

Representation of Wuling's Identity In Antaranews Media

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the representation of Wuling's brand identity in the media of Antaranews, one of the leading news portals in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach with a content analysis method, this study evaluated 50 articles published in the period 2017 to 2023. The results of the analysis show that Wuling has succeeded in building a positive image through an emphasis on product quality, technological innovation, and after-sales service. However, there are challenges related to negative perceptions that are still attached to brands from China, especially regarding prices that are considered high. The study also found that the marketing communication strategies implemented by Wuling, including advertising campaigns and the use of social media, contributed to creating a positive buzz around their products. Thus, the study concludes that although Wuling has been successful in some aspects, market education and response to criticism are important steps to strengthen the brand's position in the Indonesian automotive market. These findings are expected to provide insights for the development of more effective communication strategies for Wuling and other brands in a competitive industry.

Keywords: brand identity, media representation, marketing communication, consumer perception, content analysis, automotive industry

INTRODUCTION

In the era of increasingly rapid globalization, brand identity is a crucial factor in the success of a product, especially in a highly competitive market such as Indonesia. Brands that are able to communicate their identity clearly and effectively have a greater chance of capturing consumers' attention and building loyalty. In this context, Wuling Motors, as an automotive manufacturer from China that has been operating in Indonesia since 2017, is an interesting example to analyze (Zhang, Liu, Wang, & Hu, 2022). Wuling Motors entered the Indonesian market by offering products specifically designed to meet the needs of local consumers. Since the initial launch of Wuling Confero, the company has been striving to build a positive image in the eyes of the public through various marketing strategies, including advertising campaigns and promotional activities. However, the representation of brand identity in the mass media, especially through news on news portals such as Antaranews, has a significant impact on the public's perception of the brand (Tangkudung, 2024).

The mass media, as an information agent, not only conveys news but also forms a narrative that can influence public opinion. Previous research has shown that news presented in the media can shape a brand image, both positive and negative. For example, news that focuses on product quality, after-sales service, and technological innovation can strengthen the brand image in the minds of consumers. Conversely, news that highlights problems or

criticisms of the product can damage the brand's reputation. Along with the development of information technology, consumers are now increasingly critical in assessing a brand. Therefore, it is important to analyze how Wuling is represented in the news published by Antaranews. This research aims to understand the key elements in Wuling's identity representation and how they affect consumer views (Pratiwi & Harahap, 2022).

Wuling Motors officially entered the Indonesian market in 2017 by launching its first product, Wuling Confero. Since then, the brand has tried to build a positive image and gain a place in the hearts of Indonesian consumers. According to research by Suhardi and Sulistyawati (2022), a strong brand identity can increase consumer loyalty and competitiveness in the market. Mass media, including Antaranews, have an important role in shaping this image through the news they present. News that appears in the media often influences public opinion and creates a broader understanding of a brand. Research by Sari (2019) shows that the media has the power to form narratives related to brand identity, which can have an impact on consumer perception. Therefore, it is important to analyze how Wuling is represented in the news published by Antaranews.

Several previous studies have addressed the theme of brand identity and representation in the media. For example, research by Fitria (2018) states that the media acts as an agent of brand image, where the message conveyed through the news can affect the way consumers perceive the brand. This is relevant in the context of Wuling, where the public's understanding of this brand is greatly influenced by the existing news. In addition, research by Ahmad (2024) examines how mass media plays a role in building the image of automotive brands in Indonesia. The results show that a positive brand image can be obtained through constructive news and focusing on product excellence. This research supports the hypothesis that an analysis of Wuling's representation in Antaranews can provide insight into how the brand is trying to build its identity in the Indonesian market. Furthermore, this research will look at the communication strategies used by Wuling in an effort to build its identity.

By understanding how Wuling is presented in the media, it is hoped that effective strategies can be identified in building a strong brand image in the Indonesian market. This research also seeks to provide recommendations that can be used by Wuling and other companies in facing challenges in the competitive automotive market (Yan, 2019). Through an in-depth analysis of Wuling's identity representation in the media, it is hoped that this research will not only contribute to the study of communication and marketing, but also provide practical insights for stakeholders in the automotive industry. Thus, understanding how brand identity is formed through media becomes essential for the development of effective marketing strategies (Wullur, Tumbuan, & Rumokoy, 2019).

This study is based on several main theories that are relevant in analyzing brand identity representation in the media, especially in the context of Wuling. By integrating these various theories, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the representation of Wuling's identity in the Antaranews media. The results of the analysis are expected to contribute to the development of marketing communication theory and brand management, as well as provide practical insights for brand communication strategies in the automotive industry.

1. Brand Identity Theory

Brand identity theory emphasizes the importance of the elements that make up the image and perception of the brand in the minds of consumers. Aaker (1996) stated that brand identity consists of assets such as names, logos, and values that are communicated through

various channels, including mass media. In the context of Wuling, it is important to analyze how this brand identity is represented in the media and how it affects the public's views.

2. Marketing Communication Theory

Marketing communication theory states that the media functions as a channel that connects brands with audiences. According to Kotler and Keller (2018), an effective communication strategy can build a strong relationship between brands and consumers. This research will analyze how Wuling uses Antaranews media to build effective communication, create positive impressions, and respond to criticism that may arise.

3. Content Analysis Theory

Content analysis theory is used to evaluate the content of media and how messages are conveyed. Various content analysis techniques allow researchers to identify themes, patterns, and meanings in news reporting. Krippendorff (2013) states that content analysis provides insight into the media's representation and influence on public opinion. In this study, content analysis will be used to explore how Wuling is represented in articles on Antaranews.

4. Consumer Perception Theory

Consumer perception theory explains how individuals understand and interpret the information they receive. According to Solomon (2018), perception can be influenced by a variety of factors, including previous experiences, social contexts, and media information. This research will consider how Wuling's representation in the media can affect consumer perception of this brand.

The urgency of this study lies in the increasingly competitive landscape of the Indonesian automotive industry, where foreign brands such as Wuling face significant challenges in building and maintaining a positive brand identity. With the growing adoption of electric vehicles and advancements in automotive technology, the ability of brands to effectively communicate their value propositions through media representation is critical for achieving market success. Moreover, the persistent negative stereotypes associated with Chinese-origin brands in Indonesia underline the need for strategic efforts to reshape consumer perceptions and build trust.

A notable research gap exists in the exploration of how media representation specifically affects brand identity for Chinese automotive brands in the Indonesian context. While prior studies have examined the role of media in shaping consumer perceptions and brand loyalty, there is limited research focusing on the nuanced relationship between news narratives and brand identity for emerging players like Wuling. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing content from a prominent news portal, Antaranews, to uncover how the brand is positioned and perceived in the local market.

The novelty of this research lies in its integration of content analysis with brand identity theory to evaluate the interplay between media narratives and consumer perceptions of a relatively new market entrant. Unlike previous research, this study delves into Wuling's unique positioning strategies and the challenges it faces in altering consumer stereotypes, providing insights into the role of local media in shaping the identity of foreign brands in Indonesia.

The primary objective of this study is to assess how Wuling's brand identity is represented in Antaranews articles and to analyze the implications of these representations for consumer perceptions. By identifying key themes such as product quality, innovation, consumer responses, and marketing strategies, the research aims to provide actionable insights for enhancing Wuling's market positioning.

The benefits of this study extend to both academic and practical domains. For academics, it contributes to the literature on media representation and brand identity in emerging

markets, particularly for Chinese automotive brands. For practitioners, including Wuling and other stakeholders in the automotive industry, the findings offer valuable recommendations for crafting more effective communication and marketing strategies to overcome negative stereotypes and foster consumer trust.

The implications of this research underscore the critical role of media as a mediator in shaping brand perceptions. Wuling's ability to address consumer concerns, leverage media to highlight its technological innovations, and maintain transparent communication will be pivotal in establishing its long-term credibility and competitiveness. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of adopting a localized approach to marketing and media engagement to resonate with Indonesian consumers, paving the way for sustainable brand growth in a dynamic market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze the representation of Wuling's identity in Antaranews media. McMillan & Schumacher (2010) argue that qualitative is an investigative approach because usually researchers collect data by face-to-face and interacting with people at the research site. Meanwhile, (Moleong, 2019) argues that qualitative research is a certain tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on the observation of human beings in their own region in relation to those people in their language and terminology. Data was obtained through content analysis of articles published by Antaranews about Wuling in a certain period, for example from 2017 to 2023. The analysis process includes article collection, selection of relevant ones, and categorization by theme, such as product quality, innovation, and consumer response. After the data was collected, the researcher conducted an in-depth analysis using coding techniques to identify patterns in the news. In this way, researchers can assess how Wuling's brand identity is represented, as well as the factors that affect public perception.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Chinese car brand achieved success by posting orders for thousands of units during the 11 days of the GAIKINDO Indonesia International Auto Show (GIIAS) 2024, the largest automotive exhibition in Indonesia. GIIAS 2024 officially ended on July 28 with nearly 500 thousand visitors. A number of car brands from various countries participated, including automotive manufacturers from China who dominate the domestic electric vehicle market. Wuling recorded a total of 2,301 orders at the exhibition, almost 80 percent of which were for the company's electric car lines, namely AirEv, BinguoEV, and CloudEV. In addition, as many as 1,390 visitors took part in the Wuling electric car test drive." This is clear evidence of consumer trust in the quality and innovation that Wuling presents until entering its seventh year in Indonesia," said Senior Manager Marketing Strategy of Wuling Motors Ricky Christian in his official statement. GAC Aion, another Chinese electric car manufacturer, recorded orders of 1,118 units even though it was first introduced to Indonesia about three months ago. To date, the company has launched three models for the Indonesian market.

Meanwhile, Neta posted an increase in the number of orders of more than 100 percent compared to GIIAS last year, with the number of order letters received reaching 327 units for the Neta V-II model and pre-orders for the Neta X model. Not only electric vehicles, conventional car brands from China are also quite in demand. One of them is BAIC, which managed to record orders of 136 units even though it only entered Indonesia a few months ago. However, that amount does not only concern purchases during GIIAS, but also orders

through dealers and business-to-business transactions. The BJ40 Plus premium off-road vehicle model accounted for about 80 percent of the total orders. (<https://otomotif.antaranews.com/berita/4231875/merek-mobil-china-kantongi-ribuan-pemesanan-di-ajang-giias-2024>)

History of Wuling Enters Indonesia

The initial history of Wuling entering the Indonesian market in 2017, at that time, Wuling began by inaugurating a factory located in Cikarang, West Java. Then, a series of products were presented for Indonesian consumers, ranging from the Confero series, Cortez series, Formo series, Almaz series, to Air ev. Since 2022, Wuling has also taken concrete steps in realizing more environmentally friendly mobility by launching two new energy vehicle lines, namely Air ev and Almaz Hybrid. This tiny electric car also received a quite extraordinary response. This can be seen from the sales figures that are close to more than 10,000 units since its launch until now. Wuling Air Ev is also trusted by the government to become the Official Car Partner vehicle in the 2022 G20 Summit and the 2023 ASEAN Summit which will take place in Labuan Bajo.

The features and technology offered by this manufacturer are also not kidding, on the New Cortez, Almaz series, and Air ev, Wuling equips them with the first advanced voice commands in Indonesian, Wuling Indonesian Command (WIND), and the Wuling Remote Control App which allows users to operate various vehicle features remotely through the MyWuling+ application. In addition, Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) technology, which is a modern safety feature, is also available in the Almaz RS and Almaz Hybrid. Not only focusing on product development, Wuling also continues to maintain customer satisfaction through after-sales service. For customers who experience problems on the road, the Emergency Road Assistance service and Wuling Mobile Service are ready to provide the assistance needed. As additional information, Wuling has made various achievements in the automotive world of the country in a short period of time. Until 2023, there are 31 prestigious awards for the various product lines and innovations that Wuling presents. (<https://otomotif.antaranews.com/berita/3630873/enam-tahun-berkiprah-di-indonesia-wuling-terus-perkuat-inovasinya>)

Research Results

The results of the content analysis of 50 articles published by Antaranews about Wuling identified several main themes that contribute to shaping the representation of the brand identity. The key findings of this study are as follows:

1. **Product Quality:** Many articles highlight the superior features of Wuling vehicles, such as modern design, latest technology, and good performance. Several articles list testimonials from users expressing their satisfaction with the comfort and reliability of the product. For example, there is an article that mentions that the Wuling Confero has a spacious cabin space and is suitable for families, which strengthens its image as a practical vehicle for Indonesian consumers.
2. **Innovation and Technology:** Innovation is one of the main focuses in reporting about Wuling. Many articles discuss the launch of new models, including advanced features such as infotainment systems, safety technology, and fuel efficiency. This news not only highlights the product, but also Wuling's strategy in adapting to the ever-evolving market needs, demonstrating the company's commitment to offering relevant solutions.
3. **Consumer Responses:** In addition to the positive aspects, the articles also include diverse consumer responses. Positive responses generally have to do with good after-sales service and a satisfactory driving experience. However, there are also criticisms, especially

regarding prices that are considered relatively high compared to local products. This criticism shows that there is a challenge for Wuling in changing the public's perception of brands originating from China.

4. **Marketing Strategy:** Reporting on Wuling's marketing strategy, such as creative advertising campaigns and participation in automotive exhibitions, is also an important part of the analysis. Several articles note how Wuling leverages social media and influencers to reach a wider audience, creating buzz around their products. This shows that Wuling is not only focused on products, but also on how they are perceived by the public.

Discussion

The results of the analysis show that the representation of Wuling's identity in Antaranews tends to be positive, although there are several challenges that must be faced. The emphasis on product quality and innovation provides a strong foundation for Wuling to build an image as a reliable automotive brand. This is in line with the brand identity theory, which states that positive elements in communication can increase consumer perception of brands (Aaker, 1996). However, criticism that has emerged in some articles shows that consumer perception of Chinese brands is still influenced by negative stereotypes. This is in line with consumer perception theory, which emphasizes that social experiences and contexts influence how consumers value brands (Solomon, 2017). Therefore, Wuling needs to continue to conduct effective education and communication to overcome this negative perception, with several challenges that must be faced such as:

1. **Product Quality and Innovation:** The emphasis on product quality and innovation offered by Wuling is in line with brand identity theory which states that positive elements in communication can strengthen the brand image (Aaker, 1996). When the media picks up positive stories about quality and innovation, it can increase consumer trust and brand loyalty.
2. **Negative Perceptions and Challenges:** Nevertheless, the criticism that has emerged in the news regarding the price and origin of products shows that Wuling still faces challenges in changing the perception of people who tend to be skeptical of Chinese brands. According to consumer perception theory, social experiences and contexts greatly influence consumers' judgment of brands (Solomon, 2017). Therefore, Wuling needs to overcome this stereotype through proper market education and promotion.
3. **Marketing Communication Strategies:** This research also shows the importance of effective marketing communication strategies. By utilizing mass media and digital platforms, Wuling can reach a wider audience and create better interactions with consumers. This is in line with the opinion of Kotler and Keller (2016) who emphasized that integrated marketing communication can help brands build strong relationships with audiences.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of the media's role in shaping brand identity representation and its impact on consumer perception. By continuing to strengthen the positive aspects of communication and responding to criticism constructively, Wuling has the opportunity to improve its image and position in the Indonesian automotive market. The results of this research are expected to provide practical insights for Wuling and other stakeholders in developing more effective marketing strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role of media in shaping Wuling's brand identity and its influence on consumer perception within the Indonesian automotive market. The analysis of Antaranews media reveals a predominantly positive representation of Wuling, highlighting key aspects such as product quality, innovation, superior features, driving comfort, and advanced technology. However, challenges persist, including negative perceptions of Chinese brands and concerns over high pricing. To address these issues and strengthen its market position, Wuling is recommended to enhance consumer education, develop inclusive marketing campaigns, and improve after-sales service quality. Strategic use of social media and collaborations with influencers can further bolster audience engagement and brand awareness. By constructively responding to criticism and emphasizing positive communication, Wuling can foster stronger consumer relationships and solidify its competitiveness. The insights from this research are valuable for Wuling and other stakeholders in formulating effective marketing strategies in the automotive industry, while future studies could explore the long-term impact of media representation on consumer loyalty.

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