

## Visual Construction of Gender Roles in Bali Tourism Advertisement

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**Abstracts:** Visual content plays a fundamental part in our lives. When it comes to advertising, it is a compelling way to draw people's attention. Videos and pictures tell a story a thousand times more efficiently than written words. Furthermore, it enables you telling your story using less space. Advertising has been defined as the most powerful, persuasive, and manipulative tool that firms have to control consumers all over the world. It is a form of communication that typically tries to persuade and convince potential customers to buy particular brand of products or service. Influencing people's habits, creating false needs, distorting the values and priorities of our society with sexism and feminism, advertising has a crucial role in people's life. Gender advertisement refers to the pictures in advertisements which describe stereotypical gender roles and displays. Gender presentations are used massively in advertisements to establish the role of one gender in relation with the other. This research aims at discovering how gender roles are portrayed as stereotypes in Bali tourism advertisement. The data was taken from Bali tourism advertisement video which published on YouTube. Observation method was used in collecting the data. The researchers used descriptive qualitative method in analyzing the data with pictorial analysis based on Goffman's theory of gender (1979). Goffman argues that there are codes which can be used to identify gender. These codes of gender can be seen in the portrayals of men and women in advertising. In this study the researchers analyzed, described and interpreted the signs of portraying gender in Bali tourism advertisements.

**Keywords:** advertisement, visual, gender roles

### INTRODUCTION

Bali is among the hardest hit by the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, which has put global travels to a halt since March 2020. Indonesia's most popular tourism destination, globally famous for its preserved culture and home to beautiful beaches and ancient temples amid a myriad of hype night clubs, is ranked in the bottom of 34 provinces after its economy shrank by 10.8 percent in the second quarter. The tourism sector accounts for around 80 percent of the province's revenue sources and almost all of its labor force work in the business. The impact of the pandemic is more devastating in Bali than in any other area in the archipelago (Jakarta Globe, 2020).

Many efforts done to promote tourism sectors in Bali. One of them is by promoting Bali through tourism advertisement videos which published worldwide. It aims to show the world that Bali is safe to visit. In addition, it also promotes the uniqueness of Balinese culture, nature and society. Advertisements play a crucial role in business world which is very competitive. It is used to introduce a business, build a brand and position a company, product or service against the competition. The primary role of advertisements on business is the strength to influence buyer decisions and drive purchases. Advertisers promote their commodity and service in a unique and influential way to educate their potential customers.

Visual aspects are very important in advertisements since it is the first thing caught by the people eyes when looking at an ad. Visuals communicate so much more and so much faster compared to text. Visual aspects are fundamental since they assist potential buyers imagine the product or service in a more relatable way. Furthermore, visual aspects help people create an affection towards the brand faster. Images help the advertisers connect with the potential customers in a way that written messages cannot. Visual content allows you to make use of something called psychological projection. Psychological identification is why in advertising men are attracted to pictures of men and women to those of women. For example, if a man sees an ad portraying a handsome fellow, he projects himself into that person's shoes. The same goes for women. Psychological

projection is a powerful reason why advertising should feature visuals with a high attention value. It's something that cannot be achieved through headers and text.

Men and women are portrayed in advertisements according to the constructed definition of femininity and masculinity. To be a woman is to be feminine and to be a man is to be masculine (Jha & Raj, 2017: 1). Goffman (1979) argues that there are codes which can be used to identify gender. These codes of gender can be seen in the portrayals of men and women in advertising. There are six categories under which we can see these codes of gender such as relative size, function ranking, the feminine touch, the reutilization of subordination, licensed withdrawal and body display. This study aims to analyze how gender roles are portrayed as stereotypes in Bali tourism advertisement.

## **METHOD**

The data was taken from Bali tourism advertisement video which published on YouTube. Observation method was used in collecting the data. The researchers used descriptive qualitative method in analyzing the data with pictorial analysis based on Goffman's theory of gender (1979). Goffman argues that there are codes which can be used to identify gender. These codes of gender can be seen in the portrayals of men and women in advertising. In this study the researchers analyzed, described and interpreted the signs of portraying gender in Bali tourism advertisements.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

This section consists of the analysis of visual construction of gender roles in Bali tourism advertisements. The analysis is divided into two parts. First, the writers will show and describe how women are portrayed in advertising by presenting some pictures of women found in the advertisements. Second, the writers will present some pictures which show how men are portrayed in advertising. In addition to gender issue, the analysis will be enriched by the explanation of Balinese culture aspects which is very crucial in this analysis.

### **Portrayal of Women in Advertising**



Figure 1



Figure 2

The pictures above show women's role in Balinese traditional life. The first picture shows a woman carries an offering on her head. She goes to the rice field to do rituals as the expression of her gratitude to the almighty God who gives prosperity for human being through nature. The second picture also shows two women carry an offering to the temple. Both pictures show women's domestic roles in Balinese society. In these images, women are portrayed religious, dilligent and responsible. Women's domestic tasks are the actualization of their role as wives and mothers. Typically, women's domestic roles are cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of the children. This also includes woshipping in daily basis. It shows that women have a significant role in religious aspect which is the foundation of Balinese tranditional life, where rituals done regularly to keep the balance life. It is very crucial in Bali since Balinese believe that life is a gift and we have be grateful every day which is done by worshipping.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 3 and 4 show Balinese women in a traditional cloth preparing all the equipments needed to make offerings for a specific ceremony. They work in a group since the offerings are quite big and need extra energy to finish it. Most of the offerings are made of young coconut leaves and other natural materials. It needs skills, patience and sincerity to do it since Balinese offering are various, detailed and complicated. This activity shows women social role in Balinese life. Balinese women not only have responsibility in worshipping in their own household but also in the bigger areas, their village (*desa adat*). The responsibilities as the member of *desa adat* such as giving offerings (*mebanten*), joining a community self help (*ngayah*) in Kahyangan Tiga temple and giving mutual assistance (*ngroupin*) among all members of *desa adat* and *banjar* in human-life-circle ceremony (Rivai, 1981: 139). In this case, Balinese women are portrayed cooperative, responsible, and have integrity.



Figure 5



Figure 6

Figure 5 and 6 show Balinese women sell flowers, fruits and vegetables in a traditional market. It shows that Balinese women are hardworkers. They obviously have many domestic and social responsibilities. However, they still support the family to earn money. The advertisement shows how traditional markets in Bali are dominated by women who sell daily needs from food to clothes, etc. Beside their domestic and social roles, Balinese women also has production role which is earn money for their family. Production role is an economical activity in which women work and are paid. So that they can bring the money home in order to fulfill their family needs. There are some reasons why Balinese women work. It is considered as an opportunity to develop a career, a chance to show their ability and a belief that working women are more respected in the society. In this case, Balinese women are portrayed diligent, hardworking and tough.



Figure 7



Figure 8

Figure 7 and 8 show beautiful Balinese dancers in fascinating and glamorous traditional costumes. Balinese cannot be separated from art and culture. Almost all of Balinese women can dance because it is not only an art but also part of Balinese tradition. Balinese dance is not only performed for entertainment purposes but also as part of religious ceremony to please the Gods in particular rituals

Each dance represents unique stories and values behind all the beautiful movements and expressions which performed by the dancers.

Dance is closely related to women. Most of Balinese girls are obsessed with dancing, they learn to dance since they were a little girl. It is an honor to dance in the temple or contribute to particular festivals. The portrayal of women through Balinese dance represent beauty and femininity. In the era when tourism industry developed rapidly in Bali, Balinese dance becomes one of the best tourists' attractions so it is very common to see Balinese dances are displayed on the advertisements. Become a professional dancer is another way to earn money for Balinese women. They usually perform to welcome tourists at the airport or hotels, and also perform on stage in various tourism sites in Bali.



Figure 9



Figure 10

In contrast, figure 9 and 10 show how western women spend their time by travelling to Bali and spoiled themselves by doing yoga and going to spa for relaxing. Meanwhile, Balinese women who work in the hotel and spa give service to them. It shows the different characteristic between Balinese women and western women. Travelling is not a priority of Balinese women since they have many responsibilities, domestic roles, social roles and production roles so it is hard for them to find time for themselves. On the other hand, western women have more freedom since they do not have to deal with many domestic and social roles like Balinese women. Western women can use their extra money for travelling while Balinese women use their income mainly for family needs, religious and social events which cost a lot of money. The pictures implicitly deliver a message to women that they have to spend time to take care of themselves and to love themselves, although not in a luxurious holiday. A short affordable escape is also good for mental health.

### Portrayal of Men in Advertising



Figure 11



Figure 12

Figure 10 and 11 show a temple priest (pemangku) who leads the prayer in a temple. Men is closely related with leadership in Balinese. Men has a role as a leader in a family, village and temple. All the activities are led by men. The pictures above represents the role of men in Balinese traditional life. Men are portrayed as leader in many aspects of life in Bali. One of them is in religious aspect. Ceremonies and rituals in temples in Bali are commonly led by a male priest which show that men have a very crucial role in accomplishing a ceremony in Bali. Men are considered brave, being able to think rationally, strong and physically active which make them a good leader.





Figure 13



Figure 14

Figure 13 and 14 show another role of men in Balinese religious life. As well as women, men also have their own roles in temple ceremony. Balinese traditional music instruments (gamelan) are commonly played by men. Gamelan is a must in a temple ceremony. There is always a gamelan orchestra playing in a religious ceremony at a temple. It is a fundamental part of a temple ceremony. Balinese believe that the human ability to play gamelan is a gift from the Gods so that they should be grateful and express their gratitude by playing music for the Gods. It is also believed that some Gods prefer certain tunes. Gamelan is not only played in the temples but also in ceremonies on the street. For example, during a cremation ceremony, gamelan is said to entertain the deceased spirits and help guide their way to heaven. Beside playing the gamelan, there is also a dance performed by men in temple ceremony as the completion of the ceremony. So, in this case men are portrayed physically active, energetic, and artistic.



Figure 15



Figure 16

Figure 15 and 16 shows how Balinese men earn money for their family. One of them is by creating an artwork. Figure 15 shows two men make a stone carving and figure 16 shows a man make a wood carving. Conventionally, stone carvers created works for temple and palace gateways. In Bali, gateways symbolize the division between the inner and outer worlds. Even nowadays it is rare to see the gate of Balinese house, office or restaurant without at least one stone statue which commonly in the form of a demon in order to maintain security. The demon form is also designed to alarm visitors into behaving well once inside. Meanwhile wood carving is created for decorative purposes. It needs special talent to be a stone or wood carver. This job is typically possessed by men since doing this job needs extra energy physically. In this case, men are portrayed masculine, hardworking, powerful, strong and responsible. They work hard for their family.



Figure 17



Figure 18

Figure 17 and 18 show how Balinese men spend their leisure time, playing kite and taking care of the roosters. Balinese are primarily Hindu and deeply spiritual. As seen on figure 17, there are Balinese men carry a giant kite at the beach. Kites were initially flown over the rice paddies as an agrarian tradition to ask the gods for abundance and a strong harvest. Nowadays, there is annual kite festival in Bali which is started off as seasonal

agrarian festival which aims to thank the heavens for abundant crops and harvests. Playing kite is identical with boys who spend their free time in the afternoon after school hours playing kites with some friends. However, the picture shows that the kites are flown by adult male. In this case, men are portrayed fun, childlike, adventurous, energetic, and physically active.

Figure 18 shows an old man holding a rooster. Balinese men are identical with cockfighting since it is one of Balinese tradition. According to local beliefs, the cockfight is a part of a ritual called Tabuh Rah which aims to spill blood on the ground to block evil spirits. The Balinese cockfight is bloodier than any other identical tradition because the fighting cock's feet are tied with sharp blades to quicken the spilling of blood. Even though its religious roots are established, not all cockfights that occur in Bali are held with religious intention. In many villages, cockfighting is a social event, where men gather to show off their fighters and women see it as a business opportunity to sell traditional food and goods. Therefore, men used to take care of their cock in their leisure time to prepare it for cockfighting. In this case, men are portrayed competitive, love to show off and love gambling.

## CONCLUSION

There are many benefits of using images in advertisements. They can be used to stimulate curiosity, command attention, demonstrate product's features or benefits, associate a specific product with a particular lifestyle and anchor the brand identity in the minds and memories of your target audience. More specifically in Bali tourism advertisements images play a very significant role in portraying gender roles. Based on the finding of the study, it can be concluded that women are portrayed as part of society who have domestic role, social role and production role. It demands them to commit their life to their family and society. Balinese women are portrayed diligent, hardworking, responsible, tough, patient and grateful. Meanwhile men are portrayed as a leader in many aspects of Balinese life. They are considered brave, being able to think rationally, strong and physically active. In addition, men are portrayed masculine, hardworking, powerful, responsible, fun, adventurous and competitive.

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