

GLOBAL MARKETING STRATEGIES OF COCA-COLA IN BUILDING BRAND LOYALTY IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

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Informasi	Abstract
Volume : 3 Nomor : 6 Bulan : Juni Tahun : 2026 E-ISSN : 3062-9624	<p><i>This study aims to analyze the global marketing strategies employed by The Coca-Cola Company in building and maintaining brand loyalty across international markets. The method used is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach, through analysis of corporate annual reports, public financial data, and relevant academic journals. The findings indicate that Coca-Cola successfully combines standardization and adaptation strategies (AdaptStand) simultaneously across more than 200 countries. Through an integrated 4P marketing mix—a product portfolio of over 500 brands, value-based and locally adjusted pricing, a franchise distribution network with over 900 bottling partners, and promotional investments of USD 5.01 billion, Coca-Cola achieved net revenues of USD 47.1 billion in 2024. Brand loyalty is built through emotional engagement, mass personalization, and global visual identity consistency. SWOT analysis identifies iconic brand strength as the primary competitive advantage, with key challenges stemming from public health pressures and intensifying industry competition. This study concludes that Coca-Cola's competitive superiority derives from its sustained ability to reconcile global scale with local relevance.</i></p> <p>Keyword: <i>global marketing, brand loyalty, standardization, adaptation, marketing mix, Coca-Cola</i></p>

A. INTRODUCTION

Competition in the global soft drink industry continues to intensify as the number of market players increases, including both multinational corporations and increasingly competitive local brands. Changes in consumer lifestyles, rising health awareness, and advances in information technology that accelerate the global dissemination of trends have fundamentally transformed the competitive landscape of the beverage industry. Amid these challenges, The Coca-Cola Company has maintained its position as an undisputed global market leader for more than a century. This remarkable resilience is not coincidental but rather the result of carefully planned, adaptive, and consistently implemented global marketing strategies.

The Coca-Cola Company was first introduced to the public in 1886 by Dr. John S. Pemberton in Atlanta, Georgia, United States. Within less than two decades, the brand had expanded beyond national borders and entered international markets. Today, after more than a century of operation, Coca-Cola is present in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide, with over 500 brands and 3,500 product variations in its portfolio. During fiscal year 2024, the company reported net revenues of USD 47.1 billion with 12% organic growth and served more than 2.2 billion beverage servings daily (The Coca-Cola Company, 2025). These figures represent not merely business statistics but a reflection of the success of a global marketing strategy that has been developed and refined over several decades.

The success of Coca-Cola is measured not only by its financial performance but also by its extraordinary brand strength in the minds of global consumers. In 2024, the Coca-Cola brand was valued at USD 106.45 billion, consistently placing it among the five most valuable global brands in the world (ElectroiQ, 2026). Such brand value reflects a high level of consumer trust, affection, and loyalty that has been cultivated across generations and cultures. The company's ability to maintain a 44.9% market share in the U.S. carbonated soft drink market in 2024, despite competition from hundreds of rival brands, demonstrates that its brand loyalty is highly resilient to both market competition and changing consumer preferences.

One of the most interesting aspects of Coca-Cola's business model is its ability to operate in a manner that is simultaneously standardized and diversified. On one hand, Coca-Cola maintains a consistent global brand identity through its iconic red color, distinctive Spencerian logotype, consistent beverage formula, and brand values centered on happiness and togetherness. On the other hand, the company actively adapts its products, pricing, distribution, and marketing communications to local conditions and cultures in each country. Ramadan campaigns in Indonesia, Carnival-themed advertisements in Brazil, and Georgia Coffee developed exclusively for the Japanese market are examples of how Coca-Cola successfully functions as a global brand with local relevance (Accelingo, 2024).

Within the academic framework of international marketing, Coca-Cola's strategy reflects what Vrontis et al. (2022) describe as the AdaptStand approach, an integrative strategy that combines standardization and adaptation simultaneously. The debate between these two strategic perspectives has long been central to global marketing literature. Levitt (1983) argued that the homogenization of global consumer preferences encourages companies to adopt full standardization to achieve cost efficiency, whereas proponents of adaptation

emphasize the importance of local customization as a key determinant of brand relevance. Coca-Cola provides empirical evidence that these two approaches are not mutually exclusive but can be harmoniously integrated to create sustainable competitive advantages.

Building brand loyalty in international markets is considerably more complex than in domestic markets. Companies must deal with cultural diversity, differences in value systems, variations in consumer behavior, and unique competitive dynamics in each market. In this context, Coca-Cola has developed a multi-layered approach to building brand loyalty, ranging from creating emotional attachment through universally appealing campaigns to mass personalization initiatives such as “Share a Coke,” which has been implemented in more than 80 countries, and ensuring consistent brand experiences that provide consumers with the same quality and value wherever they are located (Blankboard Studio, 2025). Promotional investments totaling USD 5.01 billion in 2023 demonstrate the company’s commitment to continuously strengthening emotional connections with consumers (Electroiq, 2026).

Considering the strategic and academic relevance of this topic, research on Coca-Cola’s global marketing strategies deserves systematic and comprehensive examination. This study aims to analyze Coca-Cola’s implementation of the 4P marketing mix in international markets, identify how the company balances standardization and adaptation strategies across global markets, and examine the approaches used to build and maintain brand loyalty internationally. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of international marketing management and provide practical insights for businesses seeking to expand their brands into broader markets.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Global marketing is defined as the process of focusing a company’s resources on opportunities and threats in global markets while coordinating marketing activities across national borders to achieve organizational objectives (Keegan & Green, 2020). Unlike domestic marketing, which operates within a single country, global marketing faces additional complexities arising from differences in culture, legal systems, economic conditions, and consumer behavior among countries.

1) Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to a deeply held commitment by consumers to repurchase or continue using a preferred product or service in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts from competitors that could potentially alter purchasing behavior (Oliver, 1999, as cited in Kumar & Shah, 2021). Brand loyalty encompasses two primary dimensions:

attitudinal loyalty, which reflects psychological commitment and preference toward a brand, and behavioral loyalty, which refers to consistent repeat purchasing behavior.

Kumar and Shah (2021) classify brand loyalty into four levels: (1) no loyalty, (2) inertia loyalty, where purchases are driven by habit rather than preference, (3) latent loyalty, characterized by high preference but inconsistent purchasing behavior, and (4) premium loyalty, characterized by strong preference and consistent purchasing. Companies strive to move consumers from the first category to the fourth through structured marketing programs.

2) Standardization versus Adaptation Strategy

The debate between standardization and adaptation is one of the most important issues in international marketing. Levitt (1983) argued that globalization has created increasingly homogeneous markets, encouraging firms to adopt standardized marketing strategies to maximize efficiency and brand consistency. In contrast, adaptation proponents argue that differences in culture, preferences, and local conditions necessitate customized marketing strategies in each market (Douglas & Wind, 1987, as cited in Vrontis et al., 2022).

Vrontis et al. (2022) proposed the AdaptStand approach, which suggests that standardization and adaptation are not opposing strategies but rather points on a continuum where firms can choose the optimal balance according to market characteristics and marketing mix elements. This approach is particularly relevant in explaining Coca-Cola's marketing strategy, which simultaneously maintains a consistent global visual identity while adapting products, flavors, and promotional communications across different countries.

3) The 4P Marketing Mix in a Global Context

The marketing mix, developed by McCarthy (1960) and refined by Kotler (2022), consists of four elements: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. In global marketing, each element must be evaluated regarding its degree of standardization or adaptation based on local market conditions.

Product is often the most frequently adapted element because it directly relates to consumer preferences and cultural factors. Price is influenced by purchasing power, competitive conditions, and tax regulations. Place depends on infrastructure, geographical conditions, and local trade systems. Promotion requires cultural adaptation in language, symbols, and communication values to ensure that marketing messages are effectively received by target consumers (Keegan & Green, 2020).

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research method. The qualitative approach was selected because the research objectives are exploratory and descriptive in nature, focusing on analyzing complex phenomena such as global marketing strategies that cannot be adequately measured solely through quantitative methods. Library research enables the researcher to collect, synthesize, and interpret various publicly available sources of information relevant to the research topic.

1) Data Sources

The data used in this study were obtained from two primary categories. The first category consists of secondary primary data, including The Coca-Cola Company Annual Reports from 2022 to 2024, quarterly financial reports published on the company's official website and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), as well as official corporate press releases. The second category consists of secondary data derived from international academic journal articles indexed in reputable databases, international marketing textbooks, and industry reports published by trusted institutions such as Statista and Bloomberg.

2) Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Data were collected through documentation techniques, namely the collection and examination of documents relevant to the research topic. Data analysis was conducted through four stages. The first stage involved collecting data from various predetermined sources. The second stage was data reduction, which consisted of selecting and simplifying information relevant to the research focus. The third stage involved presenting the data in descriptive and analytical narrative form. The fourth stage consisted of drawing conclusions based on patterns and findings that consistently emerged across multiple sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Sugiyono, 2022).

3) Analytical Framework

The analysis was conducted using two primary frameworks. The first was the 4P Marketing Mix framework, consisting of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, which was used to systematically describe Coca-Cola's marketing strategies. The second was the SWOT Analysis framework, comprising Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the company's strategic position in the global market. These frameworks were selected because of their proven relevance in international marketing studies and their ability to present a holistic overview of a multinational corporation's strategy.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Coca-Cola Company was founded in 1892 in Atlanta, Georgia, United States. Today, the company has grown into the world's largest non-alcoholic beverage corporation, with a portfolio of more than 500 brands and 3,500 product variations distributed across more than 200 countries. In fiscal year 2024, the company reported net revenues of USD 47.1 billion, achieved 12% organic growth, and served more than 2.2 billion beverage servings every day (The Coca-Cola Company, 2025). Coca-Cola operates through a franchise business model supported by more than 900 bottling partners worldwide, allowing the company to maintain control over product formulas and quality standards while simultaneously providing flexibility for local adaptation in each market.

Coca-Cola's product strategy is bifurcated, maintaining core products that have proven successful globally while simultaneously developing new products that respond to local consumer preferences. The company's visual identity is consistently maintained worldwide through its distinctive red color, Spencerian logotype, and iconic contour bottle, which has been trademarked since 1915. However, regarding packaging sizes and flavor variations, the company adapts its offerings according to local purchasing power and consumer preferences, such as affordable small-size packaging in Indonesia and India, Coca-Cola Zero Sugar for health-conscious consumers, and Georgia Coffee, which was developed exclusively for the Japanese market (Blankboard Studio, 2025). The pricing strategy follows a revenue growth management approach through differential pricing, whereby premium prices are implemented in developed countries while affordable pricing and smaller package sizes are offered in emerging markets. This approach has proven effective, as reflected in the company's 11% price/mix growth in 2024 (The Coca-Cola Company, 2025).

Coca-Cola's distribution system is one of the most extensive in the world. In 2024, the company added more than 250,000 new retail outlets and nearly 600,000 new cooling units globally (The Coca-Cola Company, 2025). Its distribution model integrates modern channels such as supermarkets and e-commerce platforms with traditional channels such as small retail stores and street vendors, enabling the company's products to reach consumers across all socioeconomic segments, including those in remote rural areas of developing countries. In terms of promotion, Coca-Cola allocated USD 5.01 billion to advertising investments in 2023 through a multi-channel strategy encompassing television, social media, international sports sponsorships, and experiential marketing (ElectroiQ, 2026). The "Share a Coke" campaign, which was replicated in more than 80 countries, demonstrates how mass personalization can

encourage organic consumer engagement, while local cultural adaptations such as Ramadan campaigns in Indonesia and Christmas campaigns in the United States strengthen brand relevance within each market.

Coca-Cola implements an AdaptStand strategy that optimally combines standardization and adaptation. Standardization is applied to the core product formula, global visual identity, and brand values centered on happiness and togetherness. Meanwhile, adaptation is carried out in packaging sizes, flavor intensity, pricing, and promotional messages according to local cultural and economic contexts (Vrontis et al., 2022). Brand loyalty is developed through three primary mechanisms. First, emotional attachment is fostered through campaigns such as “Open Happiness” and “Real Magic,” which create positive brand associations across cultures. Second, mass personalization initiatives provide consumers with a sense of personal connection to the product. Third, consistency in brand experience ensures uniform quality and value across all consumer touchpoints worldwide (Kumar & Shah, 2021). The effectiveness of these strategies is reflected in the company’s 44.9% market share in the United States and a brand value of USD 106.45 billion in 2024 (ElectroiQ, 2026).

The SWOT analysis indicates that Coca-Cola’s primary strengths lie in its exceptional brand value, unparalleled global distribution network, diverse brand portfolio, and multigenerational consumer loyalty. Its weaknesses include a high dependence on carbonated beverages and the complexity of coordinating hundreds of bottling partners. Significant opportunities exist in emerging markets experiencing middle-class growth and in the rapidly expanding healthy beverage segment. The company’s major threats include sugar tax regulations in more than 50 countries, increasingly intense competition, and foreign exchange volatility that affects reported revenues (The Coca-Cola Company, 2025). Long-term challenges include growing public health concerns, sustainability demands such as the commitment to achieving 50% recycled materials in packaging by 2030, and the need to adapt to ongoing digital transformation as consumers increasingly shift from traditional media to digital platforms (ElectroiQ, 2026).

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted in this study, several conclusions can be drawn. First, The Coca-Cola Company has successfully implemented an integrated and adaptive 4P marketing mix strategy in global markets. Through its diverse product portfolio, value-based pricing and local purchasing power considerations, franchise distribution networks spanning

more than 200 countries, and promotional investments totaling USD 5.01 billion, Coca-Cola has consistently achieved strong revenue growth, reaching USD 47.1 billion in 2024.

Second, Coca-Cola effectively implements the AdaptStand strategy by optimally combining standardization and adaptation. Standardization is applied to core elements that shape the company's global brand identity, such as the primary product formula, visual identity, and brand values, while adaptation is implemented in elements requiring local relevance, including packaging sizes, flavor intensity, pricing, promotional messages, and distribution channel selection. This balance is the key factor behind Coca-Cola's ability to maintain brand relevance across highly diverse markets.

Third, Coca-Cola's brand loyalty is built through an integrated strategy encompassing emotional attachment, mass personalization, and consistency of brand experience across all consumer touchpoints worldwide. The success of these efforts is reflected in the company's dominant 44.9% market share in the United States, a brand value of USD 106.45 billion, and its position as the world's leading beverage brand, which it has maintained for decades. Overall, Coca-Cola's success demonstrates that the ability to balance global consistency with local responsiveness remains a crucial determinant of sustainable competitive advantage in international markets.

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