

# An Analysis of Gender Stereotype in Television Commercial Advertisements in Indonesia

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## Abstract

The media is one of the influential sources in shaping gender stereotypes among Indonesian people. The advertisements displayed in various television broadcasts tend to show a classification between masculine which is identical with men and feminine which is associated with women. The aims of this study are (1) to describe the gender stereotypes found in television advertisements in Indonesia; (2) Explaining the effect of gender stereotypes on advertising on product marketing. This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the advertising object "Extra Joss, and Molto,". This study focuses on the selection of talents who play masculine and feminine characters in the advertisement. The data used in this study were obtained from various steps, including observing television advertisements as a form of population, selecting advertisements containing elements of gender stereotypes, and explaining the meaning of advertisements on television with contextual aspects. The results of the study show that advertising has a major impact on the preservation of gender stereotypes that have long existed in society. On the other hand, this also affects the consumer's interest in products according to the gender attached to their identity.

**Keywords:** Gender Stereotype, Masculine, Feminine

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## 1. Introduction

Gender stereotypes never subside from the topic of conversation in society. Restrictions on the roles of men and women make movement between the two limited. According to Widyatama in Dyah & Defuri (2014), gender bias is an injustice in the division of roles and positions that occurs between men and women. With the nature of feminism in women, they are considered to play a role in the domestic sector only. On the other hand, since men are portrayed as strong and brave, they should play a role in the public sector. We can easily find such things in various advertisements for a product on television and other mass media. Women are seen as gentle people, as housewives to take care of children, and serve their husbands. Meanwhile, men burden with a strong, tough figure, the head of the family, provide protection, and many other privileges that women do not have (Pratiwi & Wiyanti, 2017).

Without realizing it, advertising has become a part of society that is difficult to avoid. Various print media such as the internet, television, media, radio, public transportation are the means for these advertisements to spread quickly. One of the media that is considered the most effective in spreading the promotion of any goods or services is television (Prihatiningsih & Mudrikah, 2020). Advertisements displayed on television are packaged in such a way by producers so that they are easily accepted by the public. Viewers are more easily attracted to advertisements that display images or situations directly that they can see. Therefore the talent used in product advertising will also have an effect on its

marketing. The purpose of its manufacture is not to attract people to buy products or services that have been displayed by advertisers.

Kurniadi (2007) also revealed that almost 55% of the majority of national advertisements that appeared were published by television media and consumers also stated that advertisements were their means of getting to know a product. The globalization of television has an impact on the culture that develops in society. Barker (2005) explains that slowly but surely an identity will be formed, where it will be understood according to the identity and culture in a society. Therefore, advertisements starring women will tell how women are in culture in the eyes of society. Advertising is of course able to provide views that can influence the wider community. Men and women depicted in advertisements can construct views or judgments against men and women in everyday life in the social environment.

As is well known, many advertisements show various types of products with the main character in the advertisement being dominated by one gender only. Women often get roles in the domestic sector such as household appliances, household needs, and so on as in the Molto advertisement. Meanwhile, men participate in advertisements that require energy, under the hot sun, lifting heavy weights, and so on such as in the Extra Joss advertisement. Indirectly, this will also affect product sales, where consumers of these products will be dominated by women or men only. The gender identity attached to the product will also appear by itself in the eyes of the public, because the advertising representation that is displayed seems to lead to the characteristics of the product's user.

Research related to mass media and gender has been reviewed by several researchers. First, research by Luly Zahrotul Lutfiyah and Kingkin Puput Kinanti (2020) entitled "*Perbandingan Stereotipe Gender dalam Iklan: Kajian Semiotika Roland Barthes*", the study analyzed two advertisements, namely the ABC food advertisement of the True Husband Cook version and the drink advertisement "Extra Joss". From the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the two advertisements show gender stereotypes where these things describe the characters of male charmers, dandy, weak, and do not have the spirit to work hard. While the male figure has a strong depiction and is able to work hard. Second, "*Media dan Gender (Studi Deskriptif Representasi Stereotipe Perempuan dalam Iklan di Televisi Swasta)*" by Yanti Dwi Astuti (2016). The results obtained that advertising has a great influence in producing products so that this forms a stereotype attached to women. as a tool in product marketing by the owners of capital. Third, a journal article entitled "*Representasi Stereotipe Perempuan dalam Iklan Layanan Masyarakat: Sahabat Peduli Anti Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga*" by Deddi Duto Hartanto (2022). This study shows that the depiction of the female character is weak compared to the male figure who is described as strong as a person in power in the household.

Based on the problems and several studies that review television advertising in Indonesia. Researchers are interested in studying two commercial advertisements that aired on Indonesian television, namely Extra Joss and Molto. Both will be studied based on gender stereotypes, which focus on the selection of the main character (talent) in advertising and its impact on consumer interest.

The term stereotype comes from the Greek, namely stereos and typos. Saguni (2014) explains that Stereotypes are defined as cognitive representations in a group that can influence the views of certain groups which can be positive or negative. Thus, it can also be interpreted that stereotypes are interpretations of the perspective and background of a culture. This is supported by Narwoko & Suyanto (2009) revealing that stereotypes are labeling of certain parties or groups that always have an impact on things that are detrimental and cause injustice.

Gender-related definitions refer to the differences between women and men as a social construct. Anindya & Defhany (2019) explained that gender is referred to as a character that is formed based on the nature of feminism and masculine in the social and community domains. This is reflected in people's lives where masculine characters are considered healthy and good by society while women are considered to have a soft character, shy and not attracted to power. Therefore, men are consistently represented as having aggressive physical strength compared to women.

Gender stereotypes have four dimensions including traits, role behavior, physical and occupational characteristics. So that the role of women is only related to household affairs which have a natural figure of giving birth, breastfeeding, and all activities related to child care. Meanwhile, men are represented as protectors of the family from harm and as the main breadwinners. Therefore, it is this image that ultimately forms the gender stereotypes that we usually find in the public and domestic spheres.

Advertising is a means to promote a product that is intended for the public. Advertising can also be interpreted as any form of message about a product that is conveyed through the media with the aim of persuading the public or the public to buy or use the product. Anindya & Defhany (2019) explains that advertising is a true picture in society because advertisements are represented in the form of images, captions or words. So that advertising must have a purpose and expect reciprocity from the public. According to Fathoni & Failah (2021), an effective advertisement is an advertisement that gives a good perception in society.

Therefore, advertising should be a good means of conveying information in order to achieve a good perception also in society. Advertisements that are displayed in public are considered a picture like real life now. Meanwhile, it is only a pseudo reality that is considered ideal by society. This gives rise to different perceptions among the public. The depiction of the roles of women and men has always been consistently carried out in advertisements such as domestic and public roles. Therefore, the image displayed is challenged with a feminist and masculinist understanding of each role based on that character.

Jackson (2005) explains that Marxist/socialist feminism describes the low position of women in the economic, social and political structure of the capitalist system, as well as patriarchal analysis (focusing on men). The focus is on capitalism and the patriarchal position of women, which is nothing special. They argue that abolishing the capitalist system is a way to achieve equal treatment for women. This school of thought examines women's issues in a critique of capitalism. The source of oppression of women should be class exploitation and production methods. The position of women is weakened due to the concept of private ownership (private ownership) of production activities which were originally intended for their own needs, becoming a need for exchange.

Social feminism emerged as a critique of Marxist feminism. This school of thought says that patriarchy existed before capitalism and will remain unchanged when capitalism collapses. Social feminism uses class and gender analysis to understand the oppression of women. On the other hand, feminism which tends to accept the differences between men and women is called Ecominism feminism. This pheninism criticizes the previous schools of thought that used the principle of masculinity (ideology to rule) in an effort to stop women's pressure from being caused by the patriarchal system.

Masculinism is a stereotype about men that can be challenged with femininity possessed by women (Darwin, 1999). The two have contradictory characteristics. According to Kurnia (2004) revealed that masculinity in terms of sexuality can be classified into several parts. First, the retro gladiator type of man: a sexually active and dominant man. Second, the type of protector: a man who protects and guards. Third, the clow of boffoon type: men who prioritize equality in relationships and respect women. Fourth, the type of gay man is sexually oriented, homosexual. Fifth, wimp type: shows the type of man who is weak and passive. The media often use this category to construct masculinity, although most often gladiator figures appear as carriers of power or superiority.

## **2. Research Method**

The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Mohajan (2018) revealed that qualitative descriptive is a research method that examines social events by interpreting and understanding existing social realities with data presented in the form of words. Two television commercials Extra Joss and Molto were selected as research objects. The data obtained are in the form of words, with the aim of describing the gender stereotypes contained in television commercial advertisements in Indonesia.

Data collection techniques used are documentation and observation. Documentation is a method of collecting data by taking data from advertisements on television and YouTube. This method is done by taking pictures on the ad video, then cutting it, then showing it by writing or transcribing it using a written script or in the form of analysis on a snippet of an image in the ad video. The next method is the observation method, in this method researchers observe advertisements on YouTube and television where researchers are not directly involved in making advertisements. The researcher only observes and then explains the phenomenon of gender stereotypes in society. The data analysis technique used is in the form of advertising analysis using words or written texts through an observation process with the aim of obtaining an in-depth description of the object under study.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

There are two types of advertisements that will be discussed in this study, including Extra Joss and Molto advertisements. First, ExtraJoss: Laku Berani Beda is an advertisement produced in 2022, played by a male model with the main characters being artists named Rio Dewanto and Jefri Nichol. The extras in the advertisement are also male models. Second, the advertisement of Molto fabric softener & deodorizer. This product advertisement has been present in Indonesian society for several years and has experienced it several times. This ad is played by an actress named Bunga Citra Lestari as the main character that was shown in 2018. The ad is often shown on the sidelines of ongoing television shows, so it is likely to be watched by all groups, both men and women.

**Figure 1**  
**ExtraJoss Advertisement**

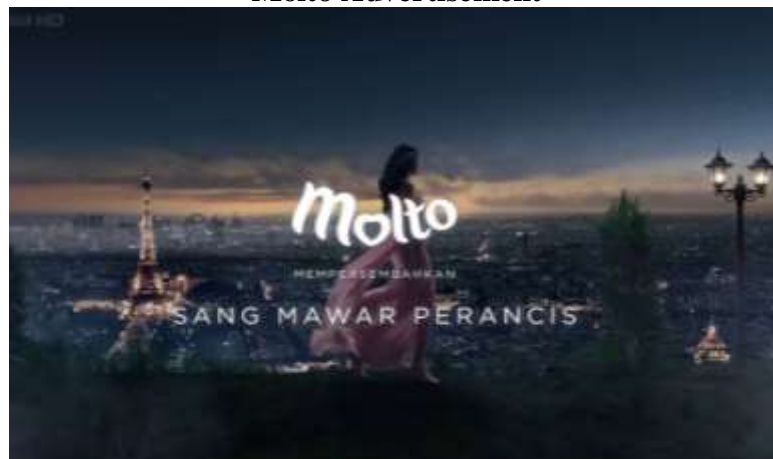


This advertisement shows that a male figure who is strong, tough, able to face any danger, as well as a savior figure. This is evidenced in several scenes. Where the first scene is shown with a male model driving a car very fast. Then, in the second scene, the male actors are doing electrical repairs on a pole. In the next scene, the actor races a motorbike and then in the middle of the road saves the victim who has an accident. Then, it was followed by a scene depicting a male model as a savior figure in helping the search for aircraft debris. The last scene shows them drinking Extra Joss products.

The symbol of the male model in the advertisement is seen in signs in the form of clothes, gestures, and voices that represent masculinity. The use of symbols and sounds that synergize strongly shows the masculinity of men. This is supported by the opinion of Kurnia (2014) which states that the character of masculinity shows the type of gladiator and retro man, protector. The man is completely in control of everything. The Perceptions in society indicate that physical-related characters such as things that apply in the field of work are considered only appropriate for men. This can eventually lead to public perception, that masculine character is always inherent in men, not women. The selection of the main character (talent) played by men in the advertisement, increasingly raises people's thinking about the ownership of masculine traits that are always tied to one gender. Therefore, the labeling of this trait causes injustice to women. Narwoko & Suyanto (2009) explain that labeling a party or group will have an impact on something that is detrimental and creates injustice in society. This indirectly oppresses women where men dominate in everything.

Based on the statement above, the advertising product has a great influence on the community. The negative perception generated will have an impact on the survival of women, because things that are strong and tough are only suitable for men to be crowned, while women will continue to be seen as weak figures. In addition, the selection of the main character (talent) in advertising also has an impact on the sales market. Automatically, most of these products will be bought and used by men, although in reality some women also buy and drink these products.

**Figure 2**  
**Molto Advertisement**



Based on the picture, the main character in this advertisement is a woman. The actor is described as a woman with a charming dress, smooth skin, graceful, fragrant and charming which can be an attraction for a man. Indirectly, this is increasingly growing gender stereotypes that exist in society, where women must have several standards that have been labeled with them. As revealed by Pratiwi & Wiyanti (2017) that women are always seen as gentle people, serving as

housewives to take care of children, and serve their husbands. Likewise with the opinion of Jackson (2005) which says that women tend to accept patriarchal attitudes by men, where their position is lower in the economic, social and political structure of the capitalist system. Therefore, This advertisement represents that the beauty possessed by women is for the satisfaction of men.

Basically, the both men and women have the same rights in terms of appearance. A fragrant and neat body does not only have to be owned by a woman. Therefore, the selection of the main character in this advertisement does not have to be a woman who is the center of attention. However, in reality it is again women who are used as objects of beauty in the eyes of society. The image of women is always idealized with a perfect figure both in terms of ability and appearance. In addition to its attractiveness, the main focus of this ad maker is to attract consumer interest. Since the identity of clothing fragrance products is attached to women, it is predicted that the advertisers of this product will be much more salable among mothers. Considering that the average consumer in Indonesia comes from women who shop for household needs, the target market is increasing

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there are still elements of gender stereotypes in television commercials in Indonesia. The nature of masculinity is still associated with the power possessed by men. Seen in the ExtraJoss advertisement, a male figure is depicted with the soul of a savior, tough, and persistent in fighting. On the other hand, there is a Molto advertisement which shows a woman figure gracefully portraying the image of feminism inherent in her soul. This model is shown as elegant, fragrant, level, and can attract the attention of a man. Both of these advertisements provide standardization for masculine and feminine, where masculine can only be owned by men and feminine for women. In terms of product marketing, the main character in the advertisement indirectly leads to public perception that the product can only be purchased and used by certain groups. As a result, ExtraJoss consumers are dominated by men. While, Molto will be interested by woman.

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