

---

**COMMODIFICATION OF RELIGION'S VALUE ON INSTAGRAM  
CONTENT-STUDY CASE: SAFI INDONESIA**

**Rizqiani Dian Lestari<sup>1\*</sup>, Ayu Sulistya Putri Sugeng<sup>2</sup>, Fajar Harits<sup>3</sup>**  
UPI Y.A.I Jakarta, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>, Universitas Paramadina Jakarta, Indonesia<sup>2,3</sup>  
Email: rizqianidianlestari@yahoo.com<sup>1\*</sup>, ayusugeng92@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>,  
fajar.santoso@students.paramadina.ac.id<sup>3</sup>

\*Correspondence

---

**ABSTRACT**

**Keywords:** commodification;  
spatialize; structuration;  
religious values; semiotics.

As plenty of 'religious values products' have been sells and have a good market penetration, the writers consider to elaborate on how a brand bringing up the religious values to make their product accepted by market. Indonesia itself, have Islam religion as the majority. Therefore, the Islamic values tend to be accepted by market in Indonesia. This writing aimed to give an explanation and sample of how a brand tried to construct the market's mind using Mosco's theory about Economy Political and Communication through commodification, Spatialize and Structuration; featuring Semiotics analysis by Peirce's, with Qualitative method by observing Safi Indonesia's Instagram content. The writers use constructivism paradigm to observe how the brand build their market's point of view towards a product with religious values. From the observation, the writers found that the symbol of religion have been used by the brand to construct market point of view, and accept the brand aiming a conversion to more sales.



---

**Introduction**

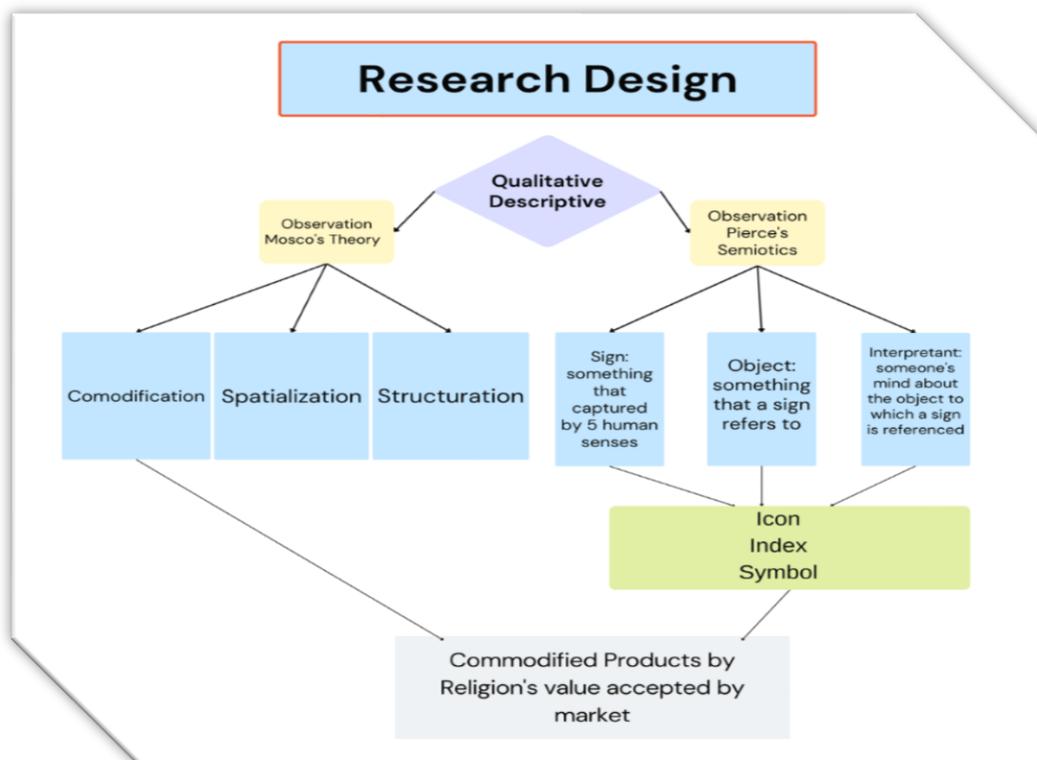
Muslim is a terminology that described the followers of Islam and there are more than two billions of Muslims worldwide (Fatah, Shofaussamawati, & Khusniyah, 2022). Indonesia has 231 millions of Muslims, it considered as the most in the world, followed by Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Due to Indonesia's ministry 86,9% citizen of Indonesia's are Muslim (Haryani, 2019). It means that religion values on product may affects the consumer behaviour and religion values help brand penetrating their market. Karl Marx, a well know critical theory father, had predicted religion would influence behavior on buying and selling (Setya, Gelgel, & Pradipta, 2020). Religion itself is one of human rights, a 'being', that believed as a spirit or creature of what happens in human's life (Kamim, 2017). Religion is something that affect human's behavior and actions, and how someone decided to buy and sell are not exception. In Indonesia, there is an organization that stated something is halal or not, the organization named Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI).

Muslim prefer to buy products that have halal certifications. On a research found that on 350 respondents do have consideration to halal certification and halal awareness, it has a positive effect on consumer decisions (Setyaningsih & Marwansyah, 2019). A segmented market has emerged along with segmented product and services that claimed Islamic values such as cosmetics, skincare, or event any home living stuffs like refrigerator. They implied halal and Islamic values on their advertising that pictured

middle class Muslim (Suhadi & Muslim, 2022). Writer consider that, not only halal certification that has a tangible and physical affection on consumer decision, but also something intangible including symbol and values must be one of the factors that implied a buying and selling activities. This writing tries to picture it with Mosco's statement about commodification, spatialize, and structuration that construct certain economic, political and communication condition. Moreover, this writing will analyze the contents of the Brand with Peirce's Semiotics theory.

### Research Methods

Qualitative data analysis being chosen to give actual example and the analysed data towards the readers. Writers aimed to picture the real phenomenon. The qualitative descriptive data analysis method tries to understand certain phenomenon that happened in real social life that lead us to further summary about certain actions. This writing will elaborate the phenomenon by observing the social media of the Safi's brand, the writers chose Instagram since it has 307 thousand followers and posted 935 content on its feeds (Istighfarin & Yuliani, 2020), matter fact on other social media like TikTok Safi's page only followed by 25 thousand accounts and lesser posts comparing to their Instagram Account [10]. Therefore, the writers tend to examine the Instagram account because it caused effect on more people. The writers will try to see the Commodification, Spatialize and structuration through the Instagram content's Sign, Signifier and Signified object with Semiotics Theory by Pierce Sanders.



Vincent Mosco's Theory about commodification, spatialize and structuration in Economy Politic and Communications will be one of the theory that help us gather more insights to this phenomenon. Mosco's point of view towards Economy Political and Communication is standing on critical points. Mosco sees Commodification, Spatialize and structuration is the three major points in Economic, Politic and Communications. In this case, how Religion's value, being commodified, how religion's follower being spatialized and how religion's context being structured to gather certain interests of the certain stakeholders. Besides that, Peirce's semiotics theory will be one of the tools to take a look on how sign, object and interpretant's connected to each other and resulted a construction that leads to market conversions towards sales on certain brand. Signified object, the sign and the signifier will be seen as the tools on the effort of understanding how the commodification, spatialize and structuration being constructed.

**Theories and insight:**

Semiotics by Peirce - Pierce sends the idea that sign is the first element on the semiotic analysis, the second element is the object or the signified, and the third element is the interpreter which also becomes the medium of the first and the second element [11]. The Signified or object is something that five human senses can feels, sees or hears with the five human being's senses ; the sign is something that also related to some values that will be brought by the constructor and the interpretant is a subjective being with point of view or we can call it as human.

Vincent Mosco's Theory on Economic, Political and Communication study - Vincent Mosco is one of the popular theorist In Economy, Political and Communication study. That brings three concept of Economy, Political and Communication which are, Commodification, Spatialize and Structuration. That three of them cannot be fully separated and correlated one another. How something is being commodified as the constructor's interest, whether it is about money and fees or political interest through communication style. Mosco is criticizing the reality that economy political communication is being controlled by some people who has the capital. This point of view is a constructivism paradigm, which sees something is being constructed. Everything is what you made of it, and who's the man behind it? The constructor who has capital? The certain political or economic interests' which is being taken by some stakeholders? This writing will only be focused on how commodification implies buying and selling activity towards certain products. Mosco's on an interview stated that to examine the process of commodification we have to look after the three distinct agents, the first one is the capitalist who's an expert on capitalizing certain things, the second one is the state (nation-state) which contributing on mobilizing the institutions, laws and public supporting this process, and the third one is the media itself which also owned by certain capital owner, so the media will transform informations into money [12]. Therefore, theres is three main agents in this phenomenon, the capital, the state and the media – the commodification, the spatialize and the structured effort to gain particular interests.

Commodification is a transformational process of message and value to become something that acceptable by market and brings certain amount of profit. The actor that commodified the message and value of course will gain more capital (Ballesteros, Luján, & Pedro, 2010). Due to Karl Marx statement: certain things owned by social agent with some capitalism of production will be seen as commodity, or bunch of something to be sold in order to gain some interests, Vincent Mosco stated on his writing on 1996) [14]. Henri Lefebvre inside his writing *The Production of Space* in 1991, creating space on social is the institutional extension of corporate power in the communication industry. There is some level of spaces, from the most abstracts, the visible ones, and the scientific ones (which is the most absolute space), and will firm into one social space as the effort of spatializing something.

### Results and Discussion

About Safi Indonesia - Safi is actually a brand from Malaysia, which claimed that have their own research institution that developed skincare and beauty products with “halal” and “natural concept. Safi goes to Indonesia’s market officially since it grand launching event on Kota Kasablanka which held on 2018. With halal claim, Safi products accepted by Indonesia’s market since most of Indonesians are Muslim. “Safi even took two years to developed and researched about the product that will be launched in every time”, they claimed, besides the Halal, Natural they also bring that Safi’s Products are well teste and researched before their launching. Safi is a cruelty free brand, that never been used animals as the tester of the products (Ali, 2011).

**Table 1**  
**Semiotics Type of Analysis Towards Safi’s Instagram Posts**

| No | Content   | Type of Analysis | Unit Sign  |
|----|---|------------------|--|
| 1  |  | Icon             | Framed a young beautiful Muslim girl showing a products with “Stay Fresh All Day” caption. |

|          |  |               |  |
|----------|--|---------------|--|
| <p>2</p> |   | <p>Symbol</p> | <p>Hijab as a symbol of Muslim Women. Captioned “<i>Bangga dengan Pilihan Halalku</i>”, try to imply that Safi is a halal brand.</p> |
| <p>3</p> |    | <p>Index</p>  | <p>Framed a you Muslim energetic women that have no worry about pimple and acne skin, due to the treatment by Safi's products.</p>   |
| <p>4</p> | <p>safiindonesia Ladies, mengapa kita perlu night cream? Karena night cream bekerja maksimal pada malam hari untuk menutrisi, memperbaiki sel kulit dan menjaga kelembaban kulit. Di malam hari inilah regenerasi kulit terjadi.</p> <p>Jangan lupa pakai Safi White Expert Replenishing Night Cream malam ini ya, Ladies. Karena kandungan BHA dan Vitamin B3-nya akan menjaga kelembaban kulitmu, sekaligus merawat kulitmu saat kamu tidur. Kulit terasa segar dan tampak lebih cerah saat bangun.</p> <p>Kamu sudah rutin pakai #SafiWhiteExpert Replenishing Night Cream, belum?</p> <p>#SafiIndonesia #SafiResearchInstitute #HalalNaturalTeruji</p> | <p>Index</p>  | <p>The hashtag #HalalNaturalTeruji means that Safi's product is halal, natural and tested.</p>                                       |

6



Symbol

The review about products that symbolize with a girl in hijab.



Liked by perempuankopi and others

safiindonesia Perjalanan mencari serum si Review Hunter! Semua product review dicari: dibaca, ditonton, didengerin... Siapa yang kayak gini nih kalau mau beli serum baru?

Nyari review mulu, kapan action-nyaa? Stay tuned buat cobain yang presisi & nyata hasilnya!

#TheSkintellectual #CariHasilNyata #SafiIndonesia

7



Icon

Products being framed with an influencer who is a switcher (*mualaf*), try to pictured that Safi is being used by *salehah* person.



Liked by picme07 and others

safiindonesia #Repost from @larissachou

Alhamdulillah skarang aku ga perlu khawatir lagi kulit kering karna kena AC terus. solusinya supaya kulitku lembab terhidrasi.

8

Safi safiindonesia

... Icon

Products being framed with hijabi influencer try to pictured that Safi is being used by *salehah* person.



Liked by picme07 and others  
safiindonesia #Repost from @namiramamora

Guys sadar gaksih pake Masker sehari dan dibawah AC terus menerus bikin kulit kita kena Skindemik?

Buat yang gatau skindemik itu apa, skindemik itu masalah kulit yang muncul saat pandemik ini, seperti kulit kemerahan, gatal, super kering. Nah Skindemik ini disebabkan karena kulit kita dehidrasi dan skin barriernya terganggu.

From the previous table, we can see that the brand implies the commodification effort from their content on Social Media Instagram. By adding hashtag #halalnaturalteruji means they claimed that the products are halal, natural and its provenly tested. Besides that, the models or talent that they took to be representation are mostly Muslim girl wearing hijab. The sign were the hijab, the caption, the hashtag and the talents. The signified one is the product that claimed to be halal; and the interpretants is the audiences. Which they convert the audiences to be their market, so they can penetrate to Indonesian's market which have Muslim as the majority. They try to create social space of Religion's believer that will choose to buy halal products, and structured the social to buy the halal-embedded values to the products they sold.

**Table 2**  
**The Triangle of Semiotics**

| Charles Sanders Pierce Semiotics Theory |  |
|---|--|
| Sign                                    | Hijab, Hashtag, Caption, Talents                           |
| Interpretant                            | Audiences and Market: Muslim Girl who seeks halal products |
| Signified/Object                        | Products: Skincare and other beauty stuffs                 |

The Commodification of Religion's Value here is pictured by how the Brand captured and dish up their products with certain claim, especially the halal claim. Then the Brand brings certain Sign to express the claim, by adding Hashtag, choosing the right

interpreting influencers and model, and so on. Then how about the Spatialize? In Economic, Political and communication, Spatialization actor is not the capital owner as this case, Safi Brand, is being elaborate as the Commodification main actor. Yet the Spatialize is merely bringing up by the political elite, Parry Geriant (1969) has defined elite as “small minorities who play an exceptionally influential part in the affairs of society in specific fields” (Adila, 2011). In this case, Religion’s actors have also played the notorious part of this belief that society embraces. The elite is also created space of a set of circumstances that being built as a belief’s elements, in this case, the Halal concept. And the last but not least part of Mosco’s theory is the Structuration that has been created as this Halal concept was brought, the elite has even made a certain institution (MUI) to validated something as “Halal” thing that Muslim can use and consume without being rebel to the reliance.

Basically constructivism is the most basic science for learning knowledge. Constructivism can be interpreted as looking at a science that is not limited by explaining facts, rules and concepts that need to be understood in a standard way, but we as humans need to build that knowledge. From this, we as humans should be able to build and analyze knowledge through research studies, or through experiences that have been passed. With things like that, humans will slowly compile the knowledge they have learned [19].

Religious values are broadly interpreted as a rule that is understood by humans to be able to develop in life so that they can coexist with one another. We also often see how religious values apply to everyday life. Religious values can be divided into written religious values and unwritten religious values. Basically, this religious value always has a reference, namely the book that is adhered to by each individual. Islam with the Koran, Christianity with the Bible, and many others. Even though it is like that, slowly religious values change into religious values that apply to the general public more thoroughly.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

How a Religion Values being Commodified - From the data that previously retrieved an explained we can conclude that the brand delivers message about halal products that they sell to the Muslim audiences to convert their product values to become sales and profit. The halal itself is a certain policy and belief that Muslim try to implement on the daily life basis, to avoid hell, a place that will be used to cursed Muslim who make sins. From the concept of Islamic belief, leads the Muslim to seek halal-ness in everything, including what eat, consume and wear. Therefore, the market is exist and it invites brand to serve halal products. Again, it will be converted to sales and profit from the capital owner, because making products and values from branding, etc do needs capital.

Writer Thought? – a Critical point of view

Through the discussion and observation before, the writer has some point of view towards the phenomenon. How a belief become an opportunity to gain “benefit” by the capital gainer. The actor of commodification process who gain some “benefit” is of course the capital owner, they have the capital to build certain products customised and adjusted as the Muslim’s level of tolerance to accept some products. Moreover, it is the “Halal”

concept that the capital owner try to reach to gain "benefit" that only felt by small amount of interest's stakeholders. In this case of course the investors and business actor behind a brand of product. What they did is for the sake of helping other believer? Maybe they can claimed that statement. But again, in the commodification of something, they try to construct certain condition as they wished, to gain as much as possible benefit for them.

### **Conclusion**

Market penetration with products of religious value, especially Islamic values, is a significant phenomenon in Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim. This paper outlines how brands utilize religious values to make their products more accepted by the market. This is done using Mosco's theory of Political Economy and Communication through commodification, spatialization, and structuration, as well as analyzing semiotics based on Peirce's theory. The research method used was qualitative by observing Safi Indonesia's Instagram content. Observations show that Indonesian Safi brands have used religious symbols to shape market views and increase sales. Products with halal certification are highly desirable by Muslim consumers in Indonesia, and this has become an important factor in influencing consumer decisions. The use of qualitative data analysis, particularly in the form of Safi's Instagram observations, provides concrete examples of how brands leverage religious values to influence market perception. The use of social media, especially Instagram, for marketing strategies also reflects how consumer behavior can be influenced through visual symbols and messages.

Safi Indonesia is a concrete example in this study, where the brand claims to develop skincare products with the concept of "halal" and "natural." The brand is actively entering the Indonesian market, with halal claims and products that have been well tested and researched before launch.

### Bibliography

- Adila, Isma. (2011). Spasialisasi Dalam Ekonomi Politik Komunikasi (Studi Kasus MRA Media). *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 1(1), 93–108.
- Ali, Mohammad. (2011). *Memahami Riset Prilaku dan Sosial*. Pustaka Cendekia Utama.
- Ballesteros, Begoña, Luján, Luis, & Pedro, Joan. (2010). The political economy of communication: power and resistance, an interview with Vincent Mosco. *Global Media Journal*, 10(17), 21–31.
- Fatah, Abdul, Shofaussamawati, Aziizah Khusniyah, & Khusniyah, Aziizah. (2022). Qur'anic Digital Civility: Contemporary Indonesian Muslim Interaction on Social Media. *Jurnal Theologia*, 33(2), 179–202.
- Haryani, Elma. (2019). Intoleransi Dan Resistensi Masyarakat Terhadap Kemajemukan: Studi Kasus Kerukunan Beragama Di Kota Bogor, Jawa Barat. *Harmoni*, 18(2), 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v18i2.405>
- Istighfarin, Firly Rachmah, & Yuliani, Magvira. (2020). MEDIA DAN KOMODIFIKASI KEBERPIHAKAN POLITIK: ANALISA EKONOMI POLITIK MNC MEDIA GROUP. *JURNAL EKONOMI, SOSIAL & HUMANIORA*, 2(01), 56–66.
- Kamim, A. B. M. (2017). *Bertahan di Tengah Guncangan Komodifikasi Agama*.
- Setya, Asla Eva, Gelgel, Ni Made Ras Amanda, & Pradipta, Ade Devia. (2020). Commodification Of Islamic Values In The Ads Of "Hijab Fresh" Body Lotion. *INJECT (Interdisciplinary Journal of Communication)*, 5(1), 73–96. <https://doi.org/10.18326/inject.v5i1.73-96>
- Setyaningsih, Eka Dyah, & Marwansyah, Sofyan. (2019). The effect of halal certification and halal awareness through interest in decisions on buying halal food products. *Syiar Iqtishadi: Journal of Islamic Economics, Finance and Banking*, 3(1), 65–79. <https://doi.org/10.35448/jiec.v3i1.5515>
- Suhadi, Muhammad, & Muslim, Azis. (2022). Islam Dan Produk Halal: Muslimah, Komodifikasi Agama Dan Konsolidasi Identitas Keagamaan Di Indonesia. *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 23(1), 164–176. <https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v23i1.18082>