

Gender Relation in Advertisement : from Time to Time

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Abstract

As part of the media, advertising is an effective marketing communication tool. Moreover, advertisements on television that have broad reach. Therefore, producers will allocate a very large advertising budget on television, in order to obtain a high level of sales. Apart from informing about products, advertising is also able to shape reality in society, including the reality of the relationship between men and women. In other words, advertising is a dynamic agent of gender socialization, in the sense that it can perpetuate existing gender relations, as well as form new gender relations. This condition needs to be criticized, because sometimes showing advertisements causes harassment, discrimination, and even gender violence, which is especially experienced by women. For this reason, this study aims to examine changes that may occur in the characters and gender roles between men and women who appear in television advertisements. This research approach is descriptive qualitative where the data is obtained from the results of research at Google Scholar from the 1980s to the present. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using an interactive method sharpened with a gender perspective. The results of the study show that during this period female figures were still presented stereotypically with feminine characters while male characters were masculine. However, other characters also appear where both women and men are presented with mixed characters. The role of the father is also described as being closer to the family. This shows that gender is dynamic and advertising can be an agent of gender relations reform. For this reason, advertisers and advertisers need to be encouraged to make advertisements that are fairer and gender equal without worrying about a decrease in product sales.

Keywords: gender, advertisement, marketing communication

1. Background

Advertising is one of the marketing communication media strategies for producers. Advertising is an advanced communication process that brings audiences to the most important information they really need to know. Advertising is the most persuasive sales messages directed at the most potential buyers of certain goods or services at the lowest possible cost (Jefkins, 1997). Advertising aims to introduce products and services to consumers so that they are influenced and then buy these products/services. For this reason, the portion of advertising costs is usually too large, so the communicator must design the message in an interesting, creative and effective way. Creative advertising has a positive effect on advertising effectiveness which will ultimately encourage audiences to buy it (Faizan, 2014; Shapiro & Krishnan, 2001).

Advertising as part of the media is one of the agents of gender socialization (uns.ac.id). Therefore, advertising is one of the key factors in the cultural dynamics that occur (Lutfiyah & Kinanti, 2020). This means that advertising can be a preserver and at the same time a reformer of gender meaning, because according to its definition, gender is man-made, not natural, subject to change, exchangeable depending on time and local culture. In general, advertising is not only interpreted as information about a particular product, but rather as a medium that offers ideology, lifestyle and images. In the Indonesian context, Thamrin Amal Tomagola conducted research on the image of women in 300 advertisements in four leading women's magazines in Indonesia in 1986 – 1990. The result is that there are five images about women

in advertisements, namely: frame image, pillar image, image competition, dish image and social image (Tomagola, 1998).

Until now, television (TV) is still the most preferred advertising medium by producers. The Nielsen Ad Intel report shows that TV still dominates with a share of advertising spending of 79.2 percent, growing by more than 8 percent with total advertising spending reaching IDR 107.5 trillion. Next in line is the portion of digital advertising spending which grew 15.2 percent with advertising spending reaching IDR 20.5 trillion (Gunawan, 2022). For this reason, this study aims to examine the meaning of gender displayed in television advertisements during the period 1980 to the present (2023), in order to find out whether there is a dynamics in the meaning of the concept of gender, both related to male and female stereotypes and their gender roles.

2. Research methods

This study uses a qualitative approach. The data source is secondary data derived from the results of studies on advertising and gender on television during the period 1980 to 2023 accessed from Google Scholar. The collected data were then analyzed from the aspects of the nature and character of women and men, as well as the gender roles displayed according to the time period: (a) 1980-2000, (b) 2001-2009 and (c) 2010-present. The collected data is then analyzed using an interactive model (Miles et al., 2014) which is strengthened by a gender perspective.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Period 1980-2010

In this period, only 2 (two) studies on advertising and gender were found. The two even studied it in decades. Nurdyawati et al., (2021) studied Citra Body Lotion advertisements during 1980-2010 and found that there was a shift in the female figure from initially using the jargon of "beautiful skin typical of Indonesia", which was olive, to white skin. This shows that Citra's products use adaptive strategies with the times and use the word "beautiful" as a new construction that encourages women's false awareness to buy their products. Meanwhile, Persiana (2015) examines the representation of women's identity in the 1990-2000s through detergent advertisements. The results of his study show that in these advertisements, women are placed as discriminated figures, because they are only placed as 'sidekicks wingking'. Women are only faced with three domains, namely the kitchen, the well and the mattress.

3.2 Period 2000-2010

In the 2000s-2010 period there were quite a number of studies on advertising from a gender perspective. Several advertisements featuring women's identities include advertisements for Lux bath soap (Sadikin, 2006), advertisements for sanitary napkins/Softex (Utami, 2007) and advertisements for men's perfume Ax (Putri, 2009). In the advertisement for Lux soap version of Beauty Gives You Super Powers, the four models are shown as strong figures. They dress like Super Hero women, without reducing their femininity and elegance. Women are shown as characters who are intelligent, authoritative and able to rule over men, succeeding in obtaining a higher social status (Sadikin, 2006). A similar appearance is also shown in Softex advertisements which use 3 female models (Utami, 2007). In In this ad, femininity and masculinity appear simultaneously in each woman's personality, which refers to gender equality. As for the Ax "Call Me" version of the "Sauce", "Mist", "Special Need", "Lost" perfume ads, women are exploited both physically and psychologically. physical and non-physical. Physical exploitation is shown in shots which exploit several parts of the body such as the lips, chest, shoulders, and hips, accompanied by body language and expressions that

support a sexy image. Meanwhile, non-physical exploitation can be seen from various characters such as being easily seduced male, sexy, and aggressive (Putri, 2009).

3.3 Period 2011-2023

In the period from 2011 to the present, female figures are featured in advertisements for Ax perfume (Fitriana, 2014) and Shinzui soap (Iye et al., 2020). As for the gender relations between men and women, this can be seen from advertisements for household products (As Toffany, 2011; Dewi & Dewi, 2021). In Ax's advertisements for "Falling Angels", "Women Police vs Robbers" and "Firefighters and Astronauts", women's sensuality is still highlighted through minimal clothing, facial expressions, and camera techniques that target certain body parts of women (Fitriana, 2014). A similar prominence can be seen in the Sutra condom advertisement where women are presented as satisfying men's sexual needs and are "the second sex" (Isnawijayani & Mahriani, 2017). In contrast to Shinzui soap advertisements (Iye et al., 2020), women are shown their femininity, i.e. wearing a beautiful white dress, loose hair, proportionate body posture which gives the impression of being graceful and gentle. Likewise in advertisements for soap, detergent, hand body, tonic supplements and food, the female figure is still highlighted in physical reality because it is considered "a significant selling tool" (Astuti, 2016). Another image of a female figure appears in Shopee advertisements which displays female figures who are beautiful and attractive and at the same time active, independent and confident (Dara & Muchlis, 2019). Likewise the Nike shoe ad version "What will they say about you?", motivates and encourages women (including athletes who wear the hijab) to be able to carry out sports activities without having to feel afraid of being judged by their social environment (Sarwoko et al., 2022).

The male figure attached to masculinity is found in advertisements for Marlboro, Djarum Super, Dji Sam Soe, and Gudang Garam, as well as advertisements for L-Men milk (Apriati, 2019). The style of masculinity is also shown in male figures in Caffino coffee advertisements, but with a more casual and relaxed look, so it is called new masculine (Prasetyo, 2022). However, there is also an advertisement for POND's Men powder edition #LelakiMasaKini which combines the characteristics of masculinity with femininity (so-called "new masculinity"). Traditional masculinity is displayed from muscles, sweat and strength, while femininity is evident from a neat appearance, successful and sensitive to women's feelings and conditions (Yulianti & Andari, 2017). Male figures are increasingly "soft" shown in Vaseline Men advertisements (Rahardjo, 2015).

Meanwhile, several advertisements related to domestic products presented various gender roles. In the Sari Wangi tea advertisement entitled "Let's Talk to Your Partner", men (husbands) are shown to be more dominant in making decisions, while wives only follow all of their husband's decisions (Indarto et al., 2022). Likewise, in advertisements for 45 formula milk products throughout 2011, the female/mother figure is depicted as still struggling with a domestic role, while the male/father figure is shown as being more familiar with interacting with children (Mutahir et al., 2018). However, in advertisements for household products such as the Bayclin Kitchen Cleaner version Cooking for Mama, the Procold Tile Leaking version, and the Sharp Aquamagic version Sayang Elektronik, men are depicted as men (fathers) who care about household/domestic work such as cooking, washing and caring for children (As Toffany, 2011). Likewise in advertisements for several products such as Mama Lemon, Supermi Chicken Onion Mushroom and Rapika Lubricating clothes. Activities include playing with children, doing activities with the family, doing household chores (mopping floors, washing clothes, operating washing machines and so on), and massaging the wife (Pratiwi & Wiyanti, 2017). Likewise in the Soy Sauce advertisement version of "My father is good at cooking" (Sanjaya, 2014).

3.4 Discussion

From that study it appears that several advertisements in the 1980s-present period still perpetuated stereotyped and discriminatory gender roles and identities for women and men, although some brought changes. The perpetuation of gender stereotypes can be seen in advertisements which always present female figures only as housewives (Persiana, 2015), are dominantly feminine (Astuti, 2016) and are seducing men (Fitriana, 2014; Isnawijayani & Mahriani, 2017; Putri, 2009). This shows that the 5 images of women found in the Tobagola study (1998) still occur. While the male figure is still shown with a masculine image that is "macho" (Apriati, 2019).

Meanwhile, in advertisements which have a change, female figures are shown not only as having feminine traits, but also masculine (strong, intelligent, authoritative) (Dara & Muchlis, 2019; Sadikin, 2006; Sarwoko et al., 2022). As for the male figure displayed with "new masculinity", namely having tenderness (Prasetiyo, 2022; Rahardjo, 2015; Yulianti & Andari, 2017) and caring for family (As Toffany, 2011; Mutahir et al., 2018; Pratiwi & Wiyanti, 2017; Sanjaya, 2014). This shows that advertising can also be dynamic following developments in reality and community needs. Tschla (2020) and Uray & Burnaz (2003) also found changes in the female and male figures in this advertisement. This change in the appearance of women and men is a reflection of changes in society. This further clarifies the fact that basically gender relations can indeed change/differ from time to time and that advertising can be one of the media for forming and disseminating new gender values that are more gender based.

4. Conclusion

Advertising is one of the most effective marketing communication strategies and at the same time can be a vehicle for establishing and disseminating gender values that are more just and equal. In order for advertisers and producers to be encouraged to make advertisements more gender sensitive, it is necessary to study the relationship between gender sensitive advertisements and sales levels.

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