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Online advertising: how the consumer goods speaks to women

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Abstract

This research discusses the phenomenon of the product of consumer goods to communicate with women online commercial advertising. The method used is descriptive that try to describe the phenomenon of products interaction to women on online advertisement. The results of this research show that for speaking to women, online commercial advertising sells the social value, like lifestyle and family. In conclusion, one type of communication that exists today besides interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and mass communication is the communication between humans and objects.

Keywords: Women, Advertising, Media, Consumer, Goods.

Publicidad online: cómo los bienes de consumo le hablan a las mujeres

Resumen

Esta investigación analiza el fenómeno del producto de bienes de consumo para comunicarse con las mujeres en la publicidad comercial en línea. El método utilizado es descriptivo y trata de describir el fenómeno de la interacción de productos con las mujeres en la publicidad en línea. Los resultados de esta investigación muestran que, para hablar con las mujeres, la publicidad comercial en línea vende el valor social, como el estilo de vida y la familia. En conclusión, un tipo de comunicación que existe hoy en día, además de la comunicación interpersonal, la comunicación organizacional y la comunicación masiva, es la comunicación entre humanos y objetos.

Palabras clave: Mujer, Publicidad, Medios, Consumo, Bienes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Media is no longer seen as a communication device that connects the sender and receiver. However, the media is now a message. The media gives something meaningful to humans. Williamson (1978) mentions that advertising media messages have taken on a religious function that implies promise and hope, obviously it (advertising) has a function, which is to sell things to us. But it has another function, which I believe in many ways replace that traditionally fulfilled by art or religion.

Once the ads have mastered the public space of television, advertisements are currently invading the internet media. This is very reasonable. Based on data from Hootsuite, in 2018, the number of internet user is 4,021 billion (53%) from 7.593 billion the totality number of population in the world. This means that half of the world's population accesses the internet. In Indonesian, the number of internet users has exceeded fifty percent of the total population of Indonesia (132.7 million users out of 256.2 million total Indonesians by 2017). Of the total internet users, by sex, 51.43 % were male and 48.57 % female. Furthermore, based on the content of internet media that is often visited, 62 % or 82.2 million is an online shop and more than 50% of shopper is women.

Commercial advertising is targeted to the internet media based on the data of the reason the users access the internet. A total of 31.3 million people use the internet for updating the information, 27.6 million jobs related, 17.9 million for leisure, 13.6 million on socialization, 12.2 million information about education, 11.7 million for entertainment and 10.4 million related to business and looking for goods (Hasyim, 2017). Shopping online is experiencing and will continue to have a rapid increase in Indonesia. 18% of these users do online research from the desktop computer before buying online an additional 11% using a mobile device for their research. 16% and 9% is converted for desktop and mobile users respectively. Most traffic comes from Facebook which accounted for 14%, then WhatsApp (12%) and Twitter (11%) (Tikno, 2017).

Product advertising does various ways to convince consumers to buy products. The advertising message conveys objective information that is useful to judge the product/service. Consumers use this information to update his/her beliefs about the product and decide his/her buying behavior. The rational consumer should interpret in a negative way the lack of disclosure of relevant information. On that basis, advertising media controls public space. At present, advertising is invading online media, because he knows that the number of internet users is half of the world's population. So, in addition to television that has been mastered, now advertising is attacking public internet space (Hasyim, 2017).

And undeniably, how do advertisements online always appear every time users open social media applications (Facebook, Whats App, Instagram and Youtube video applications). This is in line with social network penetration worldwide that is ever-increasing. In 2017, 71 percent of internet users were social network users and these figures are expected to grow. Social networking is one of the most popular online activities with high user engagement rates and expanding mobile possibilities. With over 1.86 billion monthly active users, social network Facebook is currently the market leader in terms of reach and scope.

Based on statistical data, global digital advertising spending has been constantly increasing since 2010 and is forecast to round up to nearly 548 billion U.S. dollars in 2017. Due to advances in technology and consumer preferences, not all mediums are as heavily invested in as others. As of 2016, television was still considered the most

important medium for advertisers, accounting for an estimate of 35.5 percent of total media ad spend in 2016. According to the source, desktop internet and mobile internet accounted for 18.9 percent of the total ad spending and 15.2 percent respectively. Internet expenditures are projected to record a growth of 13.3 percent in 2017.

Consumer behavior is certainly not all the same for the media used in communication. Internet user behavior is more interactive where communication between senders and recipients can take place reciprocally. Online advertising continues to motivate communication methods to attract and capture the attention of internet users as consumers. The studies about the relation gender with internet habit strength and online communication showed females were found to be more relational-oriented and socialized more frequently as compared to males. Correspondingly, females' social relationships, either in physical or virtual contexts, were more socially involved than males. By that, many online advertisements are played by women for various commercial product advertisements.

Various research results indicate that in many countries commercial advertisements are mostly played by women. Hasyim (2017) explained that commercial advertising marketing in Indonesia uses as much as 80% in marketing its products and utilizing female sexuality as a personality and brand image. Nadine & Britt (2014) has reviewed the ideal concept of beauty of women in advertising. The results of the research conducted by Hasyim (2017) state that for decades, advertisers are presenting women in their advertisements to generate more revenue. Women's role is often associated with

different stereotypes by advertisers. In every form of media, women are portrayed by advertisers as just housewives - taking care of domestic chores, sex objects, dependent, etc.

The research conducted by Hasyim (2017) concludes that 21st century advertisements perpetuate the roles and images based on women's sexual objectification, sexism, stereotypes and classical archetypes used in advertisements. Results present stereotyped fashion of women in advertising. One of the interesting problems to examine is how product and women's interactions in advertising. Products are presented as animate objects that have an important role in women's social life. Products are part of a woman's life that gives meaning, personality and identity. The focus of this research is how products communicate with women in meeting the expectations and needs of women. Finally, consumer goods are seen as objects of the soul as a means of communication with humans.

2. METHODOLOGY

The method used is descriptive that try to describe the phenomenon of products interaction to women on online advertisement. Descriptive research focuses on the actual issues observed in the online commercial advertisement. Data collection method consists is commercial product advertisement on the Internet (Youtube) as a research object. The advertisement that is the object of research is the Traveloka, Bukalapak and Shopee.

Traveloka is the online shop, a company that provides airplane and hotel ticket booking services online with a focus on domestic travel in Indonesia. One company that controls the sale of airplane tickets and hotels online in Indonesia. Bukalapak is one of the leading and fastest growing online marketplace in Indonesia. This travel online provides online sales services with the customer-to-customer (C2C) business model. And Shopee, is an e-commerce company under the auspices of Garena, an internet company in Southeast Asia. Shopee runs a C2C mobile marketplace business. The method of data analysis for commercial advertisement is conducted by studying ad text (slogan and tagline) with a semiotic approach.

3. THEORETICAL BASIS

3.1. Semiotics

Semiology (the term that Ferdinand de Saussure (1967) uses for semiotics) is a study that examines the sign in social life (Saussure, 1967). The focus of semiotic review for Saussure (1967) is a sign. So whatever that is meaningful in social life is a sign. The signal significance is very close to the people of the speaker. A meaningful sign is formed through the process of semiotic dichotomy, i.e. signifiant (signifier) and signifié (signified). The relation of these two signs forms a sign (meaning). Saussure (1967) gives an example of the sound of arbròr which consists of six letters arbror. The word arbror is

a marker in a concept relating to an object that is, in reality, a tree that has a stem, and leaves.

The marker (sound image or word) itself is not a sign unless someone knows it as such and relates to the concept it marks. Signifiant is in terms of sign form, and signifié is the aspect of meaning or concept of sign. Peirce (1940) using the term semiotics gives the definition of a sign as something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. Something that can be an object through a process of abstraction looks to someone as something else (meaning) with some state or capacity that the object possesses as a representamen or sign.

Baudrillard (1968) developed the Saussure (1967) theory. According to Baudrillard (1968) identified Saussure's scheme four major types or phases, of the sign-to-referent relationship. In the first phase, the sign reflects and, as in Saussure's (1967) scheme, is a good appearance of some reality. In the second, it is a bad or distorted reflection of some reality, as in the case of a counterfeit piece of money. In the third phase, it mystifies the fact that the thing to which it refers does not exist, as with a sorcery. And in the fourth phase, it is not an appearance of anything, nor does it dissimulate anything. Rather, it is a pure simulation (i.e., simulacrum, model, sign, image, etc.) without an original. Building on these ideas, Baudrillard (1968) developed a genealogy of signs in which they undergo a series of radical ruptures and mutations in each of the four orders.

In Mythology, Barthes (1957) explains that signs are formed through a two-level process, both of which take place through the

dyadic process of signifier and signified. Relation of signifier and signified on the first system are called langue. The second sign system as a result of the first system produces a new sign called myth. A sign (namely the associative total of a concept and a sound-image) in the first system becomes a mere signifier in the second, and everything happens as if myth shifts the formal system of the first significations sideways. The sign as a total combination of concepts and imagery in the first system becomes a signifier on the second system, called myth. The first system is called the object language (language system) which forms the basis of a sign or backrest in forming a new sign on the second system. The mythical sign system of an object takes place through naturalization. The relation on the first and second sign systems produces a natural sign.

3.2. Online advertising (internet)

The development of information technology resulted in the internet media has a very important role in terms of various needs information for humans. Even the Internet has become a part of the needs. The Internet has become a major source of information consumption, and to some extent, has replaced old media such as the radio, television and the newspaper. The main advantages of the Internet include its mass availability and its almost instant access to current information. The most common use of the Internet is searching for information, and purchasing products and services. On this basis, many companies advertise their products on the internet. Companies

use the Internet to attract consumers to both offline and online shopping (Celebi, 2015).

Internet advertising itself started in the early 1990s Tracy & Tuten (1967) and internet advertising activities increased with the increasing number of Internet users. The increasing number of users indicates the tendency of most visited certain content by users. The results of a survey conducted by APJII (apjii.com) in 2016 explained that based on the content most frequently visited by internet users online shop, with the number of users 82.2 million or 62%, the personal business of 45.3 million or 34.2 % and other activities of 5 million or 3.8%. Furthermore, the most visited social media content is Facebook, amounting to 71.6 million users or 54% and Instagram of 19.9 million users or 15%.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Lifestyle

Various socio-cultural values become the tagline or theme of internet advertising. Ads try to take these values in social life. Barthes (1968) explained that the reconstruction of the sign by the community was drawn from the established system of signs in society. The ads take structured marks (already systemized) and are a parole in the ad text so that customers interpret the advertising message as something natural, as is the conventional language sign system in the community.

Lifestyle is a consumer behavior that has a connection with the physical environment and consumer behavior (mind). Lifestyle, one of the theoretical studies describes the values, attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of consumer behavior.

Lifestyle serves to identify the consumer characteristics and become the basis by advertisers to design more effective internet advertising. The lifestyle of internet users is one of the social benefits that internet advertisers use. Various studies have shown it. Shopping as a lifestyle is an important factor that affects how users use the Internet (Koshksaray, 2015). These lifestyle features provide advertisers with practical, precise, information about consumers so that they can meet the needs of each user within competitive and complex markets (Kamakura and Wedel, 1995).

Internet advertising in Indonesia also presents the social benefits of lifestyle. Traveloka, one of the tour and travel companies sell products (airline tickets, trains, buses, hotels and car rentals online.) Since the segmentation is internet users, the company advertises its products on the internet through the content most frequently opened by internet users, such as Youtube, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Traveloka advertisement online check-in version, tells a young woman is relaxed and enjoy her holiday in the village without having to hurry to check in the plane ticket, because Traveloka already provides ticket check-in facility.

The advertisement gives a message to no need to rush to the airport for tickets to check in and advise the customers to relax in enjoying the holiday. Traveloka conveys the message through the

advertisement tagline, Traveloka first, then quiet vacation. This ad represents how the product has a social function as a helper. This product is seen as a human that can help anytime and anywhere if needed. This product is always on hand to help others. Traveloka product is not viewed as a product, the product already contains the social meaning that is part of the members of the society. Thus, the product is considered as citizen within a society. Baudrillard (1968) says humans are an object system by searching for the identity through the product used.

Traveloka advertising creates an identity as a soulful object (meaningful). To create a personality or identity for a product, the advertiser builds a system of signification for the product, by providing character and identity. The name of the character and the identity of the product as human, who has the figure. The advertisement sells something other than the material function (the function of the denotation) of the product and presents us with a sign system (structure) in which we and products can be exchanged. The advertisement sells to us ourselves. Ads produce meaning. The denotation meaning conveys to us the identity of the product (brand and excellence) that the society recognizes. The social meaning emphasizes social values, as human products, in which products can be exchanged with humans (Kumari & Alexander, 2018).

Lifestyle is a sign that is inserted into the product so that the product means something human. In other words, the advertisement translates various statements about the reality of the product, namely character and identity. Traveloka has a human character that

understands and meets human needs. He is like a human figure and a community member who has a social responsibility to help others. The advertisement presents to the user a product of a sign system in which humans and products can be exchanged. The advertisements sell to us ourselves by taking the human character that is transferred to the product. Therefore, the product is given the personality, which makes a person take meaning through the product. To obtain human meaning, advertising does the logic of symbolic exchange (Baudrillard, 1970), i.e. products that are exchanged with humans (Soo et al., 2019).

4.2. Family

One of the product advertisement that holds the theme of kinship is Bukalapak online shop which sells various kinds of products of family needs. This ad tells about a mother of Chinese descent who opened homestay in her home for college students. Her name was Linda. She served her guests as her own family. There were two college students who were the guests at Mrs. Linda's homestay, one was Ari, who came from the tribe of Java and the other was Mario who came from the tribe of Ambon. Both were friends. They were treated like Linda's own children. Linda always cooked the rice by using a magic jar, cooking machine and rice heater for her guests. Every time Imlek (Chinese New Year) event arrived, Linda always provided food and cooked the rice with the magic jar (Indriastuti, 2019).

The Bukalapak advertisement acts as a family member. This ad sells social value that is the product sold in Bukalapak is treated as a family member. The product is not viewed as a dead object (material goods) but as an object that has a soul that can meet human needs. Bukalapak's ads are very understanding of human wants and hopes, so to fulfill his wishes, people do not need to shop / market directly. Bukalapak is a service that will deliver the product to home and interact with people. The tagline of Bukalapak conveys the message that the family does not have to be due to the linkage of blood, but also the linkage of the heart.

This tagline conveys the message that Bukalapak as a product has a family relationship with the customer, who has no blood ties but has a heart connection between Bukalapak and its customers. Semiotically, the family is a process of symbolic exchange between the family and Bukalapak. The family concept is transferred or inserted into the Bukalapak sign. Bukalapak at the level of the functional logic of use value and the economic logic of exchange value is the value of actual benefits and has magic jar equivalence value as a cooker and heating rice (Kosari, 2018).

Linda's relationships and products sold in Bukalapak show a lasting and loyal relationship. Bukalapak product quality is symbolized by the durability of Linda who remains faithful to use Bukalapak products for a long time. This is demonstrated by Ari and Mario who stay at Linda's guesthouse until the completion of their studies. Ten years later, after completing their studies, new products of Bukalapak,

the new magic jar cannot be used again. Linda's relationship and Bukapalak's products are the economic logic of exchange value. The durability of Linda's age has the value equivalent to the durability of Bukalapak products (Sears, 2018).

The economic logic of exchange value, basically has two values, namely the equivalence value between the product and the price of goods and the value of the equivalence between the product and the social value. Taglines with family themes are also featured in the online shop of Shopee. This ad tells about a husband who was talking quietly through a smartphone so as not be heard by his wife about the service of free postage for all products ordered at Shoppe. His wife heard the conversation. Unbeknownst to her husband, the wife ordered firstly, before the husband did it, all the family needs like clothing, bedcovers, pillows, decorative lights, tablets, etc. (Yang et al., 2019).

The concept of shopping with the finger connotes the all-around modern life. Consumers do not need to come to the store to shop, but the store that comes to meet the consumer. With just one finger, people just choose products that have been displayed on the screen of Shoppe online shopping applications. The understanding of modern life is easily marked by the use of existing applications. Consumers communicate directly to Shopee's shopping app, which understands what consumers want. Shopee's shopping online acts as a waiter, providing excellent service. Shopee is a sign that has the character and identity that can be understood by people or consumers who are invited to communicate.

The relation between man and object (Shopee) represents communication between person and object, not human with the human. This ad also shows how the dominance of women in the family in terms of shopping. Women as decision makers in shopping without having to have an agreement with the husband about the products to be purchased. This is shown in the video ad about how women choose all the needs in the household: decorative lamps bedroom, bed cover, pillow, tablet, fan, bicycle, and blender. Shopping that is only done by using a finger refers to the object, the Shopee application that contains information about the world of shopping where all the needs are already in sight.

Based on Baudrillard's (1968) semiotics, Shopee's online shop is the functional logic of use value, as a sign that has a function as an online store. The economic logic of exchange value is a transactional function in shopping between buyers and sellers. The differential logic of sign value has a convenience function in shopping where the store that comes to meet the buyer. Furthermore, the logic of symbolic exchange that represents that the concept of ease of shopping with stores that come to the buyer is a sign of hyper-reality, something that already refers to shopping as a dream world in society.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion drawn from the research is that women are internet users and use the most dominant online shop content which

then becomes a factor for advertisers using women as stars in internet advertising. One of the female characteristics is the pleasure of the lifestyle. Advertisers make the lifestyle as an advertising theme and become a product that has a lifestyle-like figure. The product is constructed as the object of having a soul, which can speak and understand the needs and the secret of women. Consumable objects are not merely objects, but they have character and personality.

Traveloka's advertisement represents the product as a human thing that understands women's self. Another theme that is always dominated by women is family. In terms of shopping, women are the dominant figure that determines which products are purchased for the needs of the family. Not only related to culinary, but also related to household appliances. The ads that have been studied show how the dominance of women in all the needs of human life. The results of this study indicate that there are two paradigms that have changed, first is the communication between humans with objects of consumption. The dominance of human interaction to objects of consumption as a soulful object. Being a communication paradigm in today's era. Humans (women) as actualizing themselves as human beings exist through the objects that exist around him.

The shift in communication and interaction of women from humans to soulful objects is an actual and modern cultural phenomenon today. Secondly, the shopping paradigm has changed. Not the buyer who came to the store, but the shop that came to the house. Shop comes to contact the buyer about what products are ordered without knowing the time and place. Shop as a soulful object

of contacting and communicating people, whether he contacted us with permission or not. This shows that the paradigm of communication in this era of globalization no longer sees the boundaries of time and distance and no longer see who we communicate and vice versa. Thus, one type of communication that exists today besides interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and mass communication is the communication between humans and objects.

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