

## Conference Paper

# Rabbani's Brand Polarization Strategy in Advertising

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Polarization is now becoming a strategy in campaigning ads. Rabbani as a hijab brand also uses a polarization strategy. On December 25, 2022, Rabbani released an advertisement on the official Instagram. The written narration in the advertisement then causes polarization. The purpose of this study is to describe the polarizing strategy used by Rabbani in a number of its advertisements. This study uses a qualitative methodology and text analysis. The results of the study show that the polarization strategy applied in advertising is effective enough to increase the popularity of the Rabbani brand. After the ad was uploaded, Rabbani immediately became trending in cyberspace. There has been much criticism and blasphemy against Rabbani's ad text, however, the campaigning ads program continues and gets succeeded. Rabbani is building partnerships with SMKs to open Warung Rabbani. Rabbani also won awards from Indonesia WOW Brand 2023 and TOP Brand 2023.

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## 1. Introduction

Rabbani, one of the retail brands for hijab and Muslim clothing in Indonesia, creates advertisements that invite polarization among the public. On December 25, Rabbani released an advertisement on the official Instagram @rabbaniprofesorkerudung. In this ad, apart from having an advertising model stylized with the Rabbani brand, there is also a written narration read by the narrator. The written narration in the advertisement then causes polarization of netizens' opinions towards the text[1].

In the advertisement, it is narrated that the way women dress that is minimal and open can be the cause of sexual harassment and stupid women. Because of this advertisement, Rabbani's name later became a conversation on social media. Even though the advertisement was flooded with blasphemies, it was not the first time Rabbani

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had made a controversial advertisement. Previously, there were many controversial advertisements made by Rabbani and caused polarization[2].

Rabbani is not the only brand that makes controversial advertisements which then causes polarization in society. In many countries, many companies also create controversial advertisements[3]. However, there is a unique story from an advertisement made by Kraft which sells a product under the name Miracle Whip, a spread for sandwiches. Where in the ad, the purpose of making the ad is to create divisions among consumers to love and hate Miracle Whip products. Therefore, the ad is then said to be a polarizing ad. Thanks to these ads, posts about Miracle Whip became trending on social media and posts about Miracle Whip increased by 631% and sales increased by 14% [4].

After Miracle Whip, many similar advertisements followed, including Betty Crocker, Ryanair, Marmite, Strongbow, and others. Thanks to the polarizing advertising that has been created, rapid development has occurred and beat sales from competitors[5]. Negative campaigns and reactions can increase brand awareness and increase sales [6]. However, brand managers and public relations, of course, need to develop a strategy to develop brands to become number one sellers, will not continue to polarize without being able to gain access to various new types of data that are increasingly sophisticated with the development of data in today's new media[7]. That's why this research was conducted.

The purpose of this research is to describe how the polarization strategy is used by Rabbani in the advertisement on December 25, 2022, to build a brand. The purpose of this research is certainly different from previous research. Previous studies that examine brand polarization have been carried out a lot. Starting from the phenomenon carried out by the Miracle Whip advertisement, which was researched by Lisa Monahan et al [8].

In the above research it was found that there are three different parties that can benefit from brand polarization. The first party is the brand itself which is polarized as an independent entity. Second, the brand or public relations team is polarizing. Third are consumers who are eager to engage in brand polarization. The phenomenon of brand polarization with a negative approach to the brand can be turned into a potential business opportunity [9].

Not only in western countries, research on polarization is also studied in eastern countries such as Korea. Jeon [10] examines how to understand the effect of polarization on the rating review and evaluation of a product by looking at the goals and self-concept of consumers who consume a product. The results show that consumers can moderate themselves from polarization because of the context in consuming a product.

But individuals' consumers are also expressive individuals and tend to polarize products, whether they like it or not[11].

Based on some of the previous studies above, research on brand polarization has been carried out a lot. But no one has researched the polarization strategy in Rabbani Ads to build brand rhetoric. That's why this research was conducted. This study also limits the problem only to the strategies used by Rabbani in polarizing brands on social media. The theory used is the theory of polarization and rhetoric in brand building carried out by brand managers or public relations. The place of observation of the research was carried out on the social media of several brands that carry out polarizing advertisements.

## 2. Methode

The research methodology used in this research is qualitative. This type of research method used is descriptive. For the method of analysis using text analysis and literature studies related to brand polarization advertising. This study examines qualitative data such as words, phrases and sentences contained in Rabbani's advertisements using a brand polarization strategy. In addition, qualitative data from the comments column on adverts uploaded on Instagram will also be analyzed using qualitative content analysis methods.

The descriptive qualitative research methodology aims to describe facts and find meaning as a whole and not to be generalized. Qualitative data analysis was carried out inductively based on the facts found to obtain in-depth and meaningful data[12]. Text analysis was carried out to find out the strategy behind writing the Rabbani advertisement script on December 25, 2022 which uses a brand polarization strategy. The researcher conducted a search on Rabbani's Instagram and a number of other media that raised brand polarity in the advertisement. This is done to be able to describe the ideology of meaning contained in advertisements and texts in the comments column studied[13]

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1. Rabbani's RE-ARISE advertisement and Rabbani's success in becoming a WOW Brand 2023

Rabbani's controversial advertisement, which has polarized this research, is just one of the advertisements in a series of other Rabbani advertisements regarding RE-ARISE. RE-ARISE is one of the marketing public relations campaign programs to close the end of 2022 by introducing new Rabbani products in 2023. The RE-ARISE series of advertisements began on December 17, 2022, Rabbani launched the first advertisement entitled Launching Rabbani RE-ARISE. However, the contents of the advertisement displayed do not mention what RE-ARISE is, it only contains polarizing text between carbon or diamond options.

On December 20, 2022, an advertisement labeled RE-ARISE was uploaded again. The text content of the ad contains a metaphorical narrative about precious stones. This second ad is still related to the first ad, but the narrative is different and there is no choice of polarizing words. On December 21, 2022, the third version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded. The third ad also contains metaphorical text. But this time about the diamond stone.

On December 21, 2022, the fourth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded. This ad contains an invitation to join the launching group and watch LIVE IG regarding Pre Launching. On the 22nd, the fifth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded, which contains an announcement of the On The Road Bazaar Convoy program on Friday (23/12/2022) and Saturday (24/12/2023) with the route to be traversed plus various discount offers. This convoy was made in a series of events leading up to the RE-ARISE Launching.

On December 24, the fifth, sixth, and seventh versions of the RE-ARISE advertisement were uploaded. The fifth advertisement contains preparations for the convoy, where one of the ones that was shot was the RE-ARISE inscription emblazoned on the front of the convoy's cars. The sixth advertisement shows footage of the first day's convoy. In all parts of the advertisement, the header Road to RE-ARISE is written on 30 December 22. The seventh advertisement is a reminder advertisement that the Rabbani RE-ARISE 2023 Launching event is only six days away and an invitation to become a participant.

On December 25, the controversial eighth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded. Even though there were many comments that contradicted the contents of the ad, this ad got 4,393 likes and 4,336 comments. This ad was also watched as much as 469 K. The ad begins and ends with a question with a polarizing sentence.

Throughout the ad, polarizing sentences are made clear. The following is a transcript of the ad which is considered controversial and polarized on social media:

Ketika Perempuan berpakaian serba minim,

Jika Terjadi Pelecehan,

Siapakah yang salah?

Jika dilihat dari sudut pandang wanita,

Posisi wanita tidak salah,

karena Setiap Wanita Berhak Menggunakan Pakaian Apapun

Jadi laki-lakinya aja yang mesum

Jika melihat wanita berpakaian minim.

Namun jika dilihat dari sudut pandang pria

Wanita yang Berpakaian Terbuka Itu Bodoh.

Tidak ada Asap, tidak ada Api

Wanita yang Berpakaian Terbuka akan Mengundang Seorang Pria yang Berniat dan Berpikiran jorok.

Tidak Berlaku Untuk Sebaliknya.

Wanita Sehendaknya Menggunakan Pakaian Tertutup

Tidak Memberikan Kesempatan Untuk Pria yang Berfikiran Jorok

Pria Seharusnya Menjaga & Meminimalisir Pandangan yang Mengundang Syahwat.

Pria yang Salah atau Wanitanya yang Bodoh?

While the above narrative was being read, there were two models, a man and a woman who were dressed in the Rabbani brand. However, between the two models, there is also another image insert. For example in the narration: So it's just the men who are perverts. If you see a scantily clad woman, an insert image appears from the internet showing a man whose eyes widen when he sees something. After the Narration was read, the advertisement was closed with the words RE-ARISE and the Rabbani brand logo. After the advertisement above, on the same date version nine of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded which contains an invitation to register to become a participant in the launching of Rabbani RE-ARISE 2023 and reminds us that there are only five days left.

On December 26, 2023, RE-ARISE advertisements for versions ten and eleven were uploaded. The tenth ad contains a reminder that the event is only four days away. The eleventh ad begins with a prologue with a narrative set in the tomb. After that, the

display changed with invitations and free invitations to take part in the RE-ARISE event accompanied by a description of the time and place along with the performers.

On December 27, 2022, the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth RE-ARISE advertisements were uploaded. The twelfth ad contains a call to join the launching of RE-ARISE 2023 rabbani, which is only two days away. The thirteenth ad contains a street interview set in the convoy's activities that have been held the other day. Fill in the street interview between the presenter and Marketing Director Rabbani, Ridwanul Karim, who was promoting the RE-ARISE event. In one of his promotional statements, Ridwan explained that there was a fashion show in the form of a colossal theater. The fourteenth ad contains testimonials from Abi Amir and congratulations for the RE-ARISE event and an invitation to use Rabbani.

On December 28, 2022, the fifteenth and sixteenth versions of RE-ARISE advertisements were uploaded. The fifteenth ad contains a reminder that in two days there will be a grand launching of Rabbani RE-ARISE. The sixteenth ad contains testimonials from the people of Garut to support one of the performers, the Qosidah AL Ikrima Group, to make the RE-ARISE event a success.

On December 29, 2022, the seventeenth and eighteenth versions of RE-ARISE ads were uploaded. The seventeenth ad contains a reminder of the RE-ARISE event which is only one day away. The eighteenth advertisement contains the announcement of a special discount on the price of the RE-ARISE launch at all Rabbani stores throughout Indonesia.

On December 30, 2022, the nineteenth and twentieth versions of RE-ARISE advertisements were uploaded. The nineteenth advertisement containing a reminder that today is the D day of the RE-ARISE event. The twentieth ad contains preparations for the RE-ARISE event directly from the event location.

After the RE-ARISE event, advertisements related to RE-ARISE were still broadcast. On December 31, 2022, the twenty-first and twenty-second versions of the RE-ARISE advertisement were uploaded. The twenty-first advertisement contains promotions with outlet visitors shopping for the last RE-ARISE discount today. The twenty second ad contains a promotion reminding the last day of the RE-ARISE promo.

On January 1, 2023, the twenty-third version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded which contains footage of the RE-ARISE event. On January 2, 2023, the twenty-fourth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded, which contains snippets of the appearance of the performers for the song Qasidah Rabbani. On January 3, 2023, the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-seventh version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded. The twenty-fifth advertisement contains footage

of Wani Rabbani bureaus receiving awards at the RE-ARISE event and invitations to become Rabbani bureaus. The twenty-six advertisements contain testimonials from one of the award-winning Bureaus at the RE-ARISE event and an invitation to become Wani Rabbani Bureau. The twenty-seventh advertisement contains an advertisement for the experience of one of the participants participating in the RE-ARISE event.

On January 4, 2023, the twenty-eighth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded, containing footage of the Rabbani Show fashion theater program which ended with an invitation to watch in full on Youtube Rabbani TV. It was only on January 6 that Rabbani uploaded content that was broadcast by the Kasihsolusi account which contained clarification from Rabbani's Marketing Director, Ridwanul Karim regarding one of the RE-ARISE advertisements uploaded on December 25, 2022 which reaped a lot of polarization on social media. This content received 184 K views with 3,838 likes and 623 comments. In the content containing the interview, Ridwan said that Rabbani was not tendentious to corner women victims of sexual harassment. Ridwan also said that one of the data that causes women to experience sexual harassment is because they wear open clothes. This statement was denied by many netizens who said they experienced harassment even though they wore the hijab.

On January 7, 2023, Rabbani again uploaded the twenty-ninth version of the RE-ARISE ad containing the new product Sarimbit. On January 8, 2023, Rabbani uploaded the thirty-tieth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement whose content was to invite to buy the latest Rabbani RE-ARISE product. On January 14, 2023, the thirty-first version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded which contained a Gathering event with the Bureau and Wani Rabbani Lampung which was accompanied by the bureau's testimony. On January 21, 2023, the thirty-second version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded which contained a Gathering event with the Bureau and Wani Rabbani Indramayu.

On January 24, 2023, the thirty-third version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded, which reminded the Rabbani RE-ARISE program, which promoted the launch of the latest product in February 2023. January 25, 2023, uploaded the thirty-fourth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement containing a reminder of January 30 There will be a Rabbani Launching February 2023 and an invitation to join the join launching group. On January 26, 2023, the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded. The thirty-fifth ad containing an advertisement to enhance the Rabbani RE-ARISE product in February 2023 will launch on January 30 2023 and invites you to register to get a special prize. The thirty-six advertisements contained

advertisements inviting them to join the rabbani group. Launching of Rabbani RE-ARISE in February 2023 and ending with a call to join.

On January 27, 2023, the thirty-seventh version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded again to remind Rabbani RE-ARISE in February 2023 which will take place in four more days. On January 28, 2023, the thirty-eighth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded, which contained a give away at the launching of the Rabbani RE-ARISE product in February 2023. On January 29, 2023, the thirty-ninth version of the RE-ARISE advertisement was uploaded, containing a reminder of one more day to launch Rabbani RE-ARISE February 2023 and announcement of a special gift from Rabbani. Furthermore, advertisements regarding RE-ARISE appear at the end of each month, because at the beginning of the month Rabbani RE-ARISE releases its new product.

After the RE-ARISE advertisement case on December 25, 2023, which invited polarization and Rabbani became the talk of the town on social media. Rabbani seemed to benefit from the many blasphemy that came. Starting with the opening of Warung Rabbani in a number of places. It began with the opening of a rabbani shop at SMKN 1 Arahan Indramayu on January 25 2023, at PGRI Subang Vocational School on March 1 2023, at Kadungora Garut on March 5 2023, at Sukapura Tasik Vocational School on March 10 2023, at Warung Rabbani in Bekasi City, West Java on March 18, 2023, at Warung Rabbani Jambi on March 25, 2023, at Ulul Albab Cirebon Vocational School on April 5, 2023.

Not only that, a number of Rabbani outlets have also made overs with shops that have been renovated, such as in Rabbani Rawamangun Jakarta, Rabbani Sumedang, Rabbani Buah Batu, and Rabbani Dipati Ukur. For these achievements, on May 13 2023, Rabbani received an award in the 2023 Indonesia Wow Brand Award in the Moslem Fashion category. On 9 June 2023, Rabbani also announced that Rabbani will get the 2023 TOP Brand Award.

### **3.2. Brand polarization strategy in the first version of Rabbani RE-ARISE 2023 Ads on 25 December 2022**

In order to make the Rabbani RE-ARISE program successful, Rabbani has prepared a number of marketing strategies using advertisements. One of them, on December 25, 2022, Rabbani's Instagram account @rabbaniprofesorkerudung uploaded a RE-ARISE advert containing a sexual harassment version which contains narrative text read by the narrator with a number of supporting images and ad models. The ad text



contains polarizing words and invites a flood of opinions from a number of groups. There are two opinions that support the ad and those who reject the text in the ad. The polarized groups are women's activist groups, including Komnas Perempuan within it and Rabbani's supporters from among Islamic activists.

There was a polarization of comments on the upload which increased engagement on Rabbani's Instagram. Groups that do not agree, rollicking to provide comments. Likewise support groups also provide comments. In the group that disagrees, there are accounts that invite them to report Rabbani's account so that it disappears from social media. There are also those who are surprised by the attitude of the Rabbani admin who does not delete this ad. Many comments do not agree that open clothing is a cause of sexual harassment, stating that the Rabbani advertisement is a stupid advertisement, many women wearing the hijab who are harassed even in Islamic boarding schools are also places of sexual harassment, and other blasphemous comments.

On the other hand, the polarization of the group that agrees strengthens its loyalty to support Rabbani's advertising idea. There is even a polarizing comment on the Rabbani ad who already knows this ad is a marketing advertisement aimed at increasing the engagement and loyalty of Rabbani consumers because the netizens who are cons are not Rabbani consumers so it will not affect Rabbani's sales turnover. In accordance with the polarization theory, this strategy is implemented to increase sales because there is data that shows who will react and what the consequences of this reaction will be.

Rabbani's Marketing Director, Ridwanul Karim, was later invited to provide clarification regarding the content of the advertisement. One of the invitees is the solution account. This account is a podcast account on Youtube and has Instagram as a medium for promoting the podcast. This account is an account that helps Muslim MSMEs to upgrade. In the interview with the host Kasisolusi, there was a snippet of a podcast ad showing Ridwan's statement regarding data from Komnas Perempuan regarding open clothing being one of the causes of sexual violence. Regarding this statement, Komnas Perempuan reacted on a number of social media and press agencies by responding to data in Komnas Perempuan's annual notes (CATAHU) that did not justify incidents of sexual violence occurring not because of certain clothing. What Rabbani wrote in the advertisement is misleading information and may violate the law.

Reporting from liputan6.com (10/01/2023)[14], Komnas Perempuan delivered four statements to Rabbani, namely (1) the statement in Rabbani's advertisement was a misogynistic act and attached a stigma that women are the cause of sexual violence. (2) Rabbani and Kasisolusi to withdraw the advertisement and apologize for their intention, including the mention of misleading viewers as if the advertising information

came from Komnas Perempuan's data. (3) Request social media YouTubers and/or influencers to cite data on violence against women referring to the official Komnas Perempuan source at [www.komnasperempuan.go.id](http://www.komnasperempuan.go.id). (4) Inviting the business world to be involved in efforts to eliminate violence against women and not to make violence against women an advertising commodity, especially by conveying false information.

There was a polarizing reaction on Instagram and other social media regarding Rabbani's advertisement with the theme of sexual harassment using a brand polarization strategy to increase Rabbani's brand awareness. Where Rabbani in 2023 made a program to launch a new product and needed a controversial advertisement so that the program could go viral and make a profit. What's more, after the case went viral, Rabbani also saw another opportunity to develop a business by collaborating with the world of education, namely SMKs that needed partners so that their students can do independent learning. Plus the moments of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr which are golden moments to make a profit in selling Eid clothes.

#### 4. Conclusion

Rabbani has prepared RE-ARISE Ads with a number of strategies starting from selecting narratives, conducting research so as to obtain valid data on consumer loyalty, timing and being ready to bear the risks that will arise from choosing a brand polarizing advertising strategy. The impact of the excitement that will be caused by advertising has also become one of the choices of risks that are ready to be faced. After the polarizing mutant ad was uploaded, Rabbani immediately became a byword in cyberspace. There has been much criticism and blasphemy against Rabbani's ad text, but the RE-ARISE program continues and gets a warm welcome.

Advertisements that were previously prepared for the RE-ARISE grand launching event on December 30 2023, after the launch is over, the RE-ARISE program will continue every month with various special offers to consumers. Apart from that, Rabbani has also succeeded in building partnerships with SMKs through the independent learning program to open Warung Rabbani in a number of places on the island of Java which are densely populated areas. Other successes of Rabbani also won awards from Indonesia WOW Brand 2023 and TOP Brand 2023.

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