





Gema Wiralodra

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
<https://gemawiralodra.unwir.ac.id>

	Gema WIRALODRA
	Editor-in-Chief: Yudhi Mahmud
	 Publisher: Universitas Wiralodra

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To cite this article:

Nazahra, G.N. (2024). Analysis of public responses to political controversies in the beauty industry: a case study of rose all day and Esqa brand owners in support of Israel. *Gema Wiralodra*, 15(1), 350-354

To link to this article:

<https://gemawiralodra.unwir.ac.id/index.php/gemawiralodra/issue/view/24>

Published by:

Universitas Wiralodra

Jln. Ir. H. Juanda Km 3 Indramayu, West Java, Indonesia

Analysis of public responses to political controversies in the beauty industry: A case study of Rose All Day and Esqa Brand owners in support of Israel

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Abstract

On October 30, 2023, Indonesia's beauty industry was shocked by the boycott of two well-known local brands, ESQA and Rose All Day. The trigger for this boycott was the actions of the owners of the two brands, Angelina Cindy and Tiffany Danielle, who gave support to Israel by "liking" Gal Gadot's controversial post. The public response to this action led to disappointment and boycott from most Indonesian netizens. This research uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach. Analysis was conducted on the chronology of events, public responses on social media, and apologies from brand owners. The data was analyzed to understand the impact of individual actions in the context of social media and how public responses affect brand reputation. A simple action such as a "like" on social media by a brand owner can trigger a large public response and significantly affect brand reputation. Public responses to political controversies can result in product boycotts and create pressure on companies to take a stand. The brand owners, in this case Angelina Cindy and Tiffany Danielle, responded by apologizing and clarifying their stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This incident highlights the complexity of public response, the impact of individuals in the age of social media, and the need for dialog and education in dealing with sensitive issues.

Keywords: Indonesia beauty industry, political controversy, brand boycott, public response, social media impact

1. Introduction

The long-running conflict between Israel and Palestine is one of a number of global issues that continue to spark tension and controversy. The roots of the conflict can be traced back more than a hundred years, when the Balfour Declaration in 1917 promised "a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine." The British Mandate that lasted from 1923 to 1948 facilitated mass migration of Jews to the region, sparking tensions with Palestinians who feared changing demographics and confiscation of their land. The period saw the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939, followed by the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the tragic events of the Nakba, in which tens of thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee their homes. Territorial disputes and continued violence culminated in the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel occupied strategic territories including the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip (CNBC, 2023).

Over time, this conflict involved a complex series of events, including the First Intifada in 1987 and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority following the Oslo Accords in 1993. The Second Intifada in 2000 and a series of wars and military offensives, most notably the attacks on Gaza in 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2021, continued to escalate tensions and leave Palestinians suffering (Gallo & Marzano, 2009).

These tensions in the Middle East permeate down to the individual and business level, exposing the increasingly powerful impact of social media. On October 30, 2023, the Indonesian cosmetics world was shocked by the boycott of two popular local brands, ESQA and Rose All Day. The trigger was not directly related to the beauty industry, but rather the actions of the owners of the two brands who endorsed or "liked" actress Gal Gadot's controversial post supporting Israel. This support created a wave of disappointment among Indonesian netizens, triggering calls to boycott both brands. This case study on the owners of the Rose All Day and ESQA brands is a focal point for a deeper understanding of the impact of

public responses to political controversies in the context of the Indonesian beauty industry (Sukanta, 2023).

Political conflicts taking place online not only create tension among individuals, but also pose serious challenges for brands and companies. In the context of the beauty industry, where image and perception are crucial, an act as small as giving a "like" to content can trigger a mass reaction. The public response to the actions of the owners of Rose All Day and ESQA is particularly noteworthy as it shows how individual actions can impact the overall brand image.

It is important to look at how the owners of both brands responded when the conflict reached a breaking point. The apologies from Angelina Cindy, owner of ESQA, and Tiffany Danielle, owner of Rose All Day, created a new dimension to the narrative. Angelina Cindy emphasized that her support was not for genocide or war, while Tiffany Danielle acknowledged her ignorance of the conflict before it went viral on social media. These apologies reflect the complexity of managing personal image in the age of social media, where small actions can trigger big responses (Hajliana, 2020).

This incident highlights the uncertainty that local businesses can face when engaging in international issues. Although the brand owner is not an official representative of the brand itself, the impact can be pervasive and affect the stability of employees' jobs as well as the brand's contribution to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia (Krisnawati, 2016). This raises critical questions about how consumers can be wiser in expressing their disagreement without harming parties not involved in the controversial action.

In the context of political conflict dynamics, this study aims to explore the impact of public response to political controversy in the beauty industry, specifically in the case of Rose All Day and ESQA brand owners involved in supporting Israel. This research aims to analyze how public response to the actions of brand owners can affect brand image, job stability, and brand contribution to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia.

2. Method

The research method in analyzing public responses to political controversies in the beauty industry, specifically on the brand owners of Rose All Day and ESQA consists of a qualitative approach focusing on literature studies and social media content analysis. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides a depth of understanding of the nuances and context of the public responses that emerged in this controversial situation. The first step involved an in-depth literature review to understand the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the political controversy involving the two brands. This information became the foundation for developing an analytical framework to identify public response patterns on social media. The importance of this context and qualitative approach lies in its ability to explore an in-depth understanding of public perceptions and attitudes and to capture nuances that may be missed in quantitative analysis. Through this method, the research can provide a comprehensive insight into the dynamics of public response to political controversies in the beauty industry in Indonesia.

3. Results and Discussion

The analysis of public responses to the political controversy involving the brand owners of Rose All Day and ESQA show complex dynamics at the level of Indonesian society. In response to the brand owners' actions of supporting Israel, Indonesian netizens expressed their disappointment and disapproval through various social media platforms. This controversy created polarization among consumers and society. Some netizens showed an inclination to boycott products from both brands, perceiving support for Israel as a form of denial of the rights

of the Palestinian people. On the other hand, there are also groups that try to understand the broader context and call for an open dialog.

Both brand owners, Angelina Cindy of ESQA and Tiffany Danielle of Rose All Day, responded with apologies via their personal social media platforms. These apologies had mixed impacts among netizens, with some accepting them as a positive step towards reconciliation, while others remained skeptical of the true intentions behind the apologies. The importance of public response in this context opens up space for further reflection on the power of social media in shaping public opinions and attitudes. The analysis of social media content highlights the complexity of views and sentiments evolving in society, emphasizing that political controversies can have a significant impact on brand image and consumer engagement (Oktaviani & Fatchiya, 2019).

In further discussion, it is worth noting that the local beauty industry can also feel the impact of this public response. A boycott of certain brands could lead to a drop in sales and reputation, which in turn could impact the jobs and economy associated with the beauty industry in Indonesia. The results of this study show that political controversies not only create tension at the individual and brand level, but also have consequences that can spill over into the larger industry. Further discussion on how brands and individuals can respond wisely to these controversial issues can serve as a foundation for further discussion in the Indonesian social and business context.

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of effective brand management and crisis communication in navigating politically sensitive situations within the beauty industry. Brands need to be aware of the potential repercussions of taking sides in geopolitical controversies, as the sentiments expressed by consumers can significantly impact their market standing (Aberdeen et al., 2016). Understanding the nuances of public sentiment is crucial for developing strategies that not only address immediate concerns but also contribute to the long-term reputation recovery. Brand owners should prioritize proactive communication strategies, demonstrating transparency and sincerity in their responses. Merely issuing apologies may not be sufficient; a comprehensive communication plan that includes clear explanations, educational initiatives, and ongoing engagement can contribute to rebuilding trust among consumers. This incident highlights the need for brands to have a well-thought-out crisis management protocol that considers both immediate responses and sustained efforts towards reconciliation.

Beyond the realm of brand management, the controversy surrounding Rose All Day and ESQA prompts a broader societal reflection on the intersection of political beliefs, consumer choices, and economic implications. The polarization observed among consumers suggests a need for more informed public discourse, fostering an environment where differing opinions can be discussed constructively. Additionally, there is an opportunity for advocacy within the beauty industry to engage in ethical considerations related to global issues. Brands can play a role in promoting awareness, understanding, and empathy among their consumers (Cahyani, Indra, & Sutrasawati, 2016). This incident serves as a call for the beauty industry to explore avenues for responsible corporate citizenship, acknowledging the potential impact of their actions on the socio-political landscape.

The incident involving Rose All Day and ESQA brand owners highlights the global nature of the beauty industry and the challenges brands may face due to their interconnectedness with international geopolitical events. Globalization has made it imperative for brands to navigate not only local but also global socio-political landscapes. As beauty brands expand their reach, they must be cognizant of the diverse perspectives held by their global consumer base. This situation raises questions about the ethical responsibilities of beauty brands in a globalized world. Brands need to carefully assess the potential impact of their statements and actions on

different communities, considering the varied cultural and political contexts in which they operate. Ethical considerations should be embedded in the decision-making processes of beauty industry leaders to ensure that their actions align with principles that resonate across borders (Khoirudin, Hidayat, & Yulianto, 2016).

In response to political controversies that have industry-wide implications, there is an opportunity for collaborative efforts within the beauty sector. Industry associations and organizations could play a role in facilitating discussions, establishing ethical guidelines, and fostering a collective commitment to responsible business practices. This incident underscores the need for a shared framework that guides brands in addressing politically sensitive issues while promoting inclusivity and understanding. A unified industry response could involve shared educational initiatives, forums for open dialogue, and the development of best practices to handle political controversies. By collectively addressing such challenges, the beauty industry can demonstrate its commitment to ethical conduct and social responsibility, fostering an environment where brands are not only accountable to their consumers but also to the larger societal context in which they operate.

The public response to the controversy indicates a growing trend of consumer empowerment and activism within the beauty industry. Consumers are increasingly using their purchasing power to express their values and hold brands accountable for their actions (Gidaković, Koklic, Zečević, & Žabkar, 2022). This trend highlights the need for brands to be attuned to the values of their consumer base and to proactively engage in socially responsible practices. In light of this, beauty brands may benefit from incorporating sustainability, ethical sourcing, and responsible business practices into their core values. Brands that actively demonstrate a commitment to social and environmental causes may find themselves better positioned to align with the values of the socially conscious consumer, contributing to long-term brand loyalty. The case study of Rose All Day and ESQA brand owners provides a multifaceted lens through which to examine the complex interplay of globalization, ethics, industry collaboration, and consumer activism within the beauty industry. As the industry continues to evolve, these aspects will likely become increasingly central to the strategic considerations of beauty brands operating in a globalized and socially conscious marketplace.

4. Conclusion

This study explores the dynamics of public response to a political controversy involving brand owners Rose All Day and ESQA in support of Israel. The controversy created polarization among Indonesian netizens, reflected in negative responses and product boycotts via social media. The results highlighted the impact of small actions such as "liking" on social media on brand reputation, with the brand owner's apology creating uncertainty and skepticism. The analysis also showed wider consequences for the local beauty industry, with potential boycotts affecting economic stability and jobs in the sector. In conclusion, this study reflects the complexity of the relationship between political controversies, public response, and their impact on industry and society, emphasizing the importance of transparency and reflection in responding to sensitive issues in Indonesia's business and social. This study explores the dynamics of public response to a political controversy involving brand owners Rose All Day and ESQA in support of Israel. The controversy created polarization among Indonesian netizens, reflected in negative responses and product boycotts via social media. The results highlighted the impact of small actions such as "liking" on social media on brand reputation, with the brand owner's apology creating uncertainty and skepticism. The analysis also showed wider consequences for the local beauty industry, with potential boycotts affecting economic stability and jobs in the sector. Implications from this study suggest that businesses operating in politically sensitive contexts must carefully consider their public stances and be prepared for

potential backlash, which could extend beyond immediate brand reputation to impact industry-wide economic stability. Recommendations include fostering open dialogue with consumers, transparent communication strategies, and proactive engagement with social and political issues. In conclusion, this study reflects the complexity of the relationship between political controversies, public response, and their impact on industry and society. It emphasizes the importance of transparency and reflection in responding to sensitive issues in Indonesia's business and social context.

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