 2007; Verma, 2022). All of these experiences that the consumers have will create the associations.

The "Share a Coke With" campaign has been a ground-breaking personalized marketing as it is quite different than the existed ones before. The campaign is the very first marketing campaign that includes the most popular names within a country region and there is no other brand has ever done this approach as of 2024. Coca-Cola's approach with mass customization on a global scale was unique with local approach, as it shows the full first name of an individual, triggering people to take this approach really personal and do not hesitate to post this campaign in their social media account, being part of a global brand, besides the effect of the leveraged perception toward Coca-Cola as one of a global brand (Malik et al., 2013; Huse et al., 2022; Gikemi, 2010). The aim of this marketing campaign is to encourage their audience to build a stronger connection. With the background explained earlier, the problem has come to this research question: To what extent the brand image of Coca-Cola has affected the perception of its audience in Surabaya residents?

According to Lane Keller (2013) brand image is a consumer's perception towards a product of a brand, formed by the information acquired through the product experience. In other words, brand image is a consumer's response towards a brand according to the reputation of the brand remembered by its consumers. It establishes the belief within consumers' memory of the product as the object. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2001) through (Priscilia et al., 2024), the brand image measurement can be conducted according to the brand dimension: favorable of brand association, strength of brand association, and uniqueness of brand associations. To generate a positive image in the public perception, brand commonly uses effective marketing strategies for its products to deliver the brand's values properly.

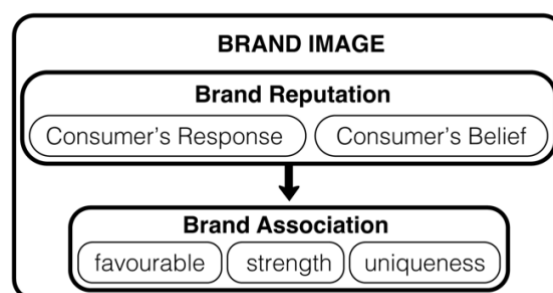


Figure 1. The theoretical framework

## Methods

The aim of this research is to uncover the brand image perception acquired by the audience through the comparative ads of "Share a Coke with" as the main focus. Though the brand comparative study has been globally existed since a very long time, it has not been very popular in Indonesia, including the popular brand. This research examines the brand image perceptions

of the consumers regarding the campaign using the qualitative research with the positivist paradigm. This research combines scalable content and content analysis methods with 53 participants on a causal survey research to establish cause-and-effect relationships in testing hypotheses and to determine the attitudes, opinions, and practices of a large population. To acquire the data required, this research includes consumers within West Surabaya with the purposive sampling of 53 consumers between 12-59 years old without gender boundaries.

Through the scalable content and the content analysis method, the collected relevant data then will be coded. The timing will be ranging from Friday, May 17, 2024 to Sunday, 19 May 2024, among the 53 participants with the same duration of less than five minutes. Given the same three open-ended and seven close-ended questions. The participants have various educational backgrounds such as diploma, bachelor’s degree, and master’s degree, with the inclusion of both genders. The researcher will provide more comprehensive information of the subject. The questions order and the form will follow the flow suggested by De Fleur & Larsen (1958). The purposive sampling is required to generate a proper quantitative method (Sarker & AL-Muaalemi, 2022). Thus, the participants who join this research will have a prior personal experience to Coca-Cola.

## Results and Discussion

After the survey has ended on Sunday, 19 May 2024, the researcher has finally gathered all the required data for this review paper, examining the indirect comparison as the Coca-Cola’s marketing campaign as the main focus of this research. The discussion will be examined according to the original order of the survey.

### Campaign Exposure and the Audience

The survey starts with the question of “Have you ever seen this marketing campaign, at least once, in your circles?” (see image 5.1) to understand the campaign exposure that the audience had. The result shows that 62.3% of the participants responded “Yes”, signifying that they have been exposed with the marketing campaign. While 37.7% of the participants responded “No”, signifying that they are not exposed with the campaign.

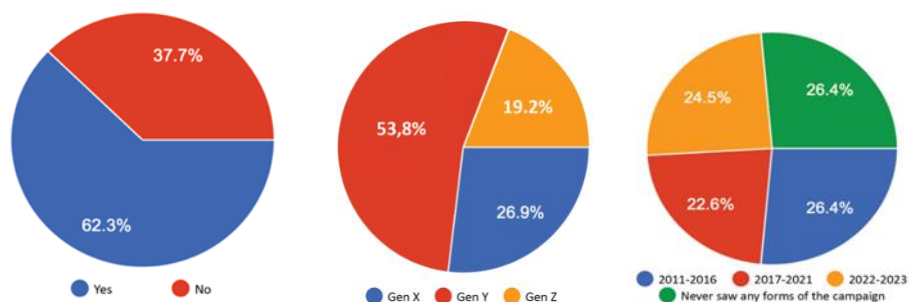


Figure 2. Campaign exposure, Figure 3. Campaign audience, Figure 4. Campaign coverage

Since the marketing campaign has ended, the researcher would like to understand more about the generation that they belong to, as it has affected how they receive message. Thus, the survey continues with the question of “As of 2024, which generation do you belong to?” (see image 3). The responses gathered have shown that 53,8% of the participants belong to generation Y (the millennials) as the majority, who were born between 1981 to 1996, who currently are 28-43 years old as in 2024. The list then continued with generation X, who were born in 1965 to 1980, who currently are 44 to 59 years old, with 26.9% of the total participants. The minority of the participants are generation Z (the zoomies), who were born between 1997 to 2012 and are 12 to 27 years old as of 2024, filling up 19.2% of the total participants.

The third question (see image 4) examines the time range that the participants have received the campaign with the question of “In any form (the product, the advertisement, word-of-mouth, etc), when was the last time you saw this marketing campaign?” This question reveals that the marketing campaign has been slightly decreased in twelve years. The majority participants (26.4%) have seen the campaign in between 2011-2016, while 22.6% of the participants have seen the campaign in between 2017-2021, followed by 24.5% of the participants have seen the campaign in between 2022-2023. However, 26.4% of the participants have never seen the campaign. These responses have shown us that the engagement remains somehow good.

### The Audience Responses

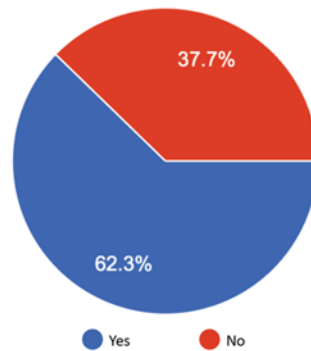


Figure 5. Campaign excitement

The survey resumes with the fourth and fifth questions to examine the perception the audiences have towards the campaign. The fourth question (see image 5) asks, “If you have received any Coca-Cola products with your name on the packaging, will you be excited about it?”. The responses have shown that 62.3% responded “Yes” while the 37.7% responded “No”. The fifth question digs deeper the reasonings of the responses. In order to describe the responses according to the responses given, the researcher has combined and classified the reasonings into two groups, “Yes” for positive responses towards the campaign and “No” towards negative to neutral responses towards the campaign.

Table 1. Campaign excitement

Yes	No
Surprised	Just keep it for collection only
mosly will be surprised	Don't know yet because I've never done it
Excited dong	Just normal
Feeling famous	Normal
Oh it's made particularly for me! I feel so special!	I have no experience
I feel that my name is common	This ain't applicable to me as I don't consume soft drinks.
Its surprise for me	Never received it
it's a previlege	i'm not really a big fan of any sodas or fizzy drinks however I do have an uncommon name, so seeing my name up there would be suprising not exciting.
Wow...so cool	Just normal, nothing special.
Happy	Umm just so-so

I will feel like it is made special for me, but actually I will feel a bit suspicious.	just normal.. hehee
Great	I'm not happy because I don't patronize soda drinks.
I feel honored	Normal
Happy.	I never have. My name is not so common. I doubt they have any products with my name on them.
It will be amazing, it looks Coca Cola know me personally.	
Unik	
So cool. So impressed	
It would be a fun surprise. Make me a little bit special and more connected to the brand.	
Surprised	
Excited	
It will be amaze me	
Excited and proud of me coz on the packaging has my name on it	
Unik, seneng...tp colanya ga kuminum karna tinggi gula...wadahnya kusimpan	
very happy to get a coca cola product with the specified name	
I feel included and happy	
I feel like that the company know me so well.	
Slightly surprised	
A bit surprise	
Excited	
Cool	
i feel special	
It feels personalised and would increase my willingness to purchase the product due to its distinct packaging	
I do feel great	
Of course happy because it is very impossible for it to happen	
It's somehow feel personal, seems like something that was made only for me	
I was shocked and amazed to see my name on it.	
feel happy and so proud	
Happy	

## The Audience Motivation

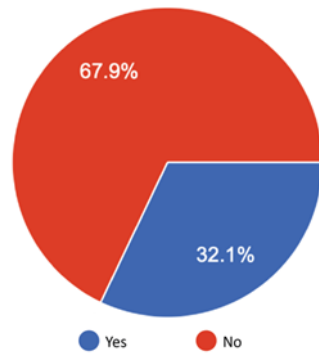


Figure 6. Share a picture?

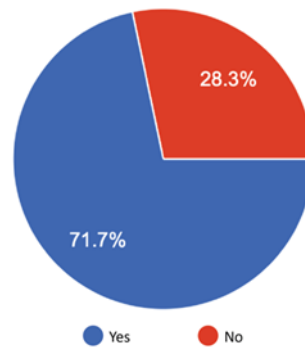


Figure 7. Share a Coke?

The survey continues to dig deeper the motivation the audience have towards the campaign. Through the sixth question (see image 6) that goes by “Would you like to share a picture of yourself with the Coca-Cola product on your social media?” The responses have shown that 67.9% responded “No” while the remaining audience with 32.1% responded “Yes”. This might be showing us that the people in West Surabaya will use the word-of-mouth to spread this campaign to the close ones (family and friends). This result goes accordingly to the following finding on the seventh question, “Will you share a can or a bottle of Coca-Cola with the names of your loved ones (family members or close friends) when you see their name on the packaging?” This question (see image 7) has found that 71.1% of the audience they will share the picture of a can or a bottle of Coca-Cola with the names of your loved ones (family members or close friends) when you see their name on the packaging. The rest of the sample (28.3%) has decided that they will not share any picture regarding the campaign.

The researcher wants to have a deeper insight on why some of them want to share the coke and some do not. In order to have the insight, the eighth question goes by “Why do you want to share a Coke with your loved ones?”, describing the responses according to the responses given, the researcher has combined and classified the reasonings into two groups, “Yes” for positive responses towards the campaign and “No” towards negative to neutral responses towards the campaign. However, there six respondents give no responses at all over this question.

Table 2. The reasoning of sharing the coke

Yes	No
To give a gift	So my loved one will not consume coke too much
Like it's non like it	I don't want to give tge coca cola drink to my beloved one because the drink is not healthy
as a sign I remember and love them	Because we do not drink coke for health reason
Beausw i love all of them	No reason
sharing is caring	Nope, it encourages people to have diabetes.
My loved one also love soda	I don't
To show them that we care about their presence in my life.	I don't want to share because I don't support things that are bad for health.
Berbagi sukacita	Bo specific reason
It's a pleasant way to connect over something familiar and personal.	I don't want to. I would rather share something else. I don't actually like the company. They are not an ethicsal company in terms of plastic waste practices, pollution, exploitation of workers and

	unethical marketing practices. They want kids to consume their products without a care about the health concerns associated with high sugar intake. There are many other issuee regarding land, resource and human exploitation which all combine to give a negative impression of Coca-cola.
Suka berbagi	
Just for fun	
I think they will feel happy.	
Because i want to show off among them.	
Kepedulian	
Because she like coke too	
Because it's about enjoying the moment and creating memories.	
To share the happiness	
Unique	
Its sweet and cute one	
Bcs i will share a happiness of me	
Flexing aja wkwkwk	
To make them happy	
Because it's funny to see their names up there. But it all depends on the person, if they like fizzy drinks I'll probably buy one. But if they dont I'll probably just snap a pictures.	
I like sharing my happiness with the people I care about whenever I have the chance	
Because I would like to share something to the person that I loved	
Sharing is caring	
I want them to feel as happy as I did when I saw their name on the Coca Cola bottle	
I think it's not about the coke but the personalized better somehow made it unique	
To share it	
Happy and laughing together so they can also feel the vibes	
As they would presume its uniqueness, thus are willing to consume the product as it is different from other forms of packaging	
Sharing is caring.	

because it's a natural thing to do with people I love and sometimes I'm willing not to drink for that person.	
Because when they are valuable to me, I will share with them without hesitation.	
bcs sharing is caring - my motto life	
To share the happiness , since sweet stuff increase dopamin level too	
Because it is a personalized	

The ninth question asks the participants by asking “If you were able to put only five names of your loved ones, whose names are they going to be?” they are separated by answering by the specific names. However, there also answers stating the relationships only, such as family, parents, and friends. There are also blank answers. The survey ends with the tenth question that goes by “Let's say you had a can of Coca-Cola with your name on it, will you keep it after you drink the Coke?” and they are separated into three responses; 41.5% said “Yes”; 41.5% said “No”; and 17% said “Maybe”.

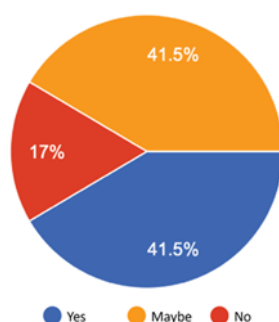


Figure 8. Keeping the packaging

### Theoretical Implications

The implications of this research are to develop a better understanding of brand image perception in the context of Surabaya residents, who were born and raised in Indonesia’s second largest city. In addition, this research examines how the Indonesians see this campaign in 2024, compared to its first release nine years ago in 2015 in Indonesia. Global and regional issues in many aspects of the current society might have changed the way people perceive their names on Coca-Cola as a global brand.

Broaden the contextual understanding is important in the theoretical and academic research as every country, region, and city has its own characteristic in perceiving the same product campaign. Contextual understanding requires multiple aspects to consider as it will redirect a brand’s marketing campaign and strategies.

### Conclusion

After the research conducted for over a week, this research has found that some residents in West Surabaya who have been exposed and accepted the marketing campaign for personal reasoning, which is usually happened on the generation X and generation Y. However, generation Z is more likely not exposed well to the marketing campaign. Some of them are even stating that the nature of the product is not good for health reasons and more likely to be

neutral to perceive the brand. The generation category has played significant role in perceiving Coca-Cola as different generation are exposed to different beverages brands.

However, further research is needed to create a deeper understanding as eco-social status, education background, and locations may create different perception towards Coca-Cola as a global brand that is still required to communicate its values to reach wider society. Developing wider and deeper research are necessary to maintain and growing the brand in the midst of global competition. In addition, considering the local competition is taken into account as the local brands might have acquiring the local market in an area. Disseminating a better understanding of its product in health context to acquire back its public trust.

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