Representation of Young Hijabers in Beauty Products Advertising

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Abstract
An ideal woman is a beautiful woman, and this stereotype continues to be constructed by various media. In the last two decades since reformasi era in 1998, beauty products for hijab users have increased in line with the development of Muslim religious movements in Indonesia. The emergence of hijabers in the middle class and media coverage about them have encouraged the development of various beauty products for this particular segment users. Gradually, media representation of the beautiful hijab users has constructed the lifestyle of the hijabers in general. The question now is how do media represent hijabers? The objects of this research are ads, which sell these beauty images and form a myth that is easily accepted by its target audience. The sample is a beauty product advertisement presenting hijabers therein and data collection is done through semiotic analysis. The results of the research shows that the ads represent the activities of adolescent hijabers that are no longer in accordance with the prevailing stereotypes in the society, although the physical appearance of women is still portrayed in a gender biased manner.

Keywords: Hijabers; Representation; Gender bias; Advertisement

Introduction
Many people in western countries have a negative perception of Muslims, especially those who wear hijab, abaya and niqab. The results of the study show that, the western media depict Muslim women stereotypically, in a manner that is extreme and inconsistent, ie as passive and uneducated victims, as well as beautiful and seductive terrorists; as suicide bombers. But in its development, the study of hijabers in western media undergoes significant changes.

Attempts to combat discrimination and eliminate prejudice against Muslims, including hijab users are getting stronger since the existence of internet and social media
(Chatterjee & Mc Kelv, 2016). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the image of hijab users is no longer the old, traditional one, but young, urbanized, holding a bachelor” degree, modern, middle-income earners and tech-savvy (Asean Confidential, 2015) and fashionable (Peng, 2017). Fashion hijab has become increasingly stylish and up-to-date (Ministry of Industry Republic of Indonesia, 2012) has reduced the negative labeling of women wearing hijab.

In addition to the religious expression, the group also demonstrates the application of heavy makeup, high heels, and they appear very energetic and these are all the indicators that they are modern and independent Muslims. In Indonesia, the term hijaber is known as a group formed by Dian Pelangi, which provides a forum for Muslim women who want to maintain the use of hijab, and encourage increase sympathy toward Islam through fashion (Kartikawati, 2014:13). Considering the above mentioned explanations about the concept of hijabers, for this paper, the term hijaber will refer to the hijab users.

The development of media technology and the high number of followers of Islam in Indonesia has given way to changes in the lifestyle of the muslim community. Adoni and Mane (1984) describe the effect of media on the formation of social reality. Another study (Kellner & Durham, 2006) also illustrates that advertising plays a role in strengthening gender roles and stereotypes. Advertising does not only shape women's self-representation, as it is also one of the most influential references for young hijabers in shaping their Islamic yet modern identities.

The study of media representation of hijabers is necessary because the tremendous pressure of globalization through social media has contributed to the changing of lifestyle of the younger generation, who in this paper are referred to as the young hijabers. As Peterson (2003) argues, media is a myth because media produce and reproduce existing values, causing values in the media to be perceived as the norms that construct society’s culture and behavior. Thus, the research question is how media represent teenage hijabers. Socially, the study is expected to inspire young hijabers so that their lifestyle will not be easily dictated by the media.

To answer the research question, the main concept used herein is representation by Stuart Hall (1997) which explains the linkage between representation and culture. According to Stuart, representation is the production of meaning through culture, and can be studied through three approaches, namely reflective, intentional, and constructionist approach. Several studies linking the concept of representation in advertising began to develop around the 1970s and found differences in gender construction in advertising (Artz & Venkatesh, 1991). Here, the role of women is identical with domestication, ie the work does not require physical strength or reason. Furthermore, Gauntlett (2008) explains that most of the advertisers in particular beauty products build a sense of insecure on women, then offer their products as a solution.
Literature Review

Representation

Stuart Hall (1997) defines representation as an action performed to represent a person or anything, as a description of a person or something specifically as a figure in a particular place. In addition to this definition, Hall (1997) also mentions that representation can be understood as the production of a meaning through culture. Hall described three different approaches to understanding representation. First, the reflective approach in which language reflects a pre-existing meaning. Second, the intentional approach in which language expresses according to what the author desires personally. Third, the constructionist approach where meaning is built in and through language. Furthermore, Hall (1997) mentions that in the constructionist approach, there are two models, namely the semiotic approach by Saussure. In the semiotic approach, representation is understood as the basis of words that serve as signs in language through narrative, statements, or collections of images. In addition, representation can also be understood as one element of the cultural circuit. There are five interrelated elements in the cultural circuit according to Hall, namely text / form / representation, reading / consumption, production / construction, conditions / regulation, and living culture / social relations / identity. In his book titled Representation, Hall (1997) describes the relationship between representation and culture. Simply put, cultures are understood to mean 'shared meanings' and language is a medium that people use to understand the things around them, where meaning is produced and exchanged.

Representation in Media and Advertising

The application of the concept of 'representation' in the media usually leads to how media texts deal with and present gender, age, ethnicity, national and regional identity, social issues, and an event to the audience (BBC, 2017). According to Bitesize GCSE of the BBC (2017), media texts have the power of shaping the knowledge and understanding of the audience on these topics, so it can be argued that the media has considerable strength in influencing one's ideas and behaviors. There are some familiar concepts found in representations such as construction (how media texts are incorporated), anchorages (words that accompany images to give meaning in a particular context), and stereotypes (a simple representation of something through an overriding basic characteristic). In his further research on representation in media contexts, Hall (2006) argues that media practice represents topics, represents types of society, represents events, and represents situations. It is further explained that, Jhally (2006) defines "The Politics of Image" or "The Politics of Representation" as contestation and struggle over what is represented in the media.

Research on representation and advertising began to develop in the 1970s and departed from a gender context, which at the time was motivated by changes in gender roles in the reality often portrayed in advertisements (Artz & Venkatesh, 1991).
addition to gender, subsequent research also began to emerge as to how the role and representation of certain groups of people are depicted in advertisements, such as non-white / minority races, children, and the elderly. The commonly used issues in these studies are the frequent discrimination, the lack of intensity of representation (underrepresented), and stereotypes in the presentation of advertisements. The various disciplines that can be used to examine this issue include mass communication, sociology, critical theory, feminist theory, consumer / marketing research, and international marketing (Artz & Venkatesh, 1991).

Representation of Hijabers in the Media

In 2016, through its study of visual framing, Dastgeer and Gade (2016) examined how women with hijab's representations are featured in news media, CNN and Al Jazeera. This study looks at how before in the media especially the western media, Muslim women are depicted stereotypically, extreme, and inconsistent, ie between passive and uneducated victims, as well as beautiful and seductive terrorists; as suicide bombers. After the study, they found that results were found to indicate that significant changes in Muslim women's portrayals in the western media previously portrayed as passive began to be described more actively as political participants.

Issues in other contexts that can be found on the representation of women with veils are from Rayouf Alhumedhi, a 16-year-old Saudi girl who advises emoji developers to make 'emoji hijab' (Jaini, 2017). Jaini explains that Alhumedhi got the idea of the emoji because he could not find emoji to represent himself and his friends, so he wrote his advice to The Unicode Consortium to persuade the development of emojis representing her and millions of women of all races around the world. Alhumedhi hopes that the emoji hijab can promote tolerance around the world and build the idea that women may also be part of a normal society that performs routine all day, starting from the habits of others to see women from their smartphones (Schmidt et al, 2017). In Schmidt et al, 2017 Alhumedhi also feels that although it is controversial and perhaps the context for using emoji hijab will not always be positive, she believes the emoji hijab in the Muslim community of the world will be a positive thing. "I just want to be represented, as simple as that. I just want an emoji of myself ", says Alhumedhi in Schmidt et al (2017).

Representation of Women in Advertising

With one of the majority of issues concerning representation related to women and gender, there are several major research themes within the scope of the representation of advertisements and women discussed, such as the stereotype of gender roles in society, and the meaning of beauty portrayed in advertisements. There have been several changes regarding the representation of women in advertising. Earlier, in the 1950s women in identical ads were portrayed with homework and stereotypical roles such as secretaries or hairdressers (Gauntlett, 2008). But for now, Gauntlett (2008)
explains that expectations for women’s representation in advertising are busy, confident, successful, attractive, have the power of professional and social life, and no longer a kitchen slave for anyone.

Gauntlett (2008) explains that most advertisers, especially advertisers in beauty products, produce advertisements to build a sense of insecure or insecurity and offer products sold by them as a solution to the sense of insecurity. For example, referring to the Posavac study in 1998 the effects of photo exposure from fashion models in women's magazines made women concerned about their weight, and even the passive exposure of such photos could produce a negative body image in women, and worries about weight gain (Lindner, 2004). The beauty portrayed in advertising builds an idea of 'ideal beauty', and it puts substantial pressure on women (Gauntlet, 2008). This is no exception for women with veils, where the media put pressure on them to have a perfect appearance while wearing hijab (Alam & Latiff, 2013).

Hijabers

Hijaber is a term used by marketers to name community groups with the following criteria: women using hijab, aged 20 and over (millennials), graduate, middle-income earners, and tech-savvy (Asean Confidential, 2015). However, apart from being a target market the hijabers has its own history. In Indonesia the term hijaber emerged when Dian Pelangi formed a hijabers community founded on 27 November 2010 in Jakarta (Riduwan, 2013). Riduwan (2013) argues that the hijaber community is formed by women from different backgrounds and professions, to be a vessel of Muslim women who want to retain to wear hijab, to have friends to wear hijab, and to foster a love of Islam through fashion.

The Strait Times (2017) mentions that the hijabers are portrayed as young, dynamic, devoted, more career driven, more 'global', and more Islamic than the previous generation. According to the Financial Times, (2015) the hijabers love bright colors, wearing thick makeup and high heels, and are eager to show them modern and independent Muslims. Asean Confidential Research in Financial Times (2015) also shows that hijabers typically have smartphones, heavy users of social media and are tech-savvy.

From a broader perspective, Williams & Kamaludeen (2016) categorize the hijaber as one of the youth subcultures in Southeast Asia. In their research, they study that in Indonesia and Malaysia, youth culture is often coughed in two binary ideologies, namely modernity vs. traditionalism, and religion vs. secularism, with the status quo of traditional and religious values. It appears that there is a great influence of hybridity between conservative life values and the consumption of Western cultural products on youth culture participation in Southeast Asia. Williams & Kamaludeen argue that the presence of hijaber is a self-identifying process of Muslim youth in Southeast Asia, through the negotiation of their identity from the religious and cultural aspects of consumers.
Research Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative approach (Ritchie et al. 2013), which is based on the paradigm of critical constructionism (Heiner, 2002). Semiotics is used as a data collection method to trace depth and deconstruct advertisements. The researcher chose to use Saussure’s semiotic analysis which divides signs into two components: signifier and signified that have arbitrary meanings (Berger, 1998). A Signifier is meaningful sound or stroke, and a signified refers to the meaning of the physical appearance of a sign.

The object of research in this study is the Pureline Hijab Fresh video ad from Unilever’s hand & body lotion product, and the ad target is a woman wearing hijab. The 30-second ad appears in YouTube ads for the last few months of 2017 and is uploaded in the Pureness Hijab Fresh brand account of YouTube Hijab Fresh ID. Since 31 August 2017 this video has been viewed as much as 1,523,687 times. Researchers acknowledge the weaknesses in this study, which include: lack of verification with the ad producer and the target users. In addition, due to the limited space, not all images from the ad will be analyzed. Instead, only parts of the ad that represent the whole idea are selected for this research.

Results

*Ad Opening Screen*

![Opening Scene](image)

Figure 1. Opening Scene

Signifier: The ad actress uses a small white and yellow bag behind her, complemented by a text overlay that reads “Hijab Fresh Body Lotion presents” in light blue and white.

Signified: The bags in the ads have are stylish and handy. The bright blue color signifies health, tranquility, and softness.
The Activities

Figure 2. Riding with friends

Signifier: Three women were on the road while riding motorbikes.

Signified: The motorbike type is chosen to fit the female character. This picture shows that women can nowadays go anywhere without being accompanied by men.

Figure 3. Playing in Rock Bands

Signifier: The artists practiced the band in an open, uncluttered garage, full of car equipment, tools, playing musical instruments, namely drums, electric keyboards, and electric guitars. In this section there is a mid-text overlay in white, reading “HIJAB IS NOT A BARRIER”.

Signified: From the band's properties, it appears that the type of song they play is the pretty loud genre, like rock. The text overlay also indicates that although previously hijab was considered a barrier to the user, it can now be worn by rock fans, and hijabers may express themselves freely, using expression that may not reflect the polite and gentle behavior that are expected from women.
Figure 3. Outdoor Sports

Signifier: A woman wearing make-up, with hands covered in orange gloves.
Signified: The make-up used signifies that even though she is doing a masculine activity which involves aggressiveness and playfulness, she still looks beautiful and attractive in her well chosen make-up and colorful outfit, in a tough environment.

Figure 4. Outdoor Sports (2)

Signifier: A woman play with a wheeled board, with high walls and a bright blue sky at the background. There is also a white text overlay that reads “NEW! BODY LOTION HALAL” which is accompanied by Pureline Hijab Fresh logo.
Signified: A woman is skateboarding, which is perceived as a sport that respects individuality, freedom and predominantly done by men. The presence of text overlays indicates that the term halal is an important product label for Muslims.

Ad’s Ending

Figure 5. Skateboarding

Signifier: A woman fully covered in her outfit, wearing black sneakers. The woman is doing a trick on her skateboard, and behind her is the walls decorated with murals. There is a text overlay, reading SOFT SKIN (is not appeared on the picture) AND BRIGHT SKIN
Signified: Sneakers, which are often associated with the hip-hop subculture, indicate that hijabers can also mingle, unite, and express themselves using western culture such as hip-hop. The skateboarding trick she perfoms is a kickflip trick. Skateboarding and
graffiti are often associated with a hip-hop adolescent subculture, indicating that hijabers can be included or be part of an active, young, and expressive subculture.

Figure 6. Dancing Outdoor

Signifier: Three women is dancing outdoors, in an open space filled with trees and wild plants. One of the women wears a beanie hat. There is a white text overlay that says "UV PROTECTION".

Signified: One of the women wears a beanie, commonly found worn by people in country that has a cold climate, signifies that the advertised product will create a cool sensation. The hip hop motion signifies that the hijabers can express themselves freely.

Figure 7. Product Appearance

Signifier: There are four different bottle packaging of Pureline Hijab Fresh lotion, and also the sachet packaging, which uses image of plants and green foliage and a white floor. There is a white text overlay that says “STAY FRESH AND COOL THE WHOLE DAY” with the Unilever logo on the right corner top.

Signified: The advertiser wants to make his target feel familiar with and therefore remember trademark, shapes and colors of the product easily, which creates the fresh and natural impression. Text overlay reinforces the main message, that the product is a Unilever product, and Unilever is a brand that is known for its high quality.

Discussion

The results of the study show that advertisements produce and reproduce the value of gender bias in a patriarchal culture. This can be seen from the character of women who like bright colors, but are soft, have smooth hands and apply makeup on their face. The importance of the use of cosmetic products on offer, is further reinforced by a description of the outdoor environment where the young hijabers conduct their
activities under the sun, which can potentially make their facial skin dull, their body sweaty, and skin darkened. As a solution, the ads show how joyful, happy, and adventurous they are to do outdoor activities because they use products that contain UV Protection, ensuring that their outdoors, under the sun activities will not make them sweaty, and their skin darkened and their beauty faded. This can also be seen from their face that remains fresh and the skin is smooth and fair because of the good treatment.

Especially for young hijabers target audience, the voice over on the ad implies that it is not hijab that used be seen as a limiting factor to their freedom. Instead, the bigger problem is when they feel uncomfortable and sticky if they do not apply lotion. Thus, a message built through representation in the entire ad herein is that the advertised product will build a fresh, cool, and breezy impression. In addition to the cool sensation, the ads describe how the vigorous, masculine and high risks activities the hijabers do do not stop them from feeling comfortable and cheerful. And this is all thanks to the advertised products.

These ads seem to present an answer to young hijabers, who become increasingly fashionable, that they can perform various activities that are usually considered masculine and that they are free to express themselves. The representation in this advertisement shows that today hijabers do not have to behave according to the stereotypes attached to women, namely to be polite, well mannered, present only in the domestic sphere and perform activities at home. And this is in line with the reality of today in which more and more women develop careers outside the home and earn recognition in their field. This is also why the figures in these ads are those hijabers who have excelled in their field. They constitute role models for other hijabers, both in achievement and in the success to maintain their beauty.

**Conclusion**

The construction of Islamic elements through the advertising, which also emphasises of the word 'halal' on the advertised cosmetic, shows the label’s distinguishing characteristic that confirms the compliance to Islamic canons which leads to the products’ specific relevance for hijabers. It is also concluded from this paper that regardless the idea of hijab has changed into a much more modern and positive meaning nowadays, the beauty myth still lingers on. Behind all the masculine activities and characteristics shown in the ads, the pressure for hijabers to manage a fashionable look, and to take care after their fair skin still exists strongly.

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This paper was part of the first researcher’s thesis, finished with thorough supervision and guidance from the second researcher. One of the early reasons behind the researcher’s motivation for this paper is how increasingly noticeable hijaber’s appearances in Western media, both from news and entertainment. A small example
such as Norwegian drama series ‘SKAM’, Pitchfork’s YouTube cartoon web series, and Netflix’s adult cartoon series ‘Bojack Horseman’. A few feminist-page Instagram posts also often include pictures or illustration of women with hijab, along with woman of color to embrace the diverse idea of beauty. As an attempt to view the phenomenon critically and academically, this paper was made. Hopefully, this paper could offer new perspective about hijabers, and to successfully capture this phenomenon on academic context.

References


