

Sell and Tell: A Story of Dairy & Cocoa Print Advertising During Indonesian Colonial Period

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Abstract. The globalized economy enables the nationwide citizen to adapt and exchange their lifestyle from one place to another. A particular cultural habit is no longer exclusive since the global consumer's behavior has seemingly evolved to be more convergent. Indonesia became the 21st rank of 132 major importing countries for dairy products category in 2016. In the same year, its value has reached \$804 million where New Zealand, USA, and Australia still became the largest dairy suppliers for Indonesia. Meanwhile, in the cocoa industry, Indonesia is also facing a challenge on processing the cocoa bean into chocolate and confectionery to fulfill the domestic market's desires. Both indicate a fierce competition between the dairy and chocolate companies to win the domestic market share. This research aims to decipher the process of introducing dairy and cocoa to Indonesian market since the colonial period. The purpose is to enrich the fundamental knowledge of product history for the modern advertiser regarding accomplish an efficient advertising strategy. By performing the research methods of print ads content analysis and qualitative interview, this research has proven dairy and cocoa colonial advertising has a significant impact on constructing the tradition of consuming dairy products and chocolate among the Indonesian families for generations.

Keywords: Colonial advertising, dairy products, cocoa, advertising history

1 Introduction

Speculated will be the Seventh Largest Economy in the world in 2030 [2], Indonesia is experiencing an increasing demand of dairy products and chocolate in the national scale. Ribka reported on Jakarta Post, in 2016 the dairy industry itself needed 3.7 million tons of milk powder to process various products [3]. Meanwhile, the worth of domestic chocolate market value has reached \$1.01 billion in 2016 and estimated to hit \$1.13 billion this year [4]. Those large market shares should give both a thrill and pressure at the same time for advertising agencies, precisely to draw the domestic consumer attention. It pushes the advertiser working harder than they used to before. On the one side, the lack of understanding of the product's history may lead to ineffective strategy since the consumers are getting smarter on purchasing product. On the other hand, the academic sources about colonial advertising from advertising perspective itself still considered a very few.

Since Dutchmen popularized the model of modern advertising when they colonized

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Indonesia in the 1900s, this research question will focus on the observation of two questions: How did advertising agencies introduce dairy and cocoa products to local Indonesian society during the colonial period? And how do the academic and practitioner in advertising industry perceive this subject?

Those questions aim to reveal how a particular advertising strategy has significantly shaped the food culture in Indonesia. It is essential for advertising student, the academician, or practitioner discerning the human nature of Indonesian consumer during the changing decades. Advertising cannot stand-alone without other disciplines because purchase activities involve a complex (conscious or unconscious) decision. Academic literature reveals that many other subjects have influenced the scope of consumer behavior from the 1960s, such as anthropology, economics, linguistics, neuroscience, psychology, and sociology [5]. This study assumed that these factors should be the reasons why consumer behavior has evolved. It intends to investigate this evolving process by looking for the evidence of the relation between advertising strategy and consumer behavior on consuming dairy products: how print ads have successfully persuaded local people to consume dairy and cocoa product.

As the fundamental knowledge for every beginner advertiser, this paper delivers a short brief about the journey of introducing western dairy product and cocoa to Indonesian local market in colonial era through advertising. In regard to strengthen the insight of advertising student and prepare them to be a comprehend advertiser, it can be utilize as one of the material sources during the learning process inside the classroom. This paper will also support the practice area by correlating the issue between advertising history, international advertising, and consumer behavior. It is convinced that the great awareness about that issue will accommodate the advertiser to build a better environment in Indonesian industry.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Early History of Advertising in Indonesia

In Indonesia before the 19th century, newspaper ads or pamphlet contained the information about the upcoming product that would be shipped from the Netherlands for the Dutch and European families who were staying in East-Indies (Indonesia under the Dutch colonialism). Later, this advertising model was widely applied by the society to promote goods and service. Still, the western expat even became the top priority list as the potential buyer for Dutch companies and advertising agencies, which were located mostly in Batavia (now Jakarta). When VOC ruled in Indonesia, the government had entirely controlled the papers by bringing Dutch people working in the advertising agency. The promotion budget was covered by BPM as the legal Dutch Oil Company and General Motor, primarily to advertise their products. So, it is assumed if the system inside the agency was reflecting the model of advertising agencies in America as it was led the industry during that time. When World War I was inevitable—there is no indication of any significant damage from those wars towards Indonesian advertising like World War II did. The moment when Japan was overruled in 1942, the advertising industry was hiatus for five years as a consequence of Dutch currency that was not longer available, while the Japanese currency was restricted [6]. After earned its independence in August 1945, the business started to crawl again and the agencies turned up by the local men and Indonesian-Chinese descendant [7] and keep growing until the recent day.

2.2 Dairy Products & Cocoa Consumption During Colonial Period

Den Hartog has researched the specific issue of food culture in Asia. He specifically

discussed about the process of dairy products consumption in Indonesia by mentioned milk as the sample [8]. The moment before the beginning of World War I, Indonesia had been viewed as a potential market by European condensed milk industry. The market had dominated by two largest milk companies, Nestlé and Dutch-based *Cooperative Condensfabriek Friesland* (or Frisian Flag). Later, Hartog learned that food distribution during 1880-2040 could be divided into two levels: geographical and social context [9]. These factors were considered as the critical issues for milk companies creating the advertising strategy and later will be explained on this paper due the unfortunate condition that similar researches are not supposed to analyze this topic from advertising perspective, despite there are growing attention from global scholars such as anthropologist and historians in regards to broadening their insight about colonial studies.

The stratification of first-class society during Indonesian colonial period was measured by looking their relationship with the Dutch government. The regular contact between European people who were working in East-indie bureaucracy and local Indonesian family has triggered acculturation, purposed or accidentally. Once, food advertisements (the dairy products: cheese, butter, milk) were spread to inform the product availability among European who tend to keep their western household preferences during the stay in Indonesia. Later, as the effect of social assimilation, many Indonesian—usually wealthy family who could afford the products, start to consume foreign foods and were getting adjusted to the western lifestyle. By noticing the visual appearance: the clothes, attitude, and message in the advertisement, we may separate the group of the target customer. Middle to high- economic class often illustrated as modern and educated person, meanwhile the ads for low-class were represented with very simple tagline displayed with more traditional attributes, such bamboo woven and conventional kitchen tools. Even so, this characteristic did not prevail in milk advertisements but only the product packaging itself.

In the same time, VOC was enforced the grow of Cacao to manifest the cultivation system beside coffee and other crops in the early 20th century— when Cocoa was still be favored as an exclusive drink for the wealthy society [10]. In addition, the way to consume Cacao was still limited on pouring Cocoa powder with hot water as a drink. Later, the Dutchmen innovated Cacao to be less bitter with some innovation in the factory so modern people now can eat the chocolate bar and other variety.

2.3 Standardization-Adaptation Theory

Every company that desire to reach a broader market in the global scale should consider between standardization or adaptation their product. Despite this topic has been widely debated in advertising world, the company shall turned into their brand's objective. Agrawal has summarized similar ideas from numerous advertising experts from the different work areas [11]. Adapting advertisement could overcome the innumerable of barriers: such as economic, social, and culture. Besides language and copy problems—it is crucial for the company to recognize the characteristic, purchase power, and buying habit of the target audience in abroad (Vladimir 1950, cited in Agrawal 1995). Likewise Vladimir, several academicians also favored that adaptation approach is more satisfying on delivering the message for a different segmentation.

In her book, Mooij [12] has arranged four variables that influence Standardization-Adaptation decision: The product, the company, business environment, and the consumer. Thus, in the context of introducing Dairy Products and Cocoa in Indonesia, those variables will be examined with the methods of research although it is still doubtful if the famous advertising agency has recognized the concept of standardization/adaptation in colonial times. That is why this research will observe the variable of the similar idea, which may refer to international advertising as a vital consideration before the agency could generate the

creative strategies.

2.4 Semiotic & Language

Printed in Batavia (former Jakarta), the majority of colonial print advertising are monochrome or at least contained primary colors printout on vintage papers. Brattinga wrote “The advertisements at the start of the century contained more or less only text, in the 1930’s new printing techniques allowed the advertising professionals to introduce illustrations, and sometimes even color.” [13]. To illustrate, the poster of sweet-condensed milk with convincing tagline and description appeared. The standard styles were using Art Deco and Art Nouveau. Known as the vintage design styles, both of them were very popular among visual designers during early 20th centuries. People who worked in an advertising agency in Batavia were European or Dutch men with experience in the design industry in Europe. This paper reckons that fact also brings indirect influence to Indonesian graphic design style, which was depicted on the colonial advertising poster.

In the colonial period, the rate of illiteracy among Indonesian indigenous people was extremely high. Education was unaffordable for the general community unless the noble family. Even the spoken language owned its stratification. By this construction, a person could be socially classified from a model of language he/she spoken: noble/high, middle, and lower economy family has a different way to communicate. It is assumed if the target audience of advertising was expanded to a lower class of Indonesian family.

2.5 Advertising & Marketing Strategy

The strategy of promoting milk consumption to the locals has expanded to social encounter, sounds promising and more persuasive that way it was before. Commonly, the housewife from middle-class families was embraced to purchase milk from the image of the ideal modern mother who serves only the best food for her family for the sake of her children health. They were probably imitating the model of European mother by indirectly showing the social capability of product user. Moreover, the other benefit of consuming sweet condensed milk that was popular in traditional Indonesian market is its convenience to mix with any food and beverages recipes such cakes and sugary drinks. So, it can be said if the decision of purchasing product was not only for the biological needs or the product value but also for self-claimed on social status [14].

From explanations above, it was seen if the colonial advertising’s role in changing dairy products consumption in Indonesia has not been exclusively conducted from the advertising perspective. By comparing the other researchers’ works, the puzzle is apparent. The previous advertising research was concentrated on other issues, such as Tobacco and Whitening Skincare; meanwhile, a study of dairy product and cocoa consumption have been enquired by different history and anthropology perspective. It can be said if this project will not individually fill any gap since the quantity of research with the related topic is still poorly limited, but being purposed to reduce the lack of reliable Indonesian references of consumer behavior as a whole. This research has a propensity for developing a different insight to perceive this issue and can motivate the fellow academician to address its limitations.

3 Research

3.1 Methodology

By collecting various models of data: text, visual and audio-visual, Content Analysis

combined with Qualitative Interview methods were chosen as the preferred method to explore the phenomenon. Firstly, Content Analysis attempted to answer first Research Question through colonial print ads, about to find the process of introducing Dairy and Cocoa in Indonesia during the colonial period. Only print ads with the old version of Indonesian language are chosen, and they were produced around the 1920s to 1950s.

Secondly, Qualitative Interview will lead a meaningful conversation with the participant with flexible way and suitable for a researcher who cares about details of participant's thought towards certain phenomena. Following the qualitative interview's nature, the analyzing process will be repeated from collected information to noting the result [14]. The results are expected to be able responding to both of research questions, either support or against it since Content Analysis and Qualitative Interview should complete each other.

3.2 Content Analysis

Visual interpretation of selected print ads may offer a new perspective about discerning advertising strategy during the colonial period. Meanwhile, the selected print ads that represent the popular dairy products and cocoa brands are taken from various sources, such as advertising books and websites. Since the research attempts to observe the whole trend and style of colonial advertising from particular products, each picture exposes several posters with a similar characteristic. This classification method is purposed to identify the visual element based on the product personalities, the brand and its target audience. It is believed that every print ads design was meant to adequately articulate the information of the product or a direct message from the brand. Thus, the interpretation could give a more precise hint about how these products were introduced to Indonesian market in the 20th century.



Fig. 1. Colonial Ads of Sweet Condensed Milk “Tjap Nonna”

4 Result & Discussion

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 1900s

Bandung, a city where a new wave of modern Indonesia occurred, became the only town with the largest society of Europeans, made about 12% among other cities with average 10% of the population [8]. The western lifestyle influence was unavoidable through many social sectors, such as employment, health, education, entertainment, etc. The exposure of western food was not only most visible in the household kitchens but also appeared inside the classrooms where the western curriculum was taught as the form of Ethical Policy after 1901. Or in the hospital, for example, milk was consumed as the part of medical treatment under

the regulation of government. Thus, the goods from abroad were imported to flourish of these activities. The percentage of imported dairy products was experiencing the climb three times within thirteen years since 1900. Hartog indicated that the trading office and major stores were spread in the big cities, especially in Batavia. In other words, cultural diffusions were unavoidable in many levels and it has directly influenced how the food culture evolved between two communities. Yet the advertising circumstances were still very traditional and limited. Back in the 1880s, the Nestlé's— *Tjap Nonna* was monopolizing the market as the only available brand for sweetened condensed milk. So apparently, the product distribution alone already has the ultimate power on the company's marketing strategy.

4.1.2 1910 – 1920s

WWI has changed the game; it was affected the way the Netherlands imported dairy products to East-Indie. After the post-war break, Chinese wholesale dealers acted to distribute the imported products from dairy company to the broader consumer, generally through their connection with Chinese retailer traders. It was the period where new brands of dairy products were introduced. Hence, they started to compete with each other, whereas also drove the public confusion and interfere the price. Consequently, the companies could not help but employ the agencies to advertise their product in the local newspaper or print ads. Beside two bicycle brands (1912) and one tea print ads, it is difficult to discover any food advertisements that were published before the 1920s.

4.1.3. 1930s

In the early of the 1930s, there was the amount of progress perceived on the colonial print ads. Marketing activities developed as well as the domestic economy was blooming, included how advertising strategy persuaded the broader market segmentation: from the layout design, such as visual elements and language, to selected media collaboration. For example, enamel advertising that has made a significant mark as favorite media at the moment.

The important factors contributed to adaptation are cultural differences, government control, purchase power, new product, and divergent/convergent culture [12]. For example, in the 1900s Nestlé could set the standardization for its products because it was the only brand that provided the preserved milk in the target market: initially the European people who lived in East-Indie. However, the market has evolved and to establish its position as the trusted brand and wanted to expand the market they should turn to adaptation to suit with local needs; Nestlé should be open to brand adaptation by modifying the advertisement into more Indonesian-friendly. As a result, the advertising language was developed into traditional versions and the visual characters have been customized with Indonesian features.

4.1.4. 1940 – 1950s

Admittedly, World War II has contributed to the crucial turning point for Indonesia as a whole newborn country in 1945. And the advertising history was not the exception. When the war was taking place, almost the entire business got interrupted as Japan came and took over the colonialism from the Dutch government. The industry in East- Indie was collapsed. Due to this economic crisis, the local people were encouraged to fill the empty seat of Dutch advertising agency. After its independence, Indonesian economy started crawling again with the new policies and regulations from a new government, including the local advertising agencies. Although the western figure has been replaced with the Indonesian character, it is apparent if some European physical features is still manifested on these images.

Above all, the realistic illustration of the product was mandatory on every colonial poster.

This style might be caused by the higher ratio of illiteracy among Indonesian community before the 1930s. To enhance the efficiency of advertising to such market, the message was embodied through the visual elements. Moreover, the term of advertising photography has not boomed in creative department yet. Even in American advertising, the realistic and persuasive hand illustration was still generally used on advertising media—including print ads and movie poster until the early years of the 1950s. It is believed that pay an illustrator was a lot of cheaper and more accessible than photography technique that time.

4.2 Interview Results

For all the interview participants, colonial advertising could be perceived representing the social force of colonialism, especially the European lifestyle towards Indonesian people in the early 20th century. Since the history could not be separated from national identity, it is fair to say if the advertising is the historical archive on documenting the journey of one nation through ages. The fourth participant who worked years in advertising claimed that people with a decent historical knowledge demonstrate a reasonable intellect level. Learning history could develop a structural, more systematic thinking. In fact, historical knowledge awareness among the recent Indonesia college students is considerably oblivious. Hence, all experts convinced that advertising history education is essential for advertising student.

One of the participants has given another impressive sample about the significance of advertising history for the general advertiser. Within the context of milk product—on the one side, a study found if the goat produces healthier milk than cows: smaller fat molecules, naturally homogenized, more calcium and vitamins, less lactose and allergic [16]. On the other side, data shows the vast national demand for cattle milk and its percentage keeps growing. If the project is selling goat milk to the Indonesian market, the advertiser should comprehend about what kind of value they want to sell? Is it a need or wants? Goat milk is more nutritious, but cow milk is what people crave. If they acknowledge the history of Indonesian milk consumption, they could explore the information that the indigenous communities ‘were’ already consumed the goat milk for centuries ago. This information is valuable in regards to developing advance brand storytelling. Bacon has shared a similar concern on Marketing Week, “Other brands have had success where they have reasserted their heritage and stories following a period of turmoil.” [17].

Colonial advertising is considerably has a significant impact on consumer behavior in Indonesia. There are four different perspectives from the participants, but most of them opined that colonial advertising in the 20th century was an entrance for the global community to the real consumerism age. After the industrial revolution started, the concept of ‘wants and desire’ was created by companies to selling the rest of over quantity goods in manufactures. It is including the people’s desire to climb a higher social stratification. Under the colonial oppression, advertising has triggered Indonesian people to increase the quality of their life such the European as the global citizen representative at that time. The companies have taken advantage of this motive. They read it as a green signal concerning their economic intention on expanding market. By hiring the agency, advertising has turned into a powerful vehicle for the companies (after the government) to construct the public mindset about consumerism.

5 Conclusion

This research was conducted to represent the spirit of advertising industry in Indonesia. Because the advertising attempt to be more humanists on building the deeper connection with social environment and maintain the consumer loyalty, they who utilize the meaningful advertising approach has proved more efficient in long-term. When advertising agency recognizes the brand history and their target audience, brand personality will appear as more

friendly and trustworthy.

By integrating the qualitative methodology with the methods of content analysis and deep interview—the result shown that food advertising since colonial period has impacted to the evolved habit of Indonesian people on consuming dairy and cocoa. This insight is not only applicable for the advertising agency to generate the creative strategies for dairy and cocoa products. The advertising academic and practitioner also embraced this finding into broader academic landscape, especially for the advertising students in order to build a proper comprehensive and systematically mindset about the consumer behavior in Indonesia.

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