A SEMIOTIC APPROACH ON GENDER STEREOTYPING ON BEAUTY PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENT

Samitha Ayuriescha Wibowo[1], Dr. Eka Fadilah[2], Endar Rachmawaty Linuwih[3]

[1,2,3] Universitas Widya Kartika

Email: [1]samithaawb@gmail.com, [2]ekafadilah@widyakartika.ac.id,
[3]endarrachmawaty@widyakartika.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to find out the signs that are depicted in the beauty product advertisements and to find out what are the meanings of the signs that are related to gender stereotypes, by using semiotics theory by Charles S. Peirce. Descriptive qualitative method is also used in this research by analyzing MS Glow x Ayu Dewi – Rahasia Tampil Menarik Wanita hebat and MS Glow x Keanu – Cakep itu Nasib, Good Looking itu Pilihan. In addition, the researcher determined the icon, index, and symbols from those two advertisements as the data. The findings indicate that there are 3 icons, 3 indexes, and 3 symbols that represent women as housewife and women who multitask, 1 icon, 1 index, and 1 symbol that represent woman as a career woman, 1 icon, 1 index, 1 symbol that represents man who was acting tough, and 2 icon, 2 index, and 2 symbols that represent man who has occupational role as celebrity.

Keywords: Advertisements; Gender Stereotypes; MS Glow; Semiotics; Stereotypes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertisements actually dated back to many centuries ago when it was found in Thebes, on a piece of a papyrus (Wood, 1958). Ever since then, advertisement has increasingly developed and been taken into account in many forms from printed media: newspaper, magazine; electronic media, radio, television, billboards, brochures or posters, and even online advertisement through email and social media.

Commercial advertisement often connects to gender stereotype, especially when it is related to product exposing beauty, masculinity, feminine, and the likes. Gender stereotyping has become a topic of research for more than five decades and it still remains an important topic until to date (Grau & Zotos, 2016). The impact of advertising is one of the crucial factors that contribute on how the gender representations are socially constructed. Grau and Zotos also argued that advertising campaigns construct the gender identity based on their image, either masculine or feminine.

In psychology, stereotype is a fixed or over generalized belief that many people have of a particular type of group or class of people (McLeod, 2015). From the definition above, gender stereotype can be interpreted as a fixed idea or belief of one's gender, whether male or female, but according to United Nations Human Rights, gender stereotypes is a generalized view about attributes, characteristics, or roles that possessed by men or women (OHCHR). The examples, from our early years, girls are told to play with dolls because it's feminine while boys should play with trucks or robots instead since it will look them cooler. It is not entirely true because girl can look feminine too while having robots as their favorite toy and vice versa (Hentschel, Heilman, & Peus, 2019).

Gender stereotypes are internalized by both men and women focusing on how both men and women are seen by other people and how they see themselves with respect to stereotypes attributed. What men and women look like typically is a great deal of consensusm about them. According to social role theory, gender stereotypes are derived

from the discrepant distribution of men and women into social roles in society both at home and work, (Eagly, Koenig and Eagly cited in Peus 2019).

Gender stereotyping in advertisements are often found in any advertisements and this also includes beauty related products such as skin-care products, perfumes, make-up products. In advertisements, women are often linked to feminine activities like shopping, cooking, cleaning, and gossiping with others while men are often associated with outdoor activities, fixing cars, driving and showing authority and leadership (Rutherford, 1994). In order to view the gender stereotypes inside of an advertisement, a deeper analysis needs to be conducted by analysing the advertisement components that the writer had mentioned above. This thesis applies semiotic analysis to reveals the signs portrayed in MS Glow.

Semiotics was coined by a Swiss linguist named Ferdinand de Saussure, later, it is developed into a bigger scale leads many people to use different approach to analyze various advertisement. The researcher uses semiotics by Pierce as the core analysis of MS Glow product. The First reason is Pierce semiotics provides more conceptual analysis covering Icon, Index, and Symbol that are broader than Saussure's semiotics: signifier and signified. The second reason is because Pierce semiotics is more connected and appropriate to analyze advertisement given the broader concept offered.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The writer used a descriptive qualitative method where the data would be analyzed thoroughly from the icon, index, and symbol. The source of the data was obtained from MS Glow's official YouTube account starring Ayu Dewi and Keanu AGL. The data obtained from the video was in a form on screenshots and translated transcript of the dialogue, similar screenshots from the video would not be chosen as only one screenshot with more elements that would be analyzed. As for the transcripts, it was translated from Bahasa Indonesia to English and it has been validated by someone who is proficient and experienced in the field.

After the data was collected, the data sources were grouped into two groups, the screenshots and the transcript. Later it would also be divided into two other groups, one for MS Glow x Ayu Dewi, and the other group is for MS Glow x Keanu.

The data will be analyzed by analyzing the icon, index, and symbol using the theory from Charles S. Peirce based on the color background, utterances, and the body gesture of the talents/models of the video and later the findings would be linked to gender stereotypes by comparing the findings with previous studies.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

RESULT
MS GLOW 2022 X AYU DEWI – RAHASIA TAMPIL MAKSIMAL WANITA HEBAT

Picture 1.
First Scene, Video 1

1) Icon:

At the earlier scene in the video, it was shown that the actress Ayu Dewi multiplies herself into four people, each of her other selves are doing different house chores such as vacuuming, dusting the drawer, and cleaning the vase on the table.

2) Index

In this first scene, Ayu Dewi is seen wearing a pink home dress and hair rollers. The color pink often linked with femininity. This scene also showed that she was doing various house chores such as vacuuming, dusting the drawer, and cleaning the vase. This shows Ayu Dewi's role as a housewife.

3) Symbol

a. The title "Rahasia Tampil Maksimal Wanita Hebat" means the character of woman (in this video is played by Ayu Dewi) is portayed as a great woman and the advertisement also aims to share how a great woman is depicted by how they are able to do multiple works at once, for example is Ayu Dewi in the video who still has to fulfill her job as housewife while having another job as an entertainer

b. At the opening of the video, Ayu Dewi said her first line, "Women were born great, because we can multitask and we're multitalented, bestie!"

This scene was pretty self-explanatory, showing that a woman should be able to do multiple house chores or multiple tasks, treating those chores as a one-person job.

Even though it was not shown clearly, some of Ayu Dewi's 'doppelgangers' were shown smiling, it shows that how tiring the chores were, as a housewife, she has to look happy and do the chores anyway since it is her 'job'.

Picture 2.
Scene 2, Video 1

1) Icon:

a. This scene showed that Ayu Dewi seemend to be in a studio, working as a host. She wore the same silver dress from the previous scene while holding a microphone. Her expression here looked bright and happy.

b. During the hosting scene, a bright golden yellow text can be seen behind her the gold color here can represents luxury, success, and achievement. "TALKSHOW" was written in uppercase letters.

2) Index

The color gold in the "TALKSHOW" could symbolize success, luxury, abundance. In fiverr.com, the color gold also has some positive meanings, such as wealth, victory, and prosperity.

Most of the meanings in the color gold are linked to material possessions such as money. This scene can be interpreted as Ayu Dewi has successful career as an entertainer (host, actress, and model).

3) Symbol

In this scene, Ayu Dewi said, "If my skin is healthy, I can do anything! Hosting? No worries. Modeling? No worries. Photoshoot? I won't be disheveled." This scene is somehow connected to the first scene on the video and her monologue that said that women can multitask and women are multitalented." It is shown that she has three jobs and mainly as an entertainer.

MS Glow 2022 x Keanu – Cakep itu Nasib, Good Looking itu Pilihan

Picture 3.
Scene 1, Video 2

1) Icon:

In this scene, Keanu was shown standing in a blue colored room, holding his phone while laughing; multiple phones are also shown on a board. Multiple comments bubble can also be seen from the scene such as, "How can I make my face to be more glowing?", "Can you share me some tips to look better!", "I'm sad that my skin looks dull!". Keanu's name can be seen at the bottom of the screen, he is shown as a person that Indonesian netizen's (Internet citizen) confide to. This scene represents how famous and busy Keanu is as a social media influencer; it was shown from how many phones were laid in front of him.

2) Index

In this scene, Keanu wore a grey suit jacket; wearing suit can be seen as a form of professionalism. In the book Teenager's Guide to the Real World, Marshall Brain, the author stated that people who wear suits tend to be looked as someone in charge and they look successful (Brain, 1997). By wearing suit in this scene, Keanu was portrayed as a successful influencer and people (or netizen) all looked up to him.

Keanu's name on the scene was shown in multiple colors such as blue, magenta and yellow, this could be interpreted as Keanu's life that is full of color. The color blue here can be associated with loyalty; the yellow can be associated by optimism and happiness, meanwhile magenta, which is closer to red, is associated with passion.

3) Symbol

The title of the video, "Cakep itu Nasib, Good Looking itu Pilihan" was one of the line that was said by Keanu in the video, that means that not every person was born handsome, because having a handsome face was fate, but to be a good looking person, it was their own choice to make themselves look good by using some of the beauty products.

The comments that appeared on this scene represents the comments that Keanu got from the netizen, as a social media influencer, Keanu got lots of comments from netizens asking things for themselves. In this case, the netizens asked Keanu mostly about their skin condition such as, ", "How can I make my face to be more glowing?", "Can you share me some tips to look better!", "I'm sad that my skin looks dull!" since this was an advertisement for beauty products.

Picture 4.
Scene 2, Video 2

1) Icon:

In this scene, the 'original' Keanu had an angry expression; it can be seen from his furrowed eyebrows and his opened mouth that seemed to be shouting. The background also changed to a dark sky and lightning

2) Index

The dark sky in this scene symbolized his change of mood, from a happy one as seen on the first scene, to angry which represented by darkness. The lightning behind him also showed anger, especially when it followed by a higher tone during his dialogue.

3) Symbol

In this scene, the 'original' Keanu said, "You dweeb, that's because you can't maintain your appearance, look at your face and skin, they're so-so."

Picture 5.
Scene 3, Video 2

1) Icon:

The 'other Keanu' now was sitting in a sofa; the room setting was similar to the first scene where the 'original' Keanu sat. The other Keanu now wearing a similar suit jacket but in different color, multiple shopping bags could be seen piled around him.

2) Index

In this scene, the 'other' Keanu seemed to follow the 'original Keanu's step as an influencer, it could be seen from the outfit change. The 'other' Keanu now also wearing a suit jacket similar to the 'original' Keanu but in different color. This indicated that 'other' Keanu now as someone famous since he was an influencer, so he looked more professional than he was before.

3) Symbol

a. This scene can be interpreted as being a good-looking or atrractive person can boost your career, in this case is the 'other' Keanu was once only a netizen, but once he has an improvement on his skin which was a more glowing skin, he can be as successful as the 'original' Keanu, it is shown by the paper bags that works as an endorsement job properties.

b. Different interpretation from this scene is that confidence is the key to boost your career; in this case, the 'other' Keanu got his confidence back after his skin no longer looked dull.dimungkinkan untuk menambah pemerincian.

DISCUSSION

MS Glow 2022 x Ayu Dewi – Rahasia Tampil Maksimal Wanita Hebat

In the first scene shows that Ayu Dewi is at her house which was dominated by the color pink and dressing in a loungewear or house dress, indicating that she is a housewife. This is confirmed by her multiplying herself while doing house chores such as cleaning and cooking, also she talked about how she dreamed about being an all-rounder mom.

Ayu Dewi: Becoming an all-round mom? It's my dream!

Ayu Dewi: Being a chef at home? No problem

This particular scene can be included as a gender stereotyping in advertisement. According to a research that was done by Sitoresmi and Hariyatmi (2014) about Women Stereotyping in Indonesia as Depicted in Indonesian Television Commercials in 2014, 60% of the analyzed commercials or advertisements featured women in traditional gender role, either as a wife or as a mother. And women are more shown in food stuffs, medicine, cooking, and body cleaning products related advertisements. This also related to another category that was researched by Sitoresmi and Hariyatmi that depicted women as career women who are still devoted to traditional gender role as good mother or wife. This can be seen from the scene that showed Ayu Dewi who is working as a host and a model, which can be categorized as a career woman, but still fulfilling her role as a mother and a house wife who cooks and cleaning the house.

On the other hand, a research that was done by Lui, Yip, and Wong in Gender Differences in Multitasking Experience and Performance, showed that gender does not affect the ability in multitasking but it is affected by the difference in processing speed. Women can be good at multitasking involving music, messaging, and web surfing while men can be more experienced in multitasking when it involved video games. In their research, men even have an advantage to multitask, but that due to the differences in the cognitive abilities, (Lui, Yip, & Wong, 2021)

From most of the scene in Ayu Dewi's video advertisement, most of the background in the place she's in was in color pink. Taken from University of Missouri – Kansas City's website (UKMC), the color pink was first associated for boys and seen as stronger than the color blue which was daintier. Michael also found that later around the 1940s, the color pink was reassigned to a girls color since it was seen as more romantic and that girls or women are seen to be more emotional than boys or men (Michael, 2018). Pink, especially in the western world is seen as a color that represents female; according to a website called Color Psychology, the color pink can be associated with love, passion, calmness innocence, nurture, and also kindness.

MS Glow 2022 x Keanu – Cakep itu Nasib, Good Looking itu Pilihan

The first scene was shown that Keanu was sitting in a blue room, which mainly related as a man's color. As been mentioned before, the color blue was first assigned to girls but later reassigned to boys in 1940s since blue are deemed to be a more robust color. From the same website called Color Psychology, the color blue tends to promote trust, dependability and loyalty (Dallmeier, 2014).

This finding support the previous studies carried out by Geena Davis Institute in 2020 regarding representations of masculinity in boy's television which showed that men are most likely to act tough to defend their reputations and are willing to do physical aggression (Geena Davis Institute, 2020), while in this advertisement Keanu did not show any physical aggression, some of his utterances showed some kind of aggression by mocking the other character and talking in a harsh and loud tone.

In the other hand, some findings do support and some findings do not support the study that was carried out by Kniazian regarding gender stereotypes in advertising. In the study, Kniazian stated that in advertisement a 'real man' is stereotyped as someone who is athletic, successful, professional, seducer, is surrounded by women, and that man are very rarely presented during housecleaning (Kniazian, 2014). But in this advertisement, MS Glow kind of breaks those men stereotypes by hiring Keanu as the lead actor in their advertisement. As we can see from the scenes, Keanu in this advertisement was shown as the sole actor and not portrayed as a seducer where he is surrounded by women, even when he played lots of roles there, no women can be seen in the advertisement, which do not support Kniazian's study, but in the advertisement, Keanu is portrayed as an influencer, not so much celebrity, but he

is considered famous in Indonesia and that part is where the finding do support Kniazian's study which stated that men are portrayed as celebrities in occupational settings (Kniazian, 2014)

4.   CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study by reviewing two video MS Glow advertisement indicates that these two video display few gender stereotypes, but some scenes also shows no stereotyping. After analyzing by using a semiotic method researcher found different stereotypes from the color theme on each video, gesture, and their activity in the video. Researcher conclude that the two videos had different amount of gender stereotyping. In Ayu Dewi's video, her color scheme in the video was dominated by the color pink. It is a common color when it comes to girls or women. This color represents love, nurture, and passion . This is shown by Ayu Dewi's gestures and facial expression in the video that she tends to have happy and flirty expression, both are connected to love. Another stereotype can also be found in Ayu Dewi's video, even though she works as a career woman, in this case, as an entertainer, the video also showed that Ayu Dewi played a traditional role as woman, which is as a housewife.

As for Keanu's video, the researcher found that the related stereotype on the video was the color scheme that was used in the video, which was blue. Blue tends to be a color that associated with men; it shows robustness, dependability, and loyalty. Another can be found that Keanu, in his videos that he is always angry, harsh, and loud. This can be seen as men who always act tough and strong as the opposite of women who tend to be more nurturing and loving. As for the stereotypes for male physics and seducing behavior in advertising, it could not be seen in Keanu's advertisements

Additionally, the researcher thinks that advertising already changed if it is compared to advertisement from many years ago. Even though Ayu Dewi's advertisement still somewhat presented the stereotypes as women which were playing a role as a housewife, Ayu Dewi also showed that women's abilities are not only limited to do house chores only, they can have a job, multiple jobs even. Nowadays, women are often presented as someone who are strong and independent.

While in the past men only advertise cars, cigarettes, and other masculine products, MS Glow showed that men can also use beauty products, using beauty products does not define your masculinity, but it can be seen as to maintain their look, and maintaining one's appearance does not belong to one gender only, it goes both for men and women.

REFERENCES

Ariani, R. T. (2013). Gender stereotypes and reinforcement of patriarchy in the reality show Pilih-Pilih Mantu. Allusion, 2(1).

Eriana, Audia, (2015), Peirce Semiotics Analysis of Icon and Symbol on Perfume Advertiements.

Grau, S. L., & Zotos, Y. C. (2016). Gender stereotypes in advertising: A review of current research. International Journal of Advertising, 35(5). https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1203556

Hentschel, T., Heilman, M. E., & Peus, C. V. (2019). The multiple dimensions of gender stereotypes: A current look at men's and women's characterizations of others and themselves. Frontiers in Psychology, 10(JAN). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00011

Koenig, A. M. (2018). Comparing prescriptive and descriptive gender stereotypes about children, adults, and the elderly. Frontiers in Psychology, 9(JUN). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01086

Koenig, A. M., & Eagly, A. H. (2014). Evidence for the social role theory of stereotype content: Observations of groups' roles shape stereotypes. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 107(3). https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037215

Mortimer, K. (2008). Identifying the components of effective service advertisements. Journal of Services Marketing, 22(2). https://doi.org/10.1108/08876040810862859

Putra, A. Rohmawati, S. (2022). Occupational Gender Stereotypes In IndonesianSecondary School English Language. Universitas Sebelas Maret. Indonesia. Vol 6.   No   1. Pages 160-175.

Sari, C. C., & Fadillah, E. (2020). Women's Image Represented on Dolce & Gabbana Advertisement. Seminar Nasional Ilmu Terapan.

Sella Rohmawati, & Kristian Adi Putra. (2022). OCCUPATIONAL GENDER STEREOTYPES IN INDONESIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS. IJLECR - INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND CULTURE REVIEW, 8(1). https://doi.org/10.21009/ijlecr.081.07

Sitoresmi, U., & Hariyatmi, S. (2014). The Portrait of Women Stereotyping in Indonesia as Depicted in Indonesian Television Commercials. Widya Wacana, 9(1).

Wayan, N., Mirani, A., Dian, K., Candra, P., Putu, D., & Pratiwi, E. (2021). THE MEANING OF BEAUTY IN RARE BEAUTY VIDEO ADVERTISEMENT.   Social Science, Public Administration and Management (HUSOCPUMENT), 1(2).