

Psychological Dynamics in the Creative Process of Copywriters in the making of Advertisements

Klaudia Mustika Wungu¹, Andik Matulesy², Suryanto³

Magister Psikologi Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya^{1,2}, Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Airlangga³

klaudia_s2@untag-sby.ac.id¹, andikmatulesy@untag-sby.ac.id², suryanto@psikologi.unair.ac.id³

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe: (1) the creative process of the copywriter in making advertisements, (2) the factors that hinder the creative process in making advertisements, (3) the factors that support the creative process. This study is based on Guilford's theory which divides human thought processes into two types: divergent and convergent. This study uses a qualitative approach through observation and interviews. The subjects of this study were 3 media workers who worked as ad copywriters, aged between 25-40 years and were male & female. The results of this study indicate the copywriter as a creative person. The creative process that occurs when making advertisements in the form of briefings, brainstorming, and execution.

Keywords: psychological dynamics, Creative Process, Copywriter

INTRODUCTION

The development of the mass media industry has made Ad agencies grow more rapidly and compete to make interesting and different advertisements. Even though the development of technology is getting more and more widespread, and internet users are getting more and more popular, the internet cannot compete with the existence of television in Indonesia. Television is considered still effective in spreading information and developing business activities. As technology develops and advertising is increasingly needed as a way to introduce business to the wider community, advertisements are now increasingly varied in displaying and introducing products in such a way as to influence consumers to the extent of buying these products.

Television advertising is a series of television shows that are made and paid for by a business entity to deliver a message, usually to market a product or just announce it. Television commercials first aired in the United States on July 1, 1941. Today many television advertisements are broadcast in the form of short advertisements for a while, ranging from five seconds to several minutes (this includes the same ad duration as most television shows, usually in the form of infomercials). Advertising like this is used to promote various products, services, announcements, or ideas.

The first TV ad in the world came from the United States, on July 1, 1941, on the WNBT channel New York station (now WNBC) before the basketball match between the Brooklyn Dodgers against the Philadelphia Phillies. The ad is a Bulova watch ad. [“Imagery For Profit” R.W. Stewart, New York Times, July 6, 1941] and to make the ad interesting, of course, there is a process that occurs so that the advertisement can touch not only the cognitive side of the viewer but also the affection (feelings) and behavior (actions).

The history of copywriting proves that, over time, copywriting became as much about the textual application of consumer analysis as it is about the art of storytelling. Copywriting is first about selling a product or service, but the method by which this is done has long been deeply rooted in the human desire for storytelling (Chartrand, 2008). To most effectively sell a thing, a service, or an idea, it is often best to approach the sale as if it were a story.

Likewise, media designers also tell stories. These stories are largely visual, attracting interest with structure, color, and flair. The media designer attempts to weave their narrative through a series of ideals and end goals that are either dictated to them or determined by them. In working with copywriters, art director can be elevated with greater meaning.

In every ad, there must be a creative team that makes the ad. The smallest creative team usually consists of copywriters and art directors. It is this creative team that converts a product or service product into one ad that can be seen on television, YouTube, Instagram or other electronic online media. and how the words in each ad are made so different and interesting that sometimes odd it is very interesting to be studied. that's why copywriters are needed to make the ads come true.

Art directors and copywriters do not develop new ideas for advertising narratives in isolation from the world outside an agency's walls. While personal experience plays a role in their creative process, the knowledge and inspiration gathered through media channels exert considerable influence on the work they produce. This condition has been widely recognized by stage-based models of creativity that begin with a research phase that involves accessing informational 'raw materials' from a broad spectrum of sources (Young 2003; Belch et al. 2014 in Baker 2018).

Based on the problems that have been described above, the research question arises namely; (1) how the creative process of copywriters in making advertisements, (2) factors that block the creative process in making advertisements, (3) factors that support the creative process. So that researchers are interested in conducting research with the title "Psychological Dynamics When the Creative Process of Copywriters in Making Advertisements"

COPYWRITER

Based on the term advertising, copywriting is taken from the word copy, (Sandra et al, 2011: 473). A copy is the text of an ad or words spoken by people in the ad. So it can be interpreted, Copywriting is a process to create the ad text. According to experts, Frank Jefkins (2004) in his book explained that "Copywriting is the art of writing the most persuasive and powerful sales messages."

In marketing communication agencies, creative practitioners' peers, such as art directors, copywriters, and creative directors, are the people who initially pass judgment as to whether an ad exhibits creative excellence (Nixon 2006). However, elevating a brand message or identity piece with copywriting is far from a simple process. A more established brand may have clear guidelines that copywriters and media designers alike can follow. This usually comes in the form of a book or manual detailing the ways in which one should handle imagery, typography, color, tone, and more (Felton, 2013).

CREATIVE

Creativity has been seen as motivation (Kris, 1952), blind variation (Campbell, 1960: Simonton, 2011), divergent thinking (Dollinger, Urban, & James, 2004; Torrance, 1972), an ability to discover new problems (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), a complex phenomenon as a journey from an idea to a product (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988), as novel and useful (Amabile & Pratt, 2016), as a distinct cognitive capacity (Ward, Smith, & Finke, 1999), and an emergence of new ideas through experimentation (Jones, Svejnova, Pedersen, & Townley, 2016). (in Walia; 2019)

According to Rhodes, four aspects indicate the existence of creativity. The four aspects are the creative person, the creative process, the creative product, and the creative press or environment. These four aspects are called the Four P's of Creativity: Person, Process, Product, and Press. The four are related as follows: a creative person who engages himself in the creative process, with the support of a motivator or creative environment, will produce creative products (Munandar, 1999).

The definition of creativity is always associated with one or more of these factors. According to Rhodes, who has analyzed more than 40 definitions of creativity, creativity is generally formulated in personal terms, processes, and products. The definition of creativity in terms of pushes (press) or the environment is another review that he offers, namely that there are personal motivating factors (motivations) and external motivators (environment) that direct individuals to creative behavior (Munandar, 1999).

Younger creatives use divergent ideas to challenge older colleagues and the existing order to create their own identity that improves their chances of success. How the efficiency and effectiveness of agency productivity are affected by the social roles acted out by creatives (Hackley and Kover 2007). and to advance their careers (Nixon in Stuhlfaut 2013).

CREATIVE PROCESS

The definition that emphasizes the process, among others, was proposed by Torrance (Langgulong, 1991) which states, "Creativity is a process that contains sensitivity to problems and gaps (gaps) in a particular field, then forms some thoughts or hypotheses to solve these problems. , test the validity of this hypothesis, and convey the results to others".

Among the various models of the creative process (for a review, see Lubart, 2000) many are based on the concept of iterations or complementarity between two main sets of subprocesses: one in charge of idea production and synthesis, and another in charge of idea evaluation and selection. Such theories have a long tradition in psychology, coming from various perspectives such as cognitive psychology (e.g., Finke, Ward, & Smith, 1992; Guilford, 1956, 1957), evolutionary psychology (e.g., Campbell, 1960; Simonton, 1999), psychoanalysis (e.g., Kris, 1952; Suler, 1980), and organizational psychology (e.g., Treffinger, Isaksen, & Stead-Dorval, 2006) (eg. Furst 2002).

With other formulations, the definition can also be seen as a model of the creative process which is divided into four stages: 1 Be aware of problems 2 Arrange hypotheses 3 test hypotheses 4 Make reports It seems clear that the above process is similar or even similar to the steps in the scientific method. The steps generally accepted in the scientific method, apart from several variations in the formulation, are: 1) formulating the problem; 2) collecting data; 3) formulating hypotheses; 4) test the hypothesis by observation or experiment; 5) conclude. Some psychologists doubt this kind of creative process model can be applied to all forms of creative work. One objection that arises is that creativity becomes no different from the process of problem-solving. Taylor (in Langgulong, 1991) states, "There is a kind of confusion between creativity and problem-solving. Some creators do not gather enough data in the field in which they work or try to make hypotheses, but let their minds wander freely in that field. This is what amazes his friends. "

Hilgard (Langgulong, 1991) supports Taylor's opinion by stating, "There are various solutions that we do not judge according to their validity, but according to their authenticity (originality). Of course, there are works of art in the fields of literature and music that are not subject to the form of problem-solving. "The last sentence from Hilgard can be found for example in the creation of poetry and songs. Poetry and songs are not always born from a process prepared in advance. Often it just appears without being planned, without being intended, without thinking, without even wanting. For example, a heartbroken young man, without intending to make poetry, suddenly poetic sentences just appear in his mind. If the young man is a poet or someone accustomed to writing poetry, this event can be understood as a result of the preparation process he has carried out for years in his discipline and practice. For a poet, every moment or period in his life can be seen as an incubation period, where he will always be ready to receive any inspiration (insight) that arises from that phase. But this kind of case is not uncommon for people who have never written poetry.

Against this objection, it might be possible to say that the problem in the context of creativity is a problem in the broadest sense. Every form of a gap between hope or desire and reality, that is the problem. Abd. Ghafar stated (Langgulung, 1991), "There is no fundamental difference between the form of problem-solving and the process of creativity."

One thing that distinguishes the creative process from solving problems is usually the element of imagination. According to Vinacke (Suharnan, 2005), creative processes or activities can be well understood if understood as a combination of problem-solving and imagination. Although in the process includes some information or data, a creative person will be guided by fantasy factors rather than the information. So don't be surprised if in the end an original, unusual solution to a problem is obtained.

Unlike the two models above, but can still be classified in terms of the process, is Guilford's theory that sees creativity as a way of thinking. Guilford introduced two types of thinking called convergent and divergent. Convergent ways of thinking look for the most appropriate way to solve problems also called analytical and critical thinking. Divergent ways of thinking treat various alternative solutions to problems with the same attitude or think in ways that are out of the ordinary. More specifically, divergent ways of thinking involve certain intellectual abilities, which Guilford breaks down into four:

1. Fluency is the ability to produce many ideas.
2. Flexibility (flexibility), which is the ability to give ideas from diverse categories or see things from various points of view.
3. Elaboration (elaboration), is the ability to break down the main idea into smaller ideas.
4. Originality, or unusual thinking, which is to think about something that people have not yet thought of or are not the same as the thoughts of people in general (Suharnan, 2005).

This divergent way of thinking is then made into a synonym of creativity. For example, Munandar (1999) states, "Creativity is the ability that reflects fluency, flexibility, and originality in thinking, as well as the ability to elaborate (develop, enrich, detail) an idea." Other terms that are often considered similar to divergent thinking such as lateral thinking flexible thinking and fluid intelligence. Popular psychology often links creativity or divergent thinking to right brain performance; on the contrary, the left brain is associated with convergent thinking.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research This study uses a qualitative approach. In this study, 3 people were selected using purposive sampling technique, which is based on criteria determined by the researchers, namely: (1) male or female media workers aged 25-35 years old, (2) working as copywriters.

I found this copywriter in the LinkedIn application and, I contacted them one by one and asked whether they would be informants in this research. The first participant was male, aged 35 years and had been a copywriter for 8 years. he has won several domestic and foreign awards for the copies that he made. the second informant was a 31-year-old male, working as a copywriter for 2 years, he is the one who creates the tokopedia tagline #MulaiAjaDulu. The third informant was a 26-year-old woman who had worked as a copywriter for 2 years, successfully creating a campaign to raise humanitarian funds within 1 hour.

The data collection method in this research is to use the interview method. While for the data analysis Creswell (2013) states there are 6 stages: processing data, reading the entire data, describing and presenting categorization in the form of description, and finally interpreting the data.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research on 3 informants who work as copywriters data obtained in the form of interviews results that the creative process they feel and live in broad outline is in the form of; Brief, Brainstorming & execution. But on the way, these 3 things are still detailed and have other details. And they also agree that what makes the creative process intertwined are qualified references and data, because, without data and references, it would be very difficult for them to be able to make a good copy for TVC (Television Commercial) advertisements. Radio, website / online advertising, etc.

Just like participant no. 1 who been working as a copywriter for 8 year, he says that *“The creative process, from the client brief down to the agency, the agency then made the same planner first, what communication after that then down to the creative team. Well, to be more creative to creative communication, not more to marketing, usually if more to the marketing planner and account (executive). That’s the usual. The process ... it’s usually straightforward, we already know what the communication is going to be like, brainstorming right away, we want the execution like the important thing is still on the brief. So it doesn’t ... it doesn’t go anywhere, the brief becomes a reference to make the execution like, is it humor, is it touchy...”*

On the other hands, participant no.2 says that *“The creative process; first we get a brief from the client. Then usually the agency will be given to the team. In one creative team, there are usually 2 people. One is AD (art director) and the other is a copywriter. AD is more visual and copy’s more into writing but they did work together ... So these two people work together to make one advertisement according to the brief that was obtained ... after the brief we do brainstorm, yes there is concept exchange in this process,, after that, I write the concept in the form of words and in the other hand, AD creates a kind of storyboard for the ad ... if it’s already approved by client, then the execution stage”*

And for participant no 3 *“the creative process is started from the problem given by the client to us whose data is presented in the form of a brief followed by the process of finding ideas that if the creative language is brainstorming then after that the execution.”*

And because it is the main process and all three of them brief, brainstorm and execution are the same important, interrelated so there is no single process that can be eliminated or skip. Although on subject no.1 it says that one element of the brief in the form of a target market can be set aside or can be ignored, in broad outline, the brief process must still be there for the copywriter to write or make one copy. This is supported by Guilford’s theory, Flexibility, which is the ability to give ideas from diverse categories or see things from a variety of points of view and Elaboration, is the ability to break down the main idea into smaller ideas.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interview with the participants, it was found that the creative process of a copywriter is divided into 3 stages: the first stage is briefing, the second is brainstorming and the third is execution, it can be concluded that the three participant are copywriters who have created and represent creative people with the characteristics of having a strong imagination, have initiative, broad interest, are free to think (not rigid or hindered), are curious , always want to get new experiences, believe in them self, full of enthusiasm, dare to take risks (not afraid to make mistakes), brave in opinions and beliefs (do not hesitate in expressing opinions despite criticism and dare to defend opinions that become his beliefs). Although not all of these characteristics are owned by each subject.

The briefing here is a long activity and the initial process of a series of creative copywriter processes. Starting from the arrival of the client to the advertising agency, and tell the ad as what they want to introduce or promote the products and services they have, followed by a brief from the planner to the creative team of an advertising agency, usually a creative team consists of a Art Director (AD) and Copywriter. The AD that is in charge of visualizing what the copywriter writes, can be in the form of a script/script if it is TVC, etc.

Unclear briefs and different insights can be factors that slow down the creative process of making advertisements. Brief here is indeed the main element and initial element. So when the brief is unclear, the next process will also be hampered. While insight is a different understanding between the client and the agency, here the client is usually a foreign whose had indeed different insight from the original Indonesian. Ideas that difficult to obtain, and lack of data/references also become obstacle during the creative process.

Meanwhile, factors that can smooth or smooth the creative process are references, data, and chemistry between the client and the creative team of an advertising agency. References can be obtained from anywhere, for example, foreign/domestic TV commercials that have already existed, novels, comics, ngalor-ngidul or long conversations with the fellow creative team, can give birth to creative ideas. The more complete the data and information available the better and simplifies creative tasks. And chemistry according to the subject become things that can simplify the process is when the client and agency have a match then the next process in its journey becomes smooth.

SUGGESTION

Based on the results of research that has been done, the suggestions from the authors are as follows:

1. For copywriters to always be open to new ideas and continue to enrich themselves with new references so that new ideas also emerge with liquidity.
2. For advertising agencies, it can facilitate the creative team with qualified things so that in each step and creative process (briefing, brainstorm to execution) everything can run smoothly and properly.
3. For clients, it may be clearer to provide briefs and concepts that will be highlighted or want to be highlighted or promoted or introduced to the public, so that the task of one agency's creative team can be easier and more straightforward, and the creative process runs smoothly without obstacles.
4. For further researchers, the results of this study can be used as additional information so that they can deepen and enrich the theme related to the creative dynamics of the copywriter.

REFERENCE

- Barker, R. (2018). *Creatives talk technology: exploring the role and influence of digital media in the creative process of advertising art directors and copywriters*. *Media Practice and Education*, 1–16. doi:10.1080/25741136.2018.1464741
- Chartrand, J. (June 25, 2008). *The savvy copywriter's advantage: Creative storytelling*. Retrieved from <http://www.copyblogger.com/the-savvy-copywriter's-advantage-creative-storytelling/>
- Chetan Walia (2019): A Dynamic Definition of Creativity, *Creativity Research Journal*, DOI: 10.1080/10400419.2019.1641787

- Creswell, J.W, 2013, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Approaches*, third edition, Student Library, Yogyakarta.
- Felton, G. (2013, August). *Advertising: Concept and copy, 3rd edition* [VitalSource Bookshelf version]. Retrieved from <https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/books/9780393733921>
- Fürst, G., Ghisletta, P., & Lubart, T. (2012). *The Creative Process in Visual Art: A Longitudinal Multivariate Study*. *Creativity Research Journal*, 24(4), 283–295. doi:10.1080/10400419.2012.729999
- Hackley, C., and A. Kover. 2007. “The Trouble with Creatives: Negotiating Creative Identity in Advertising Agencies.” *International Journal of Advertising* 26: 63 – 78
- Jefkins, Franks, 2004: 11 Public Relations Jakarta: PT. Gelor Aksara First Erlangga
- Langgulung, Hasan *Creativity and Islamic Education*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Husna, 1991)
- Mostopha Aedi. Efforts to improve students’ creative thinking abilities X1 Pemasaran 2 SMK 2 Negeri 1 Slawi through Problem Based Instruction (PBI).
- Munandar, Utami. (2004). *Gifted Child Creativity Development*. Rineka Cipta. Jakarta.
- Nixon, S. 2006. “The Pursuit of Newness: Advertising, Creativity, and the Narcissism of Minor Differences.” *Cultural Studies* 20: 89 – 106
- Suharnan. 2005. *Cognitive Psychology*. Surabaya: Heroine.
- Stuhlfaut, M. W., & Windels, K. (2013). *The Creative Code: A moderator of divergent thinking in the development of marketing communications*. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 21(4), 241–259. doi:10.1080/13527266.2013.772913
- Interview with the resource person 1
- Interview with the resource person 2
- Interview with resource persons 3
- R. W. Stewart, New York Times, July 6, 1941. Imagery For Profit. Via wikipedia