



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL IDENTITY AND BRAND
COMMUNICATION USING SPOKES CHARACTERS DESIGN FEATURES
IN KELLOGG'S BREAKFAST CEREALS***

MAJIDATUL FARHANA BINTI NOOR ADZMEE

FBMK 2019 7



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By

MAJIDATUL FARHANA BINTI NOOR ADZMEE

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Science**

January 2019

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Science

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Over the years, the spokes character has become an important aspects in the brand communication advertisement. This is due to the scholars thought on the importance of brand communication as the main function of brand communication was to enhance the brand loyalty and brand trust within several stakeholders such as; the customers, employees, suppliers, channel members, the media, government regulators, and the community. Even though the spokes characters' design features have become an important aspect in creating spokes characters to represent the image of the company somehow, less studies had been done concerning the relationship between the social identity and the design features of spokes characters. Thus, the aim of this research was to determine on the relationship between the social identity and brand communication using the design features of spokes characters in Kellogg's breakfast cereal across the six countries of the world which includes; South Africa, Japan, France, Mexico, United States of America and Australia. The social Identity was explained by the national culture using two cultural framework which were; Hofstede's Cultural Framework and Hall's Cultural Framework. A total of 81 Kellogg's spokes characters were observed to identify the design features preferences based on the national culture indicators chosen from the literature. The independent observers also were appointed to compare the results using the Normality and Reliability Analysis to prevent the systematical error. The data were analyzed through the frequency analysis on features of spokes character according to the countries, mapping of national culture markers on the spokes character design features, and Statistical Analysis using the Cross-Tabulation Data and Chi Square. In conclusion, the finding of the study found that the design features of Kellogg's spokes character across the six countries of the world has significant differences in most of the design indicators chosen. The findings also indicated that Social Identity influences the design features of spokes character across the six countries of the world. However, the research only focusing on one breakfast cereal brand hence, it is recommended for the future researcher to include

several breakfast cereal brands to make more comparison between the spokes characters brands.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

**HUBUNGAN ANTARA SOSIAL IDENTITI DAN JENAMA KOMUNIKASI
MENGUNAKAN CIRI-CIRI WATAK JURUCAKAP PADA BIJIRAN
SARAPAN KELLOGG'S DI SELURUH DUNIA**

Oleh

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Januari 2019

Pengerusi : Rosmiza Binti Hj Bidin, PhD
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Selama bertahun-tahun, watak jurucakap telah menjadi aspek penting dalam iklan komunikasi jenama. Hal ini disebabkan oleh para ulama berfikir tentang kepentingan komunikasi jenama sebagai fungsi utama komunikasi jenama untuk meningkatkan kesetiaan jenama dan kepercayaan jenama dalam beberapa pihak berkepentingan seperti; pelanggan, pekerja, pembekal, ahli saluran, media, pengawal selia kerajaan dan masyarakat. Walaupun ciri-ciri reka bentuk jurucakap watak-watak telah menjadi satu aspek penting dalam mencipta watak-watak jurucakap untuk mewakili imej syarikat entah bagaimana, kurang kajian telah dilakukan mengenai hubungan antara identiti sosial dan ciri-ciri reka bentuk jurucakap. Oleh itu, tujuan penyelidikan ini adalah untuk menentukan hubungan antara identiti sosial dan komunikasi jenama dengan menggunakan ciri-ciri reka bentuk huruf jurucakap di bijirin sarapan Kellogg di enam negara di dunia yang termasuk; Afrika Selatan, Jepun, Perancis, Mexico, Amerika Syarikat dan Australia. Identiti sosial dijelaskan oleh budaya kebangsaan menggunakan dua kerangka kebudayaan yang mana; Rangka Kerja Kebudayaan Hofstede dan Rangka Kerja Kebudayaan Dewan. Sejumlah 81 huruf jurucakap Kellogg diperhatikan untuk mengenal pasti keistimewaan ciri reka bentuk berdasarkan penanda kebudayaan kebangsaan yang dipilih dari kesusasteraan. Pemerhati bebas juga telah dilantik untuk membandingkan hasil menggunakan Analisis Normality dan Keandalan untuk mencegah kesilapan sistematik. Data dianalisis menerusi analisis kekerapan mengenai ciri-ciri ciri jurucakap mengikut negara-negara, pemetaan penanda budaya negara pada ciri-ciri reka bentuk watak jurucakap, dan Analisis Statistik menggunakan Data Salib Taburan dan Chi Square. Kesimpulannya, penemuan kajian mendapati bahawa ciri-ciri reka bentuk ciri-ciri jurucakap Kellogg di enam negara di dunia mempunyai perbezaan yang signifikan dalam kebanyakan indikator reka bentuk yang dipilih. Penemuan ini juga menunjukkan bahawa Identiti Sosial mempengaruhi ciri reka bentuk ciri-ciri jurucakap di enam negara di dunia.

Bagaimanapun, penyelidikan hanya memberi tumpuan kepada satu jenama bijirin sarapan pagi, adalah disyorkan untuk penyelidik masa depan untuk memasukkan beberapa jenama bijirin sarapan pagi untuk membuat lebih banyak perbandingan antara jenama-jenama jenama



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SI
SIT
USA
UPM

Social Identity
Social Identity Theory
United States of America
Universiti Putra Malaysia



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

This chapter begins with the background of the research which discusses in particular on the relationship between the social identity and brand communication using spokes characters design features in Kellogg's breakfast cereal. Then, the next part of this chapter discussed the problem statement of the research which focuses on the issues of national identity and the design features of spokes characters across the world. The aim and objectives, research questions, the significance of the research and limitation of the research were also provided in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter discussed the definition of key terms.

1.2 Background of the Research

Brand communication is a process that is important in the marketing strategy in the organization. It is considered as an important tool by which the organization reminds the consumer about their products and brands. According to Kotler and Keller (2007), it representing the "voice" of the brand and considered as a way to establish a dialogue and build a relationship with the consumers. The brand communication was done in many strategies such as advertising through the spokes character (Baeva, 2011).

In the late 1800's, the spokes-characters had been known as one of the most important elements in the advertising strategy and American culture. Spokes characters can be defined as a living personality which includes human beings and animals which also can be described as a fictional persona (Callcott and Phillips, 1996). Fictional persona means the characteristic or personality of an imaginary character created by the organization to represent their brands and to sell certain products or services (Callcott and Phillips, 1996; and Folse, Netemeyer and Burton, 2012).

Later, the advertisers had finally found the main function of spokes characters which were; for the product recognition, for the brand attitudes, to shows the relationship between the imaginary character, and to show the function of the brand (Callcott and Phillips, 1996; and Sandip and Jaydeep, 2015). This is supported by Stout and Moon (1990), who also believed that the spokes characters show the relationship between the advertisement and the human or animated counterparts which are the spokesperson. Hence, the advertiser had used several persuasive advertising techniques to increase the consumer's interest in their advertisements (Mashwama, 2016).

The increased usage of spokes characters on the packaging of breakfast cereal from all over the world has been seen as a primary factor for the organization to explore more on the social identity and design features of spokes characters (Lapierre, Vaala, and Linebarger, 2011, Ali, 2012). Social identity plays an important role in attracting local consumers. The image and identity of local organizational culture are one of the main factors that make the spokes characters unique and special. However, there is still an argument concerning the relationship between social identity and the design features of spokes character.

In particular, this study had three objectives. Firstly, the research investigates the design features of spokes characters of Kellogg's breakfast cereal. Secondly, the research identifies differences of design features of spokes characters on the Kellogg's breakfast cereal from different national culture. Thirdly, the research identifies the relationship between social identity through national culture and the design features of spokes characters breakfast cereal.

1.3 Problem Statement

The cultural differences had become a major factor in affecting the consumers brand communication in a different region and had been studied for decades (Tsai, 2009). According to the psychologists and sociologist, there were differences in values, design features, and general cognitive processes between the people from one culture to another. There were many studies regarding the culture to evaluate cultural differences. Some scholars claimed that the cultural differences between countries do exist because every people from different region acted differently depending on their national culture (Hofstede and Mcrae, 2004; and Cry and Trevor-Smith, 2004). Thus, the design features for a specific culture is very important. However, not many studies investigated on the breakfast cereal social identity according to countries. Therefore, this study tries to fill this gap by focusing on the social identity of breakfast cereal across the countries.

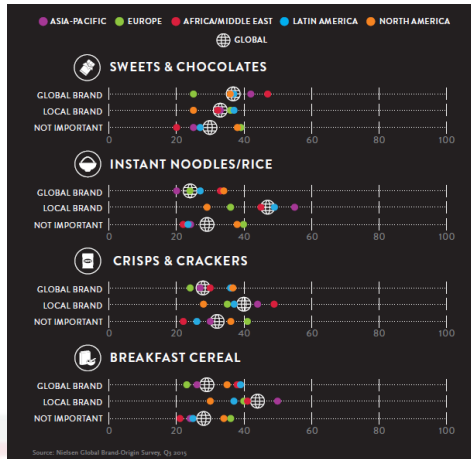


Figure 1.1: Branding Decision Influenced by the National Culture of the Countries

(Source: Pharr, 2005)

Figure 1.1 shows how the national culture influenced the branding decision and consumers purchasing intention. Based on the data, it showed the Africa/Middle East and Asia-Pacific preferred to use the global brand image on the sweet and chocolate product, Africa/Middle East, Global, Latin America and the Asia Pacific preferred to use the local brand image on their instant noodles/ rice, the Asia Pacific and Africa/Middle East preferred to use the local brand image for the crisps and cracker, and the Asia Pacific and Africa/Middle East preferred to use the local brand image for their breakfast cereal product. Based on the above discussion, this study tries to fill the gap in confirming the role of national culture in the design of spokes character.

Secondly, although the national culture was believed to be important in affecting the consumer's judgment and decision-making process somehow there still exists a research gap concerning the relationship between the national culture and the design features of spokes character. Based on the Adaptive Decision Making (ADM) theory, the knowledge, training, and culture can affect the people's decision-making process (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson, 1988). Some scholars claimed that there is a gap between the intended meaning of the designers and the perceived meaning of the consumer, and that is the reason on why some people mistreated the intended meaning of the certain subject. According to Hedberg and Brown (2002), cross-cultural has become an important element in communicating a complex meaning of certain image (refer to the spokes character). For instance; in the early 1970's, Kellogg's Sugar Smacks breakfast cereal used a Red Indian guy as their spokes characters to attract the Native American. Somehow, it did not last long because Native America believed that the spokes-characters image brought shame and disgraced to their national culture.

Third, there were many studies related to the design features of spokes characters somehow, fewer studies focused on the design features of spokes characters in every region across the world. Since the national culture was different from each region, thus, we must do a comparison between the spokes characters in every country to prove that the comparisons were valid. Therefore, this research tries to fill the gap by examining the design features of spokes character on the breakfast cereal across the six countries of the world.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the matter stated before in problem statement, in order to achieve the goal and objectives, this research will answer specific research question as mentioned below:

1. What are the design features of spokes character of Kellogg's breakfast cereal?
2. Are there any differences of design features of spokes characters on the Kellogg's breakfast cereal from different national culture?
3. Is there any relationship between the social identity through national culture and the design features of spokes characters breakfast cereal?

1.5 Research Objectives

General Objectives:

To determine the relationship between social identity and brand communication using design features of spokes characters in Kellogg's breakfast cereal.

Specific Objectives:

1. To investigate the design features of spokes character of Kellogg's breakfast cereal.
2. To identify differences of design features of spokes character on the Kellogg's breakfast cereal from different national culture.
3. To identify the relationship between the social identity through the national culture and design features of spokes character breakfast cereal.

1.6 The Significance of the Research

The significance and the impact of the research were to affect and give benefits to certain groups which were; the academic community, the organization and, the practical and methodology. Many researchers and studies had provided models and empirical evidence that social identity could influence the design of a character. Based on the past year's research, it was believed that the design of character from the variable region differed accordingly. Thus, the study will help the academic community to acknowledge the relationship between the national culture and the design features of spokes character on breakfast cereal across the world.

Then, it helps the organization to have a greater understanding of the importance of spokes characters preferences for their reputation and image of the brand. The organization also must acknowledge that the people's choices of choosing product were depended on the product appearances including the packaging, the spokes character, the color and other physical appearances of a product. It was proved that a well-designed spokes character could improve the appeal of the product and increase the customer attraction in buying the product.

Lastly, the result of the research will help to provide an insight information on the national culture and the design features of spokes character for the practical and methodology. The content analysis could help to improvise the advertiser current spokes characters to improve their product effectiveness. The idea that the design features of spokes characters were influenced by the national culture could help the advertiser to enrich the perspectives on the spokes characters for their breakfast cereal.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Research

The research covered on the Kellogg's breakfast cereal, national culture, five design features of spokes character and the six countries across the world. The relevance of choosing Kellogg's breakfast cereal as the selected sample was because it is the oldest food manufacturing company that introduced the breakfast cereal to the whole world ("Our History," 2017). However, the research only focused on the Kellogg's breakfast cereal that had the presence of spokes characters on their breakfast cereal packaging. According to Hofstede and Bond (1984), a culture can be symbolized through a symbol as it can be a word, image (spokes character) or object. The spokes character is an image (spokes character) that was used by the organization as a brand communicate to communicate their social identity through the national culture (Hedberg and Brown, 2002).

After that, the relevance of choosing social identity was because culture is the primary determinant of human perception (Samovar, 1995). The culture also has an impact on people inner values and morality towards external practices such as art, clothing, and design features. Furthermore, different culture affects the perception of the consumer's way of perceiving the messages (Tsai, 2009). The culture can be communicated through the spokes character that functioned as the brand communication.

Then, the design features of spoke-characters that had been choosing were based on the physical characteristics and non-verbal communication of the spokes characters which were; gender, appearances, number of colour, facial expression and body language. The relevance of choosing the physical characteristics and non-verbal communication as the indicators were because it related to the focus of the research which was; the design features of spokes-characters in the breakfast cereal packaging. Furthermore, the social identity has an impact on the external practices of the organization such as in the art, design features and also food (Tsai, 2009). He also claimed that the external practices are perceived differently by a different culture.

Next, the research focused on the six countries across the world which consisted of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and Oceania. Then, the research focused the selected country from each region which is; South Africa from the African region, Japan from the Asia region, French from the Europe region, Mexico from the Latin America and Caribbean region, United States of America from the Northern America region, and Australia from the Oceania region. The relevance of choosing these countries is because the researcher realized that these countries were capable of buying breakfast cereal based on their GDP ranking. Based on past research, different cultures have different perceptions because they have different values and different cognitive processes (Tsai, 2009).

1.8 Conclusion

As a conclusion, the design features of spokes character has an important role in enhancing the brand communication of national culture towards the consumer. Somehow, there were some scholars claimed that the national culture was not important because what works in the home country might not work out in another country (Donaldson and Dunfee, 1999; and Ali, 2012). Hence, the next chapter discussed the literature review of social identity and the design features of spokes characters thoroughly.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Brand Communication

Brand communication is the most important element in enhancing the brand loyalty and brand trust within the customers, employees, suppliers, channel members, the media, government regulators, and community (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). The brand communication can be in many forms such as the spokes character in the advertisement and package (Folse and Burton, 2005).

Social Identity (SI)

Social Identity referred to the same basic knowledge that was shared by the same group such as the language, race, or national culture of the region (Wen-Shin, Tsuifang and Han-Shen, 2011; and Hogg and Vaughan, 2002).

National Culture

The national culture is a higher-level culture that is shared between the people in the organization to differentiate the members of one nation from the other (Hofstede, 1984 and Ali, 2012). The national culture can be measured through the Hofstede's Cultural Theory and Hall's Cross Cultural theory (Ali, 2012).

Design Features of Spokes Character

There were two indicators of design features of spokes character which were; physical characteristic and non-verbal communication (Nguyen, 2014). Then, the physical characteristic were divided into; gender, facial appearances and number of colour. Meanwhile, the non-verbal communication were divided into; facial expression and body language.

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