

## ADVERTISING AND POPULAR CULTURE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF BEAUTY AND GOODNESS IN ADVERTISING

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### ABSTRACT

*This article discusses the influence of advertising and popular culture on the formation of an ideological identity of one's beauty and good looks in online media. The things discussed in this article include the meaning of beauty and good looks, the influence of advertising on the construction of thoughts about beauty and good looks, the influence of the myth of feminism and masculinity on oneself and the environment, and critical attitudes towards advertising in online media. Online media, such as websites, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Tik-Tik, are not only channels of information and entertainment. However, the online media also displays various advertisements that become channels to build a world image such as beauty and good looks. For example, a skincare ad that constructs the idea that beautiful women are white, glowing, (athletic). The purpose of this article is to see how advertising in online media can shape the ideological identity of a person's beauty and good looks. This article uses a qualitative research method of literature study. The data sources in this article are data from various research references such as scientific journals, e-books, as well as other relevant and credible information data sources. The results of this article state that advertising and popular culture greatly affect the mindset of both male and female consumers. Advertising constructs a mindset towards a product as if the product displayed is real, causing people to set standards for a person's beauty and good looks based on their physical appearance. However, we must be able to be critical of the spread of information.*

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## Introduction

In this all-digital era, people are free to choose and enjoy information broadcasts in various media. Freedom has become a representation of an autonomous public right to choose a form of presentation from the media they like (Fitryani 2009). Various impressions in the information media always have a big impact on a change in the community, which is increasingly easy to believe in all the information that is displayed. The development of the world of information technology also has a major influence on people's mindsets and lifestyles that are increasingly changing with the times. Popular culture is also one of the supporters of a change in the mindset of the community itself, where popular culture is abstractly embodied in a value, ideology, norm and traditional belief. Popular culture is very easy to spread in urban

society as it is today, because people are now very easy to access and receive information from various parts of the world, supported by technological sophistication. (Istiqomah 2020).

Wrong One information that is growing rapidly on digital platforms today is advertising. Advertising is a form of communication that is commercial and sometimes paid to market or introduce products to a wide audience. Advertising or it can also be called sponsorship, apart from attracting viewers or netizens, it is also an effort to create a brand awareness. Advertising is also a depiction of an image of a product that is able to construct society into a group with a lifestyle or pattern of life that has been regulated through certain themes, images, and symbolic meanings. (Kartini 2015). The development of advertising in the modern era began in the 1960s, in that year the form of advertising was much more modern than the previous one where there were many creative and innovative works. The Indonesian people themselves interpret advertising as all forms of messages about a product or service that are delivered through a media and are intended for part or all of the community. Advertising can also be interpreted as a process that includes the preparation, planning, implementation and supervision of the delivery of advertisements (Erlita 2016).

Over time, advertising is no longer just a medium for delivering information on a product or service, which aims to attract public interest. However, now advertising has begun to influence people's mindset or ideology which also affects their lifestyle. Currently a standard measurement of an object, style, and also a person's perspective of assessing beauty and good looks are starting to be influenced by advertisements that are displayed in online media. For example, advertisements for women's beauty products and grooming products for men, basically these advertisements display beauty standards such as the figure of the advertisement star shown. The advertisements clearly display a figure who describes a beautiful physical form and is believed to be the standard of beauty or good looks (Worotitjan 2016). From there, people have begun to construct and assume that the standard of a person's beauty and good looks can be measured based on what they usually see in these advertisements.

Based on this reality, this article will discuss how television advertising can shape one's ideological identity of beauty and good looks. This article also discusses the meaning of beauty and good looks, what a person's standards of beauty and good looks are in terms of television commercials, the mythical influence of beauty and good looks on the environment and ourselves, and how we manage ourselves in dealing with this new view.

## **Advertising Power**

Mass media plays an important role in creating an ideal discourse for society through advertisements in public spaces. Advertisements are made not only to promote one product, but also to shape the brand image, values and product concepts. Advertising is one of the most widely used communication activities by companies. Advertisements are presented to convey messages to the public. Advertising provides an interpretive framework that can direct the audience to their desires so that they can understand the message conveyed. In the world of marketing, advertising is referred to as the biggest communication element that determines the positioning of a brand. This statement implies that advertising is determined carefully and must go through a careful planning process (Winarni, 2010).

## **Sexuality Theory**

The main factor that underlies the development of the concept of sexuality is influenced by people's mindsets. The concept of sexuality is considered as truth, can be followed, and imagined which is actually created to dominate the mindset of certain people. The view that only women have the right to look stunning while men appear as they are is a traditional cultural thought of Indonesian society. The times have changed the construction of people's thoughts about the concept of sexuality, especially for men. In this post-modern era, the understanding of masculinity in men has undergone a considerable shift. The idea that men should appear as they are seems to have changed. This change of mind, of course, cannot be separated from the goals of certain parties to achieve their wishes (Habib, Ratnaningsih, & Nisa, 2019). The post-modern era creates a new image of the metrosexual male figure who appears by maintaining appearance. Metrosexual men will be obsessed with taking care of their bodies, and pay attention to all appearances by spending their time and money to go to the gym or salon. (Fayardi & Ashaf, 2017).

## **Beauty Concept**

The concept of beauty has recently become a topic of debate in many circles. When talking about the beauty of a woman, of course one's view will immediately lead to the ideal body (sexy), tall and slender, white skin, long black straight hair, and a glowing face. Someone who wants to have a body that has been determined based on certain beauty standards will try to adjust his body to the concept of beauty that is indoctrinated in people's lives. (Aprilita & Listyani, 2016).

## **One Dimensional Human Theory**

Basically society has a lot of diversity in all fields. In this modern era, diversity is integrated by market forces to achieve certain goals. The meaning of uniformity is reflected through the concepts of feminism and masculinity. The concepts of feminism and masculinity vary between social groups, which have now been identified in certain patterns. The homogeneity of the concepts of feminism and masculinity was created by the capitalist group to increase the global capitalist market network in order to increase the profits earned. (Habib, Ratnaningsih, & Nisa, 2019).

In a study entitled "Advertising and Popular Culture: Formation of the Ideological Identity of Women's Beauty by Advertising on Television" written by Inda Fitria stated that some groups view culture as having a positive impact as a form of civilization development, but on the other hand the impact of popular culture will gradually erode local culture that is considered outdated. The commercial value of popular culture will make a person willing to spend large amounts of money to buy the things he needs to support his appearance. Capitalism uses the culture industry to set certain standards that are considered ideal. Currently, television has become the most widely used electronic media by the public. Television has become the most popular advertising medium through advertising, people's thinking will be constructed in setting a person's standard of beauty that has been set. Many women will be willing to sacrifice to get the ideal body, a beautiful face which will result in the loss of identity in him. He will also become a consumptive because he consumes things that he doesn't really need (Fitryarini, 2009). In another study entitled "Construction of Beauty in Wardah Cosmetics Advertisement" stated that beauty is not only measured by women who look sensual, but rather by women who have ideal bodies with clean, white faces, tall lives, neat teeth and long hair. The development of the times makes the capitalists take advantage of opportunities to take maximum profit (Worotitjan, 2014).

## **Methods**

In this article, the researcher uses a qualitative research method of literature study, where the researcher looks for data sources that come from various research references such as scientific journals, e-books, and also other reliable sources of information data, so that

secondary data is obtained from valid or reliable sources of information. The qualitative approach method itself is a research method that examines an object, where the researcher is the key instrument and the data collection technique is carried out in a combined manner and the data analysis is descriptive of the data in the field.(Inscription 2018). While literature study is a series of activities related to library data collection, by reading, taking notes and also managing a research study(Supriyadi, 2016).

## **Results And Discussion**

### **Meaning of Beauty and Handsomeness**

As we know, women are always synonymous with beauty and beauty. Actually, the meaning of beautiful and handsome is relative, it can not only be seen from their physical appearance, but also their behavior. Along with the times and the influence of advertising, it has now experienced a shift in meaning. Today's human mind has been constructed by capitalism that an example of a beautiful figure can be seen from her physical appearance such as looking smooth, white, glowing, make-up, and tall. So that women will feel inferior and less confident to appear in public if they do not meet these beauty standards(Jahidin & Ahmad, 2019). Meanwhile, a handsome figure for a man has also been constructed to have an athletic body, white, smooth, tall, and even glowing. For example, as in k-pop artists who are idolized by Indonesian young women. In its development, masculinity in the era of capitalism is not the same as in the ancient Greek era, which can be seen from strength, courage, independence, leadership and assertiveness. According to Moss, today's men tend to worry about their physical appearance, such as body shape, clothes worn, unkempt faces, expensive hobbies, and the appearance of hairstyles. (Fahrimal & Husna, 2020).

According to the results of research conducted by Grabe et al, it was found that the ideal body of a woman has been constructed to be thin and slender as in media impressions, this can affect women's perspective on their body shape. This does not only affect women, men also experience it. Men are constructed to have a beautiful face, and a beautiful body. According to Grijalva et al, the current level of narcissism between women and men does not have a significant difference. So that it can be interpreted that women and men have the same view of their self-image in public(Fahrimal & Husna, 2020).

The thought of always looking beautiful and handsome is one of the influences of the mass media, especially in the media online which is supported by video editing in beauty/good-looking product advertisements so that they look real and attractive. According to Marshall

MC Luhan, online media as hot media is the most effective medium in generating and disabling mass awareness in an indefinite period of time. (Fitryarini, 2009). As a result of this thought construction from capitalism, there has been a shift in the meaning of beauty and good looks which currently emphasizes physical appearance from head to toe with various polishes that require quite expensive costs. As a result of this thought construction of capitalism, consumers will do various ways so that they can display a good self-image in front of the public.

### **The Effect of Advertising on the Construction of Beauty and Handsomeness**

Advertising plays an important role in marketing management, advertising as the highlight of the promotion of a product. Advertising is any form of paid media that promotes ideas, goods or services. The use of advertising can be an alternative to distribute messages and build brands to customers in a more cost-effective manner (Kotler & Keller, 2009). In addition to functioning as a promotional medium, advertising also functions as a medium for delivering messages to instill symbolic meaning through visuals and language. Advertising is used to convey a certain meaning to a target group. Messages in advertisements are made as attractive as possible as a manifestation of the creativity of the creator, which often creates a new phenomenon for the audience of advertisements (Fayardi & Ashaf, 2017).

The problem that is often associated with advertising is the appearance of male and female figures as the main actors of advertising in the mass media. Some body care product advertisements often use models that reflect a person's beauty and good looks. Most of the selected models have ideally constructed bodies and come from celebrities (Fathinah, Priyatna, & Adji, 2017). For example, Garnier's ad which clearly shows that someone who has acne will tend to feel insecure. The ad shows a woman who doesn't want to take a photo with her because she feels that she has acne on her face. He felt insecure with the face he had. Knowing this, his friend recommended treating his face with Garnier products, and immediately his face immediately turned clean and looked brighter.

The same thing also happened to Garnier Men products which stated that "to fight acne, make sure it is number one". In the advertisement, two men are shown exercising, where one of the men has acne on his face, then his friend recommends using Garnier Man products, and after the man washes his face the acne immediately disappears without a trace. In another example, for example in the L-Men product, it shows an athlete who is exercising, the athlete has a muscular body because he often consumes L-Men drinks.

Advertisements do confirm that a clean face and ideal body are formed by creative reproduction, not by reproduction of repressive powers. With advertising, society will be shaped, defined, created, and directed to have the construction of the mind in accordance with the purpose of the ad. The existence of advertisements indirectly makes people set standards of beauty and good looks of a person. A beautiful person is a person who has a sexy body, white and smooth skin, a sharp nose, a glowing face, and long black hair. Likewise with men, handsome men are constructed as figures who have a muscular body (athletic), white and smooth skin, a glowing face, and a tall body. As the influence of advertising, people will compete to change themselves according to the standards of beauty and good looks that have been set by the capitalists.

### **The Influence of Beauty and Handsomeness Myths on Self and the Environment**

Regarding the myth of beauty and good looks, in order to know the effect on a person and the environment, it can be seen from some common symptoms that are often experienced in everyday life.

Off style (identity freezing)

The figures of female beauty and male handsomeness are applied periodically through various advertisements in online media, which in the end seem to be the reality of female beauty standards and male handsomeness in everyday life. In this case, online media such as Instagram, Facebook, website, and Tik-Tok are transformed like a mirror that reflects the standard of female beauty and male good looks. In reality, the mirror for women and men is not realistic for a standard of beauty and good looks. This then causes a lack of self-confidence and anxiety which will lead to an identity freezing condition.

Alienation (non-support problem)

It must be admitted, in social interactions, physical beauty is the first thing that gets an assessment, both beauty for women and good looks for men. Assessments that are from within (inner beauty) such as intellectual intelligence and nature do not appear in the initial discussion of the interaction. The environment often judges a person based on external criteria, namely physical appearance in first impression culture.

A woman will get a positive response from society if she has a slim body, as well as a man who has an athletic body (proportional). Meanwhile, for women who do not have a slim body and men who do not have a proportional body will get a negative response and feel

themselves cornered or alienated. This condition will trigger anxiety and anger for both men and women, and will feel neglected by their social environment (Sulistiyati, 2019).

### **Critical Attitude Toward Television Advertising**

The progress of information technology today really demands us to be more critical in responding to the increasingly diverse distribution of information. Dozens of online media, television channels, and radio programs offer a variety of information that requires a critical attitude to seek the truth of the information. Information, including advertisements, must be filtered and categorized to avoid hegemonic situations that are intentionally created by individuals or groups for specific purposes. Advertising is defined as information that aims to encourage or persuade the general public to be interested in the products or services offered. For example, nowadays, we often see advertisements for beauty and good looks that are broadcast every day and even every hour through online media. The presence of advertisements has a great influence on the formation of public opinion. (Rahman, 2017)

*Consumerism* It can be said as a form of proposition or value that gives meaning to people's lives through what they consume rather than what is produced. In other words, consumerism is a form of transformation in which all people experience an unlimited desire to consume (Octaviana, 2020).

The strategy to avoid the existence of consumerism ideology in oneself, should be wise in consuming various information, especially in advertisements. Advertisements that are often exaggerated will make us interested in certain products which in reality are not needed at all, especially regarding beauty and good looks. Therefore, it is necessary to build the community's ability to develop skills to be more critical in reading advertising messages, so that they can quickly and carefully process and interpret the meaning conveyed by advertisements. (Winarni, 2010).

Generally, Indonesian men and women are still constructing advertisements that say beautiful women are white, slim, glowing and has long flowing hair. Meanwhile, handsome men are men who have ideal bodies (athletic) with six packs on their stomachs, and have white skin, glowing and smooth faces like k-pop artists. In addition, nowadays, many people think that "only the beautiful and the handsome can be appreciated", so they will compete to beautify and make themselves beautiful so that they can be appreciated by others. To avoid such things,



we need to always be aware that beautiful and handsome already exists in the characteristics of each person. Everyone must also instill an attitude of gratitude for the gifts that God has given to their bodies. Therefore, (Listari, 2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

The meaning of beautiful and handsome has shifted. Where the previous meaning of beautiful has a unique and non-uniform characteristic. But now the consequence the influence of advertising, beauty is identical with physical appearance such as white skin, smooth, tall, long hair, proportional body, and attractive appearance from head to toe. While masculinity itself does not only display the strength or agility of men, but rather on its physical appearance which has almost the same characteristics as women with a well-groomed face. Advertising itself is very influential on the mindset of consumers, both men and women. Where advertisements can construct their mindset towards a product as if the advertisements displayed appear real. With advertisements, people will set a standard for someone's beauty and good looks based on their physical appearance. This causes people to flock to change themselves according to the standards of beauty and good looks that have been set by the capitalists through advertising.

The myth about beauty and good looks towards one's self and the environment can be seen from several symptoms, namely the first one is identity freezing. Where these symptoms arise due to advertisements showing beauty standards, causing a lack of self-confidence and anxiety in a person so that it causes style death. The second symptom is alienation (non-support problem), where the environment often judges a person based on physical appearance. If someone does not have a good physical appearance, they will get a negative response and will feel alienated from their environment. This triggers conditions of anxiety and anger because they feel neglected by their social environment.

With the advancement of technology In this post-modern era, everyone must be able to be critical of the increasingly diverse distribution of information. The public must be able to realize that beauty and handsomeness already exist in each person in a unique and unique way, especially our attitudes and ethics in socializing and most importantly we must always be grateful for the gift of the body that God has created for each person. Thus the public will be

able to dispel all myths of beauty and good looks that are deliberately created by capitalists through advertising in the mass media to expand their market share.

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