

Dynamics of Youth Image in Sampoerna A-mild Cigarette Advertising 2020-2022 Edition

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to investigate the dynamics of youth image representation in A-Mild cigarette advertisements in three editions. By utilizing a qualitative descriptive research method and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis as the main reference, the study seeks to understand how young people are portrayed in the scenes of the advertisement. The first advertisement portrays a series of events that are closely related to the lives of people, particularly youth in Indonesia. The second advertisement features youth as the main character, specifically addressing the issue of indiscriminate littering. The third advertisement depicts youth as powerful figures who are able to influence others to follow their actions. The findings of this study indicate that youth are perceived as agents of change, and their actions can have significant impact on society. This research is distinct from previous studies as it employs a periodization of 2020-2022, represented by one advertisement per year, to examine the representation of youth image in A-Mild cigarette advertisements across various editions.

1. Introduction

The advertisement of cigarettes on media such as television greatly influences the number of smokers in Indonesia. One reason for this is that television has the power of both audio and visual which is well received by the audience (Umarella et al., 2020). The representation is present in both the process and product of the meaning of a sign and the process of change of abstract ideological concepts into concrete forms (Reiner et al., 2020).

Young people in advertisements for Sampoerna A-Mild cigarettes are portrayed as individuals who are free, independent, and strong in selling a product that is harmful to health. Research shows that cigarette advertisements targeting young people can increase the desire to smoke among young people. It is necessary to evaluate the representation of young people in cigarette advertisements and to take actions to reduce its negative impact on public health. Cigarettes can also be purchased individually at small street-side shops, making it easier for underage and young people to buy cigarettes (Wijaya, 2022). The creative ideas in a cigarette advertisement also make the advertisements more successful in influencing people to smoke (Arsyad et al., 2020).

Television can offer a certain definition of life through the airing of cigarette advertisements and affect people's perceptions of reality. From a critical perspective, the number of young people in Indonesia is considered an easy target for the tobacco industry, but this is a serious issue as the number of smokers in Indonesia continues to increase. As shown by data from the Basic Health Research (Riskedas), which shows an increase in smoking prevalence among population aged 10 years old from 28.8% in 2013 to 29.3% in 2018 (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). The tobacco industry actively exploits young people for their own profit without considering the negative impact on public health. Stronger action is needed to reduce the influence of cigarette advertising on young people and prevent the increase in the number of smokers in Indonesia.

The role of youth today has changed greatly compared to the role of youth in the past, who had a certain political culture. Youth today live in a pragmatic world as a result of the influx of global culture into Indonesia through rapid technological and informational developments (Januarharyono, 2019). Cigarette advertisements that use themes such as magic, fantasy, and humor are considered a way to control the minds and decisions of teenagers to buy the advertised products, in a critical paradigm (Padon et al., 2017).

Sampoerna A-Mild cigarette advertisement was chosen as the research object for 2020-2022, with one advertisement per year, because it addresses issues of youth and Sampoerna A-Mild is a flagship product in the Indonesian cigarette market. However, it must be remembered that advertisements like this are a way used by the tobacco industry to exploit young people and reinforce harmful myths to consumers in semiotic analysis. Therefore, it is important to evaluate advertisements like this from a critical perspective and take action to reduce their negative impact on society.

A sign is something concrete in the form of a specific object, image, person, sound, event or place that represents an idea, attitude, or feeling and therefore acquires a greater meaning (Wibowo, 2019). Visual signs or other signs will be analyzed using connotation, denotation, and myths in semiotic analysis. Sampoerna A-Mild appears to position itself as the cigarette for young people, as seen in various Sampoerna A-Mild taglines from various editions that use contemporary youth language such as "Bukan Main", "Dimana Ada Gue Disitu Ada Followers", "Ga Ada Yang Ilang GITU Aja" and many more.

There have been a number of previous studies that looked at the same topic. Research conducted by (Dewi & Magfirah, 2018) showed that Sampoerna Mild cigarette advertisements have persuasive meanings and strong social connections. The tagline "nggak ada loe, nggak rame" is very close to teenagers/young people and influences them to buy the product.

Previous research conducted by (Shofa & Astri Utami, 2017) found that the word "desire" is important in the advertising message of A-Mild cigarettes. Myths such as success and happiness are associated with desire in the advertisements. The study revealed the embodiment of desire and happiness in cigarette advertising for individuals.

This research differs from previous research in that it uses a periodization from 2020 to 2022 represented by one advertisement for each year to address how the image of young people is represented in Sampoerna A-Mild cigarette advertisements in various editions, specifically the three editions that are the subject of this research. Young people have always been the main issue in the three editions of the Sampoerna A-Mild cigarette advertisements, and it is an interesting thing to study using semiotic methods because the scenes in the advertisements are full of implicit messages and various signs that will be more structured if analyzed and translated using semiotic instruments, such as denotation, connotation, and myths.

2. Method

This research employs semiotic analysis. Semiotics refers to the basic assumptions about what constitutes a sign, the functions performed and not performed, and the consequences that may or may not be produced (Keane, 2018). Words that are easily remembered and considered as something real are those that have clear references and are easily depicted in the mind (Griffiths et al., 2020). The researcher aims to interpret each advertisement through every scene that has been selected and analyzed using the denotation, connotation, and myths in Roland Barthes' semiotics. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis is a result of the development of Saussure's thoughts, which in this Roland Barthes semiotics, emphasizes the relationship between signs and social context.

A paradigm is a collection of basic assumptions that guide research (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A critical paradigm is used in this research. Reality is closely related to the observer, who cannot be separated from one another, and the values held by the observer also influence the facts of the reality (Batubara, 2017). According to the critical perspective, social reality is shaped by past events created and reproduced by humans (Okesina, 2020). The critical paradigm is chosen in this research because the researcher wants to critically reveal the values in the Sampoerna A-Mild cigarette advertisement, in which meaning will be influenced by individual factors such as experience and the researcher's social factors.

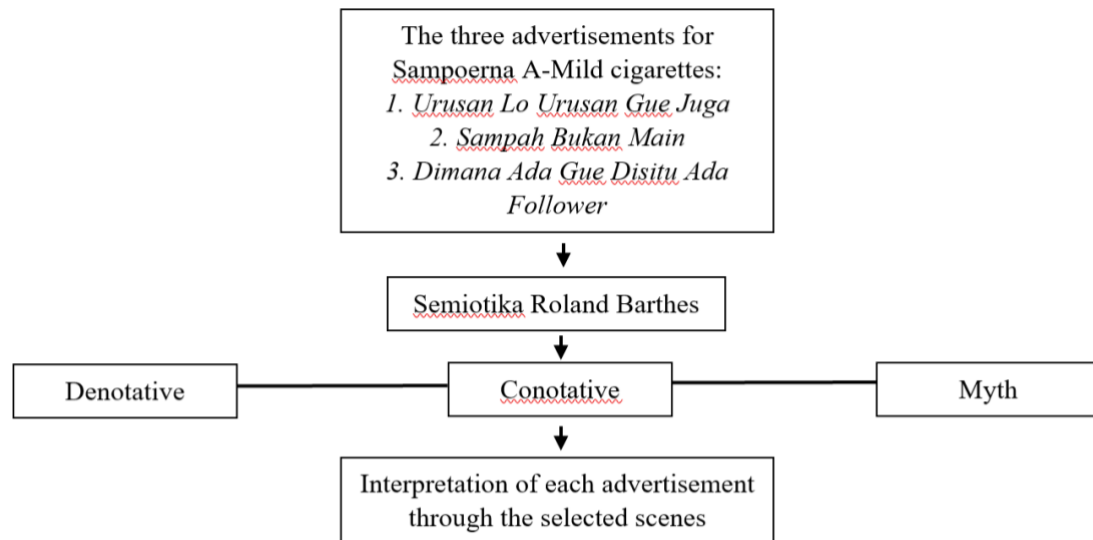


Fig. 1. The Roland Barthes semiotic analysis scheme

To obtain accurate analysis data, the first thing done is to watch the three videos of the advertisements attentively and pay attention to every scene in order to understand the purpose and message contained in the advertisement. Secondly, selection or sorting of scenes that have criteria for analysis using semiotics, so there will only be a few scenes from each advertisement that will be analyzed. Thirdly, the scenes in each advertisement that have been sorted will be analyzed and interpreted into Denotation, Connotation, and Myths.

3. Result and Discussion



The first advertisement, with the edition of "Urusan Lo Urusan Gue Juga," portrays a young man or male who is perplexed by the situation he is facing. However, when examining the connotation, the situation can be interpreted as a part of the current generation's tendency to document every moment through social media, whether it be by taking pictures of food being consumed or recording concerts. The myth that emerges from this situation is the idea that by taking pictures of food or watching a concert and then sharing it on social media will make others care. Additionally, there is the myth that cutting in line will make one feel like a hero because they don't care about the discomfort of others. Another myth constructed in this advertisement is that to hold an event, one must agree to hold it in a luxurious place to impress others.



Scene 5



Scene 6



Scene 7



Scene 8

The second advertisement, titled "Sampah Bukan Main" illustrates the problem of indiscriminate waste disposal as depicted in the advertisement. The denotation depicted in the ad shows a young man inside a car, throwing plastic waste out of the window of the car. This shows that not only does this action harm the environment, but it also disrupts the activities of others who are affected by its impact. The connotation depicted in the text shows that by being inside a car, one feels freer to take actions that harm the environment. The myth depicted in the text shows that indiscriminate waste disposal not only harms the environment but also comes back to the waste disposer themselves. This shows that irresponsible actions will have long-term consequences that harm oneself.



Scene 9



Scene 10



Scene 11



Scene 12

The third advertisement, with the edition "Dimana Ada Gue Disitu Ada Follower," the denotation of the image shown depicts a young man in a place that provides hair cutting services and a music store. However, the connotation that arises from this advertisement is that by having a different hairstyle and music taste, one will become the center of attention and followed by others. The myth generated from this advertisement is that young people with different appearances will look cooler compared to mainstream appearances and will be more acknowledged and emulated as an example. This indicates that the advertisement indirectly invites young people to follow trends and neglect the importance of being themselves.

This research is closely related to the research goal, which is to understand how the image of young people in the Sampoerna A-Mild cigarette ads of 2020-2022 is portrayed. This research explores how cigarette ads target young people as the main target and provides important contributions in understanding how the cigarette industry takes advantage of young people, and how cigarette ads influence public perception and smoking behavior.

This research offers a new explanation of how cigarette ads influence public perception of young people and smoking behavior. This can be achieved through the semiotic analysis used in this research to explore the denotations, connotations, and myths present in the three cigarette ads that are the subject of the research.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the Sampoerna A-Mild cigarette advertisements from 2020-2022 show how the advertisements target young people as the main audience and use myths to promote smoking as something cool, modern, and attractive to young people. This research also provides important insights into how the tobacco industry takes advantage of young people and how cigarette advertisements influence public perception and smoking behavior. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness about the negative impacts of smoking and reduce young people's exposure to cigarette advertisements through stricter regulations.

To achieve maximum results from this research, it is recommended that future research investigates public perception of the image of young people in cigarette advertisements to understand the extent to which cigarette advertisements influence public perception of young people and also conduct research on the impact of cigarette advertisements on young people's purchasing decisions to understand how they influence them.

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