Investigating Indonesian Beauty Contest Instagram Posts Sparking Feminism

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Abstract

In a patriarchal country like Indonesia, feminism is still an extremely relevant movement that needs to be manifested to improve women's life. Social media has become the most effective platform to promote the idea of feminism. Nowadays, women have crucial roles during the COVID-19 pandemic such as a working women community participating in the digital age. Many other feminists or woman-related communities, such as beauty pageant groups, contribute to spreading the pandemic awareness using their media while displaying their feminist perspective. Relevant to these issues, this study intends to uncover how women are represented on a beauty pageant social media account during the COVID-19 era to exhibit how the feminism ideology is presented through the women's representation. This study focuses on analyzing the pictures from the Puteri Indonesia Instagram account (@officialputeriindonesia) posted during the pandemic by employing Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotics theory of visual grammar complemented by the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method. Results of the study denote that women represent their roles day by day by posting their images while conducting various activities such as social, environmental, cultural and health activities in well-dressed outfits. Women are also portrayed as possessing various characteristics that challenge the patriarchal stereotypes. Furthermore, these indicate the positive portrayal of feminism that concerns giving women more chances to be independent of the stereotypes and be more engaged in various roles regardless of gender.

Keywords: women's representation; feminism; social media; Semiotics; visual grammar

Introduction

Since the growth and the dissemination of feminist thought many years ago, women have fought for justice for women's rights as a gender-based issue (Banet-Weiser, 2020; Federici, 2020; Dalla, 2019; Hall, 2019). These issues have prompted numerous academics to support the movement through extensive research (Wiesner-

Hanks, 2021; Nisa, 2019; Wu, 2019; Yin & Sun, 2021), some of which are feminism studies that expose gender representation in media in order to advance gender equality (Dent, 2020; Grabe, Ward & Hyde, 2008; Brooks & Hébert, 2006; Steeves, 1987). As concerns about gender equality grew, beauty pageants eventually appeared and focused on the issues. It is evident that the popularity of beauty pageant competitions contributed to the emergence of feminism (Gentile, 2020; Tice, 2012; Dow, 2003), yet researchers have hardly explored this subject.

One of the earliest feminist concepts by Wollstonecraft (2014) has introduced women's opportunity to attain education to develop their intelligence which can bring positive impacts on the advancement of the civilization rather than let them treated merely as objects for men. Recently, the newer concepts of the feminist movement have developed. Although many countries still lack gender equality awareness, the feminist movement has progressed significantly. The 2015 Global Gender Gap Index presented by World Economic Forum indicates that 96% and 95% of the gaps between men and women regarding health and education outcomes have gotten closer (Norberg, 2016). Therefore, the focus of the feminist movement in this era is to eliminate those gaps in all aspects. The statistics above also show that feminism has become more familiar in today's world, given that the movement has achieved satisfying results. The familiarity with feminism and gender issues might also point out that the ideology seems to have been a trend nowadays, especially among the young people in the media. Many parties, including women communities such as beauty pageant groups also get concerned about the idea of feminism during the COVID-19 situation. They contribute to spreading pandemic awareness. This kind of women community holds events to promote 5S government programs by implementing the compliance of COVID-19 health protocols.

Furthermore, feminism and gender equality trends are mainly spread throughout printed and digital media such as memes, comics, advertisements, modeling photos, documentation, and daily activity posts. As a result, many studies regarding feminism and gender role representations in various media have been conducted. Analyzing the posts on the Sri Lanka Ministry of Tourism's Instagram account, Wijesinghe, Mura, and Tavakoli (2020) found out that the gendered representation pictures in the tourism promotion context do not portray sexist perspectives towards the local people featured in the photos. In other words, men's and women's roles are not necessarily depicted based on feminine-masculine

stereotypes. In the advertisement context, Aryani (2013) identified women's representation in detergent packages pointing out that women are represented as feminine and motherly but still independent. The independent side represented in the advertisement indicates the aspect of challenging society's stereotypes of femininity. This opinion is supported by Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen (2017), who investigated that the proper women's representation in the media is the one that challenges the stereotypes and that it is evident that such portrayal gains more attention from the consumers. Women's representation through social media is also important in the pandemic era because social media can be used as a tool to encourage women's roles in society. Helnasya & Kailani (2021) claimed that preventive actions of COVID-19 conducted by villagers in a district were published on both digital and non-digital media to deploy the pandemic awareness to audiences. Also, Marinova, Bitri, & Ibro (2021) stated that women represent their roles in the digital age by working on Science Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) in the time of COVID-19 pandemic.

Although feminism is popular among young people, not all people are aware of the importance of gender equality. Therefore, gender representations in media are not always aligned with feminism and gender equality. In the Indonesian context, a study conducted by Ariyanto (2018) and Tyarakanita et al. (2021) about gender representation in Indonesian school English textbooks demonstrated that male roles are depicted as more active and dominant than those of females in the context of communication and social functions. Felicia (2021), who investigated women's representation in Nigerian newspaper cartoons, also found that women's roles vary from women as wives, dependents, sex objects, and political actors, to feminist activists. It indicates the reality of how women are perceived in Nigeria. In the masculinity context, Pretorius (2013) analyzed masculine representation in an Afrikaans music magazine which suggests that traditional Afrikaners masculinity inclines to marginalize black and gay masculinity and glorify white and heterosexual masculinity. These studies' results highlight the stereotypical toxic gendered representation in media, indicating the lack of awareness concerning gender equality or feminism. The perception and attitude regarding the lack of understanding of feminism and gender equality in various regions around the globe are why the feminist movement is still relevant today.

The previous studies (Wijesinghe, Mura, and Tavakoli, 2020; Aryani, 2013; Åkestam, Rosengren, and Dahlen, 2017) present the gendered representation in

various media and how it is perceived. However, none of the earlier studies investigated gender representation on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study explores the woman's picture during the pandemic era on Puteri Indonesia's Instagram posts (@officialputeriindonesia) using Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotics theory of visual grammar combined with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Puteri Indonesia is an Indonesian beauty pageant event that searches for women representatives for Indonesia organized by Yayasan Puteri Indonesia (YPI). Women appointed to be the winners of this event will be the ambassadors of Indonesia to promote the country at national and international levels. As a renowned national beauty pageant group, Puteri Indonesia shares the activities of its selected candidates. The latter holds the title of Puteri Indonesia on their social media accounts, such as Instagram (@officialputeriindonesia). It is intended to let the public know what the Puteri Indonesia does to enhance the country's development.

Moreover, during the COVID-19 situation, the representatives of Puteri Indonesia are still quite active in doing their work which still has particular relevance to the pandemic circumstances. These activities are also documented on the Instagram account. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the Instagram posts of the @officialputeriindonesia account during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has become one of the most prevalent topics throughout the last few years. The way the Puteri Indonesia group utilizes their Instagram account to share their activities by emphasizing the roles and characteristics of Indonesian women's representatives in daily life is why the researcher chose to conduct this study.

The women's representation on Puteri Indonesia's Instagram posts during the pandemic is analyzed using the social semiotics theory of visual grammar. Semiotics is a branch of linguistics that studies codes and signs. The semiotic study uses semiotic resources, including artifacts, materials, and actions used for communication (van Leeuwen, 2005). In social semiotics, these semiotic resources possess potential meanings based on their uses and the social contexts underlying the forms that are "brought together by the sign-makers," given that the forms and the meanings are not contingent on each other (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2005). To determine the meanings of the forms or the semiotic resources, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) divide the representation processes in the framework of visual grammar: (1) representational meaning, (2) interactive meaning, and (3)

compositional meaning. Each of these processes highlights different focuses of representation. The visual grammar framework is applied to find the meanings underlying the elements in the pictures taken from Puteri Indonesia's Instagram posts. Moreover, the CDA method is applied to reveal the feminist ideology represented beyond the visual elements in the pictures that become the objects of this study. CDA investigates the language used in some specific discourses related to social inequalities to critique the social circumstances by focusing on the correlation between social elements and the discourse (Baxter, 2010; Fairclough, 2013). This analysis method interprets discourses at the norm level to provide a critical analysis of social practices. Therefore, using CDA, this study aims to reveal the attempt of the beauty pageant group to spread the feminist ideology to their audience, especially to Indonesian women whose culture is still strictly attached to patriarchy, while also extending the awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, this study will provide insights into how Indonesian beauty pageant organizations depict Indonesian women's representation in daily activity pictures and how women's roles and characteristics represented in fashion and modeling pictures, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, are portrayed through social media. This study is significant to shed light on the feminist perspective in Indonesia and denote the vital role of the influential people on social media in spreading the awareness of gender issues and other crucial issues through their platforms. Having considered the issues, this study aimed to seek the answers of the following research questions:

1. How do an Indonesian beauty pageant organization depict Indonesian women's representation in daily pictures during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What feminist characteristics appear in the pageants' fashion and modeling pictures regarding the representation of women's roles?

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach that analyzed the meaning of signs in the pictures posted on the @officialputeriindonesia Instagram account during the pandemic era. This research investigated the women's representation portrayed in each image using the Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotics and visual grammar theories and the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method. It is in line with the definition

of qualitative research which is a research study that explores the quality of activities, behaviors, relationships, or materials to understand the objects or subjects being studied (Dawson, 2009; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

Furthermore, social semiotics deals with interpreting signs based on social beliefs in the society (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The theory of visual design grammar is the tool of social semiotics. Following these theories, this study analyzed discourses that take the form of pictures from the Puteri Indonesia Instagram account to answer the first research question related to how women were represented in the photos. The representational, interactive, and compositional contexts were used to interpret the research objects based on the visual grammar theory after analyzing the meaning contained in each picture. In addition, this study examined how the account, as a platform with a substantial reputation in Indonesia, depicts the ideology of feminism from the women's representation and the woman roles on the Instagram posts. Concerning the relation between power and culture within the society, this study used the CDA method, which relates to the discourse interpretation at the level of social norms (Baxter, 2010), to investigate the second research question about the portrayal of feminism.

In addition, this study was conducted by following four steps: (1) data collection, (2) data analysis, (3) data interpretation, and (4) conclusion drawing. The authors found several accounts on Instagram posting women activities during the COVID-19 condition as the target population and @officialputeriindonesia Instagram account was chosen as the target sample to collect the data using purposive sampling because this is an account for Indonesian women who have joined the Puteri Indonesia competition to promote their activities before, during, and after the competition. The models in the sample images were the top three of Puteri Indonesia 2020. This account met the research context criteria that authors looked for. The selected images should portray the figures of Indonesian women wearing masks and were published during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic era from 2020 to 2021. More than 50 (fifty) images that could be the samples were found; however, only 13 (thirteen) pictures were considered most relevant to the study using a deductive method in which one image was to represent several pictures having similar activities and purposes. The authors then analyzed the data based on the Kress and van Leeuwen's theories of social semiotics and visual grammar to investigate the meanings of signs in the pictures. The method of CDA was employed to reveal the women's

representation and roles as well as the feminist ideology depicted through the images. After that, the results were interpreted descriptively by generalizing the analysis of the pictures. Finally, the conclusion and implication are based on the study's aims.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

This study related to women's representation on @officialputeriindonesia Instagram posts during the pandemic period examines two picture classifications: (1) daily activity pictures and (2) fashion and modeling images. The interpretations of the daily activity pictures present women's representation in various activities. On the other hand, fashion and modeling pictures depict feminine traits. Using the visual grammar analysis and the norm-level interpretation of CDA, authors discovered that women are portrayed as having active roles in social, environmental, cultural, and even health activities from daily activity pictures. Furthermore, fashion and modeling pictures characterize women as possessing various characteristics contradictory to others, such as feminine, masculine, elegant, fierce, mysterious, sophisticated, sexy, seductive, calm, and modest. Women in these pictures are also shown wearing face masks indicating the COVID-19 condition. Further analyses are presented as follows.

a.   *Women's representation in daily activity pictures*

Figure 1. A woman giving a gift to a person

In this picture, the woman hands out a gift to a person as the representative of Puteri Indonesia. The woman wears a simple, casual outfit, including a black face mask, a black t-shirt, and black trousers. This simplicity of fashion is intended to make audiences focus on her action instead of her outfit. Moreover, the way the woman holds the gift to make it more visible in the picture indicates that the act of giving is the main thing highlighted in the image. The action presents women's involvement in the social activity of providing some help to people in need.

Figure 2. A woman trying to become a street vendor

This picture depicts a representative Puteri having the opportunity to experience how it is to be a street vendor. The woman also wears a simple and casual outfit with a white face mask, a black t-shirt, a pair of denim trousers, and a pair of white shoes. This picture completely captures the woman's outfit from head to toe giving another perspective of such simplicity. In Indonesia, the street vendor usually does not wear shoes. They wear sandals instead. The woman wearing shoes in the picture shows the gap between her and the Indonesian street vendor's reality, indicating that the woman is of a higher class.

Moveover, her action in the picture indicates that she tries to eliminate the social hierarchy by showing that a woman like her can take the role of a street vendor and that being a street vendor does not automatically belong to a lower-class person. The picture can also convey that every job has its value based on social class. It presents the role in the social equality implementation.

Figure 3. A woman in an environmental action

Slightly different from previous pictures, the woman, as the Puteri Indonesia representative, performs an environmental action by planting some trees. In the image, her right hand uses and scoop, and the left one holds the plant. She also wears

a more completely-equipped outfit, including a face mask, a t-shirt covered with a life jacket, black trousers, and boots. Moreover, the woman ties her hair which might be intended to avoid distractions caused by the hair or prevent the hair from getting dirty. Such appearance is considered necessary in the activity related to the natural environment. It shows that she is directly involved in the activity. Therefore, this picture highlights women taking part in an environmental action to preserve the earth's sustainability.

Figure 4. A woman in an environmental action

This picture also shows the representative Puteri Indonesia preserves the environment by collecting trash from the sea to maintain the sea ecosystem and lifting a bag of trash. She also wears an outfit equipped with a life jacket and casual clothing, including a white hat, a face mask, a white long-sleeved t-shirt, a pair of gloves, and black trousers. This appearance indicates her involvement in the activity. Similar to the previous image, this photo also presents women's roles in doing the environmental action.

Figure 5. A woman learning the process of producing batik

This picture consists of one Puteri and two other women in a batik store. Two women wear simple *kebaya* with batik clothes as the skirt and plain face masks, and the Puteri wears a denim suit and a batik face mask. The appearance of the two women wearing *kebaya* is proper and straightforward. In contrast, the woman from Puteri Indonesia appears with finely-styled loose hair, thicker make-up, and a pair of circle earrings as one of the accessories. Their appearances reflect their roles in the

situation. The two women represent the batik store and need to appear presentable and proper to create a good impression for the store.

In contrast, the Puteri inclines to look more fashionable and sophisticated but is still considered correctly dressed for the activity. Furthermore, she is holding some tools to make batik clothes while others are watching her. It seems like Puteri learns the steps of making batik, and the two women become her tutors. This activity indicates women's role in cultural preservation.

Figure 6. A woman doing a blood donor

This picture presents the Puteri conducts a blood donor activity. The woman does not candidly act as she does in the previous images while holding two blood donor bags. The background is also somewhat blurry, while the woman's figure is shown vividly. It indicates that the picture is intended to make the woman holding blood donor bags the main focus to represent the proof of her involvement in the action. Speaking of appearance, the woman wears a casual and simple outfit with a black face mask, a black shirt, and gloves. As the previous picture suggests, such simplicity makes the audience focus more on the action than the actor. Furthermore, this picture shows a woman's contributions to humanity and health acts by being involved in the blood donor activity.

b.   *Woman characteristics representations in fashion and modeling pictures*

Figure 7. Three women as fashion models

There are three women in this modeling photo as the representatives of Puteri Indonesia. Each of them wears a slim fit dress which seems like the modified version of *kebaya*, given that there are some embroidered tendril patterns on the upper part of the dress and a batik garment for the skirt, and a laser-cut face mask with some carving designs. This outfit combines traditional Indonesian culture styles with futuristic ones, which indicates that traditional culture is timeless and deserves to be preserved. It reflects women's role in cultural preservation through fashion. Furthermore, the women's gestures in the picture incline to show their body curves. For instance, the woman in the middle shows off her leg in between the slit of her skirt. The slim-fit dresses and the gestures represent seductiveness. However, the woman on the left also makes a hand-akimbo gesture for her pose, reflecting assertiveness. In addition, the picture's tone is bright, complemented by the pastel-colored background, indicating softness which becomes one of the women's stereotypical characteristics. Thus, the image portrays women's role as the actor in cultural preservation and their assertive, seductive, soft, and sophisticated characteristics.

Figure 8. A woman in a formal event

This picture shows a rather formal picture of the woman as the representative of Puteri Indonesia. The woman wears a white suit with accessories including a crown, a batik face mask, and a pair of earrings. She also wears a ribbon sash showing her identity as "PUTERI INDONESIA," in which half of it is cut out of the frame, adjusting the ratio of the picture that captures only half of the woman's figure. The outfit, accessories, and picture ratio depict the formal situation. The other part worth noting is that the woman wears a suit instead of a dress which indicates the presence of gender equality since the costume is usually used by men, which over time alters to be a unisex outfit, while a dress is still commonly perceived as a women's wear. Moreover, the woman wearing a suit also represents assertiveness, domination, and

independence, while still exhibiting the sense of softness and calmness characterized by the white color of the outfit and the bright tone of the picture.

Figure 9. Three women as fashion models

Three women in this picture are featured in two different ways inside the same frame. The first feature is the three women each doing the full-body pose, and the second exhibits the women's faces in a close-up version with a black-and-white filter. This picture consists of a combination of two distinctive images. It simply indicates that the picture tries to highlight two aspects: batik fashion and batik face mask designs. In the first feature, the women wear batik-themed outfits that are sophisticatedly designed without reducing the cultural aspect of the batik patterns themselves. Therefore, it represents Indonesian cultural preservation which still follows the advancement of the modern era. The second feature shows the three women wearing batik face masks whose patterns are accentuated since the forms are saliently exhibited due to the size of those elements in the picture. It indicates that batik, as Indonesia's original product, can be implemented in any form of fashion. Being interpreted, face masks that contain a medical indication of protecting people's respiration health can still be applied fashionably. It shows women's role in cultural preservation and health campaigns by promoting positive attitudes regarding wearing face masks from a fashion perspective as the representative of Puteri Indonesia.

Figure 10. A woman as a streetwear fashion model

The image shows a woman's pose in a public place, focusing on her figure and blurring the circumstances of the general area, which becomes the background of the picture. The photographer tries to centralize the woman instead of the site's location. It might be because the picture's purpose is to display the fashion worn by the woman. The woman wears a minimalistic outfit which includes a pair of sunglasses, a face mask matched with the clothes' pattern, gloves, a jumpsuit covering a black undershirt, and stiletto heels. The use of colors in this outfit which only contrasts with the dark-and-light accent, highlights the minimalistic side.

Moreover, the jumpsuit has somewhat asymmetric patterns in which specific patterns on the garment dominate the right side. In contrast, the other side is dominated by plain colors without marks. This asymmetricity reflects sophistication within the minimalistic style. Furthermore, the realistic background and the minimalist-but-sophisticated outfit indicate that the picture tries to display street-wear fashion. The clothes also portray the woman as simple, slightly masculine, but still showing femininity. This image points out the border between masculinity and femininity stereotypes which are getting vaguer over time.

Figure 11. A woman as a streetwear fashion model

This picture is similar to the previous one. The woman in this picture poses in a public place with the focus on her figure while the background is blurred. The concept and structure of this picture are almost the same with Figure 10. This picture also shows the intention to display streetwear fashion. However, the woman's style in this picture is slightly different. The woman wears a pair of glasses, a face mask, a scarf, a white undershirt covered by a grey coat slitted on the right and left sides to give access to the arms, a pair of gloves, regular fit trousers, and a pair of stiletto heels with matched color to the trousers. This outfit reflects a more feminine impression, particularly with the woman's loose hair.

Figure 12. Three women as fashion models

This dark-toned picture consists of three women figures as its model. The women wear single-colored black dresses with distinctive styles and laser-cut face masks with carving patterns as accessories. Despite the different types, the three dresses contain similar gigot sleeves and low-cut necklines that slightly reveal the top parts of their chests. This design represents elegance and seductiveness. Speaking the black color of the dresses indicates dominance, strength, fierceness, and grace. The hand-akimbo gestures of women on the right and the left represent the dominance and strength values.

On the other hand, the woman in the middle performs a gesture in which she shows off her leg with a hand on it; this also symbolizes seductiveness. Furthermore, strengthening the value of strength and dominance and adding the portrayal of mysteriousness can interpret the maroon background. Thus, women in this picture are represented as dominant, elegant, fierce, mysterious, seductive, and strong.

Figure 13. A woman as a fashion model

Like the previous picture, this picture is also dominated by black colors. The outfit worn by the woman includes a batik face mask, a black dress with a furry top, and a little batik pattern shown under the fur; this also matches the black background. The dress design and the black colors in the picture accentuate the elegance and modesty and, at the same time, the woman's fierceness, while the batik patterns represent the Indonesian culture. The woman's hands on her upper chest hold the top of her dress. Her fists are close to each other, and her elbows are on the left and right. She also lowers her head a little while giving a soft stare into her eyes. The gesture and the facial expression represent calmness, elegance, and femininity. Combining the whole interpretations, the woman in this picture is portrayed as calm, elegant, feminine, and modest, but still having a brave or fierce side. Additionally, the use of batik patterns shows the identity of an Indonesian woman.

Discussion

Concerning the cruciality of women's position in society, Puteri Indonesia, as a beauty pageant group, emphasizes the concept of woman empowerment through their social media posts. In the pictures, women are represented as having active roles and a wide range of characteristics. It is opposed to the norm in the Indonesian patriarchal society in some areas in Indonesia that tends to marginalize women's roles and set certain stereotypes about women. However, the representation of women that challenges the societal norm in the social media account is supported by Åkestam et al. (2017). They argue that challenging the stereotypes is the proper representation of women in the media to gain more engagement from the audience. So, the use of social media accounts plays a big part in spreading the idea of feminism in relation to women representation and roles during the pandemic era because most

of the people connect to the Internet in the COVID-19 situation whether it is used for work or just entertainment. In addition, concerning the feminist movement, the way that the Puteri Indonesia Instagram account presents women by opposing the patriarchal culture is effective in spreading the ideology of feminism to the audience the women's representation concept has influenced. Thus, the posts can be the "motivator" to their audience, primarily women, to accept the ideology of abolishing patriarchy that feminists consider a detrimental culture to women's lives. The role of the social media posts as the motivator for the audience is also in line with Ramlah, Rohmah, and Sholihah (2021) demonstrating that the positive public portrayals of women can motivate the audience to enhance their quality as women. Therefore, the emergence of women of action in the social media strengthen women roles which can be role models for audiences.

By women's roles, this study highlights that the women in the pictures taken from the @officialputeriindonesia Instagram account carry out some active parts in social, environmental, cultural, and health contexts. These activities are vital for the development of society and the surroundings. Women have the opportunity to be involved in developing social conditions such as helping people in need, environmental conditions such as cleaning up the beach and doing reforestation, cultural conditions such as learning to create and wearing Batik clothes, and health conditions such as doing blood and wearing masks during the pandemic. Moreover, women showed in the images indicate having empathy to their surrounding communities by jumping right in the activities that come into direct contact with the society. It points out that women have active roles in contributing to society's positive changes, which contradicts the conservative patriarchal belief that women have more limited and passive parts. It disagrees with studies conducted by Ariyanto (2018) and Tyarakanita et al. (2021) in the context of Indonesian school English textbook representation of women, which claim that women are portrayed as being more passive than men in communicative and social roles. Such differences occur because the beauty pageants Instagram account presents the activities of Indonesian woman representatives and targets women and feminists as their audience. Thus, it focuses on emphasizing and promoting the active roles of women. The representation of women's functions that are not based on the feminine or stereotypical masculine roles is also displayed on Sri Lanka's Ministry of Tourism's Instagram account, studied by Wijesinghe et al. (2020). Both versions of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Tourism and Puteri

Indonesia maintain the purpose of promoting the local culture of each country. However, the former does not necessarily focus on highlighting women's activities.

Further, this study discovers the representation of women's characteristics which are pretty varied regardless of the stereotypes that women should behave in specific ways. Based on the analysis, women can be depicted as feminine, elegant, calm, modest, sexy or seductive, sophisticated, mysterious, fierce, and even masculine. Just like the woman role representation, the characteristic expression challenges the patriarchal gender construction that women are expected to be patient, friendly, nurturing, calm, and feminine, as well (Asri, 2014). A study conducted by Aryani (2013) also observes the variety of women's traits as displayed in an advertisement that women can be not only feminine and motherly but also independent. These denote that women are not only limited to follow behavioral feminist stereotypes but also manly styles.

The Puteri Indonesia community attempts to spread the beliefs of feminism and gender equality by taking advantages of its status as one of the most prestigious beauty pageant groups in Indonesia. Their social media account tends to present their representatives of Indonesian women as challenging patriarchal stereotypes without omitting their cultural identity as Indonesian women. Not only that, during the peak of the COVID-19 period, the posts on the Instagram account, either the daily activity or fashion and modeling posts, emphasize the use of face masks as the means for following and encouraging their audience to follow the health protocols. Using masks in outdoor activities not only take care of themselves but also protect other people who interact with them. This also supports the 5S Indonesian government programs to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. In addition, using social media accounts to promote feminism and COVID-19 health protocols indicates their role as the representative of Indonesian women in contributing to the country's current critical issue and potentially stimulates positive attitudes of their audience towards the concept of feminism and the awareness of the pandemic situation. As the party holding power, the Puteri Indonesia group attempts to shape people's perspectives about feminism through the way they depict the ideology. As Nurhayati and Suwarno (2020) propose, the powerful party can use their status to implement the concept they attempt to share with the powerless one. It is to say that the influence of the powerful party may bring about positive results of an imperative movement in a country. Thus, other national groups or organizations that hold the equivalent power as the Puteri

Indonesia group are encouraged to perform similar actions of using their status to spread awareness of important issues to help the development of the country.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

The analysis of women's representation on Puteri Indonesia Instagram accounts was posted during the COVID-19 period to reflect women roles and characteristics in everyday life with the vogue style. It showed that women's roles are crucial in the society. On the other hand, the characteristic pictures highlight that women are not restricted to following the stereotypical woman traits Instead, women are allowed to behave in various ways including men features such as masculine and fierce style. Both the role and characteristic representations of women portrayed in the Instagram posts strongly challenge the culture of patriarchy and encourage woman empowerment. It is to say that feminism is not about disregarding men's roles and the country's culture. Still, it is somewhat concerned with providing more opportunities for women to be independent of patriarchal stereotypes that have permanently restricted their movement in life. It also implies that genders are not to be contradicted but to be perceived on a spectrum so that both men and women have equal chances in every life aspect. Besides, the images also spread the awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic through the portrayal of feminist actions. It shows that the Puteri Indonesia group has utilized its prestigious status to contribute to the crucial issues that the country currently faces. Therefore, this study implicates that social media can be a tool to spread the understanding of critical issues such as gender equality and pandemic predicaments for the country's development.

Suggestion

This study is still confined to certain limitations for academic purposes. As this study only provides interpretations of the pictures, this study cannot be considered thoroughly demonstrating the effectiveness of spreading awareness of gender equality and pandemic issues from the audience's perspective. Therefore, further studies must present the audience's viewpoint concerning the semiotic implications of the posts on the social media account. In addition, further studies observing the social media activities of other beauty pageants or influential group accounts are also significant to fill the gap of this study to collect more perspectives on the topics.

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