

Chapter V

Conclusion and Discussion

The objective of this "Creative Strategy of Cola Soft Drinks (Coca-Cola & Pepsi) Employed in Television Commercials Airing in Thailand Between 1982-1997" thesis is to identify creative strategies of Coca-Cola and Pepsi television commercials in Thailand between 1982-1997. The study emphasizes in the following areas: creative approaches; creative execution styles; appeals; positioning; and brand personality.

Regarding to the global brand concept, both studied Cola brands have been dominating the market for a long time. They both significantly become one among the most powerful global brands in the world, which successfully gain acceptance and preference from consumers throughout the world. During the past decades, both Coca-Cola and Pepsi have been overwhelmed of their steady sales growth and market share. As they become the popular beverages to be typically consumed in people's daily lives, they are approaching their mature stage in the product life cycle. No significant decrement or increment in sales number occurs because Cola soft drink is an inexpensive low involvement product, which no complex decision making procedure is required. They both become generic products which one brand can be easily substituted by another.

Therefore both Coca-Cola and Pepsi have to seriously initiate the most effective marketing plan to boost their sales. Several approaches are introduced to encourage regular consumption habit as well as captivate the definite loyal consumers. They realize necessity to induce new consumers and tremendously protect their current consumers from their competitors. Some striking marketing activities such as efficient distribution, special promotion, new package and new product launching are implemented to outsell other brands. One of the powerful approaches to guard their market share is to follow the creative strategy concept by establishing strong positioning which would result in distinguished image and reputation. To achieve this mission, the convincing advertising campaign with compelling creative strategy is mandatory. It is because creative strategy could efficiently stimulate satisfaction and

preference among consumers. It also helps generating clearer understanding of the product's unique personality, which will distinguish one brand from others.

Comparison of Advertising Target

	Coca-Cola	Pepsi
Teenager :	21 TVCs	48 TVCs
General :	43 TVCs	14 TVCs
Family :	3 TVC	None

Since both Cola brands have to strictly follow the global advertising direction created by their head offices in the United States to maintain their consistent identity, it is quite difficult for the management teams in Thailand to initiate local creative strategy to meet the needs of Thai people. There are also some other obstacles for the global brands like Coca-Cola and Pepsi to conduct the significant dramatically changed creative strategy or activity because the consumers would disagree to accept the transformation. For example, in April 1985, when Coca-Cola announced its plan to replace the original formula with the new one in the United States, this controversial issue becomes one of Coca-Cola's most mentioned failure. It is because the current brand users fear they would loose their favorite flavor and brand identity. Since then Coca-Cola always concerns about its overall positioning of being the world's first Cola soft drink which successfully gains worldwide acceptance from diverse consumers. As a result, Coca-Cola regularly employs creative strategy, which remarkably reinforces its originality and leadership status. This situation forces Coca-Cola to narrow its creative strategy only in this limited area. This limitation of Coca-Cola provides an opportunity for Pepsi to design more energetic creative strategy to efficiently generate brand awareness among the prospect consumers. In order to compete with Coca-Cola who is the leader in Cola soft drink market, Pepsi could not position itself as the best Cola beverage because no one would ever believe and appreciate this claim. Therefore Pepsi turns to position itself as an active Cola beverage for modernized stylish young people by frequently endorsing popular superstars, music, and teenagers' lifestyles in its creative strategy. With this approach, young people who are the largest target consumers could easily associate themselves to the brand. As a result, young consumers are enhanced to see Pepsi as a friend who understands their needs.

Comparison of Advertising Objective

	Coca-Cola	Pepsi
• To establish corporate image:	15 TVCs	11 TVCs
• To induce usage habit	7 TVCs	6 TVCs
• To introduce new product	3 TVCs	3 TVCs
• To position the brand as source of refreshment	9 TVCs	3 TVCs
• To position itself as part of teenagers' lifestyles	27 TVCs	31 TVCs
• To discredit major competitor	6 TVCS	None
• To introduce new identity	None	8 TVCs

Coca-Cola's creative strategy employed in television commercials airing in Thailand between 1982-1997

As it is quite difficult for Coca-Cola's global creative strategy of being the quintessential American soft drink, with powerful associations of freedom, liberty, and the American dream to have precisely the same appeal to Thai consumers, the creative strategy in Thailand has to be slightly adjusted. The local creative strategy emphasizes more on the fun-loving, good-time connotations of the brand, with much less concentration on the American origin. To successfully attract diverse consumer groups, various different television commercials such as the adventurous and lively story line for younger people, while the softer mood and tone for elder target are strikingly produced. Moreover, Coca-Cola elaborately presents lifestyles and other elements, which supportively associate the brand to local consumers. Coca-Cola also determines to maintain its glorious image and brand preference by continuously committing social contribution activities. The brand magnificently gains good reputation through numerous charitable donations, and sponsorship of countless significant sport and music events. As greater number of Coca-Cola's marketing activities emphasize on youths' interests such as the Coke Music Award Contest who encourages young targets to express their creativity, young consumers gradually develop bonding relationship toward the brand.

In addition, Coca-Cola also intentionally aims to emphasize on the glorious fact that it is the originator of the ultimate refreshing taste. As a result, it frequently designs several of its television commercials with scenes of people are freshen after drinking Coca-Cola to signify this

compelling attribute. Another one of Coca-Cola's persuasive approach to attract prospects is to demonstrate how Coca-Cola could possibly bring pleasure and jubilation to their lives. Coca-Cola vivaciously features scenes of people engage in typical cheerful and playful situations which general people usually desire for to stimulate brand preference. As a result, the humor, celebrated, and animated story lines are commonly featured. Demonstration scenes when people are experiencing the enjoyable moment from drinking Coca-Cola is also magnificently dramatized to reinforce brand positioning.

Pepsi's creative strategy employed in television commercials airing in Thailand between 1982-1997

As Coca-Cola is the first invented in Cola soft drink market, Pepsi has to seek different approach to powerfully register the distinguish position in consumers' mind. Therefore Pepsi turns to emphasize on young energetic and independent consumers who are the largest target group with the highest potential to consume Cola soft drink. As a result, Pepsi has to elaborately employ animated activities, popular celebrities, and dazzling music marketing to attract teenagers. It also tries hard to create appropriated commercials with story line of several situations, which typically happen or relate to teenagers' restless and dynamic lifestyles. To pleasingly captivate youth target, Pepsi also compellingly endorses numerous teen idol superstars both international and local to actively motivate the prospect to perceive it as an innovative and cheerful drink. With this approach, Pepsi successfully gains perception of being a progressive beverage to generate dynamic, lively, and trendsetter image for its consumers. As Pepsi repeatedly reinforces this strategy, young consumers gradually accept Pepsi as a part of their liberated and playful life.

Pepsi also realizes that to strikingly take over the leader position, it must create the new significant identity to strengthen its modernized image. Pepsi aims to use the new identity to powerfully match itself to lifestyles of young consumers who dare to stand out from the crowd. This new electric blue identity magnificently speaks to universal teenagers as well as encourages them to look and think about Pepsi in a whole new way of being trendy and active.

Comparison of key advertising concept

	Coca-Cola	Pepsi
• Refreshment	9 TVCs	3 TVCs
• Corporate	5 TVCs	9 TVCs
• Happiness	10 TVCs	2 TVCs
• Teenegers' lifestyles	10 TVCs	14 TVCs
• New product	3 TVCs	3 TVCs
• Music	6 TVCs	17 TVCs
• Food	3 TVCs	4 TVCs
• Product usage	4 TVCs	2 TVCs
• Original & ciassical	6 TVCs	None
• Sport	11 TVCs	None
• New identity	None	8 TVCs

To forcefully compete against one another, both Coca-Cola and Pepsi have developed powerful positioning in Thailand. Throughout 15 years, Coca-Cola is signified with the positioning of being a caring friend who always provides happiness and refreshment as well as truly concerns about social contribution. On the other hand, Pepsi splendidly dramatizes the positioning of being an innovative and energetic beverage for young modernized people who live ultimate trendy lifestyles. To efficiently maintain these positions, Pepsi strikingly employs the celebrities creative execution style which excitingly endorses numerous superstars to attract young consumers in its television commercials because these stars are one of the most interesting topics for young targets. While Coca-Cola elaborately turns to engage the vignettes creative execution style as the main emphasis of its television commercials. It is because the vignettes execution allows Coca-Cola to thread together several brief episodes of people experiencing Coca-Cola's aspiration and enjoying Coca-Cola's joyous moment. The slice-of-life creative execution style is also popularly occupied by both Cola brands because it usually portrays the product in use and certain group of people who use it. As the everyday life situation is emphasized to position the brand in natural way, the consumers are easily to associate the commercials with their realistic daily situations.

Comparison of creative execution styles

	Coca-Cola	Pepsi
• Demonstration	11 TVCs	10 TVCs
• Humor	8 TVCs	8 TVCs
• Serial	None	None
• Animation	6 TVCs	None
• Rotoscope	1 TVCs	None
• Comparison	None	None
• Informercial	None	None
• Slice-of-life	13 TVCs	16 TVCs
• Celebrities	7 TVCs	24 TVCs
• Testimonial	None	None
• Vignettes	16 TVCs	2 TVCs
• Problem & solution	5 TVCs	2 TVCs

When numbers of consumers frequently use their emotion as the purchasing decision for Cola soft drink product because it shares similar attribute, both Cola brands regularly use emotional advertising appeal to efficiently generate sentimental bonding between the brands and consumers. It is because as Cola soft drink is a generic product without any unique selling point, the emotional appeal is most effective approach to register the brand in the consumers' minds. And when the brands become more than typical beverage in consumers' perception, consumers are likely to signify the brands as friends who truly understand what the youth's needs are. As Coca-Cola and Pepsi believe that creating a commercial that directly appeal to consumers' emotions work better than emphasizing on their attribute, numerous commercials with humorous, exciting, and entertaining story line are frequently produced. To powerfully signify all of the mentioned approaches, three compelling creative strategies are usually employed in their television commercials. The first is the brand image strategy, which the brands create emotion framework and brand personality to appealingly motive consumers. This particular strategy helpfully generates positive attitude among consumers by portraying the brands' desired image. The brand image strategy also enhances brand personality, which will encourage consumers to intensely relate to the particular brand. The second is the product

positioning strategy, which works by placing the product in a hierarchy of competing products in the consumers' mind. This strategy is truly a useful approach for generic product category because it stresses how the brand is different from, or superior to, the competitors. The third is the resonance strategy, which links the product to universal experience of the consumers. It supportively helps associating consumers closer to the brand because they are familiar with the commonly portrayed events. Both Coca-Cola and Pepsi frequently employ these creative strategies because they efficiently stimulate consumers to remarkably think of the brands as a person who truly understands their psychological need.

As both brands are the world's famous brands, they have to carefully maintain their consistent image and advertising strategy throughout the world. They significantly present standardized positioning to prospect consumers by regularly having their head offices in the United States originally direct global strategy source of the television commercials. Only some special occasions such as to announce the new product launch, to signify the local or regional sport sponsorship, to gloriously encourage young local people to be responsive for social contribution will allow both brands to initiate local creative strategy. In Thailand Pepsi efficiently protect its brand consistency by having its locally produced creative strategy steadily created by Ogilvy & Matther (Thailand) Ltd. from 1981-1998, while Coca-Cola dramatically switches its local agency from Lintas (Thailand) Ltd. to McCaan. Coca-Cola also once hands the special project to promote its official sponsorship of the 1995 Sea Game event to Leo Burnett Ltd.

Creative strategy in television commercials of both Cola brands must be carefully planned because the successful creative strategy is the most powerful element to help registering the significant brand positioning among prospect consumers. To strikingly originate the creative strategy, there are several factors to be put in precise consideration. For example, it is mandatory to have the creative strategy consist to the brand positioning, otherwise the consumers will be confused of the advertising message. They might be uncertain of which direction the brands are gearing to. Considering of consumers' psychological needs when designing the creative strategy is an ideal because when the particular needs are emphasized in the creative strategy, consumers are likely to be persuasively convinced to accept the brand. To efficiently communicate to prospect consumers through television commercials, story lines of

familiar situations and consumers' most interested topics are strongly recommended because they have high potential to stimulate sentimental attitude.

As the Cola soft drink market is getting more competitive, every brand has to emphasize creating the most appealing advertising campaign to attract prospect consumers. Advertising then plays the most significant role to associate the brand to consumers as well as generate greater brand awareness. As a result, Cola brands put more effort to initiate the efficient creative strategy to register brand preference in consumers' minds. The powerful creative strategy will help distinguishing positioning of one brand from another. However to successfully fulfill this objective, relying solely on the television commercial might not be adequate. The efficient integrated communication plan, which includes all types of media, and supporting marketing activities should be significantly considered to powerfully strengthen brand positioning. Employing the decisive integrated communication plan will encourage prospect consumers to develop preference towards the particular brands.

Applications:

According to the study on creative strategy of Coca-Cola and Pepsi, the beneficial guidelines for creative and marketer, which have similar target, can be identified as follows:

1. As being the generic product with no unique selling point, the emotional advertising appeal is strongly recommended because it can efficiently generate sentimental bonding between the brands and consumers.
2. As being the lively product for the ultimate refreshing experience, the entertaining creative execution styles and concept such as music and happiness moment, which compellingly relate to youth's lifestyles should be emphasized to directly appeal to target consumers' needs.
3. As being the well-known international brands, it is essential to carefully maintain the consistent brand image through the global advertising campaign. However precise consideration should be concentrated because not every global advertising campaign is appropriated due to different lifestyles, and traditions. As a result, the local advertising campaign should be emphasized to successfully reach the target.

4. To efficiently stimulate consumers to perceive the brand as a person who truly understand their psychological need, the brand image strategy, the product positioning strategy and the resonance strategy are ideal.

Limitations:

1. As the timeline of the study is between 1982-1997, it is quite difficult to contact those persons who responded for those television commercial campaigns. Therefore the descriptive interview which would supportively reveal the rational behind the creative strategy development is inaccessible.
2. Due to the study period, some documentaries are outdated and uncovered.

Recommendations:

1. Group discussion or survey with consumers should be organized to learn about their perception and attitudes towards creative strategies of both brands.
2. Additional study on creative strategy of Coca-Cola and Pepsi in other types of media should be studied to reveal the total creative strategy.

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย