Ethnic Stereotypes in Advertisements

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Abstract
The worldwide growing of popular music has made unpopular music production facing ups and downs. Folk and classical music for instance, are confronting the loss number of audiences that leads to the existential crisis of the musicians. Advertisements on mass media have been evolving over time and have been one of major marketing strategies of companies to attract consumers to their products. Companies have been known to go the extra mile by implementing an array of strategies in creating and producing advertisements to be able to stand out in the market. One of the strategies that companies are commonly used is using ethnic theme. Ethnic and society are two inseparable components, especially in countries that consist of various ethnic groups and cultures, such as Indonesia. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that there are many companies that use ethnic theme in their advertisements to represent their products. Even though ethnic issues are sensitive, ethnic theme is still appealing to use.

Keywords: ethnic, Advertisement, stereotype

Introduction
Technological developments and increasingly intense business competition have urged companies to implement an array of strategies to create and market their products. One of the strategies is to implement integrated marketing communications. Consisting of advertising, promotion, and public relation, marketing communications, or commonly referred to as promotional mix, serves a medium that connect producers and consumers (Kimmel, 2006). In general, marketing communication is a communication process between producers and consumers (Koekemoer, 2004).

One of the forms of marketing communications that connects producers and consumers is advertisement or ad (Kimmel, 2006). According to Jorge Reina Schement, an ad is a form of paid non personal communication that is presented in the mass media creatively to convey the basic properties of various products, services, and ideas.
(Schement, 2002). Meanwhile, the purpose of an ad is to send information to all potential buyers of certain products made by producers (McCormac, 1952). In creating and producing advertisements, companies have been would consider and implement an array of strategies so the ad can be effectively accepted by public. One of the strategies that companies are commonly used is using certain ad themes, which one of them is ethnic theme.

In bringing up this ethnic theme, producers usually use models (endorsers) that come from a particular ethnic group to gain consumer interest in their targeted market. Several studies have discussed ethnic in ads. One of the studies mentions that the race of a model that appears in an ad often affects the viewer’s attitude towards the message of the ad (White & Harkins, 1994). In addition, the shifting of physical characteristics to the psychosocial characteristics of racial identity has led researchers in the advertising world to reveal that the racial attitudes of one’s feelings toward race have a greater effect on attitudes toward advertising than on the physical and model characteristics used (beautiful, white/black) (McCormac, 1952). This proves that the existence of ethnic in advertisement has enough influence on consumers, so producers do not hesitate to use certain ethnic model or theme to gain consumer interest.

This research will look at ethnic in ads based on ethnic stereotype concept. An ethnic stereotype is a belief shared by most ethnic groups about the distinctive features of different ethnic groups including their own ethnic group (Warnaen, 2002:121) and can influence how consumers perceive an advertisement as well as a particular race/ethnicity.

Method

This research applies qualitative approach. Research with a qualitative approach produces and processes descriptive data, such as interview transcripts, field notes, pictures, photographs, video recordings, etc. (Poerwandari, 2001: 22). Furthermore, this research will discuss ethnic stereotypes in advertisements based on previous studies that discuss the same topic. For data collection, the author uses literature review method, to see the ethnic in advertising world. How those ethnicity could affect consumer’s view or why producer decided to use ethnicity on their ads. By observing various research and journal, writer will try to see stereotype ethnic that is presented on advertisement world. This research will be related on marketing communication elements which is advertising and also culture aspect which is ethnic. Those two things can’t be separated from society, that’s why this research can be useful for marketing communication study.

Results
Ethnicity is part of culture. According to William Kornblum, an ethnic group is a population that has a group identity based on a particular culture and has a common ancestor (Murdiyatmoko, 2007). Bruce J Cohen distinguishes ethnicities based on the cultural characteristics of their culture, such as religion, language, as well as nationality in the territory of Indonesia (Murdiyatmoko, 2007: 8). Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that ethnicity is a group of people or population that has the same culture and ancestry so that they can be characterized into the same categorization. Ethnicity consists of two types: ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities.

Kwan describes minorities as disadvantaged people in ethnic stratification system and as people of low sovereignty who receive unequal treatment and who consider themselves as objects of discrimination (Shibutani dan Kwan, 1965). Ethnic minority is not the superior ethnic group and are often underestimated. Meanwhile, ethnic majority or more often called dominant ethnic, is the opposite of ethnic minority. Ethnic majority is the superior or dominant ethnic group in a country or a place. Countries in the world are likely to be governed by people who are members of the majority ethnic group whose culture and language are dominant in the country. Similarly, ethnic majority is more likely to control national symbols, especially those based on official national language (Anderson, 1983).

In looking at particular ethnicity, public often uses ethnic stereotypes. Ethnic stereotypes are beliefs shared by most ethnic groups about the distinguished characteristics of different ethnic groups including their own ethnic group (Warnaen, 2002). Ethnic stereotypes look at how an ethnic group looks at another ethnic group in both positive and negative manner.

One of the countries that have issues about ethnic minorities (African-American, Latin-American, Chinese-American) is the United States because these ethnic minorities have formed the majority of population in the United States (Baron, 1984). In the US, stereotypes are attached to ethnic minorities, including to the Chinese-Americans, such as the model minority stereotype (Hanson & Gilbert, 2012).

Ethnic stereotypes are attached to certain ethnic groups. This has become one of the reasons producers use certain ethnic theme as their advertisement theme. Since advertisements function as a medium of information, persuasion, and reminder, advertisements usually contain meanings that portray stereotypes. Often, stereotypes in advertisements are based on negative or exaggerated characteristics (Moriarty, Mitchell, Wells 2009). Stereotypes that often appear are ethnic-related stereotypes. This can be seen from the high number of ads that use certain ethnic as their main theme, such as ads involving ethnic group with black skin and curly hair. In this depiction, the ethnic group with such stature is designated as ethnic minorities (Malau, 2011).

According to previous studies, stereotypes also have benefits or positive sides that can benefit the producers. Courtney and Whipple (1983) emphasizes the heuristic value of stereotypes as a quick way to get a decision. Accurate stereotypes can give consumers...
a functional means to simplify social interaction (Rossiter and Chan, 1998). In this case, social interaction refers to when consumers see an ad that has ethnic elements then the stereotypes that come to mind help people to determine whether they are interested in the products or services displayed by the ad or not.

Research in the world of advertising reveals that the race of a model that appears in an ad often affects the attitude of the viewers towards the message of the ad (White & Harkins, 1994). Representation of ethnic groups in advertising has increased in recent years (Zinkhan, Qualls, and Biswas, 1988). In the field of marketing, there is now an urgent need in many industries to find the best way to deliver ads to ethnic minorities (Bernstel, 2000; Liebeskind, 2001; Schnuer, 2001).

The shift from the physical characteristics to the psychosocial characteristics of racial identity has led researchers in the advertising world to point out that the racial attitudes a person has toward race have a greater effect on attitudes toward advertising than on the physical and model characteristics used (Stern, 1999). One of the examples is in the United States. Asian-Americans (Chinese-Americans) tend to have stereotypes as the hard-working ethnic group as well as the one with high self-discipline, achievement in math and science, and an ability to assimilate into American cultures (Gitlin, 2002; Kinsman, 2002). Therefore, this ethnic group is considered as an ethnic group that has an expertise in certain product categories, such as products produced from Asia (Cohen, 1992). Based on research by Taylor and Stern (1997), Chinese ethnic group is more represented with ads related to work or prosperity. In addition, based on other research, white ethnic communities are more interested in ads featuring models that are also white, as is the case with black ethnic communities who are more interested in ads featuring black ethnic models (Qualls & Moore, 1990). All of this research proves that things that are related to ethnicity become an interesting thing to put into ads, and influence the way people view the ads.

This occurs not only in the US. Indonesia which is a country that consists of various ethnicities also cannot be separated from ethnic stereotypes. This can be seen from ads that use ethnic theme. For example, the ad “bukalapak memang cincai” that shows Chinese ethnicity as its theme since Chinese are known for their expertise in trading. Looking at the history and ethnic background of Chinese in Indonesia today, Chinese control the economy in Indonesia. Therefore, it is understandable that many ads use Chinese in their advertisements. Chinese carry the portrayal of rich, diligent, persistent, and skillful in trading. In addition, many advertisements in Indonesia use foreign models (Caucasian) as clients in Indonesia are bulen-minded and using biile on ads is considered more prestigious (Gozali, Achmad Fudholi, and Satibi, 2011).

**Discussion**

The use of ethnicity in advertising is common, and producers should be careful about using ethnicity and culture as a theme that they will use. This is because ethnicities, ethnic groups, races, and cultures are still sensitive issues in many countries,
including in Indonesia. Therefore, producers should be more careful in conveying messages on their ad so that it does not cause conflicts.

Conclusion

Ethnic groups cannot be separated from ethnic stereotypes. Ethnic stereotypes will be found in various aspects of life one of which is in the ad that is often watched by the public. Producers and consumers will look at ads based on ethnic stereotypes. When producers produce ads with ethnic themes then there are ethnic stereotypes that are inherent with the ethnicity, and consumers will see and think about the ad in accordance with ethnic stereotypes attached to them. Moreover, in a country of many ethnic groups, ethnic stereotypes cannot be avoided and will always be attached to certain ethnicities and cultures.

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