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Analysis Strategy of Visual Brand Adaptation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine how companies successfully created visual brands during the COVID-19 pandemic that are easy to remember, contextually-relevant, and educated the public about the current pandemic. The phenomenology research method was used, which is a method to deeply observe actual and factual phenomena occurring at a specific time. This method runs with several steps to find out the essence of the phenomenon that occurs. The results of this study explain consumer behaviour, visual strategies that can be taken by companies in dealing with pandemic situations, and how companies and brands communicate in the new-normal era. It will be a valuable input, especially for visual communication design science, because the collected data can be used to determine strategies and visual communication techniques during a pandemic. Data related to the stage of consumer shifting during a pandemic can also be used to determine the direction of branding and brand communication with the community.

Keywords: visual brand, visual adaptation, COVID-19 pandemic

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1. Introduction

The impact of the coronavirus or COVID-19 outbreak is very pronounced in the business and economic aspects. In a relatively short time, the marketing pattern also changed, especially when social distancing and the territorial lockdown was imposed. Marketers must think of a strategy, to be able to market their products or services to consumers, as a brand strategy to survive amid the coronavirus pandemic [1]. Business people optimize online marketing and digital branding as a means of communication with their target consumers.

In order to survive during this pandemic, brand players must be able to deal with it. Starting from focusing on digital marketing through websites that are used as e-commerce, social media, search engines, sales through marketplaces and forming a reseller team to sell their products. In the midst of this pandemic, of course, brand players must be wise in allocating campaign funds. Where creativity is absolutely necessary when branding, especially when working from home like this. The branding activities carried out also vary, ranging from CSR activities related to the coronavirus pandemic, shopping from home campaigns, branding through online media, social media, official websites, creating online festivals by providing special discounts and others [2]. Several strategies can be implemented for a company so that it is a brand and product position will survive a pandemic that is uncertain.

2. Method

This research uses phenomenology method. Phenomenology is a type of qualitative research method that is applied to reveal the similarity of meaning which is the essence of a concept or phenomenon that is consciously and individually experienced by a group of individuals in their life [3], [4]. In a simple sense, actually, humans at specific times practice phenomenology in their daily lives. Humans observe phenomena, open themselves up, let the phenomena appear, then humans understand them. Humans understand it in the perspective of the phenomenon itself, how he tells stories to others. Brouwer [5], seeing symptoms is an absolute basis and condition for all scientific activity. It is not a science, but a way of looking, a method of thinking, a form of looking at things. To convince people of a phenomenon, a phenomenologist will invite people to directly witness the phenomenon in question, or show it through language. In order to understand a symptom, there is no other way, we have to patiently watch it, listen to it, experience the language it expresses. The essence of phenomenology was put forward by Stanley Deetz [6]. First, knowledge is a conscious thing. Knowledge is not inferred from experience but is found directly in the understanding of consciousness. Second, the meaning of something consists of the potentials in a person's life. How a person's relationship with an object will determine how the definition of the object for the person concerned. Third, language is a means for the emergence of meaning. We experience the world and express it through language.

The Problem of Objectivity in Phenomenology. A fact that is examined in a phenomenological perspective is subjective, which is based on the narrative of the subjects who have experienced the facts or phenomena in question [7]. How to overcome

the subjectivity of the subject under study or the researcher himself. Objectivity in phenomenology means letting the facts speak for themselves. This can be done via epoche and eidetic. Epoch is a process in which the researcher suspends or postpones the assessment of the points/phenomena he observes even though he has had certain preconceptions or judgments about the phenomenon [2]. Let the phenomenon speak as it is, without the intervention of good-bad, positive-negative, moral-immoral, etc., from the researcher. Eidetic is understanding phenomena through understanding the expressions or expressions used by the subject. In this case, the researcher performs empathy, tries to enter the area of the subject's thought experience through creative processes.

3. Finding and Discussion

There are several findings obtained from this study. Starting from the background of people's fear of coronavirus, which causes purchasing power to decrease and automatically affects producers and marketers. Then by looking for loopholes to maintain branding and create an impact so that the brand remains popular in the community. Get to the tactics and strategies for dealing with the situation while adhering to health protocols.

Since the government announced the first COVID-19 infection (2/3) followed by WHO's announcement that COVID-19 has become a pandemic (11/3), anxiety has begun to hit the community which has resulted in a fundamental shift in consumer behaviour. The following are the phases during the COVID-19 pandemic:

3.1. Consumer Fear

During the deadly COVID-19 outbreak, the community is filled with tremendous fear. Public fear due to the coronavirus pandemic can be identified by the following problems:

1. Consumers are afraid of being exposed and contracting COVID-19 once the government announces that a resident is infected/died. So, for an instant, consumers are "aware" that maintaining personal hygiene by diligently washing their hands and hand sanitizers have become basic necessities.

2. Consumers are afraid because companies lose their turnover, Termination of Employment and mass unemployment, the dollar skyrocketed, stocks plummeted,

Figure 1: Anxious Phase

Figure 2: Fear Phase

bank NPLs soared, a recession is in sight, the government is confused about what to do to overcome this epidemic.

3. Consumers are afraid that the plague will spread out of control so that the lockdown cannot be avoided. So they took action hoarding goods for supplies during the lockdown.

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Figure 3: Panic Phase

Figure 4: New Normal Phase

4. Consumers are afraid of the spread of the virus through relatives, colleagues, or neighbours because the COVID-19 tests are minimal—life on the line.

5. Consumers are afraid and haunted by panic by bad news about the impact of COVID-19. This has a negative effect on mental conditions. Those who recover

will face a stigma that makes them difficult for society to accept. Psychosocial, this affects mental health and well-being.

6. Consumers fear not only personal health conditions but also all family members, especially children and their parents who are at the highest risk of contracting the virus.

7. Consumers are afraid of losing their jobs because the company they work for is bankrupt because there is no turnover. The ILO predicts the number of unemployed due to COVID-19 reaches 5.3-24.7 million people.

8. Consumers are afraid that their lives will be lost to see the trend of death toll continues to increase rapidly. As of the end of March 2020, the death rate has reached 8.37%, which is the highest in the world.

9. Consumers fear that households will go bankrupt due to the Termination of Employment due to the economy ravaged by the epidemic. This worries families in Indonesia because Indonesia is one of the worst social security systems.

Consumers who are filled with this fear will last long enough and will take more and more victims. A study conducted by Budi Sulistyo, et al. (2020) estimate, with the handling of social distancing loosely like what is currently happening, it is estimated that the outbreak will only pass in about a year away, namely March 2021.

3.2. Look for loopholes to make an impact

The COVID-19 disaster will encourage the formation of what call GIVING SOCIETY [1]. Namely people who care about others. Right now, we are all aiming there amidst everyone (regardless of ethnicity, religion, race, social status, class, or party) being hit by difficulties due to the COVID-19 disaster. Amid this mass difficulty, we work for hand in hand, help, unite steps, to fight COVID-19. In such dire conditions, everyone has a JOINT MISSION to contribute to fighting COVID-19. Everyone puts forward "what I can contribute to others", rather than vice versa. Blessing in disguise, COVID-19 forms a society that cares: Full of love, empathy, compassion. A brand is also a corporate citizen that must care and responsible for people who are in distress.

3.3. Branding Strategy during Coronavirus Pandemic

5 principles can be used in a branding strategy in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. A sense of empathy will touch the deepest recesses of consumers. Reach people's hearts with love, care, and real action to improve life.

2. Community is the central pillar of branding existence. Appreciate them.

3. There are always social benefits for society. A good brand is the most beneficial for society socially. It can improve the company's reputation.

4. Always share in every situation. Sharing is not just about giving things, but also attention.

5. Be part of problem-solving. This will be remembered by the public and can be a brand amplifier.

3.4. Communication Tactic during Pandemic COVID-19

Three communication models can be used during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely:

1. take advantage of the digital world

   Responding to the crisis of the COVID-19 outbreak, some brands have put up billboards whose messages are precisely so that their advertisements are not seen by motorists. This is a paradox. Brands deliberately put up physical advertisements, but their target audience is netizens. Their advertising goal is viral on social media. This is the time when brands have to see that their target market has moved to online netizens. The appeal to stay at home and work from home is the main trigger, consumers are more often online to connect with brands. The "Make Everything Goes Digital" mindset is a survival tactic to face the current crisis. Any marketing campaign must target online netizens.

2. Use Time Efficiently

   During a crisis, of course, almost all brands experience financial difficulties. Brands that sell non-essential goods now practically do not get turnover because these goods are no longer a priority for consumers. Brands must be smart & creative to help people who are in trouble with as little cost as possible. Tempo, Ruangguru, and GoPlay get around this by maximizing their overhead costs. They make services free without adding costs because it is part of their overhead cost. Also, Grab maximizes the GrabMart and GrabGroceries features to help consumers shop and accommodate Partners who are "unemployed" due to the Social Distancing policy. Meanwhile, Loket.com went digital amidst the prohibition of concerts and shows by offering various events in an online version.

3. Make an Affirmative Movement

Because the COVID-19 disaster hit the entire community. This sense of fate and acceptance creates a common goal against it. Therefore, the most impactful campaign is to create a movement to move the community to work together through the crisis.

For brand builders, the COVID-19 disaster is not merely a great disaster but a great correcter. Humanitarian disasters such as COVID-19, environmental damage, and various social problems are increasingly rampant. Therefore brands cannot wash their hands. The brand should be careful and be a solution. Every brand has to be an empathic brand. This is a new must. This is the new normal.

4. Conclussions and Suggestions

The coronavirus pandemic has yet to show signs of abating soon. The world seems gripped by this plague. Because of this, quite a number of people still continue to quarantine at home, even though social restrictions have begun to be relaxed.

Despite the very unfavourable conditions of today, some changes in consumer behaviour are still opportunities. For example, limited activities outside the home make people spend more time in front of the screen, whether laptops or smartphones. This situation is an opportunity that a brand or business needs to respond to.

The never-ending COVID-19 brings havoc for business owners. This is because many consumers save money in order to have enough money to survive a pandemic. However, it can be seen that there are also many businesses that have remained standing tall despite the pandemic. When viewed carefully, these businesses have strong branding, making it possible to have loyal customers. The strategies and tactics that have been described are alternative solutions in a pandemic era that has yet to end. In addition, the solidarity of the community in adhering to health protocols is also a very important step to stop the progress of the disease so that things can return to normal.

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