MARCOMM'S PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN SHARIA-BASED PRINT ADVERTISING DESIGN

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Article Info	ABSTRACT

The rapid development of the advertising industry in the digital era has created increasingly intense competition among businesses in communicating their products to target audiences. This study aims to analyze the persuasive communication strategies implemented by Syafaat Marcomm in designing sharia-based print advertising, while also exploring how Islamic values are integrated into modern marketing practices. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature study, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that conventional branding generally emphasizes profit and image enhancement, whereas sharia-based branding focuses on ethical and spiritual principles such as honesty, trust, justice, and truthful communication. Syafaat Marcomm applies a three-level integrated branding strategy, namely conducting research and brand audits, designing persuasive messages across print and digital media with ethical language and visual symbols, and building long-term consumer loyalty through value-based communication. Despite challenges such as limited budgets and public skepticism toward sharia branding, the study concludes that persuasive communication rooted in sharia principles is both effective and relevant for strengthening consumer trust, brand awareness, and business sustainability in Indonesia's competitive advertising landscape.

Keywords: *persuasive communication; print advertising; sharia-based*

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the advertising world in the modern era shows increasingly rapid dynamics along with the emergence of new and innovative products. In a competitive market, every manufacturer strives to communicate the advantages of its products to its target audience. This communication process is carried out

through various media, both above-the-line and below-the-line, so advertising plays a crucial role in building a product's image and strengthening its position amidst competition. This situation increases the need for the strategic role of advertising agencies.

An advertising agency is defined as a team of professionals who provide services to clients in conveying product messages (Díaz-Méndez & Saren, 2019). Other similar definitions state that an agency is an independent entity comprised of creative and business professionals who design and place advertisements in the media (Laurie & Mortimer, 2019; Scolere, 2019). Jensen & Sund (2020) add that an advertising agency is an external firm specializing in the creation, production, and distribution of communication messages. From the authors' perspective, an advertising agency can be viewed as an organization tasked with designing and executing promotional campaigns creatively and strategically to support the achievement of clients' business objectives.

Persuasive communication is an essential element in advertising practice due to its ability to influence consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behavior. In the information-saturated digital era, advertising messages must capture attention and influence consumer purchasing decisions. According to Abdullaeva (2024) and Yusuf & Abas (2024), persuasive language that combines cognitive and emotional aspects has been shown to increase audience understanding and attraction to a product. Narrative techniques, the use of words that emphasize benefits, and strategies for creating urgency such as "get it now" or "limited offer" can enhance advertising effectiveness (Fatimah & Markhamah, 2024; Gillespie & Joireman, 2016; Malikha, 2024, 2024; Zakharova, 2020).

Despite the increasing dominance of digital media, print advertising remains relevant in increasing brand awareness. Research shows that print media, when designed with the right visual strategy, can generate a strong emotional impact and enhance consumer brand recall (Christian & Hidayat, 2022; Venkatraman et al., 2021). Print advertising also provides a physical experience that digital media cannot always replace, creating a deeper emotional connection with the audience (Karels & Hera, 2021; Zhang & Hong, 2022). With the integration of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), print media can complement digital strategies and strengthen the consistency of brand messaging (Hassan et al., 2021; He et al., 2017).

In the context of Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, the application of Sharia principles in marketing communications is becoming increasingly important. Sharia principles emphasize honesty, fairness, transparency, and avoidance of practices detrimental to consumers such as gharar (unclear gambling), maysir (gambling), and riba (usury). Sari & Ronaldo (2024) found that Sharia-compliant digital marketing can increase the visibility of Islamic-based businesses, while research by Husada & Yunus (2024) showed that implementing Sharia-compliant marketing communications in banking can

strengthen customer trust and loyalty. This indicates that integrating religious values into persuasive strategies can provide a significant competitive advantage in the domestic market.

Syafaat Marcomm is an example of an advertising agency that embraces sharia principles in every aspect of its advertising design, particularly in print media. While sharia principles restrict the use of certain elements, such as excessive sensuality or misleading messages, these limitations actually fuel the creative team's creativity, leading to new and original ideas. By prioritizing Islamic values in every piece of work, Syafaat Marcomm has successfully demonstrated that a sharia-compliant approach is not a barrier, but rather a source of inspiration that strengthens the relevance of advertising. Their success was further exemplified by their win at the Pinasthika Award National Advertising Festival, recognizing the quality of their sharia-based persuasive communication strategy.

Based on this description, it is clear that persuasive communication in advertising, particularly through sharia-compliant print media, plays a crucial role in building image and enhancing brand competitiveness in Indonesia. However, this practice also presents its own challenges, particularly in harmonizing creativity with sharia values. Therefore, this study aims to further examine the persuasive communication strategies implemented by Syafaat Marcomm in designing sharia-based print advertising, and to reveal the extent to which Islamic principles can become a foundation that encourages the birth of creativity and innovation in the world of modern advertising.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach, focusing on a deeper understanding of the social phenomena under study through descriptions in words and language. Qualitative research is a procedure that generates descriptive data from the behavior and statements of research subjects, thus emphasizing meaning rather than numbers (Sugiyono, 2022). Using this method, researchers seek to comprehensively explore the behavior, perceptions, interests, motivations, and actions of participants relevant to the research topic. The selection of a qualitative descriptive method is deemed appropriate to answer the research question, "Syafaat Marcomm's Persuasive Communication Strategy in Sharia-Based Advertising Design," because this research emphasizes understanding communication processes and strategies, rather than simply measuring numbers.

Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review. Observations were conducted by directly observing the field situation to obtain objective, factual data, as this method allows researchers to understand the social context in depth. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with key informants to obtain detailed information regarding Syafaat Marcomm's persuasive communication strategy, in line with the definition of an interview as a

face-to-face communication process to elicit specific information. Documentation techniques were used to collect data in the form of archives, reports, and relevant images, while literature studies were used to review scientific literature, regulations, and previous research findings that supported the analysis (Sugiyono, 2013). The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. To maintain data validity, this study also employed triangulation techniques, namely cross-validation utilizing various data sources and collection methods (Sugiyono, 2022). With this approach, the research results are expected to be more credible and able to fully describe Syafaat Marcomm's persuasive communication strategy in designing Sharia-based advertising.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The main difference between general branding and sharia branding

Research results indicate that branding, in general, is essentially the process of creating a brand identity focused on broad recognition, image building, and strengthening consumer loyalty. According to Nazhif & Nugraha (2023), branding is a strategic effort to build positive relationships with consumers through engaging messaging that fosters trust. Communication strategies in conventional branding are primarily geared toward achieving business goals, without considering normative aspects or religious values.

In contrast, Sharia branding emphasizes more than just image creation or emotional influence; it must also be grounded in Sharia principles. Alserhan (in Isnaini, 2022) states that Islamic branding is a marketing approach grounded in Sharia values, primarily targeting Muslim consumers. Values such as honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and accurate messaging form the basis for designing communications that not only convince consumers but also maintain spiritual and social integrity.

These findings demonstrate that the application of Sharia branding offers significant differentiation compared to conventional branding. While conventional branding focuses on material gain, sharia branding prioritizes a balance between business objectives, blessings, and social benefits. Thus, sharia branding is not merely a marketing tool but also a means of preaching that conveys Islamic values to the public.

Persuasive Communication Strategy in Print Advertising Design

Syafaat Marcomm implements a persuasive communication strategy through an integrated branding strategy approach divided into three levels. In the first stage, the team conducts in-depth research through focus group discussions, consumer observation, market analysis, and a brand audit. This audit serves to understand

the brand's values, positioning, and promise, which are then refined according to sharia principles, including client selection that does not conflict with Islamic law. The second stage focuses on brand communication, realized through thematic campaigns, tactical promotions, print advertising, outdoor advertising, social media, and brand activation activities. For outdoor advertising such as billboards, Syafaat Marcomm uses concise messages, strong visuals, and iconic symbols to ensure the message is quickly grasped by the audience. Meanwhile, in print media advertisements such as magazines, persuasive strategies are conveyed through longer headlines, sub-headlines, and body copy, so that the message can be communicated in more detail and depth.

The third stage is building long-term loyalty. Syafaat Marcomm not only encourages consumer loyalty but also emphasizes the importance of brand consistency with Sharia principles. These efforts are realized through educational content, strengthening the value of blessings, and implementing social activities or corporate social responsibility programs. This demonstrates that a Sharia-based persuasive communication strategy is not merely oriented towards economic transactions but also fosters deep emotional bonds and trust. The persuasive communication strategy in print advertising design, according to an interview with the Syafaat Marcomm team:

"Usually, visuals can be persuasive, but sometimes there are provocative persuasive elements, and there are a lot of playful persuasive elements. It also depends on the medium. In magazines, sometimes we can provide more than just a headline. Usually, the elements in a print ad include a headline, a sub-headline, and body copy. In magazines, print ads can be more comprehensive. On social media, we usually rely on storytelling strategies for persuasiveness. That's why we use carousels for print ads."

The Role of the Creative Team and the Process of Translating Ideas into Advertising Messages

The creative team plays a central role in transforming the results of strategic analysis into persuasive, communicative, and Sharia-compliant advertising messages. Within Syafaat Marcomm's work structure, there is a creative director who directs the direction of ideas, an art director who manages visualization, a copywriter who writes the advertising script, and a graphic designer who executes the visuals according to instructions. This interdepartmental collaboration is the primary foundation for each advertisement to convey its message effectively.

The message encoding process involves two stages: first, formulating what to say, or the core message, based on brand values and consumer needs; second, developing how to say it, or the strategy for conveying the message through compelling language and visuals. In the Karim Group advertisement, for example, the creative team emphasizes the message "home is not just about physical comfort, but also about spiritual serenity." This message is conveyed through an

icon of a prayer mat, illustrating closeness to religious values, and an emotional headline such as "Achieve the highest serenity."

Throughout the production process, Sharia principles are upheld by avoiding misleading visual manipulation. In an advertisement for a zakat charity, for example, instead of digitally removing the model's teeth to highlight the symbol of zakat recipients, the creative team covered the teeth with black tape during the photo shoot. Similarly, in a batik advertisement, they emphasized the beauty of the fabric's motif without exploiting the female body. This demonstrates that adherence to sharia principles actually fosters creativity, as the team is challenged to find new ways that are both ethical and persuasive. The role of the creative team and the process of translating ideas into advertising messages, according to an interview with the Syafaat Marcomm creative team:

"So, in a creative team, at the forefront of the creative team is the creative director, who is the director, followed by the art director. The art director has a graphic designer, and under the creative director are the art director and copywriter. The copywriter is responsible for developing the content, headlines, and so on. Meanwhile, the art director is responsible for the visuals. So, the art director and copywriter are sometimes both involved in the brainstorming process. Sometimes, the strategist is involved, and the AI is involved too. Because the AI understands the client. So, brainstorming is really about finding ideas. So, once the strategist has compiled an analysis and such, the creative team needs to brainstorm what to say and how to say it. They already have what to say. Usually, the copywriter knows what to say, because they know what to say, what to say. Sometimes, the way to say it is brainstormed. I think it's about what the visuals are, what good ideas are."

Measuring Effectiveness and Implementation Challenges

Syafaat Marcomm uses various methods to measure the effectiveness of persuasive communication. For social media, analysis is conducted using available analytics features, such as engagement rate, reach, and monthly follower growth. For paid advertising, they review ad performance reports to assess the extent to which messages reach the target audience.

For outdoor media, measuring effectiveness tends to be more complex. Large companies typically use third-party services like Nielsen to measure exposure levels, while Syafaat's smaller clients generally rely on traffic data from billboard vendors as an indicator of message reach. Furthermore, Syafaat encourages clients to track consumer feedback, for example, by asking the source of information that led them to learn about a brand. If consumers cite billboards or print media as the primary source, the advertisement is considered effective.

However, research has identified several challenges. First, there are limitations in presenting persuasive messages that remain engaging without violating Sharia principles, especially when clients come from non-Muslim backgrounds or use figures that do not comply with Sharia requirements. Second, financial and human

resource factors often limit the implementation of developed creative strategies. Third, negative public perception of the term "sharia" persists due to cases of fraud in the name of religion. This challenge requires Syafaat to prioritize transparency in communications, develop alternative strategies tailored to clients' capabilities, and consistently educate the public about sharia values, which truly bring blessings and trust.

Discussion

Research findings indicate that the persuasive strategy implemented by Syafaat Marcomm in designing print advertisements aligns with persuasive communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of using language and visuals that engage consumers' cognitive and emotional aspects. Concise, clear, and engaging advertising language has been proven effective in influencing attitudes and purchasing decisions. This aligns with research by Abdullaeva (2024) and Yusuf and Abas (2024), which confirms that the use of persuasive language increases audience comprehension and engagement. The use of narrative techniques, metaphors, and expressions that emphasize urgency, such as "get it now," strengthens the relationship between brands and consumers, as evidenced by research by Gillespie & Joireman (2016), Zakharova (2020), Malikha (2024), Fatimah & Markhamah (2024), and Losi et al. (2022).

Furthermore, the relevance of print advertising in the digital age is also reflected in field findings. Despite the increasing dominance of digital media, print still holds advantages, particularly in building brand awareness through visual experiences and physical touch, which cannot be replaced by digital media. Simple, clear, and engaging print designs have been shown to make it easier for audiences to remember the message. This finding aligns with research by Venkatraman et al. (2021), Christian & Hidayat (2022), and Zhang & Hong (2022), which emphasizes the role of print advertising in strengthening consumers' emotional attachment to a brand. Moreover, Karels & Hera (2021) assert that innovative print strategies can capture audience attention in an increasingly information-dense media context.

Syafaat Marcomm's application of sharia principles in branding and communication strategies demonstrates a paradigm shift from simply building an image to an approach grounded in ethical and spiritual values. Each creative process begins with in-depth research, followed by a brand audit to understand core values and target markets. The message encoding process is carried out through the selection of symbols and language that are not only communicative but also maintain honesty and avoid manipulation. This practice supports Alserhan's (in Isnaini, 2022) view regarding the importance of integrating sharia values into brand identity and reinforces the findings of Adawiyah's (2021) research, which emphasizes the importance of halal aspects in business and marketing.

Syafaat Marcomm's success in integrating persuasive communication with sharia values is also reflected in its achievement in winning an award at the Pinasthika National Advertising Festival. Despite challenges such as limited budget and human resources for some clients, the implemented strategy demonstrated effectiveness in reaching audiences. Success was measured in layers, ranging from social media analytics and out-of-home advertising traffic data to consumer satisfaction surveys. The results of this study align with the findings of Wardana et al. (2024) who emphasized the importance of integrated marketing communications integration to maintain message consistency and strengthen brand reputation.

Finally, this research provides both conceptual and practical contributions. Conceptually, the results reinforce the view that sharia branding is not merely a marketing strategy but also a da'wah instrument that prioritizes blessings, justice, and honesty. Practically, Syafaat Marcomm has demonstrated that the limitations of sharia can actually trigger creativity, such as the use of contextual Islamic symbols without violating norms. Previous research (Hamid & Zubair, 2019; Kurniawan et al., 2023) supports these findings by demonstrating that sharia ethics and values can increase consumer loyalty. Thus, a sharia-based persuasive communication strategy is not only effective in increasing brand awareness but also relevant in strengthening a business's position in a predominantly Muslim market.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study confirms that the persuasive communication strategy implemented by Syafaat Marcomm in designing sharia-based print advertisements is not only effective in building brand image and awareness, but also capable of maintaining the integrity of Islamic values. The main difference between sharia branding compared to conventional branding lies in its support for the principles of honesty, justice, and blessings, which then become creative constraints and triggers the birth of innovative ideas. The practice of persuasive communication that combines the power of narrative, emotion, and ethical visuals shows consistency with the theory of persuasion and demonstrates the relevance of print media in building consumer trust in the digital era. These results provide a conceptual contribution that sharia branding can be a creative governance system that balances value compliance with business effectiveness, as well as a practical contribution in the form of a three-tier strategy model that can be replicated by other agencies. Thus, this study proves that the sharia-based persuasive communication approach is not only relevant but also strategic in addressing the challenges of the modern advertising industry in Indonesia, which is predominantly Muslim.

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