

The Portrayal of Indonesian Women in Advertisements

Yulistiyanti, Teguh Kasrabowo Stikubank University,
Semarang, Indonesia yulistiyanti@edu.unisbank.ac.id,
teguhkas@edu.unisbank.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines women images in Indonesian domestic product advertisements. To support this examination, this study also examines the social situations in the advertisements. Soy sauce commercials were taken as the data of this study. It used 17 commercials from three different brands, namely; Kecap ABC, Kecap Bango, and Kecap Sedaap. To conduct this study, it applied sociological approach by using theories on social situation found in Goffman's Gender Advertisement and women portrayal in commercial in Holtzhausen's Content Analysis of Roles Portrayed by Women in Advertisements in Selected South African. The data found show that Indonesian product commercials use religious events to promote the products; Ramadhan and Iedbul Adha. The setting of place shows job division between men and women; public area and domestic area. This commercials are dominated by domestic area as the women's authority. The women image described in the commercials from the female models reflect Indonesian women still hold domestic role as mother and housewife. The data shows 35% as housewives and mothers, 23% as housewives, mothers, and social beings, 18% mothers, 12% housewives, mother, and work-related, 6% as housewives, and 6% as homemakers and social beings.

Keywords: Indonesian women, women image, advertisement, social situation, domestic product

INTRODUCTION

Advertisement is a means to introduce products for public. As defined by the Advertising Association of the UK, advertisements are messages paid for by those who send them and are intended to inform or influence people who receive them (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/definition/advertising>). The advertisement uses some medias to publish it. The advertisers use the media to influence the consumers, so that they buy the product (Sarkar, 2015). It may use printed media such as magazine and newspaper. The producers also use radio to make public recognize a certain product. Not only radio as audio media used, television as an audio-visual media often shows advertisements of products. Recently, people browse internet and they find many kinds of product advertisements in it.

The aim of showing advertisements in media is to make products recognized.

Differentiation of a product will make consumers interested. One product can be produced in various brands that cause competition among the producers. They compete to produce in the best product qualities. They compete in materials, ingredients, taste, models, patterns, or price. The newest product should have outstandings so that it is easy to recognize it. Consumers are offered to pick the best or the appropriate product for themselves.

Offering products via advertisement not only shows the product pictures, it also needs to aesthetic values that create the advertisements different and interesting, because advertisements are designed to inform and motivate. Advertisements use code to transfer values, and codes as Goffman argues that there are codes of gender: the family, the feminine touch, the ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal (Goffman, 1987). The consumers could change the thought or mindset in buying behavior. An

interesting advertisement may attract the consumers to see it. Then they may check the product.

To persuade consumers, advertisement producers often use female figures in their works. The figures portrayed reflect what we find in society with their fashion, vacation, and psychology. In advertisements, women image reveal the characters as inferior creatures with certain roles in society (Sarkar, 2015). These figures may have big portion role to encourage consumers thinking and sometimes they only have little role in the advertisements. Having big role female represents their own gendered activities, especially in domestic products such as detergent, soy sauce, and seasonings. We may not find female big role in cigarette advertisements or oil advertisements. The products usually are consumed by males, but the advertisements still use female figures in it. Most of female figure in advertisements reflect roles as mother, seductress, and submissive woman. Only few products represent female in independency. These portrayals become female consumption as Hung et.al (2007:1038) cited by Holtzhausen states that women form large consumer element, and most advertisements designed attract female attention ((Holtzhausen, Jordaan, & North, 2010). These portrayals can be assumed as ideal women by the female consumers that everyday, they absorb the information from the pictures in advertisement whether it is printed or it is aired.

Female figure shown used in advertisements is to attract the consumers decision in buying the products. The figures portrayed represent ideal creature that society conducts in life. Face and body of the advertisement model are ideal ones that everybody cannot have it. Female figure or model of the advertisement usually shows beautiful woman with proportional body. This ideal figure is defined what patriarchy needs.

Beside physical figure, professions shown in advertisements also represents gender job. Female models display domestic professions that women should work. For example, secretary, clerk, and nurse are professions that advertisements use to represents female working in public. But, mother is a profession that dominate advertisements. It is seldom to find advertisements showing gender equality job, such as pilot and architecture.

Advertisements can be a social agent that sounds societal belief. The societal belief is conducted in life and people try to do it. What advertisements show, people will do. People imitate what they find in advertisement, because they think the portrayals are the ideal ones.

METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on analyzing the advertisements on internet that are aired in youtube.com. It applied a descriptive qualitative approach.

This research got the data from internet via youtube.com. Here, the researcher found some advertisements that then were selected only soy sauce advertisements. These advertisements were selected that were aired from 2017 to 2019. This research uses 17 soy sauce advertisement that are produced in Indonesia. This only uses three big brands of soy sauce from Indonesia. They are ABC soy sauce, Bango soy sauce, and Sedaap soy sauce. All of the advertisements were downloaded.

This research analyzed the data got from two categories. First, it analyzed each setting from 17 advertisements that may have two settings in one advertisement. Second, it analyzed the female models of the advertisements. Setting here represents the social situation. Each data is interpreted, after that the researchers analyzed them as a whole.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

SOCIAL SITUATIONS IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS

Social situation can be defined as a pattern of people, culture traits, spesific meaning, relationship, time and place, and dynamic processes such as adjustment, interaction, social control, social changes, and readjustment. These elements relate each other, and one cannot stand on its own.

Setting included time and place, is one of important elements in creating social situation. Creating commercials need this element because it may represent the culture of the target consumers. Representing real life can convey the advertisers' message so that their product is accepted. The advertisers should adopt social values in commercials that represent the society. Message, setting, and product should be relevant. This research analyzed settings shown in 17 advertisements or commercials of Indonesian soy sauce products.

Besides setting included time and place, a commercial uses relationship and dynamic process to make the commercials close to the consumers. The models of the commercials represent relationship in real society. When they act the relationship, the advertisers create dynamic process among them. It can be social control, adjustment, readjustment, social change, or interaction.

This research analyzes settings of the commercials, especially setting of place where the social situations happen. The data shows that 52,9% commercials use domestic areas, 11,8% commercials take place in public areas, and 35,3% commercials use both areas. It is shown in the following table:

No	Advertisements	Social Situation
1	Kecap ABC 1	In a house from veranda to kitchen
2	Kecap ABC 2	In a house; kitchen
3	Kecap ABC 3	In a house, kitchen
4	Kecap ABC 4	In a house, kitchen

5	Kecap ABC 5	In a house, kitchen
6	Kecap Bango 1	In a house, bed room and kitchen. In a market.
7	Kecap Bango 2	In a house, bed room and kitchen
8	Kecap Bango 3	In a farm and a kitchen
9	Kecap Bango 4	In a kitchen, a market, a neighborhood
10	Kecap Bango 5	In a restaurant
11	Kecap Bango 6	Mosque, food stall, and a house
12	Kecap Bango 7	In a food stall
13	Kecap Sedaap 1	In a dinning room
14	Kecap Sedaap 2	In a market, a kitchen, and a food court
15	Kecap Sedaap 3	In a kitchen
16	Kecap Sedaap 4	In a kitchen and dinning room
17	Kecap Sedaap 5	In an office, a kitchen, and a dinning room

There is a division area in these commercials; public area and domestic area. Public area represents area that society meets to do their activities. Usually, this area used is to get life for example working and worship. In patriarchal society, it is the area for men doing activities. On the other hand, domestic area is the area for women. They spend most time in houses. Household activities are their main jobs.

From the data above, all ABC soy sauce commercials take place in domestic area; house. The area of it covers from veranda and kitchen. They do not move outside of the house to show women also have right to get in touch with their other world, public area. The commercials show around the houses, before they stop in the kitchen. Kitchen is the appropriate setting for this product as a domestic product.

Three ABC soy sauce commercials share equality theme. This theme focuses on how men could work at domestic area, especially kitchen. Cooking is one of woman's main job in patriarchal society, it

also causes problem for some families. The problem emerges when the wife or mother works at public area as an office worker. ABC soy sauce conveys message equality between man and woman. But, the equality does not put woman working outside, here man is asked to do domestic job; cooking. Being real husband is not only working outside, but also working inside the house. ABC soy sauce suggests men or husbands to share domestic jobs with their partners or wives. Kecap ABC company also creates a website to guide men and husbands to be "suami sejati" (real husband). It guides how to cook well guided by some Indonesian popular chefs.

In these ABC commercials depict process in the social situation. Adjustment happens in the ABC commercial entitled 'Kecap ABC Bantu Suami Jadi Pasangan yang Setara'. It depicts a divorced man who regrets to what happened in his family. He realized that he made mistake by not helping his wife in the kitchen. After being left by his wife, he adjusts his life. He starts cooking using Kecap ABC as one of ingredients. Cooking is an adjustment the model does in the ABC commercial. This commercial shows the effect of bad husband-wife relationship. It only shows the wife photograph to represent his ex-wife.

The second commercial of Kecap ABC also shows adjustment process of the male figure. After debating who is responsible for cooking, the male figure adjusts by helping his wife cooking. It also portrays a next step process preparing their son to be a real husband. He helps his mother preparing dinner. Adjustment also occurs in the fourth Kecap ABC commercial, that makes husband help his wife cooking. This process happens after the daughter comments on her parents. She compares her mother and father, the mother is stronger than the father.

Interaction runs in the third Kecap ABC commercial that a boy with his friends walk in market after playing

football. They look hungry, but the boy wants to eat his mother's delicious chicken. He runs home followed by his friends that have already bought fried chicken. In the interaction process, the boy influences his friends. They run after the boy and keep away their fried chickens to eat the home-made Kecap ABC chicken.

Relationship is shown in the last Kecap ABC commercial. It describes relationship in a family. The commercial shows ideal family with father, mother, and two children; male and female. The relationship looks harmonious that represents patriarchal family. The wife cooks delicious food the husband likes. The husband and children watch football match on TV. It describes the hierarchy of a family which works based on their function.

Kecap Bango uses various setting in its commercials. It not only uses domestic area, but also public area. Kecap Bango tries to build image as a product that people can enjoy food anywhere. People can find Kecap Bango in domestic area (house) and public area (food stall and restaurant). In conveying the message, the advertiser uses mosque, food stall, and restaurant. Besides those areas, Kecap Bango also exhibits soy farm to grow a soy variety; malika.

Settings of time and place create social process depicted in the commercials. Interaction and relationship dominate the social process in social situation of the commercials. Interaction is found in six Kecap Bango commercials that happen in public area where people come to gather. Market, food stall, mosque, farm, and square became the areas of the interaction. The figures interact each other to communicate. Relationship is also built in all of the commercials. Family relationship becomes priority in this Kecap Bango commercials, although some of the typical family have different way from the ideal family. Six commercials the family depicted only contains three members; father,

mother, and one child whether it is son or daughter.

This advertisers apply the ideal concept of nuclear family that usually consists of father, mother, and children. The nuclear family at least has one child; whether it is son or daughter. Kecap Bango uses this concept in the commercials. Most of the commercials are dominated by three members of family that have one child. Only the second commercial shows an ideal nuclear family which has son and daughter. In this commercial shows the daughter is close to the father and the son is close to the mother. This description is opposite to what Goffman suggested on special bond between parents and children based on the sex (1987:37). In fifth commercial, it shows family without father when they eat out in a food stall. It looks remove father in the relationship. This commercial contrasts to the nuclear family concept that needs two different sexes parent in it. It only shows one parent (a young mother) with two children. The fifth commercial also shows the relationship between mother and son. The obedience of a son is shown in it by feeding a mother from his cook.

Kecap Bango performs interaction in market, square, food stall, and mosque. In those areas, Indonesians often interact each other. In a market, buyer and seller are the most common interaction agents found. This interaction is shown in the first commercial, transactional interaction by showing IDR 1.000 and Kecap Bango in sachet package. Transactional interactions occur in the fifth, sixth, and seventh commercials. Although, it is not depicted as transactional process clearly, the seller and buyer exist in these commercials. These commercials do not expose product-currency exchange, but symbolize the transactional process by showing nameplate.

Kecap Bango also exhibits social interaction that commonly happens in religion holiday. Ramadhan as one of

moslem holiday becomes the center of sharing event in the commercial. The advertiser also performs Iedul Al-adha as the other event to share with others. The two commercials use Indonesian tradition to celebrate the religious ceremony; breaking fasting with relatives and visiting relatives in the events. Religious events are appropriate to promote product by inserting some values to attract the consumers. The social values performed adopt Indonesian cultural values that are so close to the consumers. These performances remind and encourage the consumers to imitate what the commercials suggest. To create this kind of interaction, the advertisers use a mosque and a square to gather people around. The fourth and sixth commercials perform religious social interaction.

In line with the product promoted, Kecap Sedaap uses domestic areas as the setting. This area dominates the commercials, although it also exposes public areas; namely an office room and a market. Kecap Sedaap advertisers show public areas that still divide job division between men and women. In the second commercial takes place in various places; from kitchen to market. The settings are arranged based on the function and the agent. Kitchen as the setting will be appropriate, if the agent is a woman. It also works for market in the commercial that focuses a woman shopping in it. In a pavilion where men come to gather informs the gender job division. It looks clear that a woman serves food for the men who gather in the pavilion. On the other hand, this commercial shows women with working clothes eating in a food stall. Different food stall is also used to promote this product, by displaying a family comes to gather eating. This second commercial display Indonesian tradition in gathering that usually eat out in a restaurant or a food stall.

The fifth commercial exposes a gender job division that men work in

public and women work in domestic areas. It tries to legitimate a newly married couple to have this ideal position. The man in the commercial works in an office while the wife is waiting for him in a house by preparing delicious food her mother-in-law taught.

Kecap Sedaap commercials contain social process that display Indonesian cultural values. Relationship dominates these commercials. The first commercial applies mother-son relationship that typically happens in patriarchal society. The mother waits for her son from school to provide his lunch. Relationship in the second commercial is family bond both in the nuclear family and extended family. These family bonds reflect Indonesian tradition when Indonesians come to gather. Nuclear family gathers in the breakfast time before the family members do their own activities. The extended family gathering tradition is shown in eating out in a food stall. The third commercial show friends relationship which commonly happens in Indonesia. The friends share experience and secret each other. The fourth commercial shows mother-daughter relationship. It is a tradition for a mother to teach her daughter teaching. It aims to prepare for the daughter when she is married. She has to prepare and cook food for her family. This tradition is also a part of patriarchal concept. Husband-wife relationship displays patriarchal concept shown in the fifth commercial. The man represent a breadwinner, so that the wife works at house to take care household.

These Kecap Sedaap commercials shows interaction that commonly happen in Indonesian society. Interaction in the first commercial happens when the son calls his mother to provide kecap as his favorite seasoning while he eats rice and crackers. It looks common happen in Indonesian family that an under-age child screams out calling his mother to provide something. The second commercial shows various interactions. There is one interaction

that indicates Indonesian indigenous culture; especially Surakarta or Yogyakarta. It displays interaction of a group of people in a Keraton pavilion. This commercial shows the costumes that royal household caretakers (abdi dalem) wear. The third commercial displays friends interaction that share a secret of a delicious food. One of the women acts the informan to share Kecap Sedaap as her secret. This interaction among women often happens. Mother-daughter relationship creates interaction between them. Teaching- learning cooking is one of interaction that mother-daughter shares in patriarchal society. A mother should teach how to cook to her daughter. This interaction also displays a mother's affection to her daughter by showing their smile. Husband-wife relationship works well, if the communication as a part of interaction does. The fifth commercial shows this process. Besides that, mother-daughter-in law relationship also works in this commercial. It portrays good interaction between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, that they can interact in cooking. The daughter-in-law looks attentive learning cooking with her mother-in-law.

WOMEN IMAGE IN ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements often use women as models to promote products. The advertisers have certain aim in taking female models. Moreover, domestic products, such as detergent, beverage, and soap use female models. Domestic products and women have close relation that ideologically cannot be separated. Domestic products will be proper, if female models promote them. Women represent domestic figures.

This research examines women image that are presented in advertisements or commercials. The commercials used are domestic product that mostly women use. This research used soy sauce commercials that have been aired in youtube.com for

two years (2017-2019). From 17 data taken, most of the commercials show women image as a housewife and a mother. The data is categorized based on the role or image presented in each commercial. It finds that 5,9% data show female models as housewives, 17,6% data show female models as mothers, 35,3% data show housewives and mothers in the female models, 23,5% data show the female models act as a housewife, mother, and social being, 11,8% data as housewife, mother, and work-related, and 5,9% data as homemaker and social being.

Graphic 1:
Women Image In Advertisement

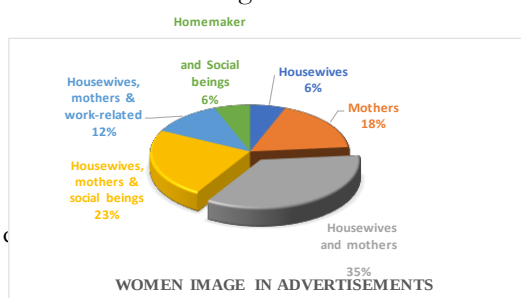


Table above shows women image in domestic products commercials. It proves that woman is still portrayed related to the domestic jobs and area. It may reflect Indonesian women conditions portrayed in the commercials, because the events described depict Indonesian cultural values. They contains Indonesian traditions whether it is daily or annually. Their roles in commercials reveal their inferiority. It is difficult for women to move out from houses.

This research does not find women image as related-work without any other roles. 12% data show the commercial support to women role in public areas, but they cannot leave their main job as a mother and a wife. The commercials also reflect the double or triple roles of women cause problem in the family. The company also support the condition by eliminating the problem. The company supports women to share their roles in public areas. It created a website that may solve the problem, because it may cause disaster for example divorce. This condition is

reflected in one of Kecap ABC commercials.

The data shows that being mothers and being wives without other roles are rare to depict Indonesian women image in commercials. The advertisers still consider other roles, because the women also interact with other outside the house. Interacting with other people, such as relatives, friends, and neighbors still women do in daily lives. The women are not full of being the role, either mother or housewife. If the women only play the role, it means they do not do any activities outside the house. The data exposes mother image in commercial 18%, and housewife image in commercial 6%.

Being housewives and mother are inseparable roles. A woman often indicates as a mother and a housewife. The roles are defined differently from the existence of other family member. A portrayal showing a wife and a husband without any children indicates the woman's role as a housewife. Then, a woman and a child without a husband may reflect her role as a mother. The commercials express the women mostly as providers of family needs. The figures fulfill what family members need from food to clothes. This function ties to women in house tightly, because people regard women occupying house in the whole day. This portrayal commonly happens in patriarchal society. The data shows that 35% commercial use both roles to represent women image.

Women image with three roles (housewife, mother, and social being) shows 23%. These roles looks ideal as women role that interact in domestic and public area where they meet others. The public areas often used to describe women role outside are market, food stall, and mosque. Those areas are safe for women and men to maintain their relation. Male- female relation in harmony is reflected on the division area between them that may not disrupt the institution, family. The women know their areas where they can

explore, while the men support them by emerging in every event described in the commercials.

Homemaker functions to arrange household. In commercials, this role usually represents the domestic product promoted. For example, a detergent commercial will display the model washing. Most of the models display household activities are female or women. This research used soy sauce product as one of domestic products. One household activity matched to this product is cooking, so that the female model acts cooking. Doing household activity sometimes can be done while the figures interact with others at the same time. This research data shows 6% commercials use women image as homemaker and social being at the same time. Social being represented by models reflects activities usually done when women have spare time. They make gossip as a way to spend their sparetime. It is typically done by people who have leisure time or do not have to work in formal way. But, this becomes tradition for women making gossip in their leisure time.

To support women equality of women image in advertisements or commercials, this research reveals most of commercials using female models to maintain the existence of patriarchy in society. It is proven from the portrayals of women image in data used relate to domestic job and area. They are described as housewife, mother, and homemaker. It counts that 82% commercials portray women image in those roles. An office-worker is one of examples that shows women equality in public area. They may have the same capability as men to do as breadwinner. Unfortunately, the research only found 12% commercials expose women image as work-related. This role is also described as the cause of family disruption. Women with working out cannot handle household activities well; especially cooking in this data.

CONCLUSION(S)

This research took 17 commercials that promote soy sauce product as one of domestic product. The 17 commercials of soy sauce product became the data. The data use three national brand of soy sauce produced and consumed in Indonesia. The three products are Kecap ABC, Kecap Bango, dan Kecap Sedaap.

In promoting the domestic products most advertisers use female models to represent women image in society. To represent women image in society, the advertisers cannot leave the cultural values of the certain society. Women image with the certain cultural values are ideal portrayals to make the products accepted by consumers. This research took Indonesian products, so that how women image in Indonesia represented with her cultural values is examined.

Cultural values in the commercials are shown from the social situations that cover the settings and the dynamic process run in the commercials. The settings of time and place reflect Indonesian social background. The use of setting of time exposes some religious holiday that most Indonesians celebrate. The data shows using Ramadhan and Idul Adha as muslim holidays to promote the products. The events may not leave women role in celebrating them. People always need food in ramadhan that women always serve as their duty in family and society. Besides setting of time, setting of place reflects women area in society. In the commercials, most of the data take house, especially kitchen dan dinning room as the central place. This place is area form women to serve food. It indicates there is job division in the data found.

Job division exposed in the data found creates or legitimates the house or kitchen as women area. It can be said that in this place women have authority. The other side, the commercials show men area in public area where they act as the

breadwinner. The public areas for example office and farm are occupied by men to fulfill and provide family need.

The next social situation uses the dynamic process that relation and interaction dominate the commercials. Although adjustment as one dynamic process also occurs in one of the data found. The relations reflected in the data most focus on family relationship whether the data show mother-child relationships or mother-father-child relationship.

The social situation finds women always represented in the commercials. They show different roles in each commercial. The data says that 35% commercials use female models to represent housewives and mothers roles, 23% commercials use the models as housewives, mothers, and social beings roles, 18% commercials use the models as mothers roles, 12% commercials use the models as housewives, mothers, and work-related roles, 6% commercials use the model as housewife role, and 6% commercials use the models as homemakers and social beings roles. This data means that women role as housewife and mother at the same time represent Indonesian women role. It also represents the product that is categorized as the domestic product. Then, people also consider women having another world to meet and interact with others. Social being adds Indonesian women role that can be accepted by the society. Another role that society has not accepted is work-related role. This role is still debatable shown in data that this role is risk to create problem in a family. It still needs support from the men as the partner in family.

REFERENCES

Goffman, E. (1987). *Gender Advertisements*. Harper & Row (Vol.1).

Holtzhausen, T. Jordan, Y. (Prof). & North, E.J. (Prof). (2010). *Content Analysis of Roles Portrayed by Women in Advertisements in Selected South African Media*. Department of Marketing and Communication Management, Dcom: Mark (August).

Ibroscheva, E. (2007). *Caught Between East and West? Portrayals of Gender in Bulgarian Television Advertisements*. *Sex Roles*, 57(5-6), 409-418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9261-x>.

Sarkar, S. (2015). *Gender Stereotyping in Product Promotion: a Dominant Tool of Advertising in Indian Media*. 1(2), 1-12.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/definition/advertising>