

Representation of Lifestyle in *Pocari Sweat* and *Coca Cola* Advertisements

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gaya hidup manusia yang dicerminkan melalui pilihan produk berdasarkan iklan. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua iklan cetak dari produk minuman yang berbeda yakni *Pocari Sweat* dan *Coca Cola*. Iklan tersebut ditunjukkan kepada 30 orang dewasa muda sebagai partisipan. Hasil dari studi ini ialah bahwa 20 partisipan menggambarkan diri sebagai pribadi yang sehat yang ditunjukkan melalui pemilihan produk *Pocari Sweat* sementara 10 partisipan yang lain ingin terlihat sebagai pribadi yang kebarat-baratan karena pemilihan *Coca Cola*. *Coca Cola* diketahui sebagai produk minuman yang berasal dari Amerika Serikat. Oleh karena itu, gaya hidup kebarat-baratan tercerminkan melalui pemilihan minuman bersoda tersebut. Sementara itu, berdasarkan pembacaan pemirsa, partisipan terbagi menjadi 3 kategori. 13 partisipan termasuk ke dalam pemirsa yang setuju dengan nilai yang ditawarkan iklan dan tertarik untuk membeli produk yang bersangkutan karena iklan tersebut. Di sisi lain, 14 partisipan merupakan pemirsa oposisi dimana iklan tidak mempengaruhi produk pilihan mereka. Yang terakhir, 4 partisipan masih dapat bernegosiasi dengan berbagai faktor untuk membeli produk yang bersangkutan. Partisipan ini disebut dengan pemirsa negosiasi.

Kata Kunci: gaya hidup, gambaran, semiotik

Abstract

This paper is aimed to analyze people's lifestyle that is represented through the choice of products based on advertisements. It used two printed advertisements of drink products which were *Pocari Sweat* and *Coca Cola*. The ads were then showed to 30 young adults as the participants. The results showed that 20 participants were fond of healthy lifestyle which was portrayed by *Pocari Sweat* while 10 of the participants felt that *Coca Cola* represented their lifestyle, in this case western lifestyle as the coke is an American product. Meanwhile, according to viewer reading theory, the participants were divided into three categories. 13 participants were regarded as a preferred reader as they catch the idea that the ad offered while 14 other participants belonged to oppositional reader since they were interested with the ads yet they were not really engaged with the products so it did not affect their choice at all. Lastly, 4 of the participants would like to think further if they face the ads.

Keywords: lifestyle, representation, semiotics

INTRODUCTION

In the present day, it is very easy to find anything from a small and simple thing to the big and extraordinary thing. For example, many stores and groceries are now selling not only the basic need of human necessary but also many alternatives of choices to the consumers. Food and drink are some of those things that are varying a lot in the industry. A single kind of drink (e.g. soft drink) might come in many different brands and each brand has their own uniqueness to sell. To make people believe that the product is totally worth buying, the company has to make advertisements to tell people what they have in the product and why they should buy it. Many advertisers try to make the product looks great using a certain color choice, lighting setting and some persuasive words. However, every advertisement does not only mean to sell the product, it also carries some values. For example, *Oppo* smart phone

advertisement often proclaims the importance of self-image which is supported by a good camera quality that the product has. This advertisement is undoubtedly aimed to persuade the ad viewers to agree with ideology that the ad has and to buy the product. But to the consumers, the choice of the products does not only come from the impact of the advertisements. Their choice of products also reveals their lifestyle. This paper is aimed to examine how *Pocari Sweat* and *Coca Cola* ads can affect their choice and serve to represent their lifestyle.

The analyzed advertisements were *Pocari Sweat* and *Coca Cola*. These two companies have been selling their products for more than 20 years with up to 30000 cans of *Pocari Sweat* and 67 million liter coke produced every year. There was also a small observation to see the presence of both products in *Warung Kelontong* (small local stores) in Lidah Wetan, Surabaya. The result was that more than 85% of the whole stores in Lidah Wetan sells *Pocari Sweat* and *Coca Cola* in almost every size.

Another thing to consider was that the two products were quite affordable. People from any social class have a big possibility to buy the products. The size of the products was also varying from small, medium and big size. This then makes bigger possibilities for the consumers to buy because they do not have to buy the big sized product to enjoy the drink.

METHOD

The target of this research was young adults which are between 18-23 years of age where identity developing is very valuable for them. As what has been said before, this lifestyle revealing might be seen from their preference when they buy something. People on this age range are usually college students so it was specified to young adult college students.

This research used interview as the technique to collect the data. 30 participants consisting of males and females were taken randomly to be interviewed. The participants were Unesa's students as they meet the requirements as the participants of this research. The interview was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to make the interview runs smoothly and the information could be gathered precisely.

The participants were given two printed drinks advertisements; *Pocari Sweat* and *Coca Cola* and they were asked some questions mostly about their preference. Here were the categories of the questions given:

1. Questions on the most interesting ad between *Pocari Sweat* and *Coca Cola* ad given to the participant.

This question was aimed to see which advertisement they think is better than another when they see it for the first time.

2. Questions on why they chose one ad over another.

This question made the participants as the viewer of the advertisement examined more what made them interested. It could be from the color choice, structure of the products or the tagline. In another word, the viewer was asked to analyze the denotative meaning of the components of the ad that they think is interesting.

3. Questions on their preference to buy drinks after they saw both ad

This question tried to see how the advertisement influenced their choice. Some people might want to buy the product because they were affected by the advertisement and some other might keep choosing the product that they think they like without being interrupted by the advertisements. By asking this question, it is

expected that the participants would give an answer that might represent their lifestyle that will lead to their identity representation.

The data were analyzed and presented using a form which was divided into six sections consisted of name of the interviewees, ads, product, reason, audience responses and conclusion of their lifestyle. Through the chosen ads, the response on the advertisement is used to see whether the ads could affect them to buy or not at all. In the second section, the conclusion was gained on their lifestyle whether each interviewee preferred healthy or western lifestyle. While for the last section was audience response which related to the chosen ads of the individual. In the last section, the responses were broken down into three categories based on audience theory by Stuart Hall which consists of preferred, negotiated and oppositional reading. Each category was then summed up to see how many people included of each category in audience theory and how many people decided to be health or western in defining their lifestyle.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The signs on each ad were analyzed first. The signs in the two chosen ads; *Coca Cola* and *Pocari Sweat* reflect either connotation or denotation meaning. The first advertisement used for the research was a printed ad of *Pocari Sweat*. The ad has a simple design with plain white background. It only shows the images of the product and some text beside it. The images of the product consists of *Pocari Sweat* product itself in every size such as canned size, small, medium and big plastic bottle size. The text beside it also does not appear in a long paragraph. It is only the tagline "*Rethink your Drink*" printed in blue colored font. The word "*Re-*" and "*your*" has lighter shade of blue and has smaller font size while the word "*think*" and "*drink*" come in darker shade of blue and has bigger font size. Under the tagline, there is health information consisted of four short sentences. The information has way smaller size rather than the tagline and it has black font color.

Each component of the ad is of course having their function to support the ideology behind the advertisement. The use of plain white color as the background is not only to make people focus on the image of the product but also to show purity as white is often associated with purity. There are also some images of the product in every size and arranged from big bottle to the small canned size at the front. This makes all products visible and the viewer will not get difficulties to find any size. The tagline is the most eye-catching component of the advertisement. It has a short sentence that is easy to remember. It also rhymes between "*drink*"

and “*think*” so it sounds unique. The darker shade and bigger font of those words also means that the ad tries to emphasize the two words more than the other word.

It somehow sounds like an advice to think more about the viewer’s drink and *Pocari Sweat* is the best choice if you want a drink that is good for your health. This tagline is supported by the health information under it. It says that human bodies lose many ions each day and the product helps a lot to bring back the ion and hydrate the body. As the result, the body will feel fresher and healthier after someone consumes it. The information is a good way to promote their product as it relates with their targeted consumers that are people who wants to keep their body healthy. Overall, the ad is actually trying to promote healthy life for the viewers and it is supported with the design of every component of the advertisement.

Another ad is promoting the new version of *Coca Cola*. This ad has more components to be analyzed. The same plain white background is used in it. Three coke bottles are given a close shot which makes the label readable. The bottles come in different cups; red cup at the front line, black cup on the second line and white cup on the last line. However, the three bottles look close to each other. Those bottles look a little bit wet as if it just came out of a fridge. People can also easily see what is written on the label of the bottle. It is a new innovation of the product to print names of people on the label. On the left corner, there is a big logo of *Coca Cola* in a red shining circle. Under the logo, there is the tagline “*It’s coming...*” written in a big font size. There is a sub-tagline under it, written in red colored font; “*WITH OVER A THOUSAND NAMES*”. This one looks more attractive with capital letters and red font and bold typed on the last part of the text. The last writing that is quite interesting is the use of a hash tag “*#ShareaCoke*” with the word coke typed in red colored font.

Even though the background is the same as the one in *Pocari Sweat* ad, it does not seem to have the same function. White background is used in this ad to make it contrast with the product so that the viewers will pay attention directly to the product which has brownish red color. The cup of the bottle with various colors may also mean something. It may want to pursue that this product does not only made for a particular society. It is for everyone from every background and it is represented with the use of different color on the cup and label of the bottle. However, the bottles look close to each other. It means that being different does not mean that people have to stay apart from each other. People can still be close even though they are from different background and this product is the one that can unite it. The wet look of the bottle makes it look fresh and ready to be consumed.

Various names of people on the label are a brilliant idea to bring the product closer to the consumers. By having their name printed on the label, it might raise the possibility of people to buy it. This is supported with the sub-tagline that makes people want this product more. It brings bigger chance for people to have their name on it because it is provided in over a thousand names. The ad does emphasize this by making the writing bold with red colored font. On the corner, the big logo seems like it wants to emphasize that this product comes from *Coca Cola Company* which is known as one of the biggest soft drink producer in the world. The red shining circle may give a full of energy, passionate, bravery or spirit as red often symbolizes those things. The last component looks really updated with the use of hash tag. It is not enough for the ad to make people buy their product; it wants them to promote it too through social media. With the hash tag provided in the ad, it will be easier for people, especially young adults that are engaged to social media platforms to share it there. This is a very genius idea to promote their product without spending much money on an ad. People will make their product famous and shared worldwide with the hash tag. To make it short, the ad is actually tries to present the idea of energetic, passionate, bravery and spirit of the Millenials (people who are born between 1980s to 1990s). These values are often associated with western lifestyle especially the Millenials where they are highly mobile people with lot things to do to make new innovations.

Through the two ads, 30 interviewees identified their lifestyle which represented their identity. In this case, in order to know their types of identity, their perspective of the two ads between coca cola which refered to western lifestyle and *Pocari Sweat* which depicts the healthy lifestyle was used. Thus, the appearance of the two advertisements influenced young adults in selecting which ads they interest. Their responses, eventually, indicated their virtual identity whether they shaped themselves to be western or healthy lifestyle. As one of interviewee, D, who preferred *Coca Cola* ad said, “*This ad is more colorful than this (Pocari Sweat). The design, also, is more innovative.*” It showed that the pattern of the advertisement influenced people whether they interested on the ad or product. Sign, here, had a significant part in order to attract their attention which was not only seen through the pattern but also color and tagline bounded.

Based on the result of the interviews of several young adults’ perspective, however, the pattern of the advertisement determined their interest in which it did not have any effects to them in deciding which product that they selected. The determination of what product they like was not only because of the ads but their

perspective and personal preference also impressed their desire. This point revealed personal identity of 30 participants in the interviews. As Participant A said, *“The ad of coca cola is more colorful and eye-catching. However, Pocari Sweat is a good drink for our body. It affects our body to be healthier than Coca Cola which only refreshes.”* It implied that she was able to ensure what is good or valuable from her body (Taylor, 1989). Based on her opinion and the product she selected, it could be concluded that her identity tends to be health. Besides, although consumers were familiar with the product and they also know the benefit and disadvantage, the condition also influenced viewer to consume the product. Take a look on Participant A’s perspective which assumed that *Pocari Sweat* is better than Coca Cola when she looks the product from the healthy side. While if she needed to choose one of them based on the advertisement, she paid attention in what situation she is. In this case, Participant A as a viewer indicated that she is in oppositional side.

Different from Participant A, the ads also influenced Participant E to prefer which product she would buy. She said, *“The ad of coca cola is more interesting. Because we can have our name on the bottle and it looks fresh.”* Thus, as a consumer, Participant E was categorized in preferred side. Meanwhile, from her response and the chosen product it was asserted that she preferred to be a part of western lifestyle. On the other hand, Participant R, if he must determine one of the two products after looking the ads, he would select the product based on the situation although his interest of the product refers to *Pocari Sweat* which identified himself to be a part of healthy lifestyle. As he said, *“It depends on the weather or the price. If the weather is hot I will choose Coca Cola because it is fresh. While if it is not so I will choose Pocari Sweat. It is also possible for me to choose the product that is cheaper.”* In this case, Participant R was in negotiated side. The ads did not give a big impact but his determination referred to the situation of him.

According to 30 interviewees, the result showed that young adults tended to shape their personality to be a part of western lifestyle is 33, 3%. While 66, 7% prefer to lead their life for being healthy. They tended to be selective on what they drink in order to maintain their own health. Young adults, however, if there is a closer look, the percentage of the result is different where 43, 3% was categorized in preferred side, 46, 7% for them who were in the oppositional side and young adults who involved in a negotiated side were 13, 3%.

The result of the interview showed that most young adults saw healthy life was more important. They tended to be selective on their drink in order to maintain themselves for

being healthy which means to have western lifestyle was not really important since they think that their body needs more product which has more advantages. Take a look on viewers reading side it could be seen that the determination of what product they selected did not depend on the ads but they would look the situation and what they needed.

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CLOSING

Conclusion

People’s perspective has a big role in order to determine what they need to do and consume for their life. The way people think is influenced by their conditions. As media, advertisements associated their perspective which impacted people in deciding their consumption. Each product that people produce in their life which they selected based on their perspective and preference would represent how their real lifestyle. It means each individual’s lifestyle could be seen by providing their consumption for daily life. Through this case, people’s lifestyle would consist of several kinds as in this research provided two kinds of lifestyle in order to portray young adults’ life.

People’s perspective also influenced their decision in order to response the media that they look in their area. Not all media could encourage people to be appealed in each product offering by company. On the other hand, the way advertiser establishes their advertisement will not assure to alter personal’s perspective.

Suggestion

The paper highlights the phenomenon happens in society nowadays. The theories used could be applied in many ways. It is suggested for the future researcher to look for another phenomenon regarding lifestyle representation such as fashion taste using the same theory.

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