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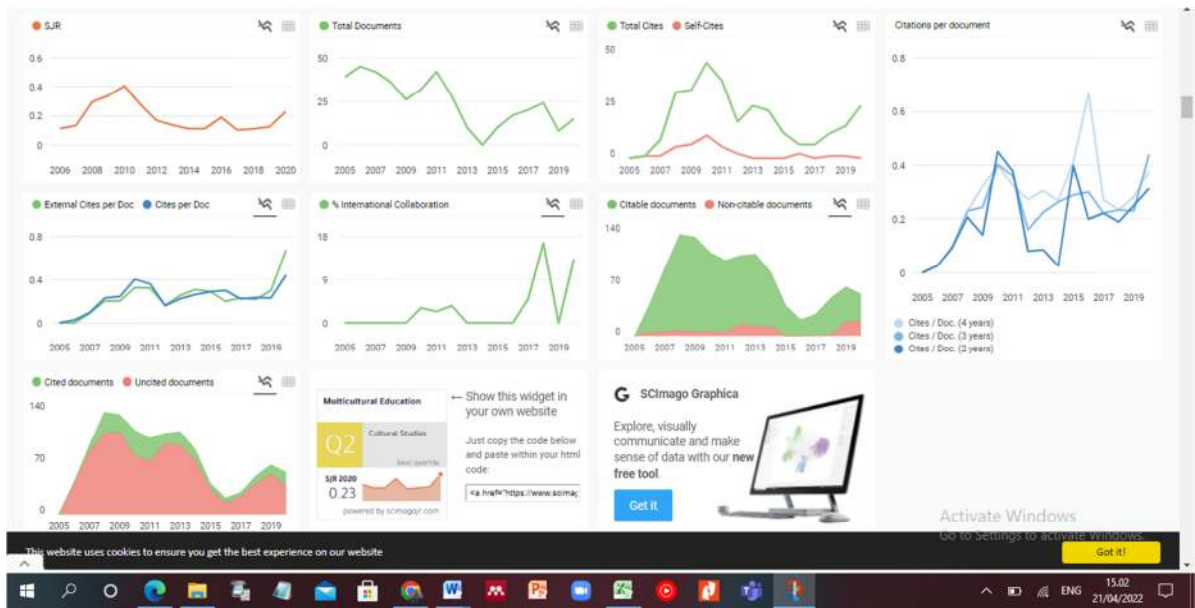
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**COMMODIFICATION OF RELIGION AND CULTURE ON TELEVISION ADVERTISING**

Robert Thadi<sup>1</sup>, Rifki Aditia Novaldi<sup>2</sup>, Rini Fitria<sup>3</sup>

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**Abstract**  
This research focussed on the commodification of religion and culture on the advertisement of Citra Wakame Gel Lotion, where the themes of religion and culture on this advertisement are made into commodities. The purpose of this study is to explain the meaning of the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement to understand the commodification of religion and culture that occurred on the advertisement of Citra Wakame Lotion Gel. This study used qualitative approach with library research type, and used semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes method. In this research, the unit of analysis was Citra Wakame Lotion Gel which consisted of three different scenes. The results of the study found that there were advertisers' interests to persuade the public who watched the advertisement, carried out by commodification of contents using Islamic religious attributes and culture, through the use of headscarves, female figures, the use of batik clothing and traditional music, which caused the audience to participate using Citra Wakame Gel Lotion product, religion and culture is not the subject of the advertisement, but only as a story concept so that the audience is interested, and this is in accordance with the commodification theory that use value can be converted into an exchange rate that has selling power.

**Introduction**  
Television media is now almost accessible to all people, various programs appear on various television stations such as news, entertainment, talk show and other programs. Mass media programs especially television certainly

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## COMMODIFICATION OF RELIGION AND CULTURE ON TELEVISION ADVERTISING

Robeet Thadi<sup>1</sup>, Rifki Aditia Novaldi<sup>2</sup>, Rini Fitria<sup>3</sup>

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Received:

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#### Keywords

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### Abstract

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### Introduction

Television media is now almost accessible to all people, various programs appear on various television stations such as news, entertainment, talk show and other programs. Mass media programs especially television certainly will not be separated from the world of advertising. It can be said that the growth and development of a television station depends on the advertisement present at the television station. This is reflected from the various research results of research institutions in Indonesia that most of the advertisements are still dominated by television. The results of research conducted by Nielsen Indonesia throughout 2012 showed that gross spending on advertising in Indonesia reached Rp 87.471 trillion, and rose 25% in 2013, the advertisement was dominated by television advertising by 60% in 2012, up 8% to 68% in 2013 and the remainder advertisements were dominated by newspaper, tabloid, and magazine (Jaiz, 2014: 35).

The world of advertising continues to develop in various forms and involves the creative industry in order to attract consumers as an effort to persuade according to what is desired by an advertisement. There is an interesting side in advertising world in the modern era, how an advertisement is constructed based on the social reality from the society and it imaged by advertisement so it has such a powerful influence on society.

Advertising is also constructed in such a way, for example cigarette advertising. Based on the social reality of the society, cigarette is no more than fulfilling the needs of people who are addicted to smoking. In fact, many advertisements display cigarette product advertisement with a new image, such as smoking as a symbol of virility, solidarity and masculinity. These efforts are commonly called the commodification that develops in advertising, how those values are transformed into exchange rate or the process of transforming the values of life that humans use into exchange rate (Halim, 2013: 45).

The phenomenon above was an example of a reality that is tried to be raised by advertising in order to achieve certain goals and objectives by raising the reality of masculinity that exists in society. Seen from advertisements on Indonesian, the commodification of advertisements on recent television stations involves religious aspects, especially Islam and also culture. In the aspect of religious values, Islamic religion which is as the biggest religion in Indonesia is seen as an effective tool in enhancing the image and awareness of brand and marketing, so television sees religion and other figures as partners to perpetuate the advertising industry and the utilization use of religion. (Sofjan and Hidayati, 2013: 51).

Advertisement that has eastern religious and cultural values is seen in Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement. This advertisement shown by women who cover their genital such as by wearing hijab. Based on the Citra

Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement, the impression that researchers get from Youtube, it appears that some prominent aspects on the advertisement, namely the use of headscarf, veil or hijab that represent aspect of religious values and the use of batik that represents aspect of culture.

Talking about religion, every religion has certain symbols attached to each adherent. The analysis that researchers tried to do on the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement in the religious aspect was the use of the jilbab. Jilbab is a Muslim women's clothing which is a cultural product which is also a religious and moral demand (Shihab, 2004: 38). Not only as a body covering, but the veil removes desire that causes lust (Fachruddin, 1991: 33).

Seeing image products advertised on television, there is a shift from advertisement who used sexy advertising models that tend to display sensuality but now changing into a more Islamic model with Islamic attributes as an image of a religious value. This shift considered to be a progress for Islam, the existence of advertisements with Islamic models that use the hijab can be an example of Muslim women to participate in wearing the hijab. But if it is seen deeper, the purpose of using the veil on the advertisement as an effort to commodify religious values so the use of the veil as a religious attribute used for profit, which according to Idi Subandy Ibrahim in Halim (2013: ix) entered into religion commodification that is in line with what he exemplifies in the phenomenon of the trendy and exclusive community of headscarf, so that many artists and models who flock wearing headscarf and umrah or hajj.

One of the most challenging and intriguing perspectives that arise from the perspective of media studies as researchers do from the perspective of media studies and critical culture is the commodification of culture. The commodification of culture perspective views the media as a culture industry, an industry that accommodates culture or the industry in which cultural commodification takes place. Some experts try to define the commodification of culture as "the study of what will happen when culture is produced and disseminated mass-distributed in direct competition with locally based culture". According to this view, the media is an industry that specializes in the production and distribution of cultural commodities (Ibrahim and Akhmad, 2014: 25).

The selection of Citra Wakame Gel Lotion television commercial as research object is because the advertisement displays models wearing veil as a religious symbol which is a representation of religious value, and this is different from the previous Citra advertisement or handbody lotion advertisement in general that used models that were tend to highlight sensuality. Besides, the advertisement selection is also based on the cultural elements appeared on the advertisement. As explained by experts that culture in general has several universal elements namely equipment and living equipment, livelihood, social system, language, knowledge system, religion, and art (Soekanto, 2007: 154), in the object of this study, namely Citra Wakame advertisement Gel Lotion displays cultural element, namely art, can be seen from the use of batik clothe by the actresses and also traditional or ethnic music backsound on the advertisement.

Citra Wakame is one of the products of PT. Unilver Indonesia Tbk, which was promoted through advertisement on several private television stations such as RCTI, TRANS TV, SCTV and others, the duration of the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement was 30 seconds. The advertisement depicting women who were doing a batik fashion show and some of them using hijab, the main model of the advertisement is Tari who in is described as a designer wearing the hijab and uses Citra Wakame product. one of the advantages of Citra Wakame raised on the advertisement is the non-sticky handbody lotion especially for women who wear hijab. The model on the second advertisement is Nina Kozok, on the second advertisement described Nina Kozok as a woman who wears hijab but uses lotion that is sticky to the skin.

The use of the veil by the actress on the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement is an important object, because it represents religious value in the study of the religion commodification that researchers conduct. In terminology, religion is defined as a set of belief, law, norm or procedure for human life with God or others who will be bring humans to the happiness of life in the world and the hereafter (Wahyuddin, et al., 2009: 12).

Thus, the value of religion is the procedure for human life in relation to God and to get the happiness of life in the world and hereafter. This also reflects the general religion elements based on Leight, Keller and Calhoun namely religious beliefs, religious symbols, religious practices, experience religion, and religious community, this is also specifically explained in the Islamic religion that the elements of Islamic religion are *akidah*, namely belief in Allah SWT, *ibadah* namely religious rules governing human relation with his Lord, and *muamallah* namely religious rules governing human relations with each other. The purpose of this study was to determine the meaning of Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement in order to understand the commodification of religion and culture that occurred on Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement.

## Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach, qualitative research is divided into two namely library research and field research. This type of research was library research, with semiotic analysis. In this study, researchers used Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis. Basically, the theory stated by Barthes was derived from the Ferdinand De Saussure language theory. The difference between the theories were Ferdinand De Saussure only emphasized on

the denotative level while Roland Barthes developed the semiology at the level marking connotative (Vera, 2014: 27).

If denotative marking is a marking of what appeared, closed and explicit, then connotative marking is open to the new interpretation so it can reveal the deeper meaning of a research object, that was why the researchers used the Roland Barthes semiotic analysis because of the expression of deep meaning, it is really needed to reveal the commodification that did not appear directly on an advertisement.

The unit of analysis in this study was Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement, where this advertisement consisted of 3 different scenes presented in pieces of images or visuals, as well as audio in form of narrative or conversation presented in form of text relating to the formulation of the problem research.


In qualitative research that focuses on cultural themes in this case semiotics is carried out with a structural analysis strategy (Bungin, 2008: 211), it is carried out with the following steps: first, read the entire story, from this reading, it is obtained knowledge and impression about the story, the characters about the various actions they take, and the various events they experience. In this study, the researchers conducted an overall observation of Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement. Second, if the story was too long, it can be divided into several episodes. The Citra Wakame advertisement is divided into scenes to get clear knowledge as a basis for analysis. Third, each episode contained a description of the action or event (*mytheme orceriteme*) experienced by the character in the story, because that event must be addressed to sentences that contain events experienced by the characters in the story. Fourth, pay attention to the existence of a relation or sentences that showed the relationship between elements in a story. Fifth, stories (*ceriteme-ceriteme*) arranged diachronic and synchronic and follows the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axis. Sixth, try to draw relations between elements in a whole story. In this study, researchers drew the relationship of a story in each scene and interpreted as a whole. And seventh, draw final conclusions by trying to make sense of the internal stories above with conclusions of contextual references.

The analysis technique in this study used Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis, a theory developed by Roland Barthes that the process of meaning is divided into several levels or significance, the first is called the first level (denotation) consisting of marker and sign and at the same time marker and sign were part of the second level (connotation) which was a deeper meaning. Based on this theory, the steps that the researchers took were as follows: Identifying the signs of commodification related to religion and culture on the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement, interpreting types of signs that have been identified on the advertisement, interpreting the overall meaning of the commodification of religion and culture on the advertisement, and drawing conclusion from the result of the interpretation of the signs that have been identified previously.








Data validity test used triangulation, the theory used as a comparison is the theory of construction of reality, with the basis of reality is the creation of creative human beings through the power of social construction of the surrounding social world (Bungin, 2007: 14). This is indicated that advertising was the work of creative work that could construct social reality, as stated by Boudrillard, that the creation of reality by advertising used a production model which is called simulation, humans are trapped in a room that they realize is real, even though it is artificial, or a mere fantasy .




## Result and Discussion





In this study, the unit of analysis was Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement, an advertisement with 30 seconds duration where this advertisement depicted the atmosphere of a fashion show conducted by several female models wearing batik clothing and some of them wore the hijab, included Tari as the main advertisement star who acted as a designer. The main figure highlighted in this advertisement was the designer and one of the models that was the main focus, namely one of the models wearing hijab. This advertisement consisted of 3 scenes, Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement storyboard (Scene 1-3):

Scene 1				
No	Duration	Per-shot video	Scene	Sound
1	0"-5"		MS. FADE IN. The setting of the place was in a room where the advertising model as a designer made a mirrored scene while tidying up the hijab that she wore. CUT TO	Advertising instrument to the end. VO. Since I wore hijab I didn't use lotion anymore, because i was afraid of sticking.




2	6"-7"		CU. The main star of the advertisement took Citra Wakame Gel Lotion product. CUT TO	Until I found Citra Wakame
3	8"-9"		MS. The main star of the advertisement held and paid attention to Citra Wakame Gel Lotion product. CUT TO	
4	9"-10"		CU. Visualization of the main star of the advertisement used Citra Wakame product on her hand. CUT TO	
5	10"-11"		CU. The hand visualization of the model after using Citra Wakame's image product was increasingly white. CUT TO	A lotion gel that can brighten the skin
6	11"-12"		CU. A visualization of model's hand that illustrated Citra Wakame product was not sticky to the skin. CUT TO	No stickiness
Scene 2				
7	13"-14"		MS. Designer tidying batik clothe that will be used by fashion exhibitor or model in the fitting room. CUT TO	
8	14"-15"		MS. The designer tidied and arranged the hijab used by the fashion exhibitor or model before she appeared. CUT TO	
Scene 3				

9	15"-16"		LS. Fashion show scene, the models walked on the catwalk and they watched by many people. CUT TO	VO. So that even in hot and humid weather
10	16"-17"		LS. One of the model walked on the catwalk. CUT TO	
11	17"-18"		MS. Designer walked into the catwalk while clapping. CUT TO	VO. (Designer): I still feel refreshed and comfortable

12	18"-20"		LS. Designer and model lined up on the catwalk after the fashion show is finished accompanied by a sprinkling of paper firework. CUT TO	
13	21"-22"		CU. Designer clapped. CUT TO	VO. Not sticky at all.
14	23"-26"		MS. One of the hijab models removed paper firework that fell into her hand and is noticed by the designer. CUT TO	
15	26"-27"		MS. Designer and model who wore hijab was laugh. CUT TO	



16	27"-30"		CU. Visualization of Citra Wakame Gel Lotion product in water. FADE OUT	VO. My skin is bright without feeling sticky.
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**Table. 1.** Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement storyboard

Information:

- CU : Close up, close-up shooting technique.  
 CUT TO : Transition, fast moving scene.  
 FADE IN : The image transition from dark to light slowly.  
 MS : Medium Shot, medium range shooting.  
 VO : Narrator voice, dialogue that sounds but doesn't appear in the picture.

After conducting an analysis by using Roland Barthes's semiotic, the result of the interpretation of the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement that leads to the commodification of religion and culture is further discussed, as follows:

### 1. Religious Commodification on Citra Wakame Gel Lotion Advertisement

The result of the analysis in 1 and 3 scenes showed that the existence of commodification effort that elevated religion as the idea or concept of the story, the commodification of religion carried out on the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement into the type of value commodification, according to Vincent Miller, the real danger posed by consumer culture is when it infects all of our capacity to accept what is valuable, in his opinion, consumption culture not only offers alternative value, but also subtly ensnares us in a network of consumer interpretation and engagement with all interpretation of value, including what we have (Ibrahim and Akhmad, 2014: 23).

This religious value unconsciously made consumer or audience who watched Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement became interest. Based on the importance of commodification in communication, religious content contained on Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement was included into the type of content commodification, ie when the message content or story idea raised on the advertisement are treated as commodity, in this case religion. Based on the theory of commodification, it tended to be encouraged by economy that focused on the study of media content and less on the audience or worker involved in the production of these advertisements, the pressure on the structure and content of this media is interpreted from the interest of global media company and growth in the value of media content, so that the commodification of religion is permitted in order to achieve certain interest. The content of the commodification of religion carried out on the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement is explained as follows:

#### a. The Use of Hijab

The results of the analysis of shot or frame on each advertisement scene of Citra Wakame Gel Lotion used Roaland Barthes's semiotic showed that there were several ideas that raised the use of the hijab as the subject matter, seen through the main figures on the advertising story, namely the designer and several other supporting models.

The hijab is a part of clothing that is commonly used for Muslim women, and aside from being a clothing, indirectly the veil is also a religious identity, especially Islam, although there are some religions that also use the hijab, such as monk in Christianity which certainly it has different name or mention, but certainly, the meaning that is captured by the audience, both through sound and visual of the advertisement known that it is the hijab worn by Muslim women.

The use of the veil is part of Muslim clothing, namely clothing that covers the genitals, and it is a religious value, as written in the Qur'an Surat Al Ahzab Verse: 59 means: "O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters, as well as all [other] believing women, that they should draw over themselves some of their outer garments [when in public]: this will be more conducive to their being recognized [as decent women] and not annoyed. But [withal,] God is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace!" (Surah Al Ahzab: 59).

However, advertiser tried to utilize the use of the veil which is poured through creative ideas in advertising story, in order to strengthen the storyline, the storyline is made in such a way not only at the level of the show, but the image building on the advertisement also reached the level of justifying people's behavior in choosing that product (Bungin, 2001: 173).

This is what it called as commodification, how the use of the veil as a religious value is utilized for commercial purpose, the religion

value that should be valued because of their function as living values used by humans, they are transformed into

values that can be exchanged. This transformation process is utilized to benefit advertiser.

b. Female Figure

The Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement displayed a female figure who worked as a designer, and this was the main idea of the advertisement as a promotional tool. This picture represented the figure of women who were also be able to work by promoting the idea of gender equality.

Gender equality in this matter for women is a value that is held in high esteem in Islamic religion, the egalitarian principle of equality between humans, both men and women and between nations, ethnicity, descent, is a central theme as well as a basic principle of Islamic teaching (Suhrah, 2013: 374).

**2. Cultural Commodification on Citra Wakame Gel Lotion Advertisement**

Cultural commodification contained on Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement contained in scene 2 also showed that cultural content is made as a commodity in advertising content. Commodification of culture entered into the type of content commodification, while the cultural content used as a tool of commodification is as follows:

a. Batik Clothing

The meaning of the Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement in each scene showed the cultural element, namely the use of batik clothing on the advertisement, it can be seen that all players who played a role on the advertisement wore batik. Besides, the story concept to strengthen the product is illustrated through the storyline of the batik fashion show.

Described through visualization that is directly or through hidden message, as the results of the meaning of scene 2, that the shot on the scene illustrated how the advertisement tried to show certain symbols through the scene, such as a design scene tidying batik used by one of the models.

According to Marcel Danesi, clothes are not only as body covering or protection, clothing is a sign system that is interconnected with other sign systems in society which we can send messages about our attitude, social status, our political belief, and so on (Danesi, 2010: 206). Therefore, the batik fashion featured on the advertisement was certainly not without intention but to conveyed a certain message.

Similar to the previous discussion, batik clothing in advertising is intended to support the advertising storyline. As we know that batik is an Indonesian culture, and certainly represents Indonesia through symbols. The ideas on Citra Wakame advertisement tried to utilize the culture to persuade the audience and to construct the mindset of Indonesian women to use Citra Wakame product.

The process of constructing, persuasion, and so on is inseparable in advertising, because it is how advertising is, whether or not advertising can also be judged by the success of the advertisement to invite the audience to obey what the advertisement wants, but the process is sometimes out of bound. Batik as a culture that belongs to Indonesia should be separated from the commercial aspect which is closely related to value function, it's just that through the commodification of culture which is symbolized through the use of batik clothing, Citra Wakame's advertisement clearly used this to achieve the goal of profit.

b. Traditional Backsound Music

Music plays a role in every society, it has a large number of styles, and each style is a feature of a geographical area or a historical era (Danesi, 2010: 195-196), this connection is considered important that bridged the audio and visual relationship on Citra Wakame advertisement, how batik as a feature of Indonesia related to traditional music used on Citra Wakame advertisement.

The whole advertisement scene of Citra Wakame Gel Lotion used traditional backsound music, and basically this is intended as a reinforcement of a sign or symbol of batik as Indonesian culture, so that the impression that can be captured by the audience is getting stronger. it means that Indonesian batik which is displayed through visual is reinforced with traditional music backsound.

The goal is as the same as the batik clothing discussed earlier, how culture which in this case is traditional music is utilized for commodification purpose, culture that is considered important for the values of function or usefulness, is changed in such a way that it has a favorable exchange rate.

The result of the analysis using the semiotic method turned out to show that on Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement used religious and cultural contents that are used as a commodity to achieve the interest of advertiser, even this was in accordance with the comparative theory in this research, namely the theory of reality construction, that advertising is the work that can constructing social reality, the creation of social reality by advertising using a production model called simulation, humans are trapped in a room that they consider to be real, even though it is artificial, or a mere fantasy (Bungin, 2007: 89).

Social reality in society can in fact be constructed by the power of the media through television advertising, how a social reality is lifted into the media message after or before its image is changed, then the media moves through image replication into the reality that exists in society, as if that reality lives in society (Bungin, 2007: 2). This also happened to Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement, the social reality that usually occurs in the community included the realm of religion and culture, able to be raised by the media, as if it became a new reality. The use of headscarf by Muslim women, reality in society about the importance of gender equality, then with batik clothing and Indonesian music as a representation of love for Indonesia, all of this is packaged based

on the reality that has already happened in society, with the power of the media it has changed its image, then lifted in form of television advertisement aimed at specific interest, namely material gains as explained by the theory of commodification in the theory of political economy of the media.

### Conclusion

After conducting an analysis with Roland Barthes's semiotic method then it proceed with a discussion of the Citra Wakame Gel lotion advertisement, the signs were interpreted as a practice of accommodating religion and culture. There was a process of transforming value into interchangeable value to benefit the advertised product. The process of the commodification of religion and culture on the advertisement of Citra Wakame Gel Lotion was to the type of content commodification, namely using the content of advertising content as a commodity, more specifically the commodification of religion that was into the commodification of value. Commodification of religion and culture on Citra Wakame Gel Lotion advertisement is done by building an idea through a story on an advertisement by incorporating religious values, namely the use of hijab and female figures and then combined with culture, namely batik clothing and traditional music, the combination of both is intended to further strengthen the idea or the message that the advertisement wanted. Religious and cultural values were still a function value, for example religious value would not change from their function as religious teaching, the function that regulated human life and other functions, only through commodification there was a shift that converted them into exchange or trade values.

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