

# Visual Analysis Of Fair & Lovely Commercial And How It Represents The Image Of Nowadays Indonesian Muslimat

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**Abstract:** The popularity of muslim fashion in Indonesia made its way to the mass media, particularly into the television screen as a part of Indonesian popular culture. One of them is Fair&Lovely Commercial which featured a female model wearing muslim fashion. The commercials featured visual elements and narratives that brings a question about the image and identity of nowadays Indonesian muslimat, as television commercials can represents a particular identity within its visuals. This paper focuses on a visual analysis of Fair&Lovely television commercial, a whitening lotion showing a model wearing muslimat fashion to see how the commercial represents the image of nowadays Indonesian young adult muslimat with the approach of semiotics in the form of intersign relation of metaphor-metonymy. The result shows that the Fair&Lovely commercial tries to communicate an image representing a mixture of idea between the Islamic Syar'i values and the Western concept of female and femininity in the form of liberal feminism as a part of nowadays Indonesian muslimat identity.

**Index Terms:** Image and Representation, Indonesian Muslimat, Television Commercials, Visual Analysis

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Muslim fashion and hijab is a part of distinct characteristic of a muslimat. Islam as a religion regulate each and every corner of a muslim's life, including how a muslim wear their everyday attire. As Hassan, Zaman, and Santosa [1] mentioned in their article about Tolerance of Islam in Malaysia, there are about 500 verses from Al-Quran and more in hadith regarding women's clothing that Muslims need to follow. Within Islamic discourse, discussion of women's dress often focuses on the issue of modesty. Quranic modesty injunctions require women to wear loose, opaque clothing covering the entire body to conceal its outline and any expression of sexuality [2]. The many details instructed and limitation regarding how a muslim wear their everyday attire makes many muslimat, especially youth and young adult felt reluctant to follow and practice these rules to their everyday attire. However, Indonesian muslimat enjoyed many muslim fashion brought by the diverse culture of the region that inspires many designers to mix and match many styles to create a distinct muslim fashion. Indonesian diverse muslim fashion has been recognized by other muslimat from all around the world [3]. The concept of "*bergaya tanpa harus terbuka*" (stylish and fashionable while being modest) makes the usage of muslimat attire as an everyday outfits becoming more popular and set an upward trend amongst the youth and young adult, especially those who identify themselves as a muslimat. The popularity of muslim fashion made its way to the mass media, particularly into the television screen as a part of Indonesian popular culture in the soap opera, public service announcement, social campaign, and television commercial.

This trend of showing a female model using muslim fashion in the mass media can alter the perception of the muslimat image and identity in the society. This is because muslim fashion is more than just a mere attire; it also represents the wearer's value and identity. This is also asserted by Negrin [4] who wrote that the fashioning of one's appearance has assumed an important role to their sense of identity. The act of fashioning one's appearance itself is an act of imitation. Simmel in Qeis, Muntazori, and Amzy [5] wrote that fashion imitates from a given example that satisfies the demand of social adaptation. This act of imitation implies that there needs a source outside of the selves to be a guideline on the identity making process, especially in terms of fashioning one selves. Thus, the media, in the form of television commercials, exerts its function to become the source, an example to be imitated. Television commercials show the content that represents value, social taste, and desire to the society. Visual image is one of TVC main appeal in representing their content. Hall in Durham and Kellner [6] argued that visual discourse can be read as something real and natural. This perception of "reality" and "natural" representation is what makes television commercials interesting to the society. Qeis [7] stated that the understanding of semiotics was needed to analyze the visual found within the advertising to see the representation and image production in the commercials. The semiotics sees television commercials with the notion of how the viewer sees certain social values as being promoted to the society [8]. The semiotics of advertising sees television commercial as a site of representation crucial in the process of social identity construction in the society. One of the television commercials that was aired heavily in 2016-2017 in Indonesia is Fair&Lovely commercial, a whitening lotion commercial which featured a female model wearing muslim fashion. The commercial featured visual elements and narratives that brings a question about the image and identity of nowadays Indonesian muslimat. This is because television commercials produce visual images while the society consumes these discourses. By showing female model wearing muslim fashion with certain set of values, television commercial produces a representation of muslimat images and the society consumes it as and in turn creates a construction of Indonesian muslimat identity. It can be understood that the showing of a female with muslim fashion within the Fair&Lovely television commercial

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aims to communicate a certain message that can alter how society thinks and act about Indonesian muslimat. In turn, the Fair&Lovely commercial tried to form a particular mindset about the image of nowadays Indonesian muslimat. This paper focuses on a visual analysis of Fair&Lovely commercials to see how the commercial represents the image of nowadays Indonesian muslimat with the approach of semiotics in the form of intersign relation of metaphor-metonymy.

## 2 METHODS

In questioning about the images within a visual form as data and its relation to the social settings, this research uses a visual methodologies with visual analysis based on Peirce's semiotics of intersign relation and its qualities. The Fair&Lovely commercials as data in the visual form then will be analyzed through the four stages of visual analysis related to the consumption of visual representation: description, interpretation, evaluation, and theorization [9]. In the description stage, the data in the form of Fair&Lovely commercial was broken down to a storyboard or frame-by-frame of the scene progression based on the narrative within the commercials. The interpretation stage was done after the description stage using Peirce's trichotomy of icon-index-symbol to see the representation coded within each of the visual features presents in the Fair&Lovely commercials. The next stage is the evaluation stage. Here, the scene depicted by the description and the representation shown in the interpretation stage was evaluated using the intersign relation of metaphor and metonymy. Dyer [10] classified metaphor and metonymy as one of the visual rhetorics of advertising. This evaluation stage using a visual rhetoric perspective by breaking down the commercial into three main analysis which are ideation analysis, inter-personality analysis, and textuality analysis was done not to see the intended meaning made by the producers of the commercials, but to see how the viewer perceived the meaning based on the social settings in the society. The perceived meaning creates an argument within the viewer. Muntazori [11] explained that argument is a personal process that can construct an idea within the mind. Using metaphor and metonymy as a tool of evaluation from each of the three analysis in this stage, we can see whether or not there is a transfer of ideas and concept contained within the iconic and indexical relation in terms of image production and construction. The last stage is theorization, which contains a summary and conclusion of the findings with validity.

## 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To analyze the phenomenon of muslimat fashion showcased within television commercials unrelated to Islamic settings and how it represents the image of nowadays Indonesian muslimat, this paper sorted television commercials aired in 2016-2017 and pick a particular one where a female wearing muslimat fashion is shown as a lead figure within the commercials. The chosen commercial is Fair&Lovely commercial, a whitening lotion commercial. First, this section will describe how the scene plays in this Fair&Lovely commercial by breaking down the commercial according to the frame-by frame of the scene presented in figure 1.



**Fig 1.** Frame-by-frame of the scene within the Fair&Lovely commercials

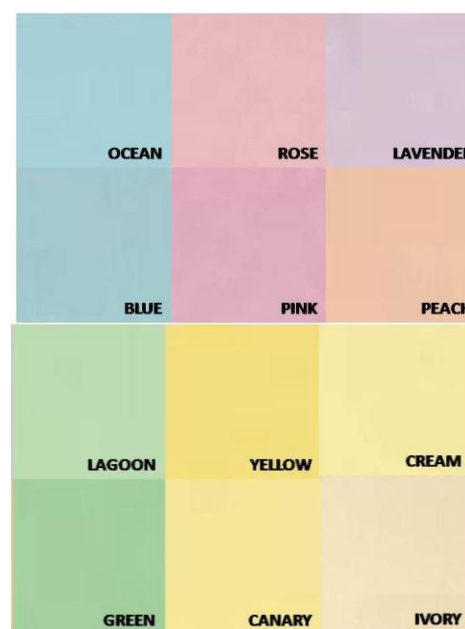
The duration of Fair&Lovely commercials is 30 seconds with eight full lines uttered by the characters within. As seen in figure 1, the opening scene depicts a family which consist of a father, a mother and their daughter which is the leading role sitting together in the outdoor settings. The mother and daughter were shown wearing muslimat attire. The parents told their daughter that they have found the best man for her to marry, a smart man with good career. The daughter, wanting to study her graduate program, asked her parents what will become of her graduate study plan if she is to be married. The daughter then convey her feelings to her friend in hope of getting an advice. She shared about her dilemma about weighing the best option between getting married and joining a graduate program. Her friend smiled and told her that, "You would find the answer, for sure." She then seen taking out the Fair&Lovely product, a whitening lotion out of the purse. The next scene shows the transformation of the daughter's face by using the lotion regularly. The scene is accompanied by the music with lyrics, "There is a new light in me." The next scene then shows the daughter walking over to her parents sitting in the family room and agreeing to their suggestion of marriage, but after she finished her graduate study. The scene then focused on the daughter's gesture portraying a balanced weight by her hands while saying, "It's equal, no?" The commercial concluded with the parents smile and Fair&Lovely product ad. After describing the scene in the Fair&Lovely commercials, we then move into the interpretation stage. The interpretation stage was done to see the quality of signs and what it represents from each of the visual feature found within the commercial. These visual features and what they represent can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1. Representation and signs in Fair&Lovely commercials**

No.	Visual Feature	Signs Quality	Representation
1.	<b>Character:</b> Young female wearing muslim fashion	Icon Index	Young female Leading role, Muslimat
2.	Adult male wearing glasses	Icon Index	Adult male Father figure
3.	Adult female wearing muslim fashion	Icon Index	Adult female Mother figure, Muslimat
4.	Young female with long hair	Icon Index Symbol	Young female Friend Beauty, Femininity
5.	<b>Object:</b> Purse	Icon Index Symbol	Purse Female (owner) Femininity
6.	Menu	Icon Index	Menu Restaurant, Cafe
7.	<b>Setting:</b> Garden	Index Symbol	Building, Outdoor Openness, Communal, Non-private
8.	Bedroom	Index Symbol	House, Indoor Private, Hidden life
9.	Living room	Index Symbol	House, Indoor Family, Kinship, Togetherness
10.	<b>Action and gesture:</b> Wistful face	Index Symbol	Sadness Life's burden
11.	Hand-to-Chin	Index	Thinking
12.	Awkward smile (closed lips)	Indeks	Uncomfortable
13.	Charming smile (slightly opened lips)	Index	Positivity
14.	Wide smile (opened lips)	Index	Happy, Confidence
15.	Walking and the wind gently blowing	Index Symbol	Going towards Success
16.	Hand parallel moving forward horizontally	Index Symbol	Parallel position Equality

From table 1, we can see that this commercial has four characters: a young female wearing muslim fashion, an adult male wearing glasses, an adult female wearing muslim fashion, and a young female with long hair. These four characters interact in three settings which depicts a garden, a bedroom, and a living room. The characters are seen holding two distinct object, a female purse, and a menu. There are seven prominent gestures observed within the commercial which was done by the leading role. As seen in table 1, the Fair&Lovely commercials has some visual features coded with

a complete quality of signs within the trichotomy of icon-index-symbol. These visual features are “young female with long hair” and “purse”. Frankel in her article The Cultural Significance of the Handbag [12] argued that bags are crucial for women and their concept of beauty. So both visual features with complete quality of signs refer to the concept of female, beauty, and femininity. An interesting visual feature is how the leading role was depicted as a “young female wearing muslim fashion” and not the usual concept of leading role representing the concept of beauty depicting “young female with long hair” (which, in this commercial, was replaced to play the role of a friend). This visual feature as an indication of a muslimat, when broadcasted in the mass media, creates a model and an example of muslimat representation as a form of an effective image building related to the construction of muslimat identity. Fair&Lovely commercial's visual features are a form of representation in the media and an effective way for forming the sense of having a shared common identity. On ideation analysis, this commercial tells a story of a young female adult having a discussion with her parents. She was advised to quickly arrange her marriage despite her plan to study for her master's degree. This discussion troubles her so much that she then seen conveyed her feelings to her friend. They both discuss about what is important and the story ends with her finding the best way to solve about the underlying situation of marriage versus pursuing her dream. On inter-personality analysis, the young female adult wearing muslimat fashion is the leading role of this commercial. This can be seen from her appearances in the commercial that took up to almost 26 seconds from the total of 30 seconds commercial duration. She also has the most lines which is six out of eight lines total. Thus, it is important to analyze her visual feature to help gain the insight on the meaning behind this Fair&Lovely commercials and how it represents Indonesian muslimat, especially today's Indonesian young adult muslimat identities.

**Fig 2. Pastel colour scheme**

Further inter-personality analysis can be seen from the iconicity relation in television commercial based on the rule of similarity, specifically on how the color played an important



role. This commercial dominantly employs light or pastel colour scheme as shown in figure 2 throughout the scenes. The commercial begins with an ivory, pink, and peach colour scheme applied to the model's outfits and to the object surrounding them. The background showing a set of greeneries in the garden also employs the same light pastel colour scheme in the shades of green and lagoon. The later background sets depicting a bedroom and a living room also use the same pastel colour scheme, dominated by the shades of cream and ivory. The iconicity relation then can be inferred from the similarity of the clothing's color scheme. This similarity was found at the beginning by showing the young female adult as a leading role having a same clothing, a muslim fashion with the same colour scheme, with her mother. On inter-personality, this shows that the leading role is a metaphor to the mother, asserting the sameness between her and the mother. This further deepens the relation between the two signs in a form of indexicality relation, a visual metonymy where the leading role was associated to the mother, having the same faith, values, and ideas. Further inter-personality analysis can be seen from the iconicity relation in television commercial based on the rule of similarity, specifically on how the color played an important role. This commercial dominantly employs light or pastel colour scheme as shown in figure 2 throughout the scenes. The commercial begins with an ivory, pink, and peach colour scheme applied to the model's outfits and to the object surrounding them. The background showing a set of greeneries in the garden also employs the same light pastel colour scheme in the shades of green and lagoon. The later background sets depicting a bedroom and a living room also use the same pastel colour scheme, dominated by the shades of cream and ivory. The iconicity relation then can be inferred from the similarity of the clothing's color scheme. This similarity was found at the beginning by showing the young female adult as a leading role having a same clothing, a muslim fashion with the same colour scheme, with her mother. On inter-personality, this shows that the leading role is a metaphor to the mother, asserting the sameness between her and the mother. This further deepens the relation between the two signs in a form of indexicality relation, a visual metonymy where the leading role was associated to the mother, having the same faith, values, and ideas.

iconicity relation at the end of the commercial. The leading role was shown not in the range of pastel colour schemes but wearing a muslimat attire in a contrasting shade that falls in the bright/vivid colour scheme as shown in figure 3. Dake [13] argued that every visual element is always in relationship so that when you change one element, the whole image changes. The changes in colour scheme then shows an indexicality relation that the leading role now has a different values and ideas than that of her mother. On textuality analysis, there is a semiotics construct present in the audio aspects of the television commercial which further strengthens the relationships between the visual elements. Based on the inter-personality analysis, one of the most important relationship in the Fair&Lovely commercials is the interaction between the leading role, a young female adult wearing muslim fashion, with her mother. In the beginning, a visual metonymy which associates the leading role to her mother shows that they have the same values and ideas. These values and ideas were uttered in the audio aspects when they are interacting with each other, with her mother speaking the line, "Marriage is indeed important." This line represents the Islamic Syar'i values, especially related to the views on marriage. Within the Islamic vision, children have a right to be conceived and reared in a stable and secure environment thus the Islamic vision condenses the primary aims of marriage —to provide warmth, comfort, and protection and to beautify [14]. The commercial draw within this vision and used the word "indeed" to show an indication that the leading role and her mother share the same views. However, throughout the scene in the commercial, there were changes regarding the visual element of the leading role. The indexicality relation at the end of the commercial indicates that the leading role has a different values and ideas. The leading role's lines at the end of the commercial can be further observed to see the semiotics construct within the textuality of the television commercial. There are two important lines here: First is, "Okay, I agree to get married, but after I finish my graduate study so I can be a well-educated person and have a good career like him." and; Second is, "so it's equal, no?" accompanied by a gesture of hands portraying a parallelism or the same position. These two lines support the notion of gender equality, the liberal feminism views on female and femininity. In the liberal feminism views, Tong [15] wrote that women's choice of family over career was entirely voluntary. Thus, marriage is seen as a contract between real equals, an option, and a choice. The relation of the audio aspect with the visual aspect also present in the settings used for the background. The first few scenes was taken in a garden as background sets. Afterwards, the setting was changed into a set depicting bedroom, and then changed again into a living room. Miller [16] wrote that garden creates a presumption of community as opposed to individuality or isolation. In this sense, the first few scenes illustrate how the leading role feels in the world, which is a communal sense, bound with the same idea and value. It strengthen the idea presented before where the leading role has the same values with the mother. But then the leading role asked herself with the line uttered, "Marriage or my plan for graduate study?" which brings about the conflicting of values within her own self. The scene then moved into a bedroom, where she pondered about the options she has. Bedroom signifies something private and individual. A hidden self that is not shown to the public. Here, the leading role shows her conflicting self which is different from the values shown by her



**Fig 3.** Bright/vivid colour scheme and how it was applied to the leading role

However, as the commercial reached the end, the leading role was shown in a different tone signifying an alteration in the

mother. The scene then shows her transformation and then it was moved to the living room settings. The living room represents togetherness and familial values. On the textuality analysis, this was shown with her utterance, "Okay, I agree to get married" signifying her acceptance of her parents values. But then she dropped her own values afterward with the utterance, "But after I finish my graduate study". The settings here shown that she has come in terms with her conflicting values and now she is ready to share her own values to her family. The moving settings from garden to bedroom to living room shows her identity building as a young muslimat in the globalization era. The semiotics constructs of this Fair&Lovely commercials show a clash of values and ideas among the characters within. The leading role as a representation of today's Indonesian young adult muslimat then shows an interesting mixture of ideas between Islamic Syar'i and liberal feminism values. Her story from the beginning up to the end build the image of nowadays Indonesian muslimat identities. On one side, they adhere to the Islamic Syar'i teaching, but on the other side, they also becoming more liberal and fusing some liberal feminism views into their own everyday life. The image of muslimat which was represented in the Fair&Lovely commercial shape a unique and distinct identity amongst Indonesian muslimat in the society. The concept of liberal feminism marked by the freedom to choose and female independence (Arivia, interview, July 27, 2017) are shown in the Fair&Lovely commercials with the Islamic packaging, thus producing a representation of nowadays Indonesian muslimat who is humble yet full of confidence and aimed to have a greater role in the society. The Fair&Lovely commercials subtly depicts such mixture of identity through the usage of color scheme worn on the leading role's muslimat attire. The music and lyrics saying, "There is a new light in me" indicates that nowadays young adult muslimat is different than the generation before, as they have a new view and vision unique to them.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

Television commercials show the content that represents value, social taste, and desire to the society through its visual images and narratives. Thus, by observing television commercials, we can analyze how the image viewed represents a particular identity within the society. In the Fair&Lovely commercial, there exists a representation of today's young muslimat adult values and ideas; the image of nowadays Indonesian muslimat identity. This identity was conveyed throughout the commercials by using a careful selection of colour scheme, background set, and audio lines placement. The Fair&Lovely commercials shows the change of nowadays Indonesian muslimat values and ideas from a conservative one to a more liberal ones. This ideology changes was shown by the changing of colour scheme applied to muslimat fashion worn by the leading female role as the daughter. The daughter's lines represent nowadays Indonesian muslimat identity; a fusion between adherence of Islamic Syar'i teachings and the views of liberal feminism values. This television commercial also draws a line between nowadays Indonesian muslimat to the former ones in the form of music and lyrics played while showing a transformation scene when the daughter applied the whitening lotion saying, "There is a new light in me." These mixtures of Islamic Syar'i teachings and liberal feminism values, especially that of female and femininity in this Fair&Lovely commercials formed

a newer take on Indonesian young muslimat adult identity, a smart muslimat with good self confidence aspiring to have a good and strong social role in the society. All of these images were subtly depicted in the form of a whitening lotion advertisement. The usage of muslimat fashion in many television commercials unrelated to Islamic field and values like cosmetics and everyday necessities, then, is an interesting subject to be observed so that we can understand more about the identity of nowadays Indonesian muslim in this globalization era.

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