

Representation of Indonesian's Beauty Concept in "Citra" Hand & Body Lotion Advertisement Using Roland Barthes' Semiotics Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the representation of beauty concept in Indonesian advertisements, with a focus on Citra's "Ragam Cantik Indonesia" advertisement, through the lens of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. However, there is a gap in understanding how these beauty standards are constructed and communicated, particularly in the context of local brands like Citra. This research aims to fill this gap by analyzing the denotative, connotative, and myth to uncover the Indonesian beauty concept in Citra brand advertisement. The advertisement seeks to highlight the racial and cultural diversity of Indonesia, presenting a variety of beauty standards. It features models with diverse characteristics, including fair, brown, and dark skin tones, as well as straight, curly, and hijab-wearing hair styles. This selection clearly represents the multifaceted concept of beauty in Indonesia. Additionally, the ad aims to challenge the prevailing myth that ideal beauty is synonymous with having white skin.

INTRODUCTION

In advertising, semiotics is important in deciphering the complex relationship between signs, symbols, and the meaning conveyed. This assertion underscores the notion that advertisements are not merely persuasive messages but complex systems of signs that communicate on multiple levels, often beyond conscious awareness. The problem is that beauty product brands in Indonesia tend to choose certain beauty standards to match the message they want to convey to consumers. Cosmetic advertisements, in particular, contain many concepts of beauty that meet the criteria of "ideal," namely beauty standards, which are the general norm of society displayed in advertisements (Sandy & Dwiningtyas, 2016 in Setyaningsih & Palupi, 2022). For example, during the post-colonial era, the concept of Westernized beauty became a concern of Indonesian society. The beauty concept, such as white skin, a sharp nose, and a tall body, while the opposite, such as dark skin and a short and large body, is considered less ideal (Rizkiyah & Apsari, 2020). Therefore, local beauty products are encouraged to feature actors who have Westernized stature. As a result, the construction of female beauty has changed society's view of beauty physically and as a white skin type.

The standard of beauty in Indonesia is often defined by having fair and light skin. This can be seen from the many advertisements for whitening products and the high interest of Indonesian women in beauty treatments to whiten their skin. A survey from a beauty clinic from 2018-2019 shows that 82.5% of respondents think beauty is having bright and glowing skin. As a result, facial brightening treatments have become very popular. According to a clinic survey in 2018, South Korea and Japan are Indonesian women's two favourite skincare

countries. Despite the diverse skin tones and climates that Indonesians have, they still think that these two countries are the most suitable for their skin (Index, 2020). In this case, the role of advertising is very influential in determining beauty standards for Indonesian women.

The public is flooded with cosmetic advertisements because access is so easy that these advertisements are consumed continuously by the public. Citra is a local brand that was founded in 1984. Citra is also one of the first hand and body lotion products in Indonesia and still survives today. Various hand and body lotion competitors, such as Nivea, Marina, Vaseline, Wardah, and Scarlett, have sprung up. This competitive environment requires market leaders to adapt constantly. In addition, a product's trust in consumer confidence can be built over time to gain customer loyalty (Ulpah, 2021). This can be achieved through marketing campaigns in the form of advertisements that can directly communicate with consumers.

The number of symbols the advertiser wants to convey to its customers increases with the advertisement's uniqueness and variety in the public's eyes. The presence of these symbols can simplify communication in advertising. Barthes saw semiotics as a science that examines how humans give meaning to things. Meaning is not just a matter of communication but also building a structured sign system. Significance, according to Barthes, is not only limited to language but also things outside language, including social life. In its various forms, is a separate sign system that can be studied through semiology. In addition, if Saussure only emphasises signification at the denotative level, then Roland Barthes perfects connotative semiology. Barthes also saw another aspect of signification, namely the "myth" that marks a society (Siboro, 2018).

The following are some previous studies that discuss the representation of the beauty concept using Ronald Barthes' semiotic approach. First, Widodo & Loisa (2022), in their research entitled Representation of Indonesian Women's Beauty in The Challenge Version FaL Advertising, showed that FaL advertisements present fair-skinned women as the standard of beauty that can be achieved by using their cream. The ad shows the model's skin color changing to white, implying that FaL cream can make the skin brighter than other products, especially foreign products. Further, Salim (2023) analysed female stereotypes represented in Dove shampoo advertisements. This study demonstrates that Dove wants to dispel societal misconceptions about what constitutes "beautiful hair" and maintain women's confidence in choosing and expressing their hair. In addition, Setyaningsih & Palupi (2022), showed that Scarlett Whitening advertisements try to display the trending beauty concept, namely shining white skin and colorful hairstyles like Korean and Japanese women. This ad also wants to show that beautiful women get much attention on social media and that the ideal man has a masculine yet gentle nature. Unlike the previous research that only focuses on knowing the beauty concept of the advertisement, this research aims to analyze how the concept of beauty is represented in Citra's "Ragam Cantik Indonesia" ad using Roland Barthes' semiotics approach. Interpretation is limited to interpreting denotation and connotation signs that characterise the formation of a new concept that was created.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative descriptive method, which is the process of sorting out information from the natural conditions of an object associated with problem-solving, both from a theoretical and practical point of view (Nawai, 1995 in Brigham et al, 2013). Taking primary data sourced from online media, namely advertising videos displayed on YouTube social media. Febriyantoro, (2020) states that YouTube, a social media platform that is most popular among millennials, has the opportunity to achieve company goals by distributing and

producing video content adapted to its user's individual needs and preferences. The data source is an advertisement for Citra products in 2022. The ad is titled "Ragam Cantik Indonesia Citra". This ad was uploaded on May 31, 2022, and has been watched 12.913.129 times (12 M views) by June 24, 2024. Furthermore, the data collected in this study was taken from images and audio transcribing. This study's data analysis technique involved identifying signs in the stages proposed by Roland Barthes (Roland Barthes semiotic theory) to determine denotation (literal meaning), connotation (implied meaning), and myth.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the data is analyzed to determine the concept of beauty displayed in Citra's "Ragam Cantik Indonesia" advertisement using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, as presented in the research method. Then, the data obtained is divided into verbal and nonverbal.

Table 1 Verbal Language Sign

Verbal Language Sign (Audio Transcribing)		
Signifier	Signified	
<i>"Indonesia kaya akan budaya dan kulit yang beragam."</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indonesia has diverse cultures, races, and religions. Indonesians have a wide range of skin colors. 	
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indonesia is a country with many and varied cultures. Indonesians have skin tones from fair to dark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This diversity is making Indonesia interesting, and it must be protected. Indonesians have a variety of skin colors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity has a myth that being different is beautiful.

The statement shows that Indonesia has cultural diversity and diverse skin color. This diversity gives beauty to the Indonesian nation because other countries do not have the same diversity as Indonesia. As Mr. Joko Widodo has said, Indonesia is a multicultural country. Moreover, there are many ethnic groups, religions, and languages, and this diversity is a wealth that the Indonesian has (Humas Kemensetneg, 2022). Furthermore, the myth in Indonesian society is that white skin tends to have a positive meaning, as having fair, smooth, and firm skin is beautiful and ideal in the eyes of society (Kasyan, 2008 in Siswati, 2015). And women will be considered not beautiful or unattractive if they have black skin. According to Ulpah (2021), the standard of beauty in society is seen and recognized only from its physical appearance. It can be interpreted that a person with white skin has a high privilege. This is contrary to the diversity of skin colors that Indonesians have and to prove that the myth is not true. Citra's advertisement tries to show that Indonesia has diverse skin colors and that being different in appearance does not mean that it is not beautiful. So, the beauty concept that wants to be presented in this advertisement is not based on just one beauty concept. According to research from Sukisman & Utami (2021), they want to show women that all women with any skin color are beautiful. Moreover, this advertisement also discusses the attitude that Indonesian women should have towards cultural diversity and differences, which can be seen in the table above.

Table 2 Verbal Language Sign

Verbal Language Sign (Audio Transcribing)		
Signifier		Signified
<i>“Menjadi perempuan Indonesia berarti merangkul perbedaan, dan menghargai keunikan kulit kita”</i>		Indonesian women are those who embrace differences and value skinniness.
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Being an Indonesian woman means having an attitude that embraces differences and appreciates skin differences/uniqueeness.	Being an Indonesian woman is not just about biology or gender but also about assuming social and cultural roles that involve tolerance of diversity and different concepts of beauty.	The concept of beauty is not only physical beauty but also embracing and appreciating the existing differences.

The statement above implies that being an Indonesian woman has a beautiful appearance and a critical role. This role is to embrace the differences and the need for mutual respect in every difference. There is an assumption in society that a particular ethnicity is considered to have an ideal beauty concept. Many people crave the idea of beauty like them. This is due to media and popular culture such as movies, social media and even beauty advertisements that often portray individuals of certain ethnicities with physical features that are considered ideal. The portrayal of women in beauty advertisements is a form of popular culture displayed through the media. Media such as television has opened vast opportunities for advertising beauty products to construct ideal beauty for women (Wahyumi et al, 2021). In this ad, “The Citra” brand seems to want to show that Indonesia has racial and cultural diversity. So, Indonesian women must appreciate the differences that exist. In this case, the image advertisement seems to provide a clear view for Indonesian women to appreciate the diversity of skin colors and not see certain skin colors as superior to others.

Table 3 Verbal Language Sign

Verbal Language Sign (Audio Transcribing)		
Signifier		Signified
<i>Bersama Citra rayakan ragam cantik Indonesia dengan membanggakan dan merawat budaya, alam dan ragam kulit Indonesia. Jadilah bagian dari sejuta inspirasi untuk jutaan jiwa lainnya karena hanya kita yang dapat menjaga pancaran cantik Indonesia</i>		An invitation for Indonesian women to inspire many with products from Citra.
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An invitation for Indonesian women to celebrate the beauty and diversity of beauty in Indonesia. 2. A desire to inspire many people. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appreciative of and celebrate the beauty of all the diversity in Indonesia and show an appreciative attitude towards the diverse beauty that exists. 2. To encourage Indonesian women to be part of a movement or action that can inspire many people and emphasize the importance of positive influence and active community roles in building a concept of beauty. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of appreciation for every difference that exists so Indonesian women often feel insecure about themselves. 2. The existence of this movement makes Indonesian women more confident in expressing every difference they have, including the concept of beauty that may have been built to make women insecure about themselves.

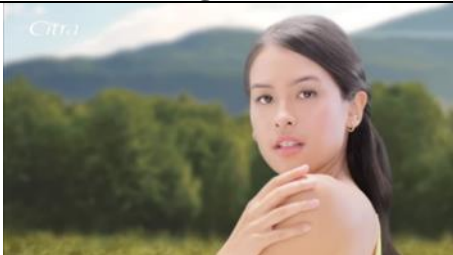
The sign above displays an invitation to Indonesian women to celebrate the diversity of beauty in Indonesia. The desire to inspire many people and encourage Indonesian women to be part of movements or actions that can inspire many people and emphasize the importance of positive influence and active community roles in building a concept of beauty. This is due to the lack of appreciation for every difference that exists, and Indonesian women often feel insecure about themselves. Women themselves are usually subjected to crimes, whether physical or symbolic, because of the views and beliefs that exist in society (Omara, 2004 in Apriliandra & Krisnani, 2021). In this advertisement, there is an invitation for Indonesian women to be more courageous in showing their uniqueness and skin diversity. This invitation makes Indonesian women more confident in expressing themselves, including the concept of beauty that may have been built to make women insecure about themselves.

Table 4 Verbal Language Sign

Verbal Language Sign (Audio Transcribing)		
Signifier	Signified	
<i>Yuk ikutan aku untuk pancarkan ragam cantik kulit Indonesia. Share kulit cantik Indonesia mu dihashtag ragam cantik Indonesiaku. Tunjukkan bahwa kita bangga dan berjanji untuk selalu merawatnya</i>	An invitation to showcase the beautiful diversity of Indonesian women by posting photos of themselves.	
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
The "Citra" advertisement invites Indonesian women to display cultural diversity by showing the diverse beauty concepts that Indonesian women have.	With the invitation, women are more willing to expose themselves and show off their beautiful skin.	Indonesian women tend to have different expectations of their condition. For example, a person's concept of beauty may overly consider beautiful skin ideal or gorgeous, while colored skin is less ideal or attractive.


The verbal sign above invites Indonesian women to bravely display cultural diversity by showing the beauty concepts that Indonesian women own. With connotation meaning, Indonesian women must be more courageous to expose every difference, especially their beauty, regardless of ethnicity or race. This is because Indonesian women still have different views and expectations of their condition. In this case, the concept of beauty is that fair skin is considered ideal or beautiful, while dark skin is considered less ideal/beautiful. The assumption of having fair skin is still a beauty standard for Asian women. But, the actual standard of beauty is not based on skin color. Having fair and bright skin is not the main thing someone can say is a beautiful woman (Puspita and Nurhayati, 2018 in Santi, 2020). This is also what Citra's advertisement "Ragam cantik Indonesia" aims to convey.

Table 5 Nonverbal Sign

Non-verbal language Sign		
Signifier		Signified
		A woman wearing green clothes poses with a mountain background. She has fair skin and black hair in pigtails and touches her shoulders.
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A woman with her clothes open has a light skin color (fair) and touches her shoulders.	A woman touching her shoulders shows that her skin is smooth/soft.	To be beautiful is to have soft and fair skin.


Citra advertisement wants to show the figure in their advertisement as Indonesian people. This is proven by some famous artists from Indonesia being actors in ads. In this case, Maudy Ayunda is an actress, model, activist, writer, and singer. She is idolized as someone who is not only beautiful but also has the inner beauty that Indonesian women crave. Maudy Ayunda is an academic, as evidenced by her degrees from the best universities in the world, namely Oxford University, Harvard University, and Stanford University. Outer beauty and inner beauty seem to be the things that are wanted to be displayed in the Citra “Ragam Cantik Indonesia” advertisement. Connotatively, this advertisement wants to present that the actor's skin is smooth and has a light color. This ad also wants to show the concept of beauty often considered ideal for society. Fair skin is regarded as the perfect skin among Indonesian women. Having white and fair skin has become a standard reference for beauty in society. In this case, the standard of beauty is seen from the skin color, namely white skin, because white skin is considered superior and idealized as a construction of femininity, sexuality, and dominance of women. (Prabasmoro & Priyatna, 2013)

Table 6 Nonverbal Sign

Non-verbal language Sign		
Signifier		Signified
		A woman wearing a green hijab is posing with mountains in the background. She has fair skin, and her hands are touching each other.
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
The woman wears a hijab and covered clothing. Have fair skin (white), with both hands touching each other.	Women who wear hijab tend to wear closed clothes, and the two hands touching show smooth and soft hands.	Although she has fair skin, it is not for show.


This scene shows a woman wearing a hijab and clothes with traditional clothing patterns. Wearing closed clothes with both hands touching each other. The use of actors who wear hijab wants to convey that even though having fair skin is not something unique or something to be proud of, beauty is not measured by the color of the skin you have. This ad seems to want to break the concept of beauty in society, which is about white and bright skin. White skin is considered a dream skin color for every woman. The white or bright color itself has a broad context meaning, namely neutral color that symbolizes cleanness, simplicity, purity, and simplicity (Heri, 2023)

Table 7 Nonverbal Sign

Non-verbal language Sign		
Signifier	Signified	
	A woman wearing green clothing poses with a mountain background. She has dark skin and curly and fluffy hair and is touching her shoulders.	
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
A woman wearing a green sleeveless shirt. She has dark skin and curly hair and touches her shoulders with a big smile.	Women with curly hair and dark skin. The following traits indicate an Eastern Indonesian woman: Hands-on shoulders show her soft skin and a broad smile shows high self-confidence.	Women who have dark skin and curly hair are also beautiful.


In this scene, a different model is shown from the other actors. A woman with dark skin and curly hair is wearing a bright green sleeveless shirt. The woman depicted in the ad is the typical skin color of some Indonesians. However, unfortunately, this skin tone is one of the skin tones that is often used as a source of racism and beauty stigma by almost everyone. Further, priests (2019) in Santi, (2010) say that dark skin symbolizes a dirty, ugly look like a poor person. It was because, in ancient times, the poor people who worked in the fields were constantly exposed to sunlight, which caused their skin to be dark. While the employers who work in the room, of course, the skin looks brighter. That is why white skin looks like wealthy people or those with a high level of life. However, this is not the case for this ad. In contrast, Pratiwi & Luthfianiza (2020), they have been studied Citra advertisements from the 1980s that featured beautiful women with yellow skin. In the ad, Citra no longer displays yellow skin as the ideal skin, instead displaying white as the perfect skin. In this ad, Citra wants to show a different concept of beauty than before. The image wants to show that having dark skin is a new concept of beauty. By featuring a model full of confidence, it shows that beauty does not depend on skin color or hair type but on how we can be grateful and more confident every day.

Table 8 Nonverbal Sign

Non-verbal language Sign		
Signifier	Signified	
	Three women wearing different clothes pose in the background with mountains. They have different physical characteristics and appearances.	
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Three women have different looks and skin colors: dark, fair, and tanned.	Showing the variety of skin tones and beauty concepts.	Being beautiful means accepting and appreciating everyone's uniqueness.

This picture shows three women with different skin types and colors. The point is that beauty is diverse and is not determined by a particular skin color or hair type. Due to these differences, Indonesian women must understand the existing beauty concepts. Moreover, having an attitude that appreciates and accepts every difference exists, in the sense of accepting every variety of beauty concepts. According to Bugin (2008) in Windasari et al., (2017), the media in Indonesia often portrays various tribes, ethnicities, races, and religions, including women's beauty ideals. Ideal here with characteristics such as white skin, thick and straight black hair, and a clean, luxurious, and elegant face. White skin is still the main component in assessing a woman's beauty, especially in Asian cultures(Li et al., 2008). However, this ad seems to stand out by showcasing the diversity of skin tones and wants to show that the ideal beauty does not have to have white skin and emphasizes that being different does not mean not being beautiful.

Table 9 Nonverbal Sign

Non-verbal language Sign		
Signifier	Signified	
	Five women wearing different clothes are walking with some people holding hands. They have different physical characteristics and appearances.	
Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Five women were walking together, they were holding hands and laughing with each other. They have different skin colors and looks.	They walk and hold each other's hands, showing that although they are different, they embrace each other and walk confidently.	Differences often become barriers, and different skin colors limit a person's expression and ability to blend with others.

In this scene, five women who have different looks and skin colors are walking confidently. The thing that wants to be conveyed from this picture is the diversity of skin colors of Indonesian women. Indonesia is a country rich in culture, as well as various skin colors such as white, yellow and tan. In this fish, a woman's skin color is not a barrier for her to mingle with others who have different concepts of beauty. As well as inviting Indonesian women to leave the zone of insecurity or lack of confidence and bad perceptions about skin color. In addition, to be a beautiful woman, one must have great self-confidence. By increasing self-confidence with their natural beauty, one can become a more beautiful, successful, and well-accepted person in their social environment (Amin, 2015 in Satria & Junaedi, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion above, the Citra hand and body lotion in every scene and element in the advertisement is a sign with meaning to convey the beauty concept to the audience. There are two types of signs found in this advertisement: verbal language signs and non-verbal language signs. The author found several important symbols that represent the concept of beauty. Namely, four symbols were taken from verbal (Audio Transcribe) and five symbols were taken from non-verbal (Image). All existing symbols are analysed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, divided into three parts: denotation (literal meaning), connotation (Implied meaning) and myth. As a result, this ad wants to show that Indonesia has racial and cultural diversity, in which various concepts of beauty exist. The models used in this ad are people with different characteristics, such as fair, brown, or dark skin, straight hair, hijab, or curly hair. This clearly shows the concept of beauty that exists in Indonesia. This ad also wants to break the beauty myth that says bright skin is ideal. However, the models in this ad having dark skin and curly hair are shown, representing Eastern Indonesian women and hijab-wearing women who are covered so that fair skin is not shown. Displaying diverse skin colours shows that being different does not mean not being beautiful. So, this ad wants to show that all forms of beauty should be recognised and celebrated and foster confidence and acceptance among Indonesian women. Suggestions for researchers who wish to conduct research with the same study are to add the data sources and compare the beauty concept from several advertisements from different countries to find out the differences in the beauty concept from these countries.

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