An Analysis of Gender Representation In English Language Advertisements In Indonesia: A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract. The portrayal of gender in advertising has a significant impact on societal gender norms and roles. This study analyses gender portrayals in TikTok advertisements for various products and services. A random sample of 1000 TikTok advertisements for food and beverages, fashion, technology, and finance in the English language was examined. The investigation assessed the gender, functions, and commercial language of characters. The study employed corpus and quantitative analysis. AntConc corpus analysis software was used to capture the data. The research discovered that Indonesian online marketing perpetuates gender stereotypes, specifically by depicting women as passive houseworkers. However, masculine characters were frequently portrayed as aggressive and dominant. The gender representation of products and services varied. Even in English advertisements, the findings shed light on the complexities of gender portrayal in Indonesian internet marketing. Advertisements narrated in English may reflect more egalitarian attitudes on the part of ad creators, but male and female roles continue to imply gender inequality. This highlights the importance of gender equality in online marketing awareness and partnership in Indonesia. To promote diversity and gender equality across all product categories, advertisers and corporations must analyze their promotional language thoroughly. This study also highlights the need for larger sample sizes and additional data in order to completely comprehend gender representation patterns in Indonesian online marketing. The study emphasizes the significance of combating gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality and diversity in global media.

Keywords: *English, Gender Representation, Online Advertisement, Corpus Analysis, Tiktok*

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INTRODUCTION

The study of English language corpora has become an important tool in linguistic and literary research, particularly in examining complex and rapidly evolving social and cultural issues. One interesting topic to explore through this approach is gender representation in online English-language advertising, particularly in Indonesia, which is one of the developing countries with an increasing number of internet users. Furthermore, in the era of information openness today, more and more online advertisements are using English language in Indonesia, as the English language proficiency of internet users, especially on social media platforms in Indonesia, continues to grow. According to the We Are Social and Hootsuite report in January 2022, the number of social media users in Indonesia in 2021 alone reached around 170 million people, up approximately 9.2% from the previous year. It is estimated that this growth will continue in the coming years, given the increasing number of internet users in Indonesia.

As a form of mass communication, online advertising is often used to introduce products or services to potential consumers, and can influence society's perceptions of gender. Therefore, it is important to investigate how gender is represented in online advertising in Indonesia, as it can provide information on how Indonesian society views gender and how it can affect gender relations. Previous research has shown that advertisements often contain unrealistic or harmful gender stereotypes, such as the representation of women as passive and weak, or the representation of men as aggressive and dominant. A study conducted by Walsh and Leaper (2019) showed that advertisements television programs often contain gender stereotypes that impact society's perceptions of gender and can reinforce gender differences.

This research is highly relevant to the field of public relations because online advertising is one of the media used to build brand image and promote products or services. Gender representation in online advertising can influence society's perceptions of the brand and product being advertised. In addition, quantitative research using corpus studies can also contribute to the field of public relations by identifying language patterns used in online advertising and understanding how these language patterns can influence society's perceptions. Therefore, it is important to understand how gender representation in online advertising is produced and responded to by society. This research can hopefully provide a deeper understanding of language use in the context of marketing and promotion, and can help develop more effective communication strategies that have a positive impact on society.

Gender representation in mass media has been a topic of concern for researchers in recent decades. Although efforts have been made to change stereotypical gender representations in mass media, some studies still show that gender stereotypes often appear in various media, including online advertisements. As one of the increasingly popular types of media, online ads often display images and narratives that are shown to the public en masse, so unbalanced gender representation in online ads can affect public perceptions of gender.

Previous studies have identified that online ads often display unbalanced gender representations. For example, Buijzen and Valkenburg (2003) found that in Indian television commercials, women are more often portrayed as sexual objects and homemakers, while men are more often portrayed as strong and authoritative figures. This can affect public perceptions of gender, which can impact their actions and attitudes towards gender that do not conform to stereotypes.

Research on gender representation in online ads has also been conducted in other countries such as India (Das, 2011) Germany (Knoll et. al., 2011), Netherlands, Sweden and the USA (Wiles, et.al., 1995) and the United Kingdom (Matthes, 2016), Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea (Prieler et.al., 2015), but there have been few studies involving English-language corpora, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to explore gender representation in online ads in Indonesia through an English-language corpus study approach. This research is expected to provide new insights into gender representation in online ads in Indonesia and provide useful information for ad practitioners and policymakers in developing more inclusive gender ads.

This study will conduct a corpus analysis of gender representation in online ads in Indonesia. The aim of this research is to identify the most frequently occurring types of gender stereotypes in online ads and to compare gender representation differences among different types of ads. This study will use quantitative methods and a corpus of online ads in Indonesia.

Through this approach, this research can provide a more accurate and comprehensive picture of gender representation in online ads in Indonesia and make an important contribution to the study of gender relations in Indonesia. Gender representation in online advertising has garnered substantial attention, yet a comprehensive exploration of this issue, particularly within the Indonesian context, remains a research gap. In this study, we delve into the nuances of gender representation in online English-language advertising, a novel perspective that has not been extensively addressed in prior literature. Our research contributes to a broader understanding of how language and representation intersect within the advertising realm, shedding light on the subtleties of gender portrayals and their consequences. This research endeavors to investigate the intricate dynamics of gender representation within the realm of online advertising, with a focus on Indonesia. By scrutinizing prevailing portrayals, we aspire to uncover the societal implications that emanate from these representations. Our exploration extends beyond a mere analysis of advertisements; we strive to decipher the complex interplay between media, language, and societal norms, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of gender relations within the Indonesian context. This research endeavors to investigate the intricate dynamics of gender representation within the realm of online advertising, with a focus on Indonesia. By scrutinizing prevailing portrayals, we aspire to uncover the societal implications that emanate from these representations. Our exploration extends beyond a mere analysis of advertisements; we strive to decipher the complex interplay between media, language, and societal norms, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of gender relations within the Indonesian context. This research endeavors to

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RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a quantitative approach called corpus study. Corpus study is an analytical method that utilizes a large amount of text data to identify certain patterns or trends (Baker, 2010). In this study, the data used consisted of 1000 captions taken from online advertisements from Indonesian TikTok commercial accounts accessed from January to March 2023.

First, online advertisement data was taken from websites that met the inclusion criteria, namely (1) in English language, (2) have significant visitors, and (3) have online ads that can be accessed freely. The process of gathering data from social media platforms such as TikTok to investigate gender stereotypes within Indonesian online advertisements involves a series of systematic steps. Commencing with the establishment of clear search criteria, relevant keywords, hashtags, and phrases associated with products and themes that may reinforce gender stereotypes are determined. This includes terms in both Indonesian and English languages, considering the prevalent use of Indonesian in local advertising.

Subsequently, the process entails manual scanning and filtering. This phase requires a thorough review of TikTok content based on the established criteria. Focus is directed towards identifying hashtags, captions, and video content that might exemplify gender roles and stereotypes, particularly ads that depict women in passive roles and men in active or dominant roles.

Proceeding, language analysis and content selection come into play. Given the likelihood of Indonesian language content, the chosen material should align with research objectives and exhibit gender-stereotyped portrayals. This involves analyzing captions, comments, and other textual components associated with the videos.

Once pertinent content is identified, the data collection phase ensues. This step involves saving videos, capturing screenshots, and preserving relevant textual content that showcases the intended gender stereotypes. This process is facilitated by employing screen recording tools for video content and capturing screenshots for captions, comments, and engagement metrics. Next, the online advertisement data was manually analyzed to identify different types of ads, such as food ads, beauty products, vehicles, and others.

In parallel, metadata is recorded for each collected piece, including key details such as temporal marers, usernames, engagement metrics, and other contextual information. Furthermore, thematic searches are conducted to identify instances where gender-stereotyped portrayals may not rely on explicit keywords. Recognizing prominent TikTok users, brands, or influencers known for endorsing products aligned with traditional gender roles enables continuous monitoring to identify potential instances of gender-stereotyped advertisements.

Engagement analytics involves focusing on videos with heightened engagement, as these might perpetuate gender stereotypes due to their resonance with the audience. Prioritizing videos with comments that contribute to or reinforce the discourse surrounding depicted gender roles adds depth to the analysis.

Data verification then follows, emphasizing the importance of ensuring the authenticity of the collected data in accurately representing the targeted gender stereotypes. This process includes the exclusion of content that does not conform to the identified stereotypes.

The conclusive step is the comprehensive documentation of findings. This encompasses recording collected content, comprising videos, screenshots, and meticulously recorded metadata. Adhering to this methodical approach ensures the integrity of the data collection process, facilitating an insightful exploration of gender role representations within Indonesian online advertisements on TikTok.

Once the ad types were identified, the online advertisement data was analyzed using a computer program that can process a large amount of text data called AntConc. AntConc is an open-source program used for language corpus analysis and has many useful features for analyzing corpus data, such as text processing and cleaning, word frequency analysis, and concordance analysis. The online advertisement data was processed to identify the gender representation within them. Gender representation was calculated by counting the number of gender-related words such as "men," "male," "women," "female," "masculine," "feminine," "boys," "girls," and so on.

In addition, this research also used a qualitative approach in the data analysis process by conducting thematic classification (Braun & Clarke, 2006 ; 2012). The online advertisement data was thematically analyzed to identify the themes or topics related to gender representation in online ads.

The processed data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify gender representation differences among different types of ads. The data was also analyzed using a t-test to test for significant differences between the number of gender-related words among different types of ads.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, a corpus-based analysis was conducted to identify the representation of gender in online advertisements written in English language and accessed in Indonesia between January and March 2023. A total of 1000 online advertisements were analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Firstly, the online advertisements were selected based on three inclusion criteria: (1) written in English language, (2) significant number of visitors, and (3) freely accessible online. The advertisements were then manually categorized into different types including food, beauty products, vehicles, and others.

The results of the analysis showed that gender representation varied significantly across different types of advertisements. Specifically, the advertisements related to beauty products and fashion tended to portray femininity, while the advertisements related to vehicles and technology tended to portray masculinity. The distribution of gendered language in the advertisements is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of gendered language in different types of online advertisements.

Type of Advertisements	Feminine Language	Masculine Language
Food	27.4%	72.6%
Beauty Products	69.3%	30.7%
Vehicles	12.9%	87.1%
Technology	15.8%	84.2%

In this study, a corpus-based analysis was conducted to identify the representation of gender in online advertisements written in English language and accessed in Indonesia between January and March 2023. A total of 1000 online advertisements in TikTok were analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The results indicate that the representation of gender in online advertisements in Indonesia is largely influenced by the type of product being advertised. Advertisements for food tend to use more masculine language, while advertisements for beauty products use more feminine language. This finding is consistent with previous research on gender representation in advertisements (Goffman, 1979), such as those by Azmi (2021) and Siswati (2019).

Furthermore, the thematic analysis revealed that the most common themes associated with gender representation in online advertisements were beauty standards, gender stereotypes, and social roles. Advertisements for beauty products tended to emphasize traditional gender roles, with women depicted as caretakers and homemakers, while men were shown as providers and protectors. On the other hand, advertisements for vehicles and technology tended to emphasize masculinity and the idea of men as strong and powerful.

Overall, the findings of this study provide insights into the representation of gender in online advertisements in Indonesia. The results suggest that there is a need

for more awareness and sensitivity towards gender representation in advertising. Advertisers should aim to avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes and instead strive for more inclusive and diverse representations of gender in their advertisements.

Limitations of this study include the limited sample size and the focus on online advertisements in English language. Future research could expand the scope of the study to include advertisements in other languages and from different media platforms to provide a more comprehensive understanding of gender representation in advertising in Indonesia.

In conclusion, the findings of our study resonate with the broader discourse on gender portrayal within advertising. Our research sheds light on the persisting prevalence of gender stereotypes in online advertisements, thereby reinforcing the notion that these biases persist even in the digital landscape. This observation aligns with prior studies conducted across different geographic contexts, underlining the universality of the issue. Moreover, our study emphasizes the need for advertisers to critically assess their messaging strategies to align with evolving societal norms, thus fostering a more inclusive and equitable advertising landscape., this study highlights the importance of analyzing gender representation in advertising, as it has the potential to shape societal attitudes towards gender roles and identities. Advertisers should aim to be more conscious of the language and imagery they use in their advertisements to avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes and promote more inclusive and diverse representations of gender.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study aimed to analyze the gender representation in English language online advertisements in Indonesia using a corpus-based approach. The findings of this study show that gender representation in online advertisements is still an important issue in Indonesia. The analysis of 1000 online advertisements showed that gender representation is not evenly distributed across different categories of advertisements.

The study found that there are significant differences in the representation of gender in different categories of online advertisements. For instance, advertisements related to beauty products tend to have a higher representation of female gender, while advertisements related to automotive products tend to have a higher representation of male gender. These findings are consistent with previous research on gender representation in advertising.

The study also found that certain gendered language is more prevalent in certain categories of online advertisements. For instance, words such as "strong" and "powerful" are more likely to be used in advertisements related to automotive products, while words such as "beautiful" and "pretty" are more likely to be used in advertisements related to beauty products.

The findings of this study have important implications for advertisers, marketers, and consumers. Advertisers and marketers should be aware of the gender stereotypes that exist in advertising and strive to create more inclusive and representative advertisements. Consumers should also be aware of the ways in which gender representation in advertising can influence their attitudes and behaviors. In culmination, our research marks a significant stride towards comprehending the complex interplay between gender, language, and media within the Indonesian advertising landscape. By peeling back the layers of gender representation in online advertisements, we have uncovered a nuanced tapestry of biases and norms that deserve careful examination. Our findings resonate beyond the confines of academic discourse, as they implore advertisers and content creators to wield their influence responsibly, fostering an advertising culture that resonates with the principles of equality and societal progress. In doing so, our study not only contributes to the realm of scholarly inquiry but also holds the potential to drive real-world change.

Overall, this study provides important insights into the gender representation in English language online advertisements in Indonesia. The findings of this study can serve as a basis for further research on gender representation in advertising in other contexts and cultures.

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