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The Quest for Inauthenticity: How Indonesian Bikers Co-Produce Value through Brand Camouflage

Abstract: Service dominant logic (SDL) concept posits that co-production of value process occurs during pre-production stages. This study holds that that process can also be occurred during consumption stage through brand camouflage. To prove this notion, the author studied the Indonesia most successful China-made motorcycle Kaisar Ruby Moge consumers, among which brand camouflage is almost a must. Netnography was utilized as research method. Data are collected from brand community websites, motorcycle blogs, and virtual forum of fans. This research found that bikers co-create experiential, social values, self-expression and collective self-esteem values through brand camouflage. Values are hierarchical in nature and the main source of them is objective inauthenticity. The author suggests that ‘easy to camouflaged’ can be used as unique selling proposition in motorcycle marketing. Others researchers are suggested to study brand camouflage further to ensure its external validity.

Keywords: Value co-creation, brand camouflage, objective inauthenticity

Introduction

Service dominant logic (SDL) concept proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008) noticed that consumers are always be co-creators of value (Vargo dan Lusch 2004; Lusch dan Vargo 2006; Vargo dan Lusch 2008). This is the most important premise in SDL (Vargo 2009). Lusch and Vargo (2006) and Vargo and Lusch (2008) stated that co-creators of value practice consists of two more specific practices, i.e. co-creation of value and co-production of value.

Co-creation of value is a process by which consumers create value during consumption. What producers produce in their production facilities is not the value itself, but potential values reside in the product. Those values are activated during consumption (Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006; Vargo and Lusch 2008; Merz et al. 2009).

Co-production of value is described briefly by White, Hede dan Rentschlers (2009: 776) as: “When consumers actively contribute to the production of goods or services”. This description is derived from Lusch dan Vargo (2006) statement:

“In co-production, consumers are actively involved in the production of the organisation’s offerings. Co-production can occur through shared inventiveness, co-design, or shared production of related goods, and can occur with customers and any other partners in the value network” (page 284).

There are two ideas in above statement. First, as also stated by Payne, Storbacka dan Frow (2009), the main actors in co-production of value are producers and consumers’ involvement in that process is optional in nature. Second, as noted Prahalad and Ramaswary (2004) and White, Hede dan Rentschlers (2009), co-production of value is performed before consumption.

The question is can co-production of value occurs during consumption? Previous studies indicated that the answer is yes. Schembri (2008) noted that, among others, product modification is a way used by the members to boost others’ recognition of them in motorcycle brand community. Schau, Muniz and Arnould (2009) revealed that product modification is one among thirteen practices used by brand community members to create value. In short, we can say that consumers can do something to product to enhance its values. In other word, co-production of value can be occurred during consumption stage. In other word, co-production of value and co-creation of value can be occurred simultaneously. Unfortunately, we can’t find this premise in any study so far.

Schembri (2008) and Schau et al. (2009) discussed value creation through product modification. But, how the values are activated remains unanswered.

Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008) stated that to activate values reside in a product, consumers require operand and operant resources. In relation to product modification, further question are: what resources are used by the consumers to activate values during consumption? Is there an interaction among resources?

This study is purposed to answer above questions. We choose brand camouflage, a specific part of product modification, as practice in which those questions can be answered. More specifically, this study describes how consumers co-produce values through brand camouflage and orchestrate operant and operand resources to multiply values reside in camouflaged brand.

To achieve those objectives, firstly we review the basic concept of SDL, consumer value and brand camouflage. The latter is still new to the academic world and considered as main contribution of this paper. To describe how the consumers co-produce and co-create values during

consumption, the author choose research context where that practice is commonly practiced by consumers. Proper research method to collect and analysis data is also determined properly. This is ended with the conclusions and discussion about the implications of findings for scholars and practitioners and areas for future research.

Literature review

Service Dominant Logic

Service dominant logic concept (SDL) is introduced by Vargo and Lusch (2004). Merz, He and Vargo (2009) stated that there are two main ideas of this concept. First, marketing exchange is a service exchange. Any product is actually a service. Service is defined as producer's knowledge and expertise that beneficial to consumers embedded to the products. What ordinary people though as service for so long is called direct service, through which producers deliver benefits or value directly to the consumers. Goods is viewed as indirect service, through which producers deliver benefits or value indirectly to consumers. In this sense, goods are not value itself but a vehicle through which service is delivered (see also Vargo and Lusch 2004; Lusch and Vargo 2006; Vargo and Lusch 2008). Second, values are created during consumption. When use product, actually consumers are involved in the activation of value process called 'co-creation of value'.

As stated above, beside in 'co-creation of value', consumers are also can be involved in co-production of value. Etgar (2008) describes it as the contribution of consumers to the performance of various activities in the production process. It involves all of the cooperation formats between the consumers and the service providers. Vargo dan Lusch (2008) stated that co-creation of value is a process that always be undertaken in consumption stage. On the other hand, the participation of consumers in co-production of value is optional. Chen, Tsou dan Chin (2011) stated that the major player in this process is producers.

According to Vargo and Luch (2004; 2008), co-creation of value practice requires operand and operant resources. Cited Constantine and Lusch (2004), Vargo and Lusch (2004) defined operand resources as resources upon which an operation or a practice is performed to produce an effect. For example, to get riding experience, a biker require a motorcycle, a biker requires gasoline, oil, and riding apparels. All of them are operand resources. Still based on the same source, Vargo and Lusch (2004) defined operant resources as which are employed to act on operand resources (and other operant recourses). It includes human competence, such as skill and

knowledge (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; 2013). In sum, Warnaby et al. (2009) stated that customer-related operant resources consist of: physical (sensorimotor endowment, energy, emotions, strength), cultural (specialized knowledge, skills, life expectancies, imagination), and cultural (family relationship, brand communities, consumer tribes, commercial relationships).

Brand Camouflage

Online Oxford dictionaries define camouflage as:

“The disguising of military personnel, equipment, and installations by painting or covering them to make blend in with their surroundings” (www.oxforddictionaries.com).

In above definition we can see that camouflage is a term derived from military world. Basically, camouflage means to disguise the appearance of personnel, equipment, and installations with their surroundings. Based on this understanding, the author suggests that changing the appearance of the product to make it being disguised with its surrounding as brand camouflage. The question, to what surrounding a brand is disguised or what is the surrounding’ of a brand?

To answer above question the author uses Keller (2013) conception of brand positioning. Step one in this process, i.e. ‘define product category’, talks about ‘the surrounding of brand’ indirectly. This notion is based on fact that consumers usually compare a brand to other brands in the evaluation stage of decision making process (Kotler and Keller 2012). By making its product category as surrounding we define brand camouflage as process of disguising brand elements taken by the consumers to make it: (1) leaves its original characteristics or (2) leaves its original characteristics and becomes more similar in appearance with another brand.

Inauthenticity

There’s no references for this concept so far. To define it the author begin with a premise that inauthenticity is the opposite of authenticity.

Cited Boyle (2003), Cumming stated that authenticity is a complex topic. It has no single definition (Leight, Peters, and Shelton, 2006). Nevertheless, let start from Grayson and Martinec (2004) to define it. Those authors identified two types of authenticity, i.e. indexical and iconic authenticity. Indexical authenticity refers to the degree to which an object is believed to be original or real. For example, the voice of Sukarno (Indonesia’s founding father) found in youtube.com is authentic if it is perceived as original. Someone’s actions or opinions are original if they are

perceived to represent who the person really is. Iconic authenticity is used to describe how similar an object with the one that has indexical authenticity. Harley Davidson motorcycles produced in India are authentic they meet the standards set up by Harley Davidson USA. In their study, Leight et al. (2006) prefer to use objective authenticity as proxy of iconic authenticity to describe to what degree a restored vintage MG car is perceived meet the standards of “showroom” condition.

In addition to indexical and iconic authenticity, Leight et al. (2006) proposed existential authenticity as perception about how real is something to be considered as authentic. This category escaped from bipolar of real - unreal or original - unoriginal”. Authenticity is something that be constructed and depend on perception. This concept rooted in postmodersm view in which, as stated by Firat and Venkatesh (1995), constructed reality sometimes can be the same or more real than the real one.

As we mentioned before inauthenticity is the opposite of authenticity. For the shake of this study, objective authenticity proposed by Leight et al. (2006) is used as reference. As the opposite of objective authenticity, the author defines ‘objective inauthenticity’ as how far an object is different from its “showroom” standards.

Consumer Values

There are many terms of value in marketing. Some authors (Day 1990; Vargo and Lusch 2004; 2008) use the term of value, other authors use customer value (Lam, Shankar, Erramilli dan Murty 2004; Khalifa 2004), value for the customer (Woodall 2003), customer perceived value (Eggert dan Ulaga, 2002), consumer value (Sánchez-Fernández dan Iniesta-Bonillo 2006). We treat those terms as the same in this study and simplification reason the term of ‘value’ is used.

In addition to those various terms, there are also various definition of value. Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo (2006) compiled four basic understanding of value as follow: (1) value as low price, (2) value as whatever a consumer wants from a product, (3) value as the ratio of quality per price and (4) value as what the consumers gets for what they give.

In this study, the author uses the second understanding, i.e. values are whatever consumers want from a product. ‘Whatever’ in this understanding is organized into two categories by many authors (such as Chitturi, Ragunathan, dan Mahajan 2008; Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann 2003; Bhurman 2002; Fiore, Jin dan Kim 2005) as utilitarian and hedonic values.

Chitturi et al. (2008) stated that utilitarian values is functional, instrumental, and practical benefits of consumption offering. This kind of values are contextual in nature. For example, in shopping context, utilitarian values means as an overall assessment of functional benefits dimensions that involve financial savings due to discounts, service quality, shopping time and the quality of product assortment (Lee dan Overby 2004). Website functional benefits include perceived website service quality and perceived website security risk. Perceived website service quality consist of navigation structure, information content and graphic style (Montoya-Weiss, Voss, and Grewa 2003). In goods functional benefits are the caspability of product to perform its basic function (Kotler and Keller 2012).

On the other side, hedonic values consist of aesthetics benefits (Hirschman dan Holbrook 1982; Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000; Chitturi et al. 2008), experiential benefits (Lee dan Overby, 2004; Chitturi et al.), and enjoyment-related benefits (Naylor, Kleiser, Baker dan Yorkston 2008) of consumption offering.

Research Method

Product modification made by consumers during consumption is common in magazine (Kozinet, 2001), automobile (Schembri, 2008; Schau et al. 2009) and mobile telephone (Katz and Sugiyama 2005). Among those categories, automobile is the one where brand camouflage is a common practice. For this reason we choose this category as research context. More specifically, this study is focused on Kaiser Ruby Moge (for simplification called Ruby hereafter) motorcycle customers, among which brand camouflage practice is almost 'a must'. This motorcycle basically has high similarity in appearance with Harley Davidson Road King (commonly called Road King) (See Figure 1). With 'little touch', the appearance of Ruby with price of 32 million rupiah (about US \$ 2.667) can be disguised to resemble Road King with price of 499 million (about US \$ 41.583) in the mid of 2015.

The choice of this research context is also based on fact that this brand is the most successful China-made motorcycle in developing brand communities in Indonesia.



(a) Ruby



(b) Harley Davidson Road King

), the most
32 chapter.

Furthermore, this achievement is made by only a single variant of Ruby. The ‘single variant’ decision presumably is made intentionally because of the producers’ awareness of consumers’ propensity to personalize their Ruby motorcycle.

This research utilized netnography proposed by Kozinets (2002) as research method. Kozinets defines it as ethnography on the Internet that is useful to study cultures and communities emerging through computer-mediated communications. There are three reasons behind this decision. First, this method is easy and efficient to collect, store, and share limitless amount of data (Kozinets 2002; Lockett and Blackman 2004). Second, this method guarantees the anonymity of the respondent (Flick 2009). Third, consumers are now more active online than offline (Kozinets 2002). Virtual communities are growing in number and size rapidly recently and they have enormous useful information for many organizations (Ridings and Gefen 2006).

Although offers many advantages, this method has a drawback, i.e. the instability of its sources by means that the Webs can change and disappear (Flick 2009). To overcome this problem, we choose three stable uniform resource locators (URLs) as the source of data with three additional considerations. First, the chosen sites have high hit to be considered as qualified source of data (Mullarkey 2004). Second, participants in the forum show no hidden agenda, such as sell a product. Third, the participants has consistent point of views from time to time. The second and the third are expected by Elmer H. Ramusson Library (n.d) for data objectivity. Above all, we study URL used by community members to interact to each other, as prerequisites for netnography (Kozinets 2002).

Permissions to conduct research and to use certain posts as verbal and visual data are posted in each forum. There’s no objection nor legitimation from the participants in each forum so far. But, since every post is open to public, we conclude that studying it and pick them up as data does not disturb privacy as well as ethical code of conduct as long as the sources of data are cited and the data contain no sensitive things.

Table 1. The Sources of Data

| SITES | NAME OF THREADS | STARTED | URL | NUMBER OF POSTS OBSERVED |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|---|--------------------------|
| kaskus.com | Serba-serbi Ruby Moge Kaisar | Oct. 19, 2008 | http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/00000000000000000001135546/share-info-serba-serbi-kaisar-ruby-v-250?goto=newpost/ | 5703 |
| tmcblog.com | Selamat Atas Hadirnya Website Resmi Penggemar Ruby Kaisar | January 18, 2009 | http://tmcblog.com/2009/01/18/selamat-atas-hadirnya-website-resmi-penggemar-kaisar-ruby/ | 189 |
| tmcblog.com | Moge Alternatif: Kaisar Ruby 250 CC | September 25, 2008 | http://tmcblog.com/2008/09/25/moge-alternatif-kaisar-ruby-250-cc/ | 534 |
| Serayamotor.com | Plus Minus-nya Motor Alternatif Kaisar V250-Part 01 | November 4, 2008 | https://www.serayamotor.com/diskusi/viwtopic.php?f=24&t=9575&start=1500 | 1502 |
| Serayamotor.com | Plus Minus-nya Motor Alternatif Kaisar V250-Part 02 | January 13, 2009 | http://www.serayamotor.com/diskusi/viwtopic.php?f=24&t=10418 | 505 |
| Mototplus-online.com | Jamnas Ke-4 Ruby Owners Club Indonesia, Ngeblarr Satoe Djiwa | June 21, 2014 | http://news.motorplus-online.com/read/AH938IOIHc2AjuGuSSDiuYUgU0kpOq2MOorPtVnq-vk/9/0/Jamnas-Ke-4-Ruby-Owners-Club-Indonesia-Ngeblarr-Satoe-Djiwa | - |
| TOTAL | | | | 8433 |

Data in this study are verbal (e.g. documents, news, stories and comments), visual (photograph and videos) in nature. They are chosen from 8433 posts available in the sources of data (see Table 1). To collect data, the author presumed that motorcycling activities is an experience (Schembri, 2008) that produced experiential values (Keng, Tran, and Thi, 2013). That values are consist of sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual experiences (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009) as well as social experiences (Schmitt), as depicted in detail in Table 1. This means that collected data are those that directly or indirectly reflect the experience in camouflaging and using camouflaged Ruby.

Table 2. Experiential Modules as Framework to Collect Data

| NO. | EXPERIENTIAL MODULES | COLLECTED DATA |
|-----|----------------------|---|
| | Sensory | Impressions on visual and audio senses of Ruby |
| | Affective | Feelings induced by camouflaged Ruby |
| | Behavioral | Physical actions when using camouflaged Ruby |
| | Intellectual | Reasoning of the worthiness to use camouflaged Ruby |
| | Social experiences | Activities that demonstrate social status in public and Ruby-related brand communities as well as collective self-esteem as Ruby bikers |

Source: No 1-4 are adapted from Brakus et al. (2009).

No 5 is adapted from Schmitt (2003)

As suggested by Yin (2011), a datum are interpreted to find the meaning in it and then putting it into at least one of Schmitt's experiential modules, i.e. sense, feel, think, act, and then relate. Data analysis is ended with deduction stage, in which the author concluded what values derived from and what resources are involved in each experience. Deduction process using Woodruff (1997) to compile the hierarchy of values.

The summary of findings is posted by Gurubirong (2015) in Serba-serbi Ruby Moge Kaisar, a thread in www.kaskus.com, the highest traffic Ruby-related virtual community site (see Table 2). There's no response toward this post so the author found no contribution nor objection of the members toward findings.

Results

Levels of Brand Camouflage

As stated earlier, White et al. (2009) describe co-production of value as the contribution of consumers to the production of goods or services. In brand camouflage concept, based on Schau et al. (2009), co-production of value can be viewed as the change of product standard made by the consumers. This study reveals the levels of the change and the reasons behind it.

Level of brand camouflage indicates the intensity of changes made upon standard product. It ranges from light to heavy brand camouflage. In light brand camouflage, the owners just unplugged the original stickers and left the vehicle without stickers or changed the stickers with adored others motorcycles' stickers. Harley Davidson' stickers are the most popular one in this process.

In heavy brand camouflage, the owners redesigned and reconstructed the motorcycle to be similar with adored motorcycle appearance in details. This practice requires significant effort and substantial amount of money. It could cost more than twice of price of the original motorcycle. For example, while the price of Ruby is 32 million rupiah, the dealer offers customized Ruby at price ranging from 55 to 75 million rupiah (dealerkaisar.wordpress.com, 2014). The result is the camouflaged Ruby that is very similar with and difficult to distinguish from the real motorcycle. Even experienced bikers can be failed to recognize the origin of camouflaged motorcycle (See Figure 2).



(b) Real HD Ultra Classic Model



(c) 'Ultra Classic Model'-like Ruby

Figure 2. A Ruby is Camouflaged Heavily to be Looked-like HD Ultra Classic Model

Reasons for Brand Camouflage

Why consumers camouflage their brand even though it could cost them significantly? This study uncovers two basic reasons. The first is to escape from the original brand image. The fact is Ruby can't escape from bad image of China-made motorcycle in Indonesia. Indonesian bikers still can't forget yet the time when China-made motorcycles invaded Indonesia with low price but unreliable after-sales service.

Many bikers still hold traumatic feeling about it because of experiencing or witnessing bad experience of using China-made motorcycle in the past time. After that that era it is difficult for China-made motorcycle to re-enter Indonesia market. Any motorcycle labelled "Made in China" suffers consumers' rejection. Remaining few decide to localized brand, such as Kaisar, Minerva, and Viar. Even after the localization, those brand still can't escape fully from bad image. Ruby consumers realize this and they commonly try to release labels and any sign that remind people of that brand's origin. So, the first reason for brand camouflage in this research is to cover the origin of the brand as we can see in following comments made by Ikhsaint (2008):

"I hate cruise model motorcycle for so long. I've never used China-brand motorcycle in my life. But, at the moment I saw Ruby I felt in love with it. Riding it for the last one month skips out my bad perception about China-made motorcycle. Bad image of China-made motorcycle has occupied the mind of Indonesia bikers commonly. Sometime I experience the effect of that bad image in daily riding. After adored the appearance of my motorcycle, people asked me the brand of my motorcycle. When I said 'Ruby', they responded: 'China motorcycle huh?' Such response hurt my hearth so deep. This was my very reason to thrown away any Ruby marking in my motorcycle,

including oil cover in the right side of the body. But, I didn't hijacked or pasted labels or marks of other motorcycles in my motorcycle.

Clear the motorcycle from its original labels and signs up the new labels sometimes have planned since pre-purchase stage, as we can see in following comment from Ridhomuhammad (2009):

“ I plan to buy this motorcycle, but I still don't know how to relieve the labels and the signs of Kaiser completely”.

Beside to cover its original identity, brand camouflage is also purposed to imitate other strong motorcycles brand image. The most common brand to imitate is Harley Davidson because this brand is highly adored by Indonesian bikers. By doing so, the consumers can borrow the image of imitated brand, as stated in following comments.

“Talking about which is the most capable one to get public attention, the answer is Kaiser Ruby 250 CC, especially the customized one. In traffic light many people feel curious about it and perceived it as Harley Davidson ...” (Jeep, 2010).

“ My motor cycle is now in her 1250 km of mileage. Its torsion is still very good and its original exhaust has been replaced with the louder one, good enough to take public attention when stopped in light traffic because of HD-like exhaust sound and motorcycle appearance. But, sometimes there's people that smile at me when they realized that my motorcycle is a Kaiser Ruby although it has been labelled with HD labels. I plan to replace the paint and to increase engine capacity to 400 CC make it sounded as a Harley Davidson ...”. (Wisnu, 2009).

As the first reason, this second reason can also be goal-oriented in nature. It means that bikers can set up 'the goal' and then customize their motorcycle in details to achieve 'the goal'. Dhantocj7 (2008A), described that story as follow:

“Oscar, a business man, didn't like small appearance of engine. He want to make it look bigger. 'I covered the right and the left sides of machine with iron plates. The inspiring model is Harley Davidson Sportster 48, 1200 XL', he said”.

By combining the levels and basic reasons, we can arrive to simple categorization of brand camouflage as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Simple Categorization of Brand Camouflage

| LEVEL | BASIC REASON | |
|-------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Escaping from Original Brand | Imitating Strong Brand |
| Light | Light escaping brand camouflage | Light imitating brand camouflage |
| Heavy | Heavy escaping brand camouflage | Heavy escaping brand camouflage |

Values Co-Created through Brand Camouflage

In this section we reveal the values derived from objectives inauthenticity. In general there are two major values co-created through camouflaged brand, they are personal experiential values and social experiences values.

Personal Experiential Values

Based on Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008), riding the camouflaged brand means activating potential values reside in it. We simplify those value as personal experiential values.

Sensory and Affective Experiences Brakus et al. (2009) stated that ‘sensory experience’ is an experience obtained through sensory receptors. Two aspect of camouflaged brand that can be catch through sensory receptors are appearance and exhaust sound (see Facificstate, 2012). To exhibit how good its appearance, camouflaged Ruby is often parked near HD for a comparison (see dhanthoj7, 2008). The quality of sound is also measured through how similar it with HD’s exhaust sound.

The one whose appearance and exhaust sound inspired others is called ‘viruses’. This status denotes the highest sensory experience given by camouflaged Ruby (see post from Incore.lulu, 2012).

Affective experience is not expressed directly. But, the fact that many bikers showed their motorcycle off (for example, see post from WongcilikSM, 2009A) reveals feeling of liking, joy and pride.

Intellectual Experience Brakus et al. (2009) described think experience as finding the way to solve a problem or involvement in thinking when customers encounter product. In this study, intellectual experience is about reasons to camouflage Ruby. Premium motorcycles have very high price while at the other hand consumers dream to have one. The problem is this dream will never be answered because of their limited financial resource. This problem can be solve through brand camouflaged, as stated by Tira (2013):

“I am a Harley Davidson big fan but it is impossible for me to buy it. Ruby Kaisar Moge is the answer, especially for low affordable people. I bought it and with minor modification it is already looked like a Harley Davidson.”

The camouflaged Ruby owners actually don't camouflage their brand blindly. They also realize that that practice is potentially unethical in nature. They develop rationalization to tolerate it. The reason is who is in charge for that "fraud". In their opinion, public is the one to be blame if they think camouflaged brand as premium brand. The owners don't say that way. Following comment from Siswanto (2011) reflects this thinking.

"Friends, I suggest you to buy Kaisar Ruby. You will lose nothing. I have used it and until now on people commonly think that my motorcycle is a Harley Davidson. Actually, its exhaust has been replaced with the real HD exhaust. The label of Kaisar Ruby in engine block has also been replaced with HD label. I think it is not wrong action. It's their duty to identify is it original or customized motorcycle. If they think it as a Harley Davidson, let they think that way. Until now I am still a solo rider and do not joint any motorcycle community".

Behavioral experience Brakus et al. (2009) described behavioral experience as the use of the product. Because of direct contact with the product, sense and feel experience can be occurred simultaneously with behavioral experience, but the latter are secondary in nature (Schmitt, 1999). Riding like HD is the sensation of riding camouflaged Ruby stated by many bikers. This sensation is caused by functional aspects of the motorcycle. It means that camouflaged Ruby has good quality of riding for long journey with good mileage (WongcilikSM, 2009B).

Social Experiences

Schmitt (1999; 2003) describes social experiences as those that create social identity and sense of belonging. This experience goes beyond personal experiences. It created when the consumption can be used to demonstrate self-identity or the conception of "who am I". Based on this understanding, in study, social experiences consist of three categories, i.e. public responses, social status in brand community collective self-esteem.

Public Responses 'Riding like Harley Davidson' can be applied to describe public responses to the bikers for riding camouflaged Ruby. This experience is described well in following comment.

"This afternoon, around 12 o'clock, I was informed that my friend's mother died. ... I decided to go by my Ruby. That was the first time for my Ruby to go out of town....

When stopped in the traffic light, about seven out of ten bikers noticed my motorcycle. When I arrived in the destination, all of people there attracted by my motorcycle. Every person smiled at me for perceiving that I am a boss that ride a Harley Davidson. Branch manager of Miwon asked me: "Would mind exchanging your motorcycle with my Kijang minibus?"

On the way back home, I stopped at a chicken soup stall in Klaten area. Usually if I ride Honda New Stream, the price of a portion of that chicken soup was Rp 5000. But, at the time a rode my Ruby, the price was tripled to be Rp 15.000 per portion. Surely, that price increase was caused by their misperception that I rode a new Harley Davidson and that means that I was a rich man.

Still on that my way home, on the three-ways junction in front of Muhammadiyah University, I was stopped by red traffic light. Suddenly, a bus came so close and almost crushed my motorcycle. I almost fell down to avoid her. I lost my temper spontaneously. I put my motorcycle exactly in front of that bus and stared directly the eyes of the driver. I did that for almost 15 seconds. He kept silent. I guess his response was due to my motorcycle. The driver though that it's a new Harley Davidson and that means that I was not an ordinary person. At least I was a boss who have connections with powerful persons in police or military department.

When arrived at home, I cleaned up motorcycle in front of my home. Many pedestrians look at my motorcycle. Once again, they thought it as Harley Davidson, I guess" [Wongcilik, 2008].

It's no secret that premium motorcycle owners enjoy the privilege provided by shopping mall management to park their motorcycle in front of the mall. Due to its high similarity of appearance with premium heavy motorcycle, camouflaged Rubys are often enjoyed that privilege. Cornhead (n.d) said jokingly:

"That sign actually is purposed to chase Ninja 250 CC away. But, when I arrived at the lobby of the mall, the security come to me in a hurry and tell me to park my motorcycle in premium motorcycle site. So, now my motorcycle is already 500 CC" (Cornhead, posted on kaskus.co.id, n.d).



Figure 3. Privilege Enjoyed by a Owner of Camouflaged Motorcycle in a Shopping Mall Parking Lot.

Source: Cornhead. (n.d). Jeng Sri sekarang sudah 500 CC ... nih buktinya [A post in atread]. Retrieved from <http://archive.kaskus.co.id/thread/1135546/2640#2660>, May 24, 2015.

Social Status Camouflaged Ruby is almost a prerequisite to enter Ruby-related communities. The more camouflaged the Ruby is the higher the owner's confidence to get into the community and vice versa. See following comment:

“(My motorcycle) is still in its 90% (of camouflaged project) condition and I still feel ashamed to meet with the ‘masters’ and ‘suhus’ (Kusumalaga, 2014).

Joining Ruby-related communities enables the owners to get information about Ruby, social recognition and social status as previously found by Muniz and O’Guin (2001). Desire to develop social identity (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006) or social status (Muniz and O’Guin 2001; Leigh et al. 2006) in Ruby-related communities is based on notion that the process of self-identity construction is a day-to-day struggle (Stets and Burke 2000). This process is based on the role of the member (Muniz and O’Guin 2001; Leigh et al. 2006) or symbolic consumption (Wattanasuwan 2005) that bears social status, from which a member gets respect and admiration (Rosenberg and Pearlman 1978, Muniz and O’Guin 2001, Schembri 2008).

Members' status is shaped mainly by the attractiveness of their camouflaged Ruby. The more attractive the camouflaged Ruby, the higher the possibility for the owners to high status in Ruby-related community. Camouflaged Ruby that inspires other members of the community is called ‘viruses’ and those who spread ‘viruses’ or whose opinions about camouflaging Ruby are highly referred are called ‘master’ or ‘suhu’. As also found by Leigh et al. (2006) people of that position are highly respected and admired by the members of the community. In group riding, as Schembri (2008) also previously found, they will occupy front part of the convoy (Figure 4). In group photographing they took most strategic position (Figure 5).



Figure 4. The Heaviest Camouflaged Camouflaged Ruby is Placed at The Front of a Convoy.

Source: Dhantocj7. (2008B). Dipesan. [A post in a thread]. Retrieved from http://www.kaskus.co.id/show_post/000000000000000049088657/2/, April 02, 2015.



Figure 5. The Heaviest Camouflaged Motorcycle (Left) Take the Most Strategic Position in Photographing

Source: Riy@n. (2014). Jamnas Ke-4 Ruby Owners Club Indonesia, Ngeblarr Satoe Djiwa. Retrieved from <http://news.motorplus-online.com/read/AH938IOIHc2AjuGuSSDiuYUgU0kpOq2MoorPtVnq-vk/9/0/Jamnas-Ke-4-Ruby-Owners-Club-Indonesia-Ngeblarr-Satoe-Djiwa>, April 24, 2015.

Collective Self-Esteem Beside ‘me-ness’ or self-identity constructed from interaction within the social group (Cerulo 1997), an individual also has collective self-esteem based on group prestige (Stets and Burke 1991; Cerulo 1997). Camouflaged Ruby that increasing the appearance of the motorcycle significantly enables Ruby-related Communities to joint premium motorcycle

communities (such as Harley Davidson Club Indonesia, Big Motorcycle Club, Classic Motorcycle Community) events, opportunities that are not enjoyed by other light motorcycle communities. This fact make many camouflage Ruby owners feel pride of their motorcycle as it has more prestige than other light motorcycles of the same class. That's why some members of Ruby-related communities perceive camouflaged Ruby is not light motorcycle anymore, but big motorcycle.

Discussion

Resources Interconnected

As mentioned earlier, the co-creation of value from the product requires operand and operant resources. From above description we can now state that there are two categories of operand resources (i.e. camouflaged Ruby and Riding apparels) and three categories of operant resources (i.e. skill and knowledge, Ruby-related communities and public) required to co-create value. This study follows the notion that operant resources are interconnected and hierarchical in nature (Madhavaram and Hunt 2008) and the consumers are in the central position to orchestrate them (Akaka, Vargo and Lusch 2013). These value co-creation schema is a symbolic consumption practice purposed to communicate self-identity (Wattanasuwan 2005). Figure 7 is expected to figure it out in these notion.

Let us starting from camouflaged Ruby. As mentioned before, this product just a vehicle of values. The realization of value requires personal operand resources (such as riding accessories) and operant resources (knowledge, skill, and sensory receptors). The result is experiential values, as described before.

Bringing camouflaged Ruby to virtual or social Ruby-related communities means exhibiting it to the members of the community. In SDL context, besides using mentioned personal resources, in this practices, the co-creation of values also involve social capital. The results is social status as mentioned above.

When camouflaged Ruby rode in front of the public, in this moment, the owner activates personal resources and public resources. The result is public response as it is a premium motorcycle and the riders enjoy that response.

Collective self-esteem values are activated when the owners, as members of Ruby-related community, use collective-self in their social interaction. In this practice, values are activated through the interaction of personal, social and public resources.

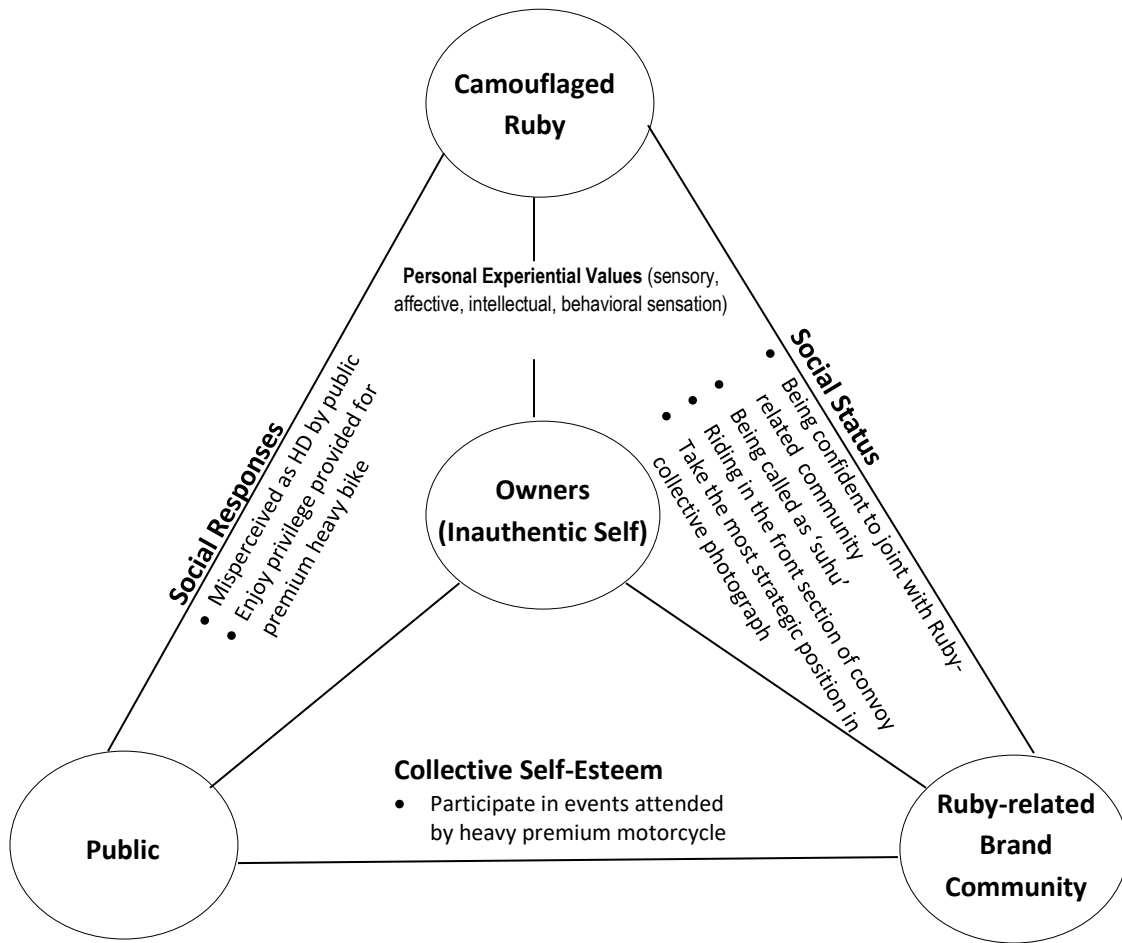


Figure 6. Resources Interconnection

The owners are positioned at the center of framework. This means that, as mentioned before, the owners are resources orchestrators (Akaka, Vargo, and Lusch, 2013). Orchestration of the resources is purposed to build self-identity as Schembri (2008) also previously found.

The Hierarchy of Values

The author has just identified values individually. Actually, these value are hierarchical (Woodruff, 1997; Perugini and Bagozzi, 2001) and multiplicative (Leigh et al. 2006) in nature. In MG Cars Community, Leight et al. (2006) identify that the main sources of values is objective authenticity, i.e. the degree to which the restored MG car meets the standard of 'showroom condition'. Contrary to Leigh et al. (2006), in this study, the author found that the main source of

values is objective inauthenticity. There are two definitions for this concept: (1) the degree to which the camouflaged Ruby leaves the standard of ‘showroom condition’ and (2) the degree to which the camouflaged Ruby meets the appearance of the imitated brand. The first definition is suitable for ‘escaping camouflage’. Both definition are interrelated for the second category of brand camouflage, i.e. ‘imitation camouflage’, as described above.

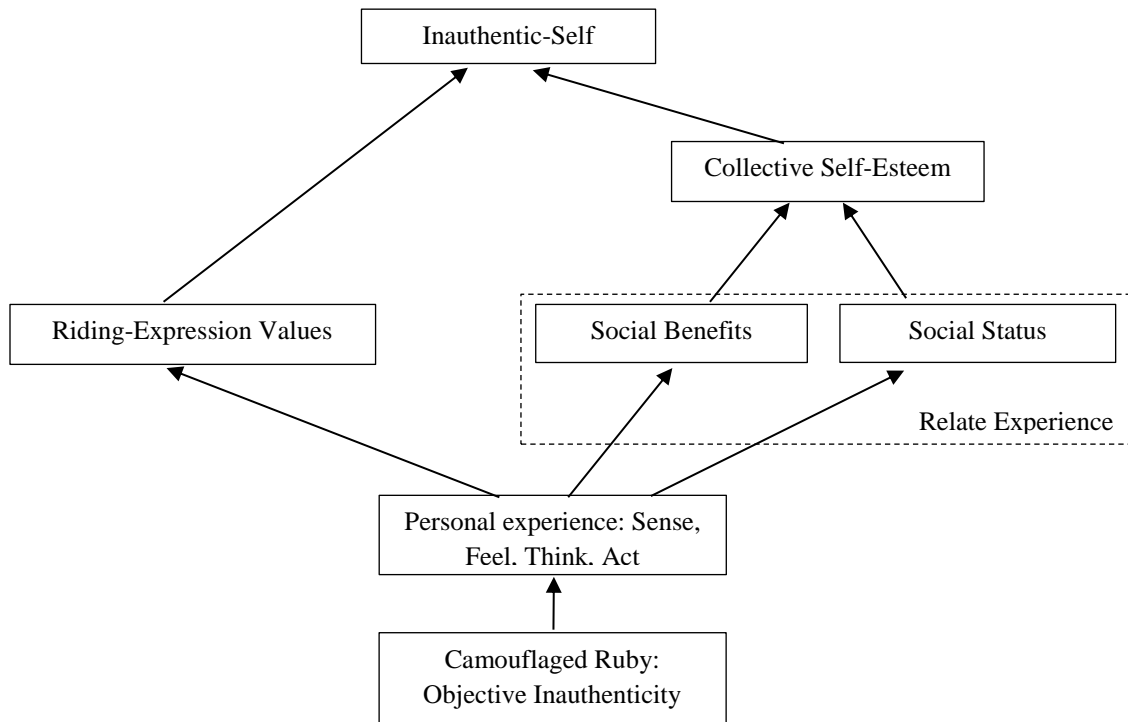


Figure 7. The Hierarchy of Values Created through Brand Camouflage

Why objective inauthenticity is the main source of value? Friese (2000) stated that self-construction is required when an individual feels that his or her own actual self can't fulfill his or her ideal self. Camouflaged Ruby can be used to bridge that gap. This view is also coherent with McCracken (1986) movement of meaning theory. Based on this theory, we can see that there are meaning (i.e. poor quality) for Chinese-made motorcycle and premium motorcycles brands reside in culturally-constituted world. On the other hand, CCW contains high image of premium motorcycles, such as Harley Davidson. Standard Ruby contains the first (i.e. poor quality) and absent from the second meaning (high image). With brand camouflage practice that resemble most as fashion system, the first meaning can be wiped out and the second meaning can be implanted to camouflaged brand. Further, as McCracken (1986) conceptualized, this implanted meaning can

be transferred to the owners through consumption and possession rituals amid brand community and public.

Based on Burke and Reitzes (1991), the end result of this process is confirmation of self-identity (me-ness) through self-perception and social identity through collective self-esteem (Figure 6). This study prefers to use 'sense-of-self' rather than 'self-image' as end result because the constructed self is actually loose. It is a kind of 'as if' behavior or roughly as a fake self. In reality the owners never obtain the prestige owned by premium motorcycles riders. This phenomenon is called by Firat and Venkatesh (1995) as hyperreality, i.e. a postmodernism phenomenon in which constructed reality is perceived the same with or more real than the real one. Previous comment made by Cornhead (n.d) and Wongcilik (2008) portray this phenomenon.

Implication for Marketing Strategy

Varadarajan (2010) define marketing strategy as integrated organization decisions that describe crucial choices about products, markets, marketing activities, marketing resources, purposed to create, communicate and deliver value to the customers, to enable the organization to achieve its objectives. Value should be superior (Craven and Piercy 2007) that can be achieved when the organization creates more value for the customer than the competitors (Slater and Narver 2000) more effectively and more efficiently than competitors (Kotler and Keller 2012).

Before we discuss more about the implication of co-production of value on marketing strategy, the very basic question is did the marketing practices implemented by the producers of Ruby work? The answer is yes. As we said before Ruby Kaisar is the most successful China-origin motorcycle in Indonesia.

Now we back to discussion about what is the lesson can we get from this Ruby producer marketing strategy. From above explanation we can see that customer value is the focus of marketing strategy. According to Vargo and Lusch (2004; 2008), the producers do not provide the value itself but potential value resides in product or marketing offer. In our opinion, this is the very basic consideration in Ruby producer marketing strategy.

To explore marketing strategy further, let us start from McAlexander, Schouten, and Koeniq (2002) that view brand community as fabric of relationships between consumers, community, and company called '3Cs framework'.

Company

The company positioned itself not just a seller, marketer, but partner. Company develop personal relationship with their consumers and brand community. Company are available for helping consumers to find model, spare-part, and workshop for brand camouflage, including to facilitate consumers to consumers (C-to-C) transaction. The company also actively participates in brand community events.

Consumers

Consumers targeted by the company are premium motorcycle dreamers with limited purchasing power. Actually this segment are premium motorcycle adorers but has no financial support to make their dream real. To fulfill this dream, they buy Ruby and camouflage it as dreamed premium motorcycle. The result of this camouflaged, as we explored above, are enhanced riding experience and enhanced social status (individually and collectively).

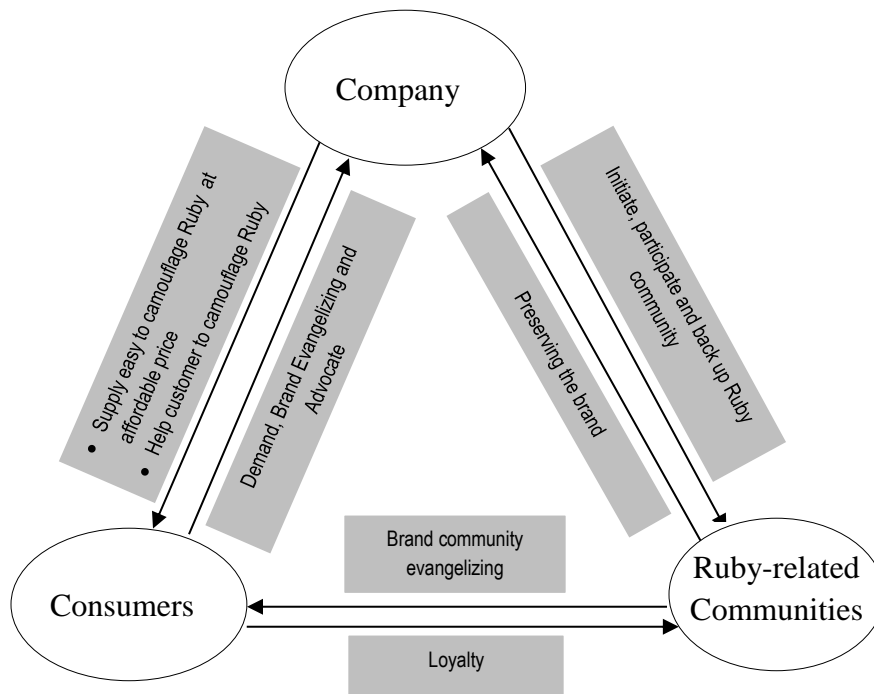


Figure 8. The 3C's Framework as Ruby's Producer Marketing Strategy

Brand community

The company intensively initiate the development of brand community and back up its activities. Interestingly, most of the motorcycle used by the members escaped from original Ruby properties. But, the community made its name from Ruby and the members actively advocate this brand to the public. The support of social and virtual Ruby community help the marketing and the continuity of this brand significantly.

Limitation

This study has some limitations. First, the data obtained through internet are potentially bias because of the tendency of virtual personality change. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2012), there is possibility that ‘netters’ change their personality in virtually world. Second, we do not confirm data gained through the internet with the reality in the field. Although has huge capacity to deliver message, internet doesn’t give high opportunity to explore the data as the real world does. Third, data gained in this study are come from the past. They have limited capacity to describe future events.

This study is in motorcycle context where product customization is a common practice. We can’t define exactly in what product categories or industries the same study can be undertaken.

Conclusion

Brand camouflage is a practice that can be used to escape from the original brand image and to borrow the strength of strong brand. This practice creates experiential value, social benefit, social status, self-expression and collective self-esteem values. Values are hierarchical in nature and the main source of values is objective inauthenticity. The peak of the hierarchy is the ‘sense-of-self’, i.e. never completed self-image construction.

There are three decisions regarding marketing strategy in this study, they are product, consumers and consumer community related decisions. Producer positions Ruby as ready to be camouflaged product. Consumers are stimulated and helped to camouflage their motorcycle. Producer initiate and back up the life of brand community. Brand camouflage preserves the existence of the Ruby brand through brand community engagement.

Practical contribution of this study is as follow. First, in product category where customer customization is common, producer can target the high brand adorer with limited financial

resource and offer their product to be camouflage as adored brand. Second, the producer should help the initiation of brand community. Third, producer can create market maven (i.e. high informed customer) to help customers to camouflage their brand.

Other researchers are suggested to explore this topic further in different context. Since this research is qualitative in nature, subsequent research can be conducted quantitatively to ensure the antecedents and consequences of brand camouflage comprehensively.

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