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Body Image Representation in MS Glow for Men Advertising; An Analysis of Circuit of Culture

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Abstract: This study discusses an advertising video of “MS Glow for Men” starring Babe Cabita and Marshel, which is intended as an encouragement for people to promote self-acceptance and break the myth of beauty of light skin and a perfect body. This study aims to answer the questions of how advertising was created, distributed, consumed, or perceived by the public and seek the explanation of how the body image represented in MS Glow for Men advertising. The researchers answer the question by applying Stuart Hall’s framework of the circuit of culture that covers five aspects: regulation, production, identity, consumption, and representation. The study shows that the advertising contains a message that the standardization of beauty should cover all types of body image and physical appearance by representing the idea that anyone can become an ambassador of the beauty brand just like Babe Capita and Marshal. The visual text shows that the advertisement influences the audience in building a perception of the ‘beauty’ through the visual image of the advertisement which presents a more realistic notion of beauty.

Key words: advertising, audience perception, body image, negotiated readings, the circuit of culture

Abstrak: Penelitian ini membahas tentang video iklan “MS Glow for Men” yang dibintangi oleh Babe Cabita dan Marshel, yang dimaksudkan sebagai dorongan bagi masyarakat untuk mempromosikan penerimaan diri dan mematahkan mitos kecantikan kulit cerah dan tubuh sempurna. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab pertanyaan tentang bagaimana iklan dibuat, didistribusikan, dikonsumsi, atau dirasakan oleh publik dan mencari penjelasan tentang bagaimana citra tubuh direpresentasikan

dalam iklan MS Glow for Men. Peneliti menjawab pertanyaan tersebut dengan menerapkan kerangka sirkuit budaya Stuart Hall yang mencakup lima aspek: regulasi, produksi, identitas, konsumsi, dan representasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa iklan tersebut mengandung pesan bahwa standarisasi kecantikan harus mencakup semua jenis citra tubuh dan penampilan fisik dengan mewakili gagasan bahwa siapa pun dapat menjadi duta merek kecantikan seperti Babe Capita dan Marshal. Teks visual menunjukkan bahwa iklan mempengaruhi khlayak dalam membangun persepsi tentang 'keindahan' melalui citra visual iklan yang menghadirkan gagasan keindahan yang lebih realistis.

Kata kunci: iklan, persepsi audiens, citra tubuh, pembacaan yang dinegosiasikan, sirkuit budaya

INTRODUCTION

Outdoors advertising has the potential to enliven the space through immersive and attractive use of technology (Bryce, 2019). The large-scale print and digital advertising board called Billboard is used as a platform for statements that appear on the big screen outdoor (Ergin & Schieck, 2018). Moreover, the Billboards advertising is placed in high-traffic driven areas like cities or along the side of the highway. Previous studies suggest that billboard commercials should incorporate elements that create enough excitement for people to take notice, share, and post them on social media (Adisa, 2018). Therefore, advertising in Billboard New York's Time Square, for example, not only allows people to expect a great presence among people unfamiliar with the subject but also allows them to deliver a meaningful message to the world (Lee, 2019).

In the light of billboard advertising, the brand of "MS Glow" follows the digital advertising space platform for their product. MS Glow is an Indonesian Beauty brand owned by famous influencer Shandy Purnamasari. As an owner of MS Glow, Shandy Purnamasari along with her husband Gilang Widya initiated an advertisement by choosing two male Indonesian comedians Babe Cabita and Marshal as brand ambassadors for their product. Through Billboard, MS Glow Beauty brand launched a two minutes advertisement video. Moreover, the video advertising is also uploaded on YouTube and Instagram. They use the Billboard and social media as a platform for conveying the message of their product to the audience.

However, it appears that the two minutes video advertisement creates pros and cons among audiences. The audience who oppose the concept of the ad

argues that it is a backlash against the idea of the beauty brand itself because the ambassadors do not have the beauty standard that the society expected which is light skin and a perfect body. And this can lead to self-portraiture simply because advertisements can alter the way the visual content are perceived, read, and digested, which in turn can influence how individuals make purchasing decisions (Greenfield, 2018). On the other hand, there are also audience who accept the concept of the ad, arguing that the presence of real people, as opposed to the presence of a real model who is physically attractive, could increase the effectiveness of an advertisement since they represents all body types.

Based on the framework of Stuart Hall's circuit of culture, this study aims to discover how local beauty brand advertisements were generated, circulated, and received by the public. The circuit of culture concept is elaborated in this study in five ways that are connected each other; regulations, production, identity, representation, and consumption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Advertising

The purpose of advertising is to attract attention and increase sales that gives the brand a competitive edge in the market so that it impacts the future success of the brand itself (Kaplan, et al., 2018). Many ads often use a specific concept of ads to attract consumers and affect the consumers buying behavior. In promoting the brand, the process of persuasion instead of manipulation should include truthfulness and transparency of the advertising itself (Tiautrakul, et.al., 2019). Previous research reveals that media exposure has had mild to moderate effects on public's physical dissatisfaction, internalized ideals, and eating disorders as well as behavioral disorders (McBride, et al., 2019). It means that the impact of manipulative advertising can be dangerous for public consumption.

A study on advertising discovered that when measuring advertising equity (which assesses the consumer's perceived value and benefit of participating in the ad itself), it could predict the likelihood that a consumer would engage with the brand's advertising (Dahlen, 2021). This implies that such advertising, which incorporates real people, aims to demonstrate that they are included in the brand itself. By showcasing real individuals, the advertisements create, such an intimate connection that is appreciated regardless of their appearance.

The development of advertisement is much affected by the growth of technology and media communication, which has been more and more dynamic and innovative, and impacted on the people's mindset (Nangoy & Tumbuan 2018). To reach larger customers and increase their market, billboards has been one of platforms that place a higher value on readability, location, and creativity (Altrjman, et.al. 2022). Customers' impressions of a company and its products are directly influenced by the quality of information displayed on a billboard. For instance, Zulu (2019) revealed that, in comparison with other forms of product promotion, billboard advertising contributes more effectively to a company's growth. Therefore, as a promotion for MS Glow, the founders initiate by using a billboard platform for their advertisement video.

Researchers have extensively studied the audience to comprehend their perception of advertising media. Such researches would give the feedback to the advertising company on how effective is the advertisement they have made. A. Loreta and A. S. Perdana, in their research (Loreta & Perdana, 2018) on audience perception on the advertisement applied the method of classifying the audience into three groups of audience: preferred readings audience, negotiated readings audience, and oppositional readings audience. The preferred reading is those who fully accept the message without questioning or blaming it. The audience are classified as opposite readings, assuming they are completely opposed to the message being broadcasted. And the last one is the negotiated reading hints that the crowd will partially acknowledge the message and also address or limit the message in some way.

B. Body Image

Pounders' research found that the idea of beauty may come from the male gender because the representation of beauty does not only come from women. In addition, there is also the shifts in beauty standard from light skin to yellow skin (Pounders, 2018). This means that whether it is light or yellow skin color, the representation of fair skin is still widely considered beautiful throughout Asia, and among Asian countries including Indonesia. The fact that people see fair skin as standardization for beauty may cause physical dissatisfaction.

The term "body image" relates to how people see and feel about their own bodies. Apart from the standardization of beauty based on skin color, it is also widely known that the aspect of society standard of beauty is determined by the body size. With today's society's developing perception of ideal body image, adolescents attempt to lose or gain weight in order to reach that flawless figure (Brathwaite & DeAndrea, 2022). However, this quest for an ideal body can

contribute to the development of perfectionism and weight dissatisfaction, leading individuals to compare their appearance with (Selensky, 2019). The societal pressure to conform to a particular standard may create a paradox wherein the pursuit of an ideal body can result in negative consequences on mental well-being, fostering a cycle of comparison and dissatisfaction. The unfavorable stereotype of a larger body is a can be harmful justification for people that undoubtedly confuses the minds of teenagers and women. We are aware of the significance placed on looking attractive and perfect, particularly for this demographic (Fitriyah & Rokhmawan, 2019). Therefore, when responding to the contemporary standardization of body image and the definition of the 'perfect' body, it is essential to consider how societal norms and expectations influence our perceptions. MS Glow features the real figure of Brand Ambassador as oppose to the presence of a model who is commonly physically attractive to challenge the idea of beauty standards.

People strive to be like role models who are depicted in the media (e.g., television, movies, and magazines) as symbols of their hopes, personal aspirations, and ideal conditions (Fitriyah & Rokhmawan, 2019). Greenfield points out that women frequently compare themselves to media representations of other women, and that this comparison is frequently upwards, leaving the viewer feeling inadequate (Greenfield, 2018). While the image that appears in media is the thin-ideal that appear to be universal (Martinez et al., 2019).

Beauty must always be depicted as a subjective concept; meaning that what one person finds attractive may be disagreeable to another (Bhakta & Latitude, 2018). Meaning that we are more focused on how beauty standards make others feel and have tried to make them more accesible to everyone. Moreover, previous researcher in their study about perception of beauty conclude that white women are ethnically marked as the ideal beauty standards (Tina, 2021). They believed that the light-skinned group represented the highest culture and embodied the best physical type and perceived by them as more intelligent (Diwen, 2021).

This implies that news feeds are clogged with celebrities and other influencers, whose impact on us would be minimal if they weren't constantly visible. This creates the illusion that the standard has been elevated, which is not the case, as it has been unnecessarily reinforced through social media. Thus, MS Glow for Men advertising starring Babe Cabita and Marshel represents the body image that basically includes those who are not trained as professional models, while the beauty product ads are predominantly featured individuals with a light-skinned and thin body type.

C. Circuit of Culture

The Circuit of Culture is primarily concerned with consumer choices on the basis of modes of reception in order for production processes to be the main focus (Loreta & Perdana, 2018). The culture is divided into 5 components. Firstly, the representation can be a description or depiction of something or symbols or substitutes for something (Hall, 1997).

Secondly, identity establishes an individual's place in society by defining who they are and how they relate to others in the world in which they live. Moreover, production refers to cultural meaning standards and values which are critical aspects that must be considered in order to build an economically successful product. Meanwhile, consumption refers to the process of decoding messages or receiving information by audiences (Pratiwi & Perdana, 2019).

METHOD

This study aims to understand the body image concept represented in the advertisement of MS Glow for Men, by using the circuit of culture concept. In answering the research question, the researcher used Stuart Hall's framework of the circuit of culture that covers five aspects: regulation, production, identity, consumption, and representation.

A. Data Source

The data for this study were MS Glow for Men Advertising videos starring Babe Cabita and Marshel. The researcher uses the video which was uploaded on "JURAGAN 99 vs SHANDY" YouTube channel. Not only that, the researcher also uses the audiences' comment on several social media: (1) comment section down below the advertising video uploaded at "JURAGAN 99 vs SHANDY" YouTube channel uploaded on August 2021, (2) comment section down below Babe Cabita's Instagram (@babecabiita) posts related to the advertising MS Glow For Men by August 2021. (3) comment section down below Marshel's Instagram (@marshel_widianto) posts related to the advertising MS Glow For Men by August 2021, (4) several comments on Twitter account using hastagh #semuajugabisa.

Moreover, the data gathered using several videos discovered with hastagh #semuajugabisa on TikTok. Lastly, the researcher took the audience from people reaction on watching the advertising that was displayed on the Billboard New York's Times Square.

B. Data Collection

The data are collected by observing the advertising video of MS Glow for Men and several audiences comments on the social media that are mentioned above. The researchers used note-taking for collecting several comments both opposing and supporting comments in responding to the advertising.

C. Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the theory of circuit of culture and audience. After that, the data were critically described and interpreted. Then, the researcher came to conclusion from the analyzed data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Using the circuit of culture theory, this part explains and discusses the result of the representation of body image in MS Glow advertising. Regulation, production, representation, identity, and consumption are the five elements of the Culture Circuit.

A. Regulation

Regulation on “beauty concept” refers the way beauty conceived in public mind. In Indonesia right now, the wave of K-pop industry, gives impacts on the way of people perceive beauty (Puspitasari & Suryadi, 2020). The development of ideal shapes of beauty promoted by media has raised the bar for how people should treat and shape their bodies (Intan & Abdullah, 2021). Thus, the constant depiction of the ideal boy and the media of perfect beauty tends to influence and even encourage people who “look normal” to compare their bodies with the ideal image conveyed in the media (Intan & Abdullah, 2021). Having an opposing audiences who disagrees with the concept of the ads carry a meaning that Indonesian people still glorify fair skin resulting in treating someone less favorably than other people solely because of their skin color and body image.

It appears that advertising videos of beauty brands use only fair and perfect body image to attract people. However, the Director of MS Glow, Sheila Marthalia, said in an interview with detikcom, everyone deserves to look charming in their own way without having to press the beauty standard of society's perfect body image by campaigning implicitly through the video starring Bebi Sabita and Marshall #SEMUAJUGABISA (Widianto et.al 2022).

B. Production

The product discussed in this paper is a viral video advertising that was uploaded on YouTube and was displayed on a billboard in New York's Time Square. According to Sheila Marthalia, director of MS Glow, in an interview with detikcom, the reason for creating the video advertising is to contribute to the public in the form of spreading perception towards the visual representation of the model - that not only models with perfect bodies can only participate in beauty brand advertising. The idea of working together with Babe Cabita and Marshel in advertising beauty brands is because of the brand ambassadors themselves. Babe Cabita made sarcasm on his social media by posting a video. In the video, he joked around about mainstream advertisements for beauty products that set unrealistic results about the advertisement which can make people think that they can change their appearance just by using the product. Thus, MS Glow beauty brand collaborated with Bebi Sabita and Marshal as their brand ambassador to banish the image of how the advertisement works for certain groups only. Not only that, but they also wanted to mention that everyone can use their product.

Several positive comments sent by the audience were found on social media including YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter as responses to the advertising launched by MS Glow. When researcher open the comment section below the video on YouTube, there are 636 total comments. Most of those comments are supporting the advertising implicit campaign by saying that the idea of the advertising content is out of the box and represents a real figure. Thus, this reaction is related to the moment of consumption: when and how the audience consumes the culture and reacts to it. Before the sarcastic video of Marshall and Bebi Sabita went viral through their own private social media platform, the concept was initially acknowledged and embraced by the owner of MS Glow to collaborate with the stars. They made the decision to collaborate with the stars by formally inviting them through a statement shared on their Instagram story. Production continued by distributing the video specifically for advertising at New York's Times Square billboard, as well as on the owner's YouTube channel. Additionally, collaborations were initiated with other influencers to promote their product.

C. Representation

MS Glow advertising video starring Bebi Sabita and Marshal in Time square New York implicitly represents proof to society that everyone can look charming in their own way without the fair skin and perfect body image of a

beauty standard that the society created by using the hashtag #SEMUAJUGABISA. Here's the writer provided with the description of scenes and advertising details related to what they represent.

In the video advertising, the ambassador states:

(0.19) "*kamu pingin ganteng juga kaya mereka? Caranya gampang*"

In this video, "*mereka*" refers to the people behind the interlocutor who doesn't have fair skin. This means they explicitly spread the awareness that the beauty definition and perfect body can come from anyone.

After that, the other person in the video advertising replied:

(0.28) "*emang bisa? Coba lakuin ke gua!*"

This use of the term 'bisa,' which implicitly refers to the missing word 'glowing,' implicitly represents the current status quo, where in people form the stereotypes of what should be considered glowing.

Then, the he replied in the video advertising by stating:

(0.33) "*ini mah gampang, semua juga bisa aku bikin glowing*"

In this section, the word "*ini mah gampang*" and "*aku bikin glowing*" right after using the skincare, explicitly spread positivity that glowing doesn't mean fair skin color.

The video's scene reflects the movement, which was started by the MS Glow team. Several scene, such as the introductory scene and the campaign's goals, has its own purpose. Firstly, the fact the advertising featuring Babe Cabita and Marshal is enough to show how they represent the idea that an ambassador of beauty brand does not have to come from people who has light skin and thin ideal body. Relating to the previous related review, it is because simply the standardization of beauty should cover all types of body image and physical appearance.

Secondly, the line uttered in the video by the artist themselves is represent how they encourage people to stop with the stereotype that only people with fair skin color and perfect body types could use skincare. The definition of body image in relation to beauty cannot come from one type alone - as it should not be biased that leave the discrimination to one race only. The idea that people should accept the fact that we do come from different races and cultures that

impacts our physical appearance also. Lastly, the hashtag #SEMUAJUGABISA was created to promote self-acceptance and body positivity to reduce the discrimination against certain types of body types.

D. Identity

Identity discusses the ways that the phenomenon itself comes to mean and the related positioning of participants (Pratiwi & Perdana, 2019). The MS Glow advertising video proposes messages, that the main idea is to acknowledge that everyone with different types of body image and skin color is as beautiful as everyone. From the writers' observation, Indonesians tend to impose the idea that only fair skin and perfect body image are considered beautiful. For instance, it impacts mainstream beauty brands by influencing their choice of models as brand ambassadors to attract people. MS Glow team aims to break society's perceptions toward body image and visual advertising. By collaborating with Bebi Sabita and Marshall in creating the video and sharing the idea, they hope that it would encourage people to stop discrimination against one group, promoting inclusivity and acceptance.

Based on the writer's observation there are other beauty brands that apply this advertising method to represent model that cover all of body types as opposed to only use one type of body and skin colour. Firstly, the Local beauty brand Dove uses brown skin color and all types of body sizes in their advertising to promote self-acceptance. Not only that, an Indonesian Local fashion brand called Monomolly uses models from different skin colours and body types to promote the body positivity campaign. The body positivity campaign spread explicitly through their social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, which were not only the perfect body image with fair skin color and slim body, but they use plus-size models and brown skin color for their brand. Both brands are explicitly addressing all types of beauty and promoting self-acceptance regardless of their skin color, body size, and even race. Based on observations and opinions, writers conclude that advertising shown in mainstream media and social media should represent all types of people from different cultures and social backgrounds. However, there are still many mainstream brands and industries that only use certain types of models to produce a perfect image related to their brand products. Only a few brands use different types of body and skin colours from group of people as their models in a way to promote self-acceptance and body positivity. This is supported by the statement from the audience who supported the advertising idea by commenting on the MS Glow YouTube channel, several comments are listed down below:

1. "*Akhirnya ada yang break the rules kalo iklan skincare selalu pake yang profesional model. Ini nunjukin skincare itu gk bikin kita auto jadi kaya model, tapi seenggaknya tetep bersih sesuai dengan diri sendiri. Apalagi produknya MS Glow emang badabess*" (audience 1) "Finally, someone breaks the rules, as skincare ads always feature professional models. This shows that skincare doesn't automatically make us look like models, but at least keeps us clean according to our own selves. Especially MS Glow products are really awesome." (Audience 1)
2. "*Yass those are da moves.. produk yg tdk mendiskriminasi&mengutamakan kesehatan kulit.. berharap moga makin bnyk produk skincare yg mengutamakan kesehatan kulit mengedukasi konsumen u/tdk halu dg harga terjangkau. Semua org berhak menjadi luar biasa&dlm hidup u/maju perlu sumber daya&kesempatan mg trus menginspirasi u/sll jd good human tetap membumi&share ilmu*" (audience 2) "Yes, those are the moves. Products that don't discriminate and prioritize skin health. Hoping for more skincare products that prioritize skin health and educate consumers to not be delusional with affordable prices. Everyone has the right to be extraordinary, and in life, to advance, we need resources and opportunities to keep inspiring to be a good human, staying grounded, and sharing knowledge." (Audience 2)
3. "*Terimakasih sudah nenjadi iklan yg segar, yang tidak mengikuti stereotype yang ada*" (audience 3) "Thank you for being a refreshing ad, one that does not follow existing stereotypes." (Audience 3)
4. "*Tunggu aja sebentar lagi pasti banyak iklan yang mengikuti konsep ini !!!*" (Audience 4) "Thank you for being a refreshing ad, one that does not follow existing stereotypes." (Audience 3)

Not only that, there are also several comments opposing the concepts of the advertising and the beauty ambassadors. Several comments down below are listed.

1. "*mukanya kurang mendukung nih*" (audience 5) "The face doesn't really support it." (Audience 5)
2. "*ganti aja lah masak dia sih jadi males aja*" (audience 6) "Just change it, I don't feel like seeing him." (Audience 6)
3. "*ga cocok jadi brand ambassador*" (audience 7) "Not suitable to be a brand ambassador." (Audience 7)

4. “*bakal laku gak sih kalo dia modelnya, kaya gak ada artis lain aja*” (audience 8)
“Will it sell if he's the model? Like there are no other celebrities.” (Audience 8)

E. Consumption

The audience reacted to the posted video advertisement in three ways: preferred reading audience, oppositional reading audience, and negotiated reading audience. First of all, the preferred reading audience is the audience who received the advertising concept without more questions, or critics. This preferred reading audience still engaged the advertising by sharing or commenting agreement without additional contra argument. There are also preferred reading audience who shows their agreement by creating video content with a supportive comment to support the concepts in rebutting the opposition reading audience. Several famous influencers include their anticipation by defending the advertising concepts. Not only that, but the preferred reading audience also uses the hashtag #SEMUAJUGABISA on their social media platform.

Second of all, the oppositional reading audience where several audiences received the concepts of the advertising by giving their disagreement opinion on social media, either on Youtube comment section, Instagram, Twitter, or TikTok. In this case, they completely disagree with the advertising concepts. They show disagreement towards the advertising by arguing that the concepts does not represent the actual beauty brand itself. Simply they reason because the ambassadors do not have the body image that fits with the beauty standard. Therefore, in their opinion, there is a model for a reason because they could represent the ideal perfect body that fits into society's beauty standards.

In conclusion, the negotiated readings audience only accepts certain meanings from the messages they receive. They did not defend either the positive side of the opposition side argument. They received the advertising by consuming the video. They include people who like the video uploaded on youtube but still disagree with the opinion.

CONCLUSION

The advertising contains a message that the standardization of beauty should cover all types of body image and physical appearance by representing the idea that anyone can become an ambassador of the beauty brand just like

Babe Cabita and Marshal. The advertising brand ambassador influences the public's perception through their association with the brand, shaping how people view and connect with the products or services that presents a visual which covers all of types of body types and skin colours. The video advertising, uploaded on YouTube, Instagram, and displayed on Billboard New York's Time Square, was received by the audience in three distinct ways: preferred readings audience, negotiated readings audience, and oppositional readings audience, as categorized based on the comments and reactions they posted. The writer uses several audiences taken from a social media platform to show different types of audiences who received the advertising video. The comment of the audiences suggests using real people in advertisements in order to enhance the self-acceptance of body positivity and dismiss the less favorable to certain body types.

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- 84 **Celt: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching & Literature**, Volume 23, Number 1, June 2023, pp. 70 – 85
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