# Analyzing Creative Strategy Process of Indomie's Ramadan Advertisement Through Creaplex Theory

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**Abstract:- In modern times, advertising is something that has become part of everyday life. With the emergence of advertisements in various media, the frequency of public exposure to advertisements is very high. This causes the public's memory to be low on an advertisement, so companies must produce unique advertisements to be remembered by the public. Indomie made the Ramadan 2020 version of the advert uniquely, namely removing the noodle image. This went viral on social media and was discussed by the wider community. This study discusses the process of planning the 2020 Ramadan version of Indomie advertising strategy through Creaplex Theory to dig deeper into the important points of the process. It was found that understanding the objective, related industry, and target audience is crucial to produce relevant messages.**

**Keywords:-** *Advertisement, Creative Process, Creaplex, Creative Strategy, Marketing Communication Strategy.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Advertising activities are usually done by companies who want to provide information to a mass audience about their products or services and also to persuade the audience to try the advertised products or services (Shimp, 2003). Advertising is necessary because it can boost the company's sales. Therefore, companies are always competing in making attractive advertisements. With the emergence of many new products and services, advertisements have sprung up competing to grab consumer's attention. Therefore, companies must plan strategies, both in terms of messages and visuals, to produce advertisements to be remembered. Communication planning to be delivered to a predetermined target audience (Belch & Belch, 2003) must be done wisely to produce successful advertisements.

Indofood still controls the instant noodle market in Indonesia through the very well-known instant noodle brand, Indomie. Apart from Indonesia, Indomie is also the largest instant noodle company in the world with a production capacity of 16 billion packs per year since 2016 (Arief, 2019). Not only that, Indomie is still the brand most favored by Indonesians since 2002 (Top Brand Award, 2020). In the month of Ramadan in 2020, Indomie aired advertisements with the theme of Ramadan through various media such as television and also social media such as Instagram and YouTube. This Indomie advert takes place in a house, where a man is cooking Indomie instant noodles. While cooking, this man reminded the public to do good even though their stomach was empty due to fasting. However, even though Indomie is a food product, this Ramadan version of Indomie ad does not show instant noodles like other food product advertisements. Through this advertisement, Indomie conveyed a message to continue to do good from home even though the world is being hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Morissan (2010) states that creative advertisements are those with original ideas, artistic and aesthetic values, and are award-winning. Indomie's advertisement won several awards from Citra Pariwara 2020, one of the most prestigious advertising awards in Indonesia. Also, Indomie's unique advertisement was accepted by the public, as evidenced by the uploading of Indomie packaging photos of the Chicken Onion flavor without the picture of noodles which received more than 34,000 tweets from fellow Twitter users, 4 million viewers with around 4,000 comments on the video upload of this ad in Instagram, and publicity from news portals regarding the Ramadan version of Indomie advertisements and special packaging. Box2Box Indonesia, one of the podcast networks in Indonesia that has more than 1 million listeners (Aryanto, 2020) also discussed this ad specifically on one of their podcast episodes.

Therefore, the author is interested in digging deeper into the creative process in making the Ramadan 2020 version of Indomie advertisements using the Creaplex theory. Creaplex is a specific form of communication from which communication activities will produce creative products or services (Sonnenburg, 2004). Creaplex theory itself was created to study how creative collaboration can occur.

Based on the background, this study aims to :
1. Analyze the process of problem finding based on the Creaplex theory in the creative and strategic process of Indomie's advertising
2. Analyze the problem process based on the Creaplex theory in the creative and strategic process of Indomie's advertising
3. Analyze the illumination process based on the Creaplex theory in the creative and strategic process of Indomie's advertising
4. Analyzing the verification process based on the Creaplex theory in the creative and strategic process of Indomie's advertising

## II. CONCEPTUAL AND LITERATURE

### A. Creaplex Theory

The Creaplex created by Sonnenburg (2004) discusses communication patterns specifically in a creative process. To be precise, Creaplex is a communication activity by collaborators (communicators) that results in collaboration in a creative context. This theory aims to produce creative products or services.

Sonnenburg explained that three types of communication occur in the Creaplex process, face-to-face interaction, tool-mediated interaction, and tool-mediated communication. Face-to-face interaction is a real-time, direct communication, and is not mediated by any media or tools. Tool-mediated interaction is a type of communication similar to face-to-face interaction, which is real-time, direct communication, but done through certain media or tools. Whereas tool-mediated communication, is a communication type that is carried out indirectly through an intermediary for certain tools or media, and usually has a time lag so that no interaction occurs in real time.
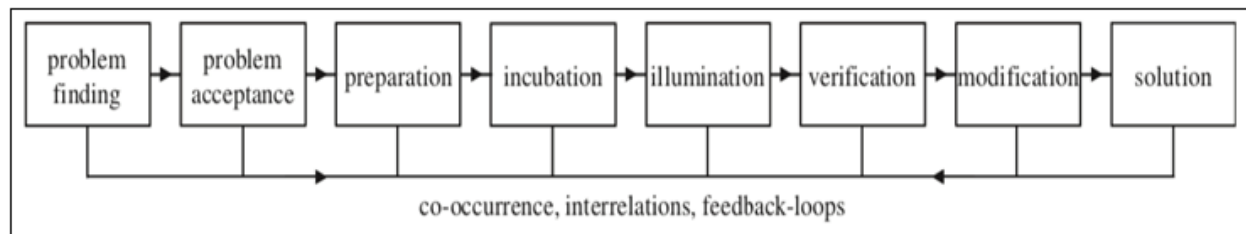


Fig. 1. Creaplex Process Framework

According to Sonnenburg (2004), Creaplex begins with problem finding. Next, at the problem acceptance stage, collaborators will further discuss the predetermined problem and share information so that everyone has the same understanding of the related problems. After having the same understanding, collaborators are going to start the brainstorming process. This stage is known as preparation. In the preparation stage, collaborators often feel 'bored' so that individual incubation is required.

In the illumination stage, collaborators will start the discussion until they find a solution. But before the final solution is decided, it must first be ascertained whether it is appropriate, this is verification. If it is a suitable solution, a modification stage will be carried out where it is reviewed whether any details still need adjustments. Finally, solutions are the final stages of Creaplex where the final solution has been determined and results in a product or service.

### B. Advertising

According to Kotler (2018), advertising is a form of promotion of ideas, products, or services carried out by identified sponsors. Advertising is an information medium that is made to attract consumer interest, is original and has distinctive characteristics, and is persuasive so consumers are voluntarily interested in taking action according to what advertisers want (Jefkins, 1997 ). Advertising has several functions (Shimp, 2003) such as informing, persuading, reminding, and adding value.

However, the advertising medium has evolved a lot and is different since it first appeared. Edwards (2002) defines New Media as a digital communication medium, including the Internet. With the emergence of new media, advertising is now something found in everyday life. As the internet has become the primary need of everyone, advertisers are now using it too. The purpose of advertising on the internet does not show a difference from advertising on conventional media, namely disseminating information, creating awareness, research objectives, creating perceptions, testing products, improving services, and increasing distribution (Morissan, 2010).

### C. State of The Art

In the United Kingdom, Turnbull and Wheeler (2015) examined the creative process that occurs in the world of advertising agencies in the United Kingdom. Turnbull and Wheeler found similarities in the creative process stages in the advertising industry with the creative process stages in organizations in general. However, Turnbull and Wheeler did not discuss the process of forming messages and creative ideas specifically.

In contrast to Turnbull and Wheeler's research, Stuhlfault and Bergh (2014) examined the process of forming messages and creative ideas in specific advertising planning. In their research, Stuhlfault and Bergh found the consistency of the framework proposed by Hyatt (2000) regarding metaphors used in creative thinking, namely (1) perception, the ability to digest problems, (2) movement, a creative process that is described as a journey in exploring existing problems, and (3) object manipulation, the process of restoring data into ideas.

Different but still similar studies were conducted in France (Taylor, Hoy, & Haley, 2013). This study found that there are several factors that make an advertisement distinctive in France, namely (1) la seduction, which means that the advertisement can attract and arouse the appetite of the audience, (2) le spectacle which means the advertisement is made artistically and beautifully like opera or stage play, (3) l'humour which means humor, and (4) l'amour which means romantic.

According to Parker, Ang, and Koslow (2016), to produce attractive advertisements requires special information which is often called insight. According to research conducted

in Sydney, Australia, insight is processing data and information about the target audience or consumers so that they can be used in the next creative process. The results of this study indicate that to gain insight, research, personal knowledge and experience are used, and external data sources which will later be processed into insights. However, this study also found that there is no definite formula for insight because one and the other must be different, but there are several qualities that an insight must have, namely originality, level of relevance to consumers, usability, and vision. These things must be possessed by an insight so that these insights can be used in the next ad planning.

## III. METHODS

Data collecting in this study will use in-depth interview with parties directly involved in the planning process for the 2020 Ramadan version of Indomie's advertisement, Zahrathia from ROMP as one of the agencies that collaborate with Indomie, and also Emil Sandru as one of the judges for the Creative Agency category at Citra Pariwara 2020. In-depth interviews with two sources will be conducted via Google Meets. This is qualitative data collection technique and is categorized as primary data (Kabir, 2016).

In addition, researchers will also use secondary data or indirect data (Sugiyono, 2016). Secondary data will be obtained through internet research to support the data so that the quality of the information presented is stronger.

The secondary data used in one of the podcast episodes belonging to Box2Box and ROMP, namely ngeROMPi. ngeROMPi is a collaborative podcast between ROMP Agency and Box2Box that discusses advertising topics with expert practitioners in their fields. In one of the episodes, episode 5, #ngeROMPi discussed in depth the planning process for the Ramadan 2020 version of Indomie's advertisement. This episode invites two speakers who are directly involved in making the Indomie ad for the Ramadan 2020 version, Afianto Makmun, namely Strategic Creative Lead from ROMP, and Axton Salim, namely Director of PT Indofood Sukses Makmur.

Then the researchers will use interactive data analysis techniques coined by Miles and Huberman. Data analysis activities in qualitative research are carried out interactively and continuously until the data is saturated (Sugiyono, 2016).

## IV. RESULTS

To obtain data, in-depth interviews were done with one of the ROMP team members, Zahrathia as ROMP's Account Executive, a member of the agency team involved in the production process of the Indomie ad version of "Where's The Noodle ?!". To get a different perspective, an in-depth interview was also conducted with Sandru Emil, a member of the Citra Pariawara 2020 jury in the Creative Agency field. Sandru Emil is the Co-Founder and Creative Lead at a local agency, Ambilhati, which has been in the advertising world since 2005 and has produced advertisements that have also been viral on social media before.

Based on previous research questions, questions that were asked during in-depth interviews were based on the four stages in the Creaplex theory framework, namely problem finding, problem acceptance, illumination, and verification.

### A. Problem Finding

Problem finding is the initial stage of Creaplex. It is very crucial because it functions as the stage of delivering information about the objectives, namely the basis of the advertising strategy. In this context, the most appropriate problem finding emerged from the client, the Indomie marketing team, because it is determined based on the business problem to be solved.

Axton Salim himself, as the Director of PT Indofood Sukses Makmur said on the ngeROMPi podcast that objectives must arise to solve business problems. This is following what representatives of the ROMP team expressed, "Actually, the details of making advertisements related to the objectives all come from the client". There are two objectives to be achieved, namely communication objectives and business objectives as described by the ROMP team.

Also, the month of Ramadan is a great opportunity for Indomie to reap more profits from product sales. As explained by Afianto on the ngeROMPi podcast, "When we first thought for this advertisement, we wanted to make the product as the center of the conversation, not even the advertisement", which became their sole principal for the whole "Where's My Noodle?" idea.

### B. Problem Acceptance

The next process is problem accepting, the stage where the ROMP team and Indomie marketing team hold discussions to understand the objectives better. In line with what was expressed by Sandru as the judge of Citra Pariwara 2020, "The big question that must be answered before we do anything, even long before brainstorming, is that we all have to know and agree on the problems we have to answer", Sandru considers this stage as a crucial stage because if the ROMP team's understanding of the existing objectives is not correct, then the next process will not run smoothly and the resulting advertisements will not be aligned with the objectives previously given by Indomie team.

To understand the objectives more thoroughly, ROMP team members carry out daily observations and collect data from external parties such as Google with Winning Ramadan with Google regarding industry trends and changes in audience media consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the data analysis process, the ROMP team representative said that "From the existing data, we (the account team and the strategic planner team) will discuss it ourselves first and take a summary, what points work in the audience". The results of data analysis that are conveyed to all team members after the data analysis process are important, namely only conveying consumer insights in the form of points and summaries so that all team members can understand it more easily.

*C. Illumination*

The questions in this section refer to the discussion and brainstorming of the strategic planning process. Based on the interviews with resource persons from the ROMP team, the brainstorming process was carried out face-to-face for several months attended by all members of the ROMP team. In the discussion, a representative from the ROMP team explained "Actually the first one must answer the client brief, then the second data analysis is also very important because all the clients I have handled are very data-based".

ROMP collects and analyzes data using Indomie's internal data, Nielsen's Brand Health Test (BHT), Winning Ramadan with Google by Google, as well as data from other external parties regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the industry because advertisements were displayed in the middle of the pandemic. Another thing that is not in the form of physical data but no less important is said by Afianto "Observation from home, we see friends, family, it influences us to combine it later when determining consumer insight."

While analyzing the data, the ROMP team representative explained "If we see on TV, all the brands that talk about kindness. It has become very basic, we can't even remember who advertise it". From this phenomenon, the ROMP team concluded that interpreting data must be done in a very precise and unique way. Finally, the ROMP team decided to take part in bringing a message of kindness, but in a different way.

Next, they combined the conclusions from the industry trends with Indomie's consumer insight. Indonesia itself is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, even 87.2% of Indonesia's population is Muslim (Kusnandar, 2019). From this fact, the ROMP team began to pay attention to the habits of Indonesian people in Ramadan, such as "In Indonesia, everyone appreciates people who fast, we can see from the warteg to the big restaurant that every month of Ramadan is certain if it's still not yet if they break their fast, they will cover the restaurant window with a curtain to respect people who are fasting so that people are not tempted. "It turned out that the ROMP team realized that respecting fasting Muslims is a good thing in itself.

Coupled with the unique habit of covering restaurant windows that Indonesians practice every month of Ramadan, Indomie finally decided to use their advertisement this time to do good. The concept that finally emerged was the result of several things during the discussion process that the ROMP team paid attention to, as explained during the interview, "We must be careful to see who our audience is, what is trending, and what our audience wants and likes." According to the ROMP team, relevant consumer insight plays a very important and key role, apart from answering the client's objectives, to make an advertisement successful.

This advertising concept was successful not only because of the collaboration between the ROMP team and the Indomie marketing team, but also the support from the team from Havas as the media agency. Taking the consumer insight points regarding the blinds closing until the breaking of the fast, the ROMP team was inspired to carry out ad serving in a different way and based on these insights. From the existing insight and supported by the capability of the media team, the ROMP team finally proposed to serve ads without noodles at the time before breaking the fast, and advertisements with noodles at the time after breaking the fast.

*D. Verification*

According to the informants, the idea for this advertisement had emerged in 2018, and was originally planned for the 2019 Ramadan ad. In 2018, the concept of "Where's My Noodle?" has not been discussed thoroughly. Going from consumer insight regarding warteg covering food with a curtain during fasting hours, at that time one of the team members made a picture to upload to Indomie's Instagram account. The image created is a greeting congratulating the fasting service with the image of the noodle removed. Quoting from representatives of the ROMP team, it turns out that the image received a very good unexpected response from the community. ROMP finally used the social experiment above as a database when raising the concept of "Where's My Noodle?" as one of the three ideas brought up when submitting a proposal for the 2020 Ramadan version of the Indomie advertisement idea.

Another reason for the concept of why "Where's My Noodle?" was chosen was because, in addition to being creative, this concept also answered the two objectives, communication objectives and business objectives. The communication objective, namely owning the Ramadan moment, is answered through a creative advertising concept that focuses on the product itself. Meanwhile, the business objective given, namely increasing sales in the month of Ramadan, is answered through an extension of the advertising concept "Where's My Noodle?" which can be executed through Indomie Fried variants and special packaged Onion Chicken Sauce which is only sold in the month of Ramadan.

## V. DISCUSSION

Creaplex itself is a form or communication activity that specifically occurs in a creative context. Sonnenburg (2004) describes three types of communication that can occur in the Creaplex process. The planning for Indomie advertisements was mainly done through face-to-face interaction and tool-mediated communication. This is because the planning for the Indomie 2020 version of the Ramadan ad strategy has been carried out since the end of 2019, where both parties can still interact face-to-face for discussions. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the next communication process was carried out through online meetings which were classified as tool-mediated interactions.

Creaplex starts from the emergence of problems and ends with solutions in the form of theories, works or art products, or services (Sonnenburg, 2004). The Creaplex situation itself is considered ideal when it starts with the emergence of a problem and ends with a solution. The initial stage where problems arise is called the stage of problem finding. In the context of planning the 2020 Ramadan version of Indomie's advertisement, the stage of problem finding was carried out by the Indomie team.

Sonnenburg (2004) himself explained that understanding is a very important stage in the Creaplex process because it will affect the discussion process that follows. In the Ramadan 2020 version of Indomie's advertisement planning, the problem acceptance stage took place through a discussion process between the agency represented by the Account team and the Creative team and the Indomie team represented by the marketing team, to understand the previously given objectives. Social experiments and data processing from external parties were also carried out to further understand the objectives given. In this context, problem acceptance is not to only understand the objectives but to understand the overall industry and target audience to be addressed.

In the illumination stage, discussions and a brainstorming process were carried out which became the core of the Ramadan 2020 version of the Indomie advertising strategy planning. In the case of Indomie's 2020 version of the Ramadan ad strategy planning, the discussion process regarding strategic planning was more dominant through face-to-face interactions. According to sources, the 2020 version of Indomie's advertising strategy planning has been carried out since November 2019. Sonnenburg (2004) quoted that whatever the participants think of the discussion is not relevant in the Creaplex communication process. Only things that are said are relevant and can be considered later. In the discussion process that took place, according to the source, all team members were directly and actively involved in discussions that took place. The involvement of all team members, starting from the Indomie team, the entire ROMP team, and the media team are what makes planning both the concept and the execution of this advertising idea maximized.

According to Sonnenburg (2004), the quality of the idea that emerges as a solution is very important in the Creaplex process. In the context of planning the 2020 Ramadan version of Indomie's advertising strategy, it can be seen that the ideas that have emerged and are finally used have answered the problems or objectives given at the problem-finding stage. The verification stage that is usually carried out at the end of the Creaplex process is carried out differently in this case. Social experiments are one of the important indicators in the approval of the advertising concept "Where's My Noodle?" as this was done in Ramadan 2019, long before this idea was proposed for Ramadan advertisements in 2020. However, Creaplex itself, even though the framework is linear, is not a linear process. The Creaplex process can go back and forth in the process, so even though it is unusual, the verification proess that occurs is still per the existing Creaplex process.

# VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The planning for the Indomie advertising strategy for the 2020 Ramadan version is aligned with the existing stages in the Creaplex process. The first stage of Creaplex, namely problem finding, was facilitated by the Indomie marketing team through communication objectives and business objectives. Matters such as answering business problems stated in business objectives and communication objectives must be the top priority in advertising, therefore understanding the brief given by the client is very important. This is in line with the problem acceptance stages that exist in the Creaplex process.

For the illumination stage itself, which is the core of the brainstorming and discussion process, this stage is important because it is at this stage that data interpretation occurs which is the result of a combination of various data sources, ranging from personal observation, internal data of Indomie client companies, and supporting external data. . It can be seen from the planning of the Indomie 2020 Ramadan version of the advertising strategy that the interpretation of data that is unique, but must remain relevant, is an important key in creating successful advertisements to answer business problems from clients. Data interpretation combined with interesting consumer insights makes the concept of "Where's My Noodle?" a unique concept but still relevant to the situation and the target audience you want to target.

The final stage, namely verification, is a little different in the case of planning the Indomie advertising strategy for the 2020 version of Ramadan. The social experiment by uploading an image of Indomie packaging without a picture of noodles carried out in Ramadan in 2019 is the basis for why this idea was finally approved. This is an execution that is not commonly done because it is not done linearly in stages. However, even though Creaplex itself has a linear framework, in reality, the Creaplex process is a process that can be done in back and forth steps.

As a recommendation for the next research, it can be continued with the development of the Creaplex theory which focuses on aspects of problem acceptance and illumination. This is because the analysis of the research results shows that these two stages are important and are at the core of the success of the advertisements produced. Further research can develop this research by using several examples of advertisements with different teams to prove whether the stages of problem acceptance and illumination are also crucial stages for the success of an advertisement.

Meanwhile, practical recommendations that can be given to advertising practitioners in the future are to create more identical ideas that only the brand can do. Although the Ramadan 2020 version of Indomie's advertisement is a very good advertisement, as evidenced by the various awards and conversations that have occurred on social media and the internet, this idea can be carried out by other instant noodle brands. This led to the concept of "Where's My Noodle?" less synonymous with Indomie as a brand. In the future, it would be nice if other brands could develop ideas that are more identical to the brand itself and cannot be used by other brands.

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