

Semiotics Analysis of Gender Roles in Television Ads in Hygiene Product

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ABSTRACT

More than just introducing products, advertising can also play a role in socializing gender roles which forms certain stereotypes. The research on the Attack Easy advertisement version of “Mother is Beautiful when Washing” and “Soklin Lantai”, which carries the theme of family, aims to learn signs that carry gender-related meanings in the advertisement. The research results are expected to extend mass communication science reference, particularly regarding gender messages through the media. This research uses Pierce's semiotic theory which includes the mechanism of signs, objects and interpretants, and is carried out using qualitative descriptive approach. The results show that the ads contained gender bias issues and gender equality.

Keywords: *Gender, Advertisement, Semiotics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is considered successful when it can attract audiences to engage in understanding the message conveyed. Advertising activities require the existence of a medium including one of the most dominant used televisions. Advertising on television has a considerable effect because in addition to audio visuals, television also allows message repetition. Television ads can also reach large audiences in short time. No wonder that television is becoming a medium that is increasingly in demand by companies in promoting their products [1].

As part of the mass media, Advertising is a promotional way to attract the audience to buy or use the products offered. However, advertising also plays an important role in delivering messages, as they form a reflection of the realities that exist in society. With this mirroring function, ads can also socialize gender.

In the world of advertising, many hygiene products ads are offensive about gender bias or gender equality in the family, especially in doing household work. Every individual who is aware of gender equality must understand that women and men are equal partners who are not boxed into feminine-masculine gender roles [2]. Therefore, women and men should have equal values, be treated objectively, equally, and also have equal rights and opportunities in various areas of life [3].

Based on the above exposure, the author is interested in learning and revealing the meanings contained in the Attack Easy ad version of "My Mother Is Beautiful when Washing" and the Soklin Lantai ad using a Semiotic point of view. In accordance with Pierce's stated function, the semiotics approach the author uses to understand the function of sign and the production of meaning in advertising. These signs and meanings will be used to understand how human reasoning is to build ads that take advantage of gender functions. This study is expected to give an understanding of the meaning behind the advertisement.

Semiotics, also known as semiology, is a study of signs that contain a certain meaning. Semiotics are derived from the Greek word 'semion' meaning "sign", or seme, meaning "interpreter of the sign" [4]. The sign itself is interpreted as something that can be considered something else based on a previously developed social convention, which is considered to represent something else.

As a model of social science, semiotics understands the world as a system with a basic unit called a "sign". Signs are messages that communicate certain things to the community. Every sign contains different meaning, both that in the form of language, images, goods, colors, and others that can be studied with semiotics. Thus, semiotics learns the nature of the sign existence. Semiotics can be considered a reading method that

viewers apply to the ads they watch. The question is not whether the message the advertiser sends is the same as the message the viewer receives, but how the viewer captures and interprets the ad. To get its meaning, the ad will be dismantled and reconstructed by semiotics [5]. Therefore, the ad will belong to the audience. There is no need to look for hidden meanings from advertisers, but you will see how viewers can generate meaning from those ads.

1.1. Gender Roles

Gender is a concept used to identify the differences between men and women viewed in terms of social and cultural. The term gender is expressed by social scientists with the intention to explain the difference between women and men who have an innate nature (god's creation) with cultural formation (social construction). Gender is shaped by a society that is not natural. Gender is defined as a sociocultural construct that distinguishes feminine and masculine characteristics [6].

The term gender refers to the characteristics and social traits associated with men and women, not only based on biological differences, but also on social and cultural interpretations of what it means to be male or female [7]. But there are some characters of the nature between men and women that can be exchanged, for example there are men who have a meek and emotional nature, while there are also strong and rational women. This happens because the dimensions of space and time passed by each gender, can also be influenced by the existence of social classes in society. All that can be exchanged between female and male traits that change over time and differ from place to place. That's the so-called gender concept [8].

1.2. The Power of Television Advertising

Advertising on television is a form of commercial broadcast program that contains information about a particular product that is planned to be produced to meet business interests and business objectives in the activities of a company [9]. Television advertising allows messages to look more real, giving a concrete and more vivid picture to the audience. Advertising through television is seen as more targeted and effective than advertising through other mediums. This is why companies make advertising on television as one of the main weapons to advertise products [10].

Advertising becomes a condition of the operation of an industry, capitalism, and the accumulation of capital, not just a matter of buying and selling or promotional instruments. Advertising has enormous expansion power and can shape the consumer culture that becomes the main joint in the marketing of goods and services. In the end, advertising became part of the cultural strategy and engineering underpinning the course of the capitalist economic system. In short, advertising is created to create and engineer new needs for consumers continuously and simultaneously [11].

Advertising as a mass communication system, nowadays tends to be a parameter or implementation of gender discourse that claims the existence of gender injustice biases. Advertising is also said to be a means of legitimating ideological hegemony as well as a conservationist of patriarchal ideological dominance. The tendency to use advertising as an example of the female subordinate arena is very easy to display. This is because advertising is a form of communication that often displays social codes as fragmentation of reality, where they often adopt stereotypes, associations, cultural reflections, ideologies and gender patterns that exist in society [12].

2. METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study is qualitative with the aim of presenting descriptive data in the form of written words from people or observable behavior. The data collection in this study was done by observing Attack Easy ad version of "My Mother Is Beautiful when Washing" and Soklin Lantai ad that can be seen through television. The ads were collected as data and analyzed with a semiotic perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce divided into sign, object, and interpret an analysis. Observations are made on both ads to get detailed ad descriptions. Furthermore, the advertisements are sorted based on scenes that represent activities or events that are considered to show gender bias and gender equality. Thus, through the analysis is expected to be seen how gender representation can build each ad.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Analysis of Attack Easy Ad version of "My Mom Is Beautiful when Washing"

The analysis results is as in table 1.

Table 1. Scene on attack easy ad

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Mom lifts gallon.	Looks like Mom is able to lift a heavy gallon.
	Mom fix sink.	Mom fixes sink that stuck but failed.
	Mom's doing laundry.	Mom still look beautiful when washing clothes.
	Dad sat on the terrace drinking a cup of water.	Dad is fascinated by the beauty of mother when washing clothes.
	Mom's doing laundry.	While washing Mom realized and happy that she was noticed by Dad.

3.2. Attack Easy Ad Analysis Results version "My Mother is Beautiful when Washing"

In the ad above, there are symbols about men and women in home life. In this ad, women are placed in a position where the responsibility of the housework is completely for woman. The mother who is always in the kitchen and dining room becomes a place that symbolizes that this is her scope of housework. In this ad, the wife has a great responsibility for homework compared to the husband. The heavy work that should be done by men is done by women, whereas basically in the male household also do housework. On the other hand, the ad also illustrates gender equality where women can do what men usually do, such as in the first image when the wife lifts a gallon and does heavy work from start to finish, while the husband just relaxes while drinking a cup of drink while watching his wife do the household chores.

This ad captures the ideology of gender bias. Where wives do dual roles also do things related to gender equality. The issue of gender inequality in this family is on the part where there is no male side to help the housework, even the women in this ad support the action by still doing the heavy work with pleasure, when if she wants, she can do it together with her husband to facilitate her work. In this ad also women are seen as a mockery. The woman presents herself as strong and capable of doing heavy work but is seen as a mockery, seen in the second image of her fixing a clogged sink but failing. It looks like comedy material.

In the third image, it is illustrated that female beauty is the thing that attracts men, and it becomes a demand for women to always look beautiful. It also means that women here become sex objects for men because female beauty is a thing that men love very much. These symbols relate to the myth of doubling women under men and implying injustice due to a form of patriarchal domination. It also relates to real-life realities where

some women still support the dominance of patriarchal values. Exemplified in the fifth image where a woman looks happy and proud when she is noticed by men for her beauty. Attack Easy ad is deliberately raised a theme that although washing the wife can still captivate the husband with his beauty because Attack Easy detergent has the power of ten hands so lighten in washing. For

this reason, women can still look beautiful even though they are washing this to make the product used by prospective consumers. That way, prospective consumers who see the greatness of this product will choose the product and become an active consumer.

3.3. Soklin Lantai Ad Analysis

Table 2. Soklin lantai ad analysis results

Sign	Object	Interpretant
	Dad mopping the floor, Mom playing with son.	Dad mopping the floor, mother accompanying her baby. The family has been using soklin lantai since their son was still crawling.
	Mom mopping the floor, dad playing with son.	Mom mopping the floor and dad played with the son. When the child started growing up, the family was still faithful to using Soklin Lantai.
	father, mother, and son mopping together.	Their children grow older, fathers and mothers ask their son to mop together by still faithfully using soklin lantai products.

3.4. Soklin Lantai Ad Analysis Result

This family-themed floor-to-ceiling ad depicts a devoted family using Soklin Lantai since their son was a toddler until he was growing up. All three scenes in this ad depict equal gender representation. This ad means that household chores such as mopping floors and others can be done together alternately, not necessarily charged to women. There is no claim that women are more skilled at it than men. This ad tries to depart from the reality that exists in society that men and women have a common awareness in domestic work. This advertisement also teaches the public, especially parents, to teach household chores to their children, both boys and girls to help parents in cleaning the house.

This ad contains gender equality issues in highlighting the quality of its products. Happiness that seems in this family is illustrated by the product that has always been used by a family for a long time because of its quality in cleaning floors that are able to create comfort in the family and cause happiness to every user.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the semiotic analysis of the Attack Easy ad version of "My Mother Is Beautiful when Washing" and the Soklin Lantai ad, the gender representation in this

Attack Easy ad contains the issue of gender bias, while the Soklin Lantai ad represents gender equality. Both ads lead to persuasive efforts of companies to attract consumers to consume their products by describing family happiness in doing household chores as an effect of product use. From the description, both have performed economic functions and social functions in their own way. The economic function is performed by integrating gender representation in both ads, so that they can build a persuasive function of the ad. The product is transformed into tantalizing images that attract consumers. The social codes in both ads describe the reality that exists in the community that is used as a reference element of advertising.

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