

## Image of Ideal Housewife in Yoga Arizona's HappyFresh #BikinMertuaHappy Advertisement

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### ABSTRACT

*Advertisement has the potential to exploit female figures elaborated with particular signs or language that allude to gender bias in society to achieve commercial goals. One of the representations of women in advertisements shows the social position of women as subordinated figures in the domestic areas. This strategy is also applied in Yoga Arizona's Happyfresh #BikinMertuaHappy advertisement posted on his Instagram account on July 25, 2020. This study examined the image of the ideal housewife as depicted in that advertisement. The research data include the visual and textual elements sourced from the video and caption in the advertisement. The depiction of the ideal housewife was analyzed using the Critical Discourse Analysis approach by Sara Mills (2003), examining the subject-object and writer-audience positions. This study has identified that the housewife plays double roles as the subject and the object in the advertisement, and the writer positions the audience as those who share common characteristics with the main character. This study has revealed that the ideal housewife depicted is the one that is capable, attentive, and reliable in taking care of the family to meet the mother-in-law's standards. The positioning of women in the advertisement supports the gender imbalance in a domestic context.*

**Keywords:** *Image; ideal housewife; advertisement; Sara Mills' discourse analysis*

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## INTRODUCTION

Advertising, from an economic perspective, indicates that an advertisement is used as a marketing tool to identify products and differentiate them from others, to communicate information about the product as well as its features and its place of sale (Lane, King, & Reichert, 2011). It is used to prompt consumers to try new products, suggest reusing the product, stimulate the distribution of a product, increase product use, lower the overall cost of sales, and build value, brand preference, and loyalty (Lane, King, & Reichert, 2011). This echoes Arens' (2006)

perspective that advertising structures and composes non-personal communication of information about products (goods, services, and ideas), particularly by using various media. Further, the influences of advertisements are more powerful to young people, undereducated, and easily impressed people.

Advertisements employ persuasive strategies to offer their products to the public by creating a recognizable image (Keraf, 2002). To establish the product image, advertisers often utilize visual, sound, and motion elements that are simultaneously involved (Widyatama, 2007). In relation to this, advertisement is built by a discourse. Cook (2001) mentions that discourse is not only concerned with language alone but also takes into account the text, context, and discourse. The text focuses on linguistic forms that are separated from context for analysis. Meanwhile, context is the substance, pictures, music, paralanguage (meaningful behavior accompanying language), situation, participants, co-text, intertext, and function. Lastly, discourse is the interaction between text and context. In an audiovisual advertisement, the text consists of all kinds of forms of communication expressions, speech, music, pictures, sound effects, pictures, and others.

In some advertisements, signs or languages that allude to gender bias in society are commonly incorporated. The blending of audio, visual, and verbal elements in conveying the commercial message to the audience may work better in fetching the audience's attention when involving women. Yulianto (2007) considers women as symbols in the advertisements industry because the female side of women is a persuasive device to obtain the image of a product, as well as the consumers who use the product offered.

Gender bias concerns the use of female figures as objects, rather than as subjects. One of the representations of women in advertisements shows the social position of women as subordinated figures in the domestic realm, for example by emphasizing their role as wives and housewives, who are responsible for household chores, such as washing, ironing, cleaning, and managing the house, cooking and serving food, as well as taking care for and raising children (Widyatama, 2007). Women are frequently featured in advertisements for cleaning products, food products, beauty products, pharmaceuticals, clothing, and household appliances (Courtney & Lockeretz, 2018).

The discussed theories go along with Yoga Arizona's version of Happyfresh advertisement. The advertisement depicts a housewife and the conflict she has with her mother-in-law about the importance of fulfilling every single need of her household before it is even required. In the advertisement, an ideal housewife should meet the mother-in-law's expectations in engineering domestic needs. The advertisement introduces and suggests the use of Happyfresh, an online shopping application for household needs, to help women fulfilling their household necessities.

The message conveyed in the advertisement is the topic that will be discussed in this research, with the help of Sara Mill's critical discourse analysis using the Feminist Stylist Approach (FSA) (2003). Mills' approach to critical discourse analysis focuses on the discourse of feminism; how women are shown in bulk. This centers on how women's role is presented in the text. Most texts show women in a less fortunate position; marginalized compared to the men's position. Thus, the representation of women's characters and the values implied in the text is the main focus of Sara Mills' approach.

Further, according to Sara Mills (2003), critical discourse analysis is performed by looking at how the role of the actor is depicted and the role of the reader is presented in the text. The subject-object position is used to view the position of the subject given the room to serve as the narrator of an event on the other person (people) as the object of the story. It is more likely about how the event is viewed and from whose perspective it is seen. It focuses on who is positioned as the narrator/subject (the one who tells the story based on his or her perception that makes the readers have the same understanding as him or her) and who is positioned as the object (the one whose presence, position, and representation are shown by the actor or the subject). Further, the text is the negotiation between the writer and the reader, and the reader's position is significant since what the narrator tells can be an effort to draw the reader's attention. Reader's position is classified into direct address (which is commonly realized with pronouns, such as "you") and indirect address (which is guided from among others the character, action, and cultural code). The reader, in this case, is taken into account as a party who receives the text and takes part in interpreting the text.

Studies on women's representations in advertisements have been previously done. Syafrini (2014) analyses how women are exploited in the mass media, with advertisements as one form of it. Some other studies, however, have narrowed down their topics to the portrayals of women in beauty products advertisements that may influence the public's ideology on the physical appearance of a woman (Nasiha & Yunaldi, 2019; Listari, 2020; Rohmah & Suhardi, 2020; Sari & Prasetio, 2020). The research by Feramayasari & Wiedarti (2020) centers on women's position in an online-shopping application for purchasing products (fashion and cosmetics) and Wardhana & Imron (2015) examine the representation of women in household product advertisements. Fahiratunnisa, Y. & Saragih (2022) analyze how both genders are depicted in the advertisement of beverages and men's products, while Saraswati (2018) compares the gender representation and

cultural value in Japanese and Indonesian food advertisements. Except for Syafrini's research, all of the previous studies used Sara Mill's approach in their researches.

The present study differs from the prior studies in terms that it focuses on a woman's representation as an ideal housewife it focuses on a woman's representation as an ideal housewife who can manage everyday household activities and needs as well as manage family, instead of centering on a woman's physical appearance (Nasiha & Yunaldi, 2019; Listari, 2020; Rohmah & Suhardi, 2020; Sari & Prasetyo, 2020; Syafrini (2014)). Unlike previous studies examining on women's position in an online-shopping application for purchasing products of fashion and cosmetics (Feramayasari & Wiedarti (2020)) as well as food (Saraswati (2018), household appliance (Wardhana & Imron, 2015), and men's products (Fahiratunnisa, Y. & Saragih, 2022), this current study uses advertisement of an online shopping application specifically for purchasing groceries and household needs. Moreover, the advertisement under study is made public through Instagram, instead of TV and other social media, incorporating the video and the caption featured in it. One more notable difference lies in the paid-promote method of advertisement, which allows the owner of the account, Yoga Arizona, as the producer of the advertisement to voice what the company wants to communicate. Therefore, this study aims to examine the image of the ideal housewife in Yoga Arizona's Happyfresh #BikinMertuaHappy advertisement using the approach that Sara Mills proposes.

## **METHOD**

Advertising is considered a media discourse because it involves language and social processes. The relationship between the nature of social practice and the properties of the language 'text' is the reason why advertisement was selected as the data source. This study adopted the descriptive qualitative design because it aims to analyze how discourse in advertising can be interpreted by the viewers. The research data, including the visual and textual elements, were sourced from the advertisement of the online-shopping application of Happyfresh that Yoga Arizona has posted on his Instagram account @yogaarizona on July 25, 2020. The textual data include the words, phrases, and sentences displayed and spoken in the advertisement as well as those written in the caption. The visual data cover the appearance or image of the model performing in the advertisement. The depiction of the perfect housewife as the ideal woman was analyzed using Sara Mill's (2003) critical discourse analysis approach of FSA. Mills' approach to critical discourse analysis focuses on the discourse of feminism. This approach was used to identify how women's role was presented in the text. With this approach, the subject-object position and writer-audience position were examined. First of all, the subject-object position was

identified to further investigate the narration point of view and the message interpreted and conveyed to the audience. After that, the writer-audience position was identified through direct address to explore how the audience was addressed and the negotiation between the writer and the audience was built. Finally, the findings were linked with the gender bias issue raised in the advertisement.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### *Subject-Object Position*

Mill's critical discourse analysis approach (2003) highlights that how the actors depicted in the text will show the ideology and the dominant perspective working in the text as well (Rafiq, 2019). In other words, the subject-object position contains a particular ideology. The position shows the narration point of view, meaning that a story is explained through the narrator's point of view. Thus, the understanding of the story is based on the narrator as the subject who tells the truth in the text. As the subject of representation, the narrator does not only have the freedom to tell the story but also interpret some actions that build the story, and the result of the interpretation is used to shape the understanding that is communicated to the audience. The point of view is subjective and contributes to how the story is defined. In a feminist discourse, the subject-object position plays a role in positioning woman in a discourse (Rafiq, 2019).

In the *#BikinMertuaHappy Happyfresh* advertisement, the subject is the daughter-in-law because she is the one who tells the story from the beginning until the end, both in the video and in the caption. The daughter-in-law also has the role as the object, because she is the main character portrayed in the story, represented and described by the subject. Meanwhile, the supporting features that build the advertisements include the mother-in-law, husband, and *Happyfresh* application. The mother-in-law as the supporting character gives the advertisement context on what the problem the housewife has to deal with is. It is the mother-in-law that gives the housewife (as the subject and object) the standards on what one should do to be a good housewife. Meanwhile, the husband is considered the supporting character as well because the standards given by the mother-in-law focus on fulfilling the husband's needs, making the husband the center of the wife's attention.

**Figure 1.** Scene 1 (Husband informs the mother-in-law's visit in the near future)

1.a.

1.b.



H: *Sayang, Mama nanti mau mampir.*  
[Darling, Mum's gonna come for a visit.]



HW: \*gasps dramatically in response\*

The advertisement positions the object as a housewife who has a demanding and dictating mother-in-law. In the beginning, she is nervous and shocked to meet her mother-in-law because she does not meet the quality of an ideal housewife set by the mother-in-law. This is portrayed in Figure 1 with her facial expression showing shock and the caption of the video “*terkejoed* [shocked]”. The housewife’s inferiority toward her mother-in-law is depicted through her past memories of when her mother-in-law visited her, and thus, seeing her mother-in-law in the future will be such a nightmare.

A housewife is required to meet the standards that please the mother-in-law on how the ideal housewife should be. Based on the mother-in-law’s perspective, the ideal housewife should be “capable”, “attentive”, and “reliable” when it comes to managing her household, particularly in taking care of her husband and children. Hence, the idea is that the housewife should buy, cook, and prepare all sorts of goods the family may need; as well as be responsible for the laundry and other household chores. This is in line with Widyatama (2007) and Fahiratunnisa, Y. & Saragih (2022) have concluded in their studies that women are commonly described as those in charge of domestic tasks. This also echoes with Wardhana & Imron (2015) that imbalance gender relation that puts a lot of pressure on woman is represented in the division of man-woman roles in domestic sector. This depiction of the ideal housewife is portrayed in the visual, audio, and verbal elements that are simultaneously incorporated into the scenes in the advertisement.

**Figure 2.** Scene 2 (Mother-in-law give negative comments on the daughter-in-law)

2.a.

2.b.

2.c.



MIL: *Kalau jadi ibu rumah tangga itu apa-apa nyetok.* [When you've become a housewife, you should have everything ready.]

2.d.



MIL: *Masa gula aja habis!* [can't believe you don't even have sugar.]

2.e.



MIL: *Jadi istri itu mbok, ya, yang pengertian gitu, loh.* [As a wife, you should be attentive.]

2.f.



MIL: *Suaminya dibeliin buah, kek! Ini dikasi micin aja terus!* [You should have some fruits for your husband, not only artificially-seasoned food.]

2.g.



MIL: *Sabun habis!* [You've run out of soap!]

2.h.



MIL: *Jadi perempuan mbok, ya, belajar masak!* [You're a woman. You should learn how to cook!]



MIL: *Bisa jadi ibu rumah tangga, enggak, sih?* [Do you even know how to be a housewife?]







HW: *\*screams dramatically in response\**

Figure 2 portrays the verbal and visual expressions representing the indicators of an ideal housewife. Scenes 2a-2f in Figure 2 shows that a capable housewife exemplifies that she has the ability, fitness, and quality necessary to do or achieve a specified thing in performing her duty as a wife, such as cooking, as shown in Scene 2f and the verbal expression of “*Jadi perempuan mbok ya belajar masak!*” [You're a woman. You should learn how to cook!]. A housewife also needs to be attentive, paying close attention and assiduously attending to the comfort or wishes of

family members, such as providing healthy and quality food to husband and children. This characteristic is detailed in Scenes 2c-2d and the verbal expression of “*Jadi istri mbok ya yang pengertian gitu loh. Suaminya dibeliin buah kek! Nggak Cuma dikasih micin terus!*” [As a wife, you should be attentive. You should have some fruits for your husband, not only artificially-seasoned food.]. Moreover, a housewife is necessitated to be reliable, consistently give good quality and performance as well as can be trusted, such as preparing and storing daily needs to anticipate future use, as illustrated with “*Kalau jadi ibu rumah tangga, apa-apa itu nyetok!*” [When you’ve become a housewife, you should have everything at ready!] (Scene 2a); “*Masa gula aja habis!*” [Can’t believe you don’t even have sugar] (2b)”, and “*Sabun habis!*” [You’ve run out of soap!] (2e)”.

**Figure 3.** Scene 4 (Mother-in-law praises daughter-in-law for her capability, attentiveness, and reliability as a housewife)

3.a.	3.b.	3.c.	3.d.
			
HW/narrator: <i>Pengen nggak sih [Don't you want it...]</i>	HW/narrator: <i>Disayang Mama mertua setiap hari? [...to make your mother-in-law happy every day?]</i>	HW: <i>Untung ada Happyfresh. [Thank goodness for Happyfresh.]</i>	HW: <i>Dengan belanja kebutuhan rumah tangga di sini, udah bikin mertua 'happy'. [Just by buying household needs on this application, you can make your mother-in-law happy.]</i>

**Figure 4.** Scene 4 (Mother-in-law praises daughter-in-law for her capability, attentiveness, and reliability as a housewife)

4.a.	4.b.	5.a.
		
MIL: <i>Nah gitu dong, jadi istri bisa diandelin. [Great job on being a good, reliable wife!]</i>	HW: <i>Iya, dong, Ma. Kan berkat Happyfresh. [Of course, Mum. It's all thanks to Happyfresh.]</i>	HW: <i>Happy Fresh; solusi tepat bikin mertua 'happy'! [Happyfresh; the right solution to make mother-in-law happy!]</i>

The “reliable” housewife demanded in a family is also supported by the mother-in-law’s statement “*Nah gitu dong, jadi istri bisa diandelin.*” [Great job on being a good, reliable wife!],



as displayed in Figure 4. The verbal expressions go together with the mother-in-law's facial expression (such as mimic, lips shape and movement, eye movement, and gesture) and intonation (such as high pitch that represents satirizing and sinister in showing the demands as well as a lower pitch that represents the satisfaction of the completion of the demands).

**Table 1.** Instagram caption of *#BikinMertuaHappy* Happyfresh application advertisement

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**Caption:**

*Siapa yang disini pernah ngalemin kejadian kayak akoh? angkat tangannya 🤔🤔🤔*

...

*Nah sekarang akoh punya solusinya gaes buat #BikinMertuaHappy gue sekarang nggak perlu khawatir lagi soal kebutuhan rumah tangga, semua udah ketolong sama @happyfresh\_id belanja jadi cepet dan nyaman. Nah buat kalian semua yang tinggal sama mertua, wajib banget cobain @happyfresh\_id ini!!! auto jadi penyelamat 🤔🤔🤔*

...

*Btw download sekarang, mumpung ada giveaway gratis belanja setahun!!! cek langsung di @happyfresh\_id ya gaesss!!!*

**Translation for the Caption:**

Has anyone here ever experienced something like this? Raise your hand if you have 🤔🤔🤔

...

I have a solution for you guys to make your mother-in-law happy (#BikinMertuaHappy). I no longer have to worry about household needs since @happyfresh\_id has helped me with everything. With @happyfresh\_id, shopping has become a very brief and comfortable activity. So, for all of you who live with your in-laws, you really have to try @happyfresh\_id!!! This app has automatically become my savior 🤔🤔🤔

...

By the way, download the application now, while there is a year's free shopping giveaway!!! You can go check @happyfresh\_id, besties!!!

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The interesting point here is that the main character, who serves as the subject and the object, has smartly found a solution for coping with the things she should accomplish as an ideal housewife that meets her mother-in-law's expectations. The solution is the *Happyfresh*, an application that can solve every problem dealing with family necessities, particularly groceries and other daily household needs. The descriptions appear in the scenes and subtitles, such as in Scene 3, in which the daughter-in-law narrates “'Pingin nggak sih disayang mama mertua setiap hari?’ [Don't you want to make your mother-in-law happy every day?] (Scene 3a-3b)”, “'Untung ada *Happyfresh*’ [Thank goodness for *Happyfresh*] (Scene 3c)”, and “'Dengan belanja setiap hari di sini udah bikin mertua happy’ [Just by buying household needs on this application, you can make your mother-in-law happy] (Scene 3d)”. The description also appears on the Instagram caption “'Nah sekarang akoh punya solusinya gaes buat #BikinMertuaHappy gue sekarang nggak perlu khawatir lagi soal kebutuhan rumah tangga, semua udah ketolong sama @happyfresh\_id

*belanja jadi cepet dan nyaman. Nah buat kalian semua yang tinggal sama mertua, wajib banget cobain @happyfresh\_id ini!!! auto jadi penyelamat.* [I have a solution for you guys to make your mother-in-law happy (#BikinMertuaHappy). I no longer have to worry about household needs since @happyfresh\_id has helped me with everything. With @happyfresh\_id, shopping has become a very brief and comfortable activity. So, for all of you who live with your in-laws, you really have to try @happyfresh\_id!!! This app has automatically become my savior. By the way, download it now, while there is a year's free shopping giveaway!!! You can go check @happyfresh\_id, besties!!!]”. The descriptions in the video and caption work together in building the understanding that *Happyfresh* is the savior which brings relief and confidence to the subject because she can be an ideal housewife that her mother-in-law favors: capable, attentive, and reliable. The narrator of the advertisement plays a role as the subject of representation (Mills, 2003; Rafiq, 2019). The narrator, the wife, interprets the actions that her mother-in-law and herself do and feel, and her interpretation is used to shape the understanding that her mother-in-law wants her to be a good, ideal wife, who is capable, attentive, and reliable, and the message is communicated to the audience of the advertisement. In the gender perspective, a woman (housewife) is considered to have a lower position than a man (husband). In this study, a woman is portrayed marginally compared to man, and the findings of this study echo with what Wardhana & Imron (2015) suggests that in household product advertisement, household chores are represented as the tokens of a wife's love for her family and the roles of a housewife in domestic sector in the family context.

### ***Writer-Audience Position***

As Sara Mills, (2003) suggests, the context of a text should not merely be perceived from the writer's position, but it should also consider the audience's position. Further, the text is the result of negotiation between the writer and the readers, which in this article are addressed as “the audiences” considering that “the audiences” can be applied to those who view videos and read captions, as featured on Instagram. This definition of “audiences” follows what has been described by Cambridge Dictionary (2022) that audiences are “the people who watch a particular television program or film, read a particular book, etc.”. The writer-audience position can be identified from the way the audience is addressed in the advertisement, which Mills (2003) calls indirect address. The first strategy is positioning the truth on a particular character so that the audiences will align themselves with the character presented in the text. The second strategy is using cultural codes or cultural values in the forms of mutually agreed values that the audiences use when interpreting the text (Mills, 2003; Rafiq, 2019).

Based on the contextual information delivered in the advertisement and the caption, the writer of the advertisement is Yoga Arizona, who is the producer of this paid-promote advertisement and who portrays the role of the housewife. The writer directs the audiences to position themselves as fellow housewives that find the subject's experiences in the advertisement to be relatable, and this supports what Mills (2003) and Rafiq (2019) suggest. The storyline is conveyed through the subject's position in the advertisement, and it is told in the same way as if the subject is retelling their experience to another housewife. This is why the subject always looks and communicates with the camera throughout the advertisement; because the camera represents the audience.

In the advertisement, the audiences are arranged as integral parts of the whole text, as represented by the use of “*gaes* [besties]” and “*kalian semua* [all of you]” to address the audiences with more informal greetings that show a closer relationship with the writer, who addresses the subject with “*akoh*” and “*gue*”, instead of “*saya*”, which mean “I”, as identified in the Instagram caption. Here, the audiences' presence is utilized to draw attention, sympathy, and support from the audiences (Nasiha & Yunaldi, 2019), as well as to convince them to have similar thoughts and finally use the product as the solution for their worries and insecurities of not being capable, attentive, and reliable housewives that meet their mother-in-law's desire. In other words, if the audiences want to make mothers-in-law favor them as ideal housewives who are capable of taking care of the family (Widyatama, 2007), understanding what their husband and children need, and being reliable for always being prepared, they should install *Happyfresh* application and use it for purchasing daily household needs.

### ***The Image of a Woman as an Ideal Housewife in the Advertisement***

Despite the positioning of the subject and objects, as well as the writer and audience, one point that we can note from the *#BikinMertuaHappy Happyfresh* advertisement is the gender stereotyping built through the image that the writer attempts to impress, that an ideal housewife must be capable, attentive, and reliable. A housewife is one who can take care of their family and thus meets her mother-in-law's expectations. Although the husband is depicted as a figure that supports his wife's steps, the housewife in this advertisement is positioned as the one who should meet the standards of an ideal housewife in her mother-in-law's eyes.

Women, including housewives, represent beauty that becomes their stereotypes and directs them to particular personalities and attitudes that supports the beauty as women, such as being beautiful and capable of taking care of the family and pleasing their husbands. Moreover, the

findings of this study also draw a conclusion that a good, ideal housewife must be smart and become the source of knowledge for the family (Ramadhana, 2018).

The image of an ideal housewife is used in this *#BikinMertuaHappy Happyfresh* advertisement as a means to grab the audience's attention and to call them to action to use the application after watching the advertisement. The use of this image is also related to the tendency that the audiences of the advertisement are likely women and the product advertised is commonly used by women (housewives) to accomplish their domestic tasks, as (Syafriani, 2014) suggests that women play typical roles related to domestic areas, mainly in the kitchen and on the bed (*dapur, sumur, kasur*). This confirms that what women do, as represented in the advertisement, is to please other people (mother-in-law and family members) and women are happy when others are pleased as well. Here, the position of women is determined based on their sex (Sari & Prasetyo, 2020).

Moreover, the imbalance between the roles of men and women in a family, that is established in Indonesian society, as represented in the advertisement under study, is intentionally presented, even in the advertisement that sells a product that is consumed by women (Bungin, 2013). The depiction of women using visual and textual elements about an ideal woman, more specifically housewife, in advertisement becomes public consumption and potentially builds knowledge that an ideal woman is like what is portrayed on screen. This directs the public's expectation and desire for the "ideal housewife".

## CONCLUSION

This Happyfresh online shopping application advertisement is targeted for the female, especially the housewives. In the advertisement, woman (housewife) is portrayed to have imbalanced position with man, based on mother-in-law's perspective. A housewife is depicted to be ideal and the idea roles of a housewife are represented by her capability of accomplishing household tasks, giving attention to husband and children, and being reliable whenever her husband and children are in need. The idea roles of housewives are exploited and promoted in the advertisement, for commercial purposes. In the context of gender relation perspective, particularly in terms of patriarchy, the delivery of the advertisement under study supports the social construction of gender relation. The social construction takes the forms of the common values held high in shaping the roles of women in domestic sector. The representation of ideal housewives in the advertisement is related to the socio-cultural and traditional reality of perceiving patriarchal culture, which is accomplishing household chores is the responsibility of housewives in a family.

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