

Women and Media: Women's Representation in Job Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

The aesthetic value attached to women and their enigmatic nature represents an intriguing topic for further research. This phenomenon has its roots in a patriarchal cultural system that serves to perpetuate public curiosity regarding women and their representation. In this context, women frequently serve as objects of media representation, engaging in a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship in which the image of women supports the media's appeal and sustainability. This study employed a qualitative approach utilising the Miles and Huberman interactive model to analyse the representation of women in job advertisements. The data were collected through the social media platform Instagram, with a particular focus on job advertisements in the East Java region. The findings show that the media and women are united in a mutually beneficial relationship, wherein women serve as objects of coverage with the potential to bolster the media's existence. This relationship establishes a balanced dynamic between women and the mass media, reflecting the intricate interplay between cultural norms, societal expectations, and media practices. The implications of this study emphasize the need to critically evaluate media practices that commodify women while considering the broader cultural and societal factors that perpetuate these representations. By shedding light on this dynamic, the research highlights opportunities for media stakeholders to adopt more equitable and empowering portrayals of women in their content.

Keywords: *job advertisement, media representation, patriarchal cultural system, women and media, women objectification*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this era, discussion about women is an interesting topic through education, social media, and society. Women often associated gender equality to realize equality, opportunity, and rights in all aspects of culture. Women became an influencer throughout the world, she also had a significant impact on social media like Instagram. Every day, new technologies are developed and shared on social media, highlighting their features.

Social media has become a crucial tool, and marketing managers are now incorporating social media marketing as a key strategy for business growth. Today, whether it's for a business or an educational institution, staying updated on the latest marketing trends is essential for continuous improvement

(Kumari, 2020). To illustrate, in the contemporary era, a nation like India has engaged in discourse surrounding the capacity of women to express their perspectives. Additionally, there is a correlation between women and the media, whereby women demonstrate their assertiveness through social media.

Numerous social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, have featured images of women who have attained influencer status. This case has prompted a shift in perspectives and discourse surrounding women, particularly on social media. Cultural norms influence women's representation on social media, with many posting images of themselves in a particular manner, often with aesthetically pleasing visuals and attire, to

project a certain image of femininity and womanhood (Pallavi, 2024).

The influence of social media on contemporary society is considerable, largely due to its utility and compatibility with the prevailing socio-cultural context. Social media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and influencing attitudes, particularly with regard to gender dynamics, particularly in the case of women. It also serves to represent women as entrepreneurs or as advocates of gender equality.

Prior research has elucidated the intricate and multifaceted nature of women's portrayal in modern media. Social media offers a platform for fostering confidence and perspective regarding women in entrepreneurial roles or in the context of job advertisements (Wang, 2024). As evidenced by numerous studies on the subject, women are increasingly represented in entrepreneurial roles. These studies indicate that women are often depicted as independent, strong, and trustworthy, which aligns with the portrayal of women in job advertisements. The findings suggest that women possess similar levels of integrity as men, yet there is a persistent tendency to feature male images in advertisements for specific roles, such as those requiring leadership or expertise in challenging fields. Previous studies have shed light on the ways in which women interpret job advertisements, highlighting the significant influence of media on shaping perceptions and trust in online social networks (Haddad & Le Loarne, 2015).

This research addresses the limitations of previous studies on the portrayal of women as entrepreneurs in the media. It focuses on the representation of women in job advertisements on the social media platform Instagram. In society, women are socialized to believe that they earn less than men. However, in the context of social media, job advertisements often utilize images of women to attract potential employees. This phenomenon presents a paradox between societal perceptions and the reality of social media. This research aims to elucidate the reasons behind the prevalence of women in job advertisements and their

impact on job seekers' decisions to apply (Balachandra et al., 2021).

The portrayal of women in the media has a significant influence on entrepreneurial attitudes. Research indicates that job advertisements featuring women are perceived as more trustworthy and organized, which encourages job seekers to view the position as more reputable and organized. For instance, the TV show *Shark Tank* has generated 4,893 interactions, which demonstrates the potential impact of such portrayals on entrepreneurial aspirations. This research specifically addresses the question of how women's representation affects job seekers' perceptions of a given position. In particular, it considers how women's representation influences job seekers' views of the organization as a whole, including perceptions of its integrity and suitability for application (Jetter & Stockley, 2023).

The representation of women in advertising has undergone a significant transformation over time, with a notable shift towards the portrayal of their strengths and abilities. Nevertheless, there is still considerable progress to be made, as many advertisements continue to objectify women and perpetuate stereotypes. It is imperative that advertisers exercise greater discernment in the messages they disseminate, ensuring that their advertisements are inclusive and reflect a diverse range of perspectives. There is a significant opportunity to portray women in advertisements in ways that challenge stereotypes and empower women.

The advertising industry is currently one of the fastest-growing sectors not only in our country but globally. Every company, institution, and service relies on advertisements to disseminate information and raise awareness (Manikandan, 2024). In Indian society, women are undergoing a transformation across the regions, becoming more confident, decisive, and assertive. This shift has influenced the way Indian advertisements portray women and their issues.

Despite extensive research on gender in the media that attributes the portrayal of women in stereotypes to

advertisements, there is a need to examine the underlying factors behind the new positioning of women and their issues in today's advertisements. These factors could be social, financial, ideological, and so on. The positive side effect of the breaking of stereotypes is the inspiration generated by these advertisements. It is an established fact that any form of media message evokes certain emotions among people, who are inclined to imitate them. Such groundbreaking advertisements also demonstrate superior methodologies for societal advancement. Despite their focus on elite audience segments, they inspire all segments of society (Kumari, 2022).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. *Women and Media*

An additional area of interest is the relationship between women and the media. It is evident that the concept of media mass is a constructed one. In practice, media mass recontextualizes the facts of the field. The media serves as a crucial instrument for the introduction of a company, the dissemination of job openings, and other pertinent information. Additionally, women engage in the promotion of beauty products. Classwell must address the additional issue of media as a surveillance tool, thereby resolving the aforementioned problem and establishing a correlation between media and the aforementioned needs (Sari et al., 2024).

One illustrative example of a case related to the use of female advertising as an attraction is the domain of beauty advertising in Japan. Pjaee (2022) posits that the portrayal of female beauty in advertising serves to persuade consumers to purchase the product. The manner in which beauty advertisements featuring a woman can be employed as an alternative or solution to influence an individual's mindset regarding the concept of beauty as it pertains to the product. This is analogous to job advertisements that utilize images of women. Such advertisements perpetuate the assumption that jobs that employ images of women are invariably neat, front office-related, and aesthetically appealing (Zahra et al., 2023).

2. *Women's representation*

In language, signs such as words or images are used to convey one's desires, needs, feelings, or thoughts to other individuals. This facilitates the establishment of a relationship with the "real" or "imaginary" world of objects, people, and events. Representation is a product that helps one understand the key to a social order. Through representation one can understand something that is happening or that has been a question. Representation can be divided into two, namely verbal representation and visual representation, both of which have their own meanings that need a process to capture information from the representation. From the representation, one will derive conclusions that will inform the perception of reality. In many cases, the representation will exert a more dominant influence than the subject itself, it is also job advertisements that use women as representation (Radovanović, 2024).

In the political sphere, prior research indicates that women remain disproportionately underrepresented. In the years following World War II, there was a notable increase in the representation of women in politics during the mid-20th century. The evidence indicates that the portrayal of women in leadership roles remains socially inappropriate. An analysis of job advertisements and reality shows reveals the manner in which women are represented. This phenomenon can be attributed to a multitude of psychological and socio-cultural factors, including the pervasive notion that women are inherently less valuable than men in specific social contexts and the deeply entrenched inferiority complex that society has historically placed on them (Mallik & Pokharel, 2024).

3. *Job Advertisements*

Advertising is a communication tool that is useful for conveying information. The purpose of communication in an advertisement is not only to inform, but also to persuade the audience to join or purchase a product if the advertisement offers a product. The attractiveness of an advertisement depends on the text, color, music, and people used in the advertisement being well chosen, as well as the

effectiveness of the persuasive techniques employed. One of the topics addressed in the advertising section is the portrayal of women in job advertisements (Kalelioğlu, 2024).

The inclusion of instruments in job advertisements has been demonstrated to be an effective strategy for attracting prospective employees. A significant proportion of job seekers utilise social media and job search applications to identify potential employment opportunities. Technological advancements have played a pivotal role in shaping the way individuals search for work, with the advent of new digital tools and platforms offering a multitude of options for job seekers. For instance, job advertisements on Instagram utilize the appeal of female appearance to capture attention and boost engagement on the platform. Similarly, in many instances, reality television employs attractive female participants who meet specific physical criteria, such as height, race, and physical appearance (Ningrum & Herna, 2023).

3. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach utilising the Miles and Huberman interactive model to analyse the representation of women in job advertisements. The data were collected through the social media platform Instagram, with a particular focus on job advertisements in the East Java region. The analysis was conducted in three core stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Initially, data were collected from Instagram and any irrelevant data were excluded. Subsequently, the remaining data were presented in the form of images, depicting job advertisements. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the patterns and relationships identified in the data, and these findings were validated through a process of checking (Asipi et al., 2022).

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research presents four data sets, which are visual representations of information extracted from Instagram. The data sets were obtained from

Instagram job advertisements and subsequently processed through the use of screenshots. The data, which is in the form of an image, was obtained from three Instagram accounts: @lokermalang, @lokersurabayato, and @loker.tulungagung. The data set comprises a variety of job advertisements, representing diverse job types. The initial data set originates from the Instagram account @lokermalang. The subsequent data set is derived from the same account, but with the addition of the tag @lokersurabayato. The third data set is also derived from @lokersurabayato, and the final data set is derived from @loker.tulungagung.

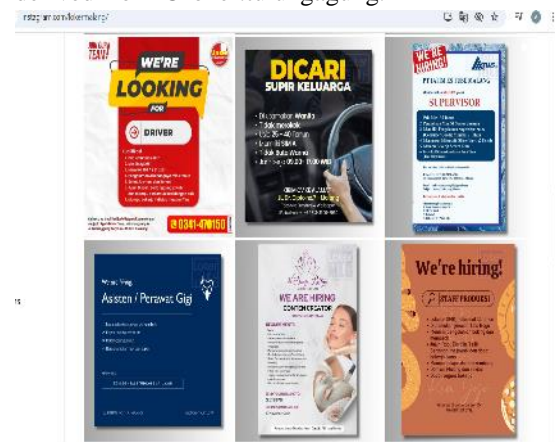


Figure 1. Job Advertisements
(@lokermalang, 2024)

The initial image from @lokermalang comprises six posts and a representation of women in the lower and central portions of the image. The accompanying text indicates that the job advertisement is seeking a content creator who is based in Malang city. It is possible that digital advertisements may exert an influence on cultural identity and language choice within society. The selection of language has a significant impact on the success of marketing campaigns and the perceptions of consumers regarding commercial products. It can influence cultural identity, as evidenced by the expression of cultural beliefs or core symbols, which may be derived from various sources, including style of dress, labels, norms, and behaviors, particularly those of females (Sari et al., 2024).



Figure 2. Job Advertisements
(@lokursurabayatop, 2024)

The image, which originates from the Instagram account @lokursurabayatop, illustrates the representation of women in social media. It comprises approximately three components: advertisements for employment opportunities, information regarding promotional offers, and instructions for applying for positions at Lokersurabayatop. The image illustrates the manner in which women are represented in digital advertisements, as well as the various choices made in this regard. The objective was to examine the representation of women's cultural identity in digital advertisements. In particular, the focus was on the extent to which female language choices were reflected in these advertisements (Sari et al., 2024).



Figure 3. Job Advertisements
(@lokursurabayatop, 2024)

The fourth image depicts the representation of four women, while the most recent post features a male representation. An analysis of the data indicates that women's representation has a dominant outcome. The data regarding women's representation is organized in

a clear, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing manner. Job advertisements include positions such as tea barista, cashier, laundry crew member, and barista who brings coffee. This serves to reinforce the idea that certain beauty concerns and products are exclusively tailored to specific genders. It was recommended that job advertisers make use of inclusive language and representations that challenge gender stereotypes and promote diversity. The paper provides insight into academic discourse and practical approaches in gender, communication, and marketing studies (Afreh & Atta-Asamoah, 2023).



Figure 4. Job Advertisements
(@loker.tulungagung, 2024)

The final Instagram post from the @loker.tulungagung account features four women, representing a notable departure from the typical portrayal of women on the platform. These women are depicted in a manner that deviates from the conventional use of real human figures. The job advertisements included in the post seek to fill roles in various sectors, including kitchen crews, banking, a dessert bakery, and the hiring of a renowned journalist and influencer, Najwa Shihab. The advertising industry has grown considerably in recent times, with a corresponding increase in the demands placed upon it in terms of both quantity and quality. In order to enhance the basic quality of any given advertisement, in addition to the graphic effects and content, it is essential to consider the role of the image in attracting the target audience (Bui, 2021).

Women's Representation in Job Advertisements

Based on the findings from three Instagram accounts, namely @lokermalang, @lokersurabayatop, and @loker.tulungagung, female images are dominant in a job advertisement. The uploaded posts also show job advertisements that use images of women focusing on hospitality jobs. In these results such as kitchen crew, banker, content creator, barista, cashier, laundry crew, and many others. This phenomenon can occur because previous research also explains the increase in women as influencers on social media (Klour & Arbatan, 2024). The analysis revealed that more than half of the job advertisements included dominant images of women. In addition to the patriarchal and gendered contexts, research on women in job advertisements and other related areas also demonstrates considerable potential for advancement (Datta et al., 2020).

The preponderance of images of women and the emphasis on hospitality in a job advertisement indicate a tendency to portray women as objects representing beauty, attractiveness, and neatness. The phenomenon of inequality has become a pervasive feature of contemporary society, with the media playing a pivotal role in influencing and shaping social perceptions of this issue. To illustrate, consider the prevalence of images of women in job advertisements (Alam et al., 2023).

Job advertisements that utilize male imagery tend to position males as leaders, thereby reinforcing the notion that males possess superior abilities and that male power is more formidable than female power. The portrayal of women as objects is perpetuated through these job advertisements. Furthermore, the portrayal of women as objects of beauty, as seen in images of neat, beautiful, and attractive women, also influences social perceptions about women. New standards are established and become the norm (Kriaučiūnaitė-Lazauskienė, 2023).

The factors that led to the objectification of women as representations of beauty, neatness, and sexual appeal have undoubtedly occurred on numerous occasions

throughout history. Women often experience physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. This is evidenced by the prevalence of advertisements on television and in Bangladeshi newspapers that portray the female body in a sexualized manner (Sadia et al., 2022). The prevalence of online sexual violence has continued to rise as the year 2024 draws to a close.

Social media can be utilized as a tool for social control. It is therefore imperative to prioritize the development of literacy and maturity in the use of social media. In India, gender-based violence persists as a significant societal issue. The findings of this research have significant implications for society, as social media has been identified as a key platform for the perpetration of violence against women with disabilities. The present study examines the impact of gender-based violence on women with disabilities and the role of social media in its perpetuation (Bajpai, 2024).

4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The aesthetic value of women is considerable, and their enigmatic nature is worthy of deeper investigation. The aesthetic value is in alignment with the role of mass media as a conduit for information, education, and entertainment. In addition, the mass media may influence the audience by displaying a form of beauty that aims to beautify the pages of mass media or present a fresh figure for mass media viewers.

The issue of women is driven by a patriarchal cultural system that serves to further fuel the public's curiosity about women. Women are willing to serve as objects for the benefit of the symbiotic relationship between the media and the public, due to the alignment of their respective views on their roles. The media and women are united in a mutually beneficial relationship, wherein women serve as objects of coverage with the potential to bolster the media's existence. Therefore, the relationship that is formed results in a balanced dynamic between the two parties.

The implications of this study emphasize the need to critically evaluate media practices that commodify women while considering the broader cultural and societal factors that perpetuate these representations. By shedding light on this dynamic, the research highlights opportunities for media stakeholders to adopt more equitable and empowering portrayals of women in their content. Furthermore, the study

underscores the importance of fostering public awareness regarding the implications of such representations, encouraging discourse that challenges traditional gender norms and promotes gender inclusivity in media practices. This research contributes to understanding the intricate relationships between gender, culture, and media in shaping societal perceptions.

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