The Women Representation in Detergent Product Packaging Designs

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ABSTRACT:

Gender representation in media often depicts gender stereotype. For example, women representation in a particular culture and society shows what women should do and how to behave. Regarding this, the present study titled "*The Women Representation in Detergent Product Packaging Designs*" aims to reveal how women are represented in detergent product package and what ideology is conveyed behind these representations. Employing descriptive qualitative method to analyze visual images and reveal women representation, this study is framed under the Social Semiotics theory of *Reading Images* proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). On the other hand, the ideology is disclosed by using Barthes' *Signification Order*. The results show that women are mostly represented as feminine, gentle, motherly, mature, independent, warm, caring, loving, attractive, friendly and happy. In consequence, the ideology relayed is ideology of feminity. This ideology is conveyed through several ways including media codes such us fashion, colors, and non-verbal codes.

Key Words: Visual images, Women Representation, Ideology of Feminity, Social Semiotics, Reading Images

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, competition among marketing industries increases rapidly. It can be seen that there are many products sold in markets. From various products displayed in markets, physical products are usually packaged. Packaging is crucial part of products. According to Stadnik (2009), packaging functions to protect the product inside against damage. O'Shaughnessy (cited Gutierrez, 2001) argues that in modern era, packaging plays role as providing informations to consumers. Thus, besides its primary function to protect the product, packaging also functions to communicate messages. Dobson and Yadav (2012) state that packaging communicates messages to consumer through visual designs. Therefore, design of product packaging is important, since it can communicate messages with consumers.

Roxburgh (2010) asserts that "Design is described as reproducing ideology and identities". It means, behind visual representations of product packaging design, there is

ideology constructed by sign-maker. Van Dijk (1998) views ideology as "A basis of social representations shared by members of a group". Gender representation in several product packaging designs is an issue. Duveen (1993) states that gender is one of social representations constructed by members of society. According to Doring and Poschl (2006:173), gender representations in media often portray stereotypes, in which men and women are depicted differently. Amancio (1993) states that "Gender stereotypes are seen as social representations or collective ideologies defining model of behavior". Thus, gender stereotypes depicted in media clearly define what male and female should behave in society.

Seeing the issue, the study aims to reveal women representation in detergent packaging designs and ideology behind representations. The topic was choosen because there are several packages of detergent product which represent woman as model illustrated. The study is beneficial for us to be critical and

aware of meanings hidden behind image representations.

METHODOLOGY

There are four selected packages of detergent product of PT. Kao with size of 23g to be analyzed, namely *Attack Softener*, *Attack Clean-Maximizer*, *Attack Color* and *Attack Easy*. The data are represented:

Attack Softener	*Attack Clean-Maximizer*
Attack Color	*Attack Easy*

Table. 1 List of Data

Qualitative descriptive method is used, since the study focuses on describing, interpreting and exploring meanings of participants, processes, circumstances and phenomenon within visual images. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that qualitative research involves a set of interpretive, natural setting attempting to make sense and to interpret phenomenon in terms of meaning of human's live. To investigate women representation, *Social Semiotics* on *Reading Images* (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) is applied. The model of *Reading Images* is appropriate as tool of analysis because the study focuses on analyzing elements of visual designs. The model is supported by three metafunctions of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics in terms of visual analysis. Following the model, the study focuses on representational meaning regarding narrative and conceptual structure. Then, interactive meaning analysis focuses on analyzing contact, camera shot and camera angle. Barthes' signification order is applied to reveal ideology behind

representations regarding denotative and connotative meaning analyses. Denotative refers to literal meaning, while connotative refers to cultural meaning (Chandler, 2002).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
Women Representation

- **Narrative structure:**

Based on Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) following Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic in terms of visual analysis, the the participants' actions illustrated can be identified into processes. Several actions are identified as material processes including the actions of 'touching', 'holding', 'carrying', 'hugging' and 'washing'. The actions are identified as material processes because the actions are physically, bodily or materially to do. Based on Gerot and Wignell (1994), "Material processes are processes of material doing". The example of findings is presented:

The woman	Is washing	Clothes
Actor	Process: Material	Goal

'The woman' is identified as actor because she is participant who does the action bodily, physically or materially. Then, 'clothes' is identified as goal. "Goal is most like the traditional direct object (Gerot & Wignell, 1995). Hence, it is identified as goal because it is direct object of the woman who does the action.

While, others are identified as behavioral processes including the actions of 'lying', 'staring' 'smiling', 'watching', 'looking' and 'laughing'. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) states that behavioral processes "Represent the outer manifestations of inner workings, the acting out of processes of consciousness and physiological states". Thus, the actions are identified as behavioral process, since the actions are outer manifestations of physiological states of the participants. The example of findings are presented:

The woman	Is staring at	The girl
Behaver	Process: Behavioral	Range

'The woman' is identified as behaver because she does the action physically involving mental consciousness. Based on Gerot and Wignell (1994), "Behaver is a conscious being". While, 'the girl' is identified as range. It explains that 'the girl' is a scope of doing.

Based on findings, behavioral process exists more dominant than material process. The findings are presented by the table:

No	Non- Relational Processes	Visual Images				Total	
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	*f*	%
1	Material Process	1	2	1	2	6	43
2	Behavioral Process	3	2	1	2	8	57
						14	100
	Total						

Table 2. Percentage of Actions Processes

From the table, the existence of behavioral process is eight with percentage of 57%, while the existence of material process is six with percentage of 43%. To conclude, the women's figures in *Attack* packaging designs are represented as being emotional because the women involve emotions of feeling and mental consciousness in doing the actions.

- **CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE: SYMBOLICAL AND ANALYTICAL PROCESSES**

How women are represented can be seen through symbolic attributes carried by the women. There are several symbolic attributes found.

1. Long hair

Three visual designs represent women's figures illustrated with long hair. Almost cultures defines woman who has long hair is considered to be feminine. Thus, the women is represented as feminine women.

2. Colors of women's clothes

Light celery green has symbols of natural, botanical, dependable, calming, delicate and cool (Morton, 1997). Based on Thesaurus Dictionary, the word 'dependable' means 'reliable' and 'responsible' and it has synonym of 'secure'. The meaning of 'secure' is similar to the meaning of 'take care'. While, the

word 'delicate' refers to old lady who has gentle manner (Thesaurus Dictionary). Thus, the woman is represented as old lady who has gentle manner and responsibility to take care of chilren. The other one is yellow color in *Attack Color* packaging design. The color symbolizes joyous, luminous, energy, spiritual, vibrant, warm, sunny, floral, tangy and citric (Morton, 1997). To conclude, the woman is represented as warm, friendly and happy. While, white color in *Attack Clean-Maximizer* packaging design symbolizes pure, chaste, clean, spiritual, sterile, truthful, innocent and peaceful (Morton, 1997). To conclude, the woman is represented as innocent, clean and pure.

3. Make up and brown belt

In *Attack Color*, woman is illustrated with 'make-up' and 'brown belt'. Almost cultures believe that woman who wears 'make-up' is considered to be feminine. The woman is represented as mature through attribute 'make-up' because children usually prefer to be natural. Meanwhile, 'brown belt' symbolizes

warm and mature. In Dixons Taekwondo field, the color of brown symbolizes maturity and the brown belt represents "The growth of a plant becoming sturdy and powerful" (cited in student handbook, 2012). To conclude, the woman is represented as feminine, warm, adult and mature.

4. Expression of smile

All women's figures are illustrated as having expression of smile. It symbolizes the emotion of happiness. Thus, the women are represented as happy women.

Symbolic attributes can be interpreted as analytical processes. Symbolic attribute 'long hair' is interpreted as analytical process. The finding is presented and elaborated:

The woman	Has	Long hair
Carrier	Process: Attributive (Possessive)	Attribute

'The woman' is identified as carrier of kind of hairstyle 'long hair'. The process of having 'has' is identified as a process of attributive possessive for kind of the woman's hairstyle.

The other one is colors of women's clothes which can be interpreted as analytical process. The finding is presented and elaborated:

Yellow	Is	The color of the woman's clothes
Token	Process: Identifying (possessive)	Value

'Yellow' is identified as token of the color of participant's clothes (value). Then, the process 'is' is identified as identifying 'possessive' because 'yellow' is identified as type of color.

Interactive Meaning

Interactive Meaning				
Contact	Demand	Demand	Offer	Demand, Offer
Camera Distance	Medium shot	Medium shot	Medium shot	Medium shot
Camera Angles	Low angle	Low angle	Low angle	Low angle
	Oblique angle	Oblique angle	Frontal angle	Frontal angle

Table 3. Interactive Meaning

'Offer' explains that participants are not gazing at camera. There is no something demand from models to viewers. The participants just want to show the closeness among them. While, 'demand' explains that participants are gazing at camera. There is something demand from models to viewers. All women's figures are taken from medium shot and low angle. Medium shot explains that the women are focused only particular parts of body; head, breast and shoulder. It implies that beauty and expression of smile of the women are more to be focused by camera. Meanwhile, low angle is to demonstrate how the women look awesome by camera to be focused from below. It also implies that the models have more power than the viewers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

FEMININITY IDEOLOGY

By applying Barthes' framework, femininity ideology is conveyed through several ways. The women's actions illustrated show

sense of femininity. The actions imply stereotypical images of woman which refer to gender roles in society including 'taking care of children', 'paying attention to family' and/or 'doing households'. Femininity ideology is also conveyed through mass media codes including fashion, color and non-verbal codes. The findings are presented and elaborated by the table:

Visual Images	Fashion Codes	Color Codes	Non-Verbal Codes
	The woman with light celery green t-shirt	Pink and white color, light celery green color	The woman with expression of smile
	The woman with white dress	White color	The woman with expression of smile, the woman with white and bright skin, the woman with long hair
	The woman with bright yellow dress	Yellow color	The woman with expression of smile, the woman with make up, the woman with long hair
	The woman with pink t-shirt	Blue and green color, pink or salmon red color of the woman's clothes	The woman with expression of smile, the woman with white and bright skin, the woman with long hair

Table 4. Mass Media Codes

From the table, fashion codes such as wearing dress construct femininity ideology. Wearing dresses is considered to be feminine one than wearing pants suit. Two visual designs illustrate women with wearing t-shirt. However, t-shirt wore by the women illustrated is slight and tight. In this idea, the women's body is more demonstrated to be slim and sexy. The sexiness of the women illustrated supports femininity ideology. Colors' choices support sense of femininity such as pink, white, salmon red, yellow, light celery green and blue color.

CONCLUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on findings, women are represented through two sides; actions processes and symbolic attributes. Two processes are found; material processes within actions of 'touching', 'hugging', 'carrying', 'holding' and 'washing' and behavioral processes within actions of 'staring', 'smiling', 'lying' 'laughing', 'looking' and 'watching'. Behavioral process is more dominant. It explains that the women are represented as being emotional figures, since the woman do actions involving physiological and psychological behavior. They involve emotions of feeling in doing actions. Several symbolic attributes including long hair, color of women's clothes, make up, brown belt and expression of smile imply that the women are represented as feminine, tender, caring, loving, motherhood, independent, mature, warm, happy, friendly, beautiful and attractive.

In interactive meaning analysis, all women's figures are taken from medium shot and low angle. Medium shot explains that the women are focused only particular parts of body; head, breast and shoulder. It implies that beauty and expression of smile of the women are more to be focused by camera. While, low angle is to demonstrate how the women look awesome by camera to be focused from below. It also implies that the models have more power than the viewers.

Femininity ideology is conveyed through several ways. The women's actions illustrated imply stereotypical images of woman which refer to gender roles in society including 'taking care of children', 'paying attention to family' and/to 'doing households'. Femininity ideology is also conveyed through mass media codes including fashion, color and non-verbal codes. In conclusions, producer of marketing of *Attack* detergent does not only sell the product offered, but the producer also constructs ideology through representations. There are some suggestions offered for the further study. Applying *Social Semiotics* on

Reading Images the Grammar of Visual Design for multimudal texts such as packaging product, it is better to investigate visual designs which not only display representations on packaging but also which can attract consumers to buy the product so that the influence of ideology is more appropriate.

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