Impact of attracting attention with a negative image: Evidence from Corona beer sales after the Covid-19 shock

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Taking an example of Corona beer sales in Tokyo before and after the Covid-19 shock, we investigate how attracting consumers' attention impacts product sales. Using monthly foreign beer sales information from the POS data, we conduct an event study, based on a synthetic control method (SCM). The result found in the analysis is that the actual Corona beer sales skyrocketed after the shock, compared to the synthetic Corona beer sales. Although this huge positive impact shrank after a couple of months, the actual Corona beer sales amount continues to be larger than the synthetic sales amount.

One obvious mechanism that can induce this positive effect is that Corona beer attracted consumers' attention after the shock. To verify this story, we compare the time series of the estimated effect on Corona beer sales and the (relative) number of web searches for "*Korona biru*" (Corona beer in Japanese), extracted from Google Trends data. The variable can be viewed as the extent of people's attention to Corona beer. Time-varying Granger causality test suggests that there does not exist statistically significant Granger causality between the two series before the shock. By contrast, the web search Granger causes an increase in Corona beer sales after the shock, which can be interpreted that more attention on the Corona beer is a positive indicator of its larger sales amount.

Our results indicate that, even when the attention to a product is associated with a negative image, and even when the quality is kept unchanged, the relevant product's sales amount can be increased by coming under the spotlight.