

SUKUN 'SING PENTING DUITE'; REDIFINING CUSTOM IN NEW NORMAL ERA

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Abstract

Recently, many television commercials participate in campaigning the awareness of covid-19 virus spread as well as the implementation of New Normal, which is defined as the time to follow health protocol while maintaining the distance from others, in adapting with the existence of the virus. The commercial of Sukun, in the episode of "Sukun lebaran 2021 "sing penting duite", also partakes in informing public on the significance of celebrating Idul Fitri with the smallest and closest group of people in order to be safe from the virus. This portrayal is unlike Indonesia's decades of customs in celebrating this Islamic Holiday by mudik (going home for lebaran), gathering with many people, and visiting others' houses. In order to analyze this advertisement in relaying positive campaign, this research employs qualitative method specifically Gillian Rose's Visual Methodology. Rose defines meaning of images is completed at three sites; the image itself, the production of the image, and the audience. Meaning of image made by the image itself is selected as approach in gaining more focused analysis. In addition, this research employs Stuart Hall's representation theory regarding the adjustment in celebrating the day. The research finds that the brief commercial employs simple language so that the message becomes informative and persuasive. Hence, "sing penting duite" (as long as the

مستخلص

البحث

Abstract

money is wired) is established as the center of attention. The presented visual which compared the past and today celebration highlights the changing and the effort to adapt with current situation. Afterward, this also presents the happiness of people either in the past or present which signifies the support and empowerment toward the viewer during this global pandemic.

Keywords: Campaign, Custom, Visual methodology, Covid-19, Representation

كلمات

أساسية

Keyword

1. INTRODUCTION (مقدمة)

Early March 2020, Indonesia for the first time announced two positive cases of Covid-19 (Kompas.com, 2020). However, some Indonesian experts have stated that Covid-19 has entered Indonesia since January (Detiknews.com, 2020). The virus from China has also spread to several parts of the world, and caused changes of people's daily life, including customs. One of which is the custom of Idul Fitri (*Lebaran*) in Indonesia. Every *lebaran*, muslim of Indonesia usually celebrate the *lebaran* day in their hometown. This time, the government has banned two times for *mudik*, going home for *lebaran*, including this year.

The pandemic has changed every aspect of our lives. How we live and interact with each other, how we work and communicate, how we move around and travel (UNCTAD, 2020). IOM recorded by 23 March 2021 there were 33712 restrictions imposed by 164 countries, territories, and areas in the data, highlighting the unprecedented rate and scale of the impact on mobility around the world (UNCTAD, 2020). Including Indonesia.

People are forced to create a new way of life, the traditions and customs in 'The New Normal' era. The New Normal is a change of behavior to carry out normal activities by adding health protocols to prevent transmission of Covid-19. The main principle of the new normal itself is to be able to adapt to the new pattern of life. Socially, we will get something new normal or we have to adapt to activities, physical distancing to other people, avoid the crowds, work and school from home, etc. Najib Azca stated that it used to be possible to use technology, but it was still reluctant. With this Covid existence, it disrupts our routine. To survive, we have to build a new culture, new traditions, including new disciplines, and the new social, health, and production discipline is a crisis as well as a great opportunity (Nugroho, 2020).

In response to that situation, the celebration of Lebaran and *Halalbihalal* (family gathering) were held only virtually for the past two years. It is a new phenomenon for the people of Indonesia. The Ramadhan month in 2021 was the same atmosphere as the previous year, in which all Muslims still living in the Covid-19 pandemic. Some activities as the characteristic of Ramadhan were limited by the government as the adaptation of the new normal. Not only that, one of the most controversial issues each year is how *Mudik* is restricted by the government.

Mudik or going home for *lebaran*, is a tradition of Indonesian society to get family gatherings on *Lebaran* day to forgive each other. *Mudik* as part of Indonesian culture contains spiritual and intimate values and becomes a ritual every year. Doina et al stated that the traditional culture of each nation was founded on their intimate relationships based on their living standards, on certain moral qualities, and a rich system of customs and distinct cultural elements of great depth, all connected in our traditional culture on aspects of human existence. They added that customs or ritual practices are one of the essential forms that express the traditions of a nation that

emphasize traditional existence (Doina et al., 2011). Therefore, *Mudik* has become an essential custom of the Indonesian people during *Lebaran*.

Based on the Oxford English Dictionary, the custom is a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something specific to a particular society, place, or time; it is things done habitually. The custom of *Lebaran* or *Idul Fitri* is (Purifying Feast) follows the Islamic month of fasting during *Ramadhan*, called *Puasa* in Indonesian. *Idul Fitri* provides a festive climax including extensive visiting and well wishing. The most crucial ritual act of *Idul Fitri*, however, is an individual plea for forgiveness following status differences. Young and lower status people beg their superiors to pardon them for any offenses (however inadvertent) they may have caused over the past year. This serves as a community reprieve of ill feeling, honors elders and elites, and lightens any sense of guilt for those asking forgiveness. It is the custom of *Lebaran* in Indonesia (Forshee, 2006). Furthermore, Adekola, G stated that beliefs or customs are maintained by traditional religious denominations and church bodies that share history, customs, culture, and, to some extent, the body of teachings (Adekola & Egbo, 2016). Just like in these Islamic traditions.

As a part of *Lebaran* tradition, *Mudik* is marked as one of the most essential rituals in Indonesia, which also affects the people's perspectives that without *Mudik* and family gathering, *Lebaran* celebrations seem incomplete. We can feel these traditions are very valuable when we can't do it because of the pandemic. The pandemic has caused various changes, including gathering activities in the family. During pandemic gathering or *Halalbihalal* is now done virtually. Gathering online or virtually has the same goal as the real gathering in order to *silaturahmi* (meet and greet).

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 emerged, many individuals and households are using Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) to minimize the disruption and circumvent some of the obstacles they face in getting on with their daily lives. Many people are forced to change the way they live and interact with others. Based on ICT-related data more people are now engaging in using the internet to do many activities from home (UNCTAD, 2020). These changing situations and customs are well displayed on the Sukun-Lebaran 2021 'Sing penting duite....!.

Sukun-Lebaran 2021 'Sing penting duite....!' is a 50 second commercial directed by Dimas Djayadinigrat. In a month this commercial has been viewed 36000 times on the Youtube platform. Fear of contagion is leading many to abandon cash in favor of digital payments. Social distancing is prompting organizations to embrace video conferencing, virtual classrooms, and telemedicine at an unprecedented scale (ey.com, 2020). These changing situations are intriguing to explore through the Sukun commercial, to see how *Sukun* commercial represents the changing of customs in the new normal era of the pandemic. This research will reveal the customs that changed before and after the new normal era during *Lebaran*.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (نظريات)

This research observes how this commercial relays certain meaning to the viewers. The representation theory of Stuart hall will be applied to understand the hidden meaning brought by the commercial (Hall, 1997). Caroline Howart declares that representation is something people perform to apprehend the worlds in which they live and, through communicating such understanding, people change these systems of values, ideas and practices into a social reality, for others and for ourselves (Howarth, 2011). Furthermore, representation is the production of meaning through language (Hall, 1997). Based on this definition, language may apply signs to represent and symbolize reference objects, people, or events as well as reference abstract ideas, imaginary things, or fantasy worlds. Hall also suggests the system of representation that consists of meaning (the mind function as a system of mental representation which classifies and organizes the world into meaningful categories) and language (it consists of signs organized into various

relationships). So, "Sukun lebaran 2021 "sing penting duite" brings languages and images containing signs in various connections that should be understood based on logical classification and organization. Accordingly, the commercial's values and concepts should be transformed into social reality so the messages will be comprehended strikingly.

In the art world, covid-19 is emerged not only as a source of inspiration (music, poetry, short story, painting, or novel), this also becomes the object of research. After the covid-19 pandemic hit the world, many kinds of research were conducted on this phenomenon. Brian Callender, Shirlene Obuobi et al. study "COVID-19, comics, and the visual culture of contagion". The research elaborates how Comics, as both a visual medium and cultural product, contribute to the visual culture of the COVID-19 pandemic (Callender et al., 2020). Images of the pandemic in the form of comics serve to inform, provide meaning, and illustrate the covid-19 pandemic. This also proves the role of culture in encountering the virus. Another research related to the comic is done by Nuriarta I wayan. In his article, he suggests that Mice delivers to the public a piece of knowledge to avoid the virus as well as stay safe (Nuriarta, 2020).

Besides, poetry also takes a role in picturing this current global threat. Fachmi Alhadar and Safrudin Amin research Covid-19 poems as a cultural response to the pandemic in Indonesia. They select "Corona Virus", a poetry written by M. Jusuf Kalla, a former vice president of Indonesia, and "Corona Virus Disease 2019", a poem written by Sri Purnomo, the Regent of Sleman Yogyakarta, to be analyzed. The research concludes that those poems are not only personal expression of the authors but also cultural response to covid-19 pandemic (Amin, 2021).

3. METHOD (طريقة \ منهج البحث)

This research is a qualitative research based on data in the form of an advertisement of "Sukun lebaran 2021 "sing penting duite" which is aired on TV as well as Youtube. The visual methodology will be applied to explore this commercial. The visual methodology is practical to deduce and read the visualization of the commerce. Furthermore, Barbour explains that a visual methodology is an approach used to understand and infer images including photography, films, videos, paintings, sculptures, collages, graffiti, advertisements, cartoons, and other works of art (Barbour, 2014). Hence, this approach is suitable for this research. Visual research, as Gillian Rose puts it, observed in three sites; site of self (site of image itself), site of production of an image (the meaning of image was made/ the production of the image), and site of the audience (how the audience understand the work) (Gillian Rose, 2001). To get a deeper understanding of the object of the research, the meaning of the image made by the image itself is chosen as the approach.

Applying site of image itself as a specific visual approach enables this research to analyze the final product, the advertisement "Sukun lebaran 2021 "sing penting duite", thoroughly. The commercial with 50 seconds duration brings a package full of entertaining images and languages. The delivered images and languages are explored based on the issue related to redefining custom which is hidden in the content.

Hence, the data analysis method employs in this research is the content analysis which analyzes documented data, advertisements. As mentioned in the above explanation, the advertisement is approached by a visual methodology which only focuses on the product. Furthermore, representation theory is applied to understanding the advertisement. The meaning is derived from signs on images and languages. The explored meaning is related to the social reality of custom alteration after the hit of the covid-19 pandemic.

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION (بحث ومناقشة)

The advertisement shows how the Indonesian people celebrating *Lebaran* before and after the new normal. How *mudik* was important, but now '*sing penting duit!*' (most importantly the money!) displayed on one of the scenes. The advertisement conveys messages of how people perceiving Idul Fitri. The customs such as celebration and how people give meaning to this sacred day change depending on the situation that happens. The portrayal of this value and act delivered well in this advertisement. This analysis is based on what Barbour said that a visual methodology is an approach used to understand and infer images including photography, films, videos, paintings, sculptures, collages, graffiti, advertisements, cartoons, and other works of art (Barbour, 2014). The analysis then focuses on the visual representation of the advertisement. Since the beginning of the advertisement, we directly know that in this advertisement there are two different customs of *lebaran* practiced by Indonesia Muslims before and after the pandemic, the unchanging customs, and the changing customs.

1. The Unchanging Customs of *Lebaran*

The advertisement of Sukun shows an interesting adaptation of changing customs. *Mudik* or going home for *lebaran* and gathering with family as an annual custom in every Idul Fitri should be replaced with other activity that has limited people and restricts movement. However, the spirit of idul fitri such as togetherness, happiness, laughs and good memory are still alive during this pandemic. The advertisement shows the comparison of old customs that happen before the pandemic and new customs that happen during the pandemic. Although there are some adjustments in how people - or in this case big families - interact with each other, the spirit of togetherness is still the same.



Tapi yang lain-lainnya sama aja. Maaf-maafannya sama. Niat dan ibadahnya juga sama.
(The rests are just the same. Forgiving each other and the pray are still the same)

The advertisement begins by showing how a Muslim and his family prepare for *mudik*. It is a custom that happens every year. The family brings many goods and travel to their hometown by public transportation. The advertisement then shows how *mudik* become a traffic jam all over the road. After arriving home, on the *lebaran* day, they give some money to their relatives. However, those traditions cannot be conducted due to the pandemic. The scenes above show that apart from an old tradition that cannot be conducted this year, the core of idul fitri as part of a religious act where people are free from their sin by giving and asking for forgiveness from each other is still the same. It is a tradition that cannot be changed for whatever condition. Besides that, the tradition that cannot be changed is the idul fitri prayer. In normal conditions, the prayer was conducted in a field. Muslims gathered in the field to hear the preach and pray Idul fitri. However, due to the pandemic, the prayer is conducted in their home with their family.

2. The Changing Customs of *Lebaran*

The scenes in the advertisement clearly show how people perceive the changing situation in their surroundings. This advertisement tries to represent how people accept the changing

customs in celebrating Idul Fitri. It is in line with what Caroline Howart declares that representation is something people perform to apprehend the worlds in which they live and, through communicating such understanding, people change these systems of values, ideas and practices into a social reality, for others and ourselves (Howarth, 2011).

This advertisement begins with some images and scenes of old custom in Idul Fitri (00.00-00.07) with its narrative “dulu kita mudik penting banget – going hometown for *lebaran* used to be the most important thing”. This simple sentence and the images show that the core of Idul Fitri celebration is going hometown with all the hustle surround it. People relate Idul Fitri with *mudik* as a symbol of celebrating Idul Fitri because they can gather with their extended family in their hometown. Hometown is considered as the best place to celebrate Idul Fitri.



In 00.07 the images suddenly change into the new scene. In this scene, there are some people with their simple clothes and traditional ones which depict that the location is in the village where the elderly and extended family live together. The grandma says “sing penting duit – as long as the money is wired” then all people there laugh. This scene shows that the change of people's perspective about how to celebrate Idul Fitri. They know that they can't gather this year. Their relatives who live in the town cannot go back to their hometown as usual. So they accept that uneasy fact by including the humor by saying “as long as the money still wired”. This scene shows that the feeling of warmth and joy among the family is still alive although they have to live in problematic situation.



The comparison between old and new custom of Idul Fitri is expanded by showing the comparative scenes.



Selalu rame kumpul keluarga (Always packed when family gather)

Kalau sekarang mau gak mau yang paling dekat aja (Now, willy nilly, only with the closest ones)

The old custom shows how people celebrate Idul Fitri with their extended family. They will gather in one place – usually in their elder one and do many activities together. This involves all members of the family start from grandparents, parents, children, uncle and aunty, cousins, grandchildren. The picture shows how this big family takes a picture together that shows the generations in the family. The scene then changes into a new activity that only shows three people taking a picture together. They are parents and their son. By looking at this picture, we realize that they celebrate Idul Fitri with a new custom. They look happy although they only celebrate it with a limited number of people. They accept it by saying “willy nilly, only with the closest ones”.



Kalau dulu ada salam tempel (It used to be giving money directly)



Sekarang ada top up saldo (Now, via top up the credit)

The second picture shows the change in the custom of Idul Fitri. *Salam Tempel* or giving money is one of the custom that becomes part of Idul Fitri. The older ones give money to children or the younger ones. The sum is not the main point here. The younger ones gather and sometimes make a line to get the money. This money is given as appreciation because they have done their fasting. This money is also given to share the income bonus that older ones get. Since the pandemic, the younger ones cannot meet most of their extended family so the money is given in a different way. By having wired or using top up system, the younger ones still can enjoy the spirit of *salam tempel*. The custom that was conducted directly in the past now is conducted in a new way. And they are still happy about it.

The advertisement then close the scene with a conclusion message that becomes its message





Lain dulu lain sekarang. Wes jalani dengan ikhlas wae dan tenang karena hari kemenangan sudah datang (It is different than it used to be. Just live with it calmly because the glorious day has come)

This ending scene shows the spirit of acceptance. The situation nowadays cannot be denied so we have to live with some adjustments. The pictures that are put on the wall show that the change already happen. But the narrator said that we have to live with it. Although the restriction to celebrate Idul Fitri with a big amount of people become the rule, celebrating with our small family doesn't reduce the value of Idul Fitri itself

This positive image closes the advertisement and becomes the main point of it. This message conveys strongly through the atmosphere of the advertisement. Everyone here is happy. Nobody shows their sorrow relates to the change of customs in celebrating Idul Fitri.

This research takes a different object of study. If previous researches select poetry or comic to be studied, this research chooses advertisement, "Sukun lebaran 2021 "sing penting duite" (Djayadiningrat, 2021). The background of selection is because the advertisement is short and has wider power to reach society. The short duration is related to efficiency and quality. Wider power aims to deliver the messages successfully. Furthermore, the issue brought by this research is redefining custom after the hit of pandemic. The previous researches focus on how society responds to the virus as well as how to implement the health protocol to avoid the virus. This research brings the idea how the emergence of virus change people life. People globally are forced to adapt and adjust to the new normal era. Such messages are brought by the object of this study, "Sukun lebaran 2021 "sing penting duite".

6. CONCLUSIONS (خلاصة \ خاتمة)

Advertising as a promotion of products can influence the audience. Advertisements can hypnotize and influence viewers through convincing audio-visuals stories, like the Sukun-Lebaran 2021 'Sing penting duite...!' advertisement. The Sukun advertisement as a creative digital product gives a positive aura with a cheerful tone. A negative and sad situation during a pandemic, when many other advertisements show an atmosphere of sadness away from family, showing death due to covid-19, but this ad can show the other side of a pandemic situation, by seeing the positive side. From the analysis, we can see that although the customs of *lebaran* is changing: face-to-face *silaturahmi* into virtual *silaturahmi*, and *salam tempel* (giving money) into top up, the spirit of *lebaran* remain the same.

Today's technological sophistication has been able to provide an alternative in supporting the community to carry out various activities. The culture of gathering and greeting can be changed with video calls and top up money, because the essence of Idul Fitri is the implementation of the main worship “*ibadah*” itself. *Lebaran* in the digital era with only the main part of the family without losing the essence of worship. The positive aura displayed contains the impression to accept the existing situation and see how we adjust to the existing situation, still interpreted with joy and happiness, as throughout the minutes shown, laughter and happiness on the faces of people in advertisements.

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