

Gender Equality in the HMNS Product Campaign "HMNS Perfection" Edition

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ABSTRACT:

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X

This research aims to explain the phenomenon focusing on gender issues and gender equality in HMNS product advertisements. This issue has spread and become a growing trend in society. The problem of gender equality is always inherent in Indonesian society regarding the division of work areas. As a result, inequality between men and women often occurs. The root of the problem is that society cannot separate sex and gender. Sex and gender are considered the same thing, so various stereotypes and gender discrimination emerge. Men are always associated with being strong, independent, and involved in the public domain. On the other hand, women are always close to the domestic area and are always associated with a gentle nature. This research is qualitative, using an analytical method, namely qualitative content analysis, and to explain the form of gender equality, the researcher uses the theory of gender inequality from Fakhri (2008), namely stereotypes, discrimination, subordination, and double burden. The object of this research is the HMNS advertisement for the "HMNS Perfection" edition. Data collection in this research is observation, documentation, and literature study. The data analysis technique in this research is that first, the researcher will group the data obtained via social media X via the official HMNS account. After that, the researcher conducted data reduction, presented the data by analyzing it, and then drew conclusions. The research results show that HMNS, as a local brand, educates about gender equality through its post entitled 'Perfection' by showing that men can make their choices without social labeling (stereotypes), the absence of gender discrimination, subordination, and double burdens in the HMNS Perfection campaign.

Introduction

Social scientists explain that gender explains the differences between women and men, resulting from cultural formation learned and socialization since childhood (Kartini & Maulana, 2019). It is essential because Indonesian society, in particular, still often confuses gender roles and sex and cannot differentiate between what is natural and what is not natural (Kartini & Maulana, 2019). This difference is then embedded in the minds of society, and the nature inherent in women and men is a differentiating characteristic. It gives rise to gender inequality, which leads to discrimination for men and women.

Gender, as explained by Fakhri (2008), is something that is socially and culturally constructed and is attached to men and women. Men have genitals in the form of a penis, while women have a vagina. It is a gift from God and cannot be exchanged. Gender has aspects consisting of individual masculinity and femininity. Gender roles are not limited to individuals but are related to identity and consist of specific characteristics more than physiological differences. However, it is related to culture and society. It gives rise to gender differences and various injustices that occur (Fakhri, 2008; Padovani et al., 2022; Sulistyowati, 2021).

For (Fakhri, 2008), distinguishing gender roles from gender differences is essential. Gender differences and gender roles are sometimes considered natural. Gender differences give birth to gender roles, not something that is associated with God's gift. It could be said that biologically, women have reproductive organs that are endowed by God with a womb, which can conceive, give birth, and menstruate. Then, the gender role is as someone who cares for, nurtures and educates children. It will not be a problem, but it will be a problem if a structure of injustice arises resulting from gender roles and gender differences. The result is the emergence of various gender injustices (stereotypes, discrimination, violence against women, double burden, etc.) (Santoniccolo et al., 2023).

Gender equality is a concept that gives all genders the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities. It respects the different desires and behaviors of women and men. It gives freedom to all human beings to develop their potential to the maximum without any limitations caused by gender roles. It does not mean that women and men will be the same (Wall, 2021). This is in line with the measurement results showing that the national IKG value in 2021 is 0.390 (Statistics, 2022). This means that the Gender Equality Index reflects losses/achievements in human development due to gender inequality and climate change, which, in particular, is expected to

exacerbate existing social disparities, including gender gaps. Gender equality in several countries is the leading indicator in measuring development targets. If inequality occurs, it is said that development has not optimally achieved its potential. The hope is that men and women will have equal and fair access to equality. Other data suggests that most women are excluded from male-dominated decision-making spaces where negotiations with the state occur (Statistics, 2022; Huyer et al., 2020; (Haider & Loureiro, 2021).

However, in history, the feminist movement has used its power to build gender equality. Feminism fights not only for women but also for men. Feminism also fights for women and men to participate fully and actively in society without discrimination or stereotypes between one another. Feminism and gender equality are a synergy to create justice, not to degrade the dignity of men or women (Syakwan, 2006). It is also consistent that men and women can develop equally in the same work industry. It is not always being the object of sexuality and harassment (Dean et al., 2024).

In the media, women and men are often differentiated according to gender roles, which refers to gender inequality. For example, men must be strong and cannot cry. Men must work while women struggle with domestic matters. Ideally, women and men would be treated fairly. Society's perspective on social values regarding gender will change according to developments in the era. It refers to applying equality and justice, which society has begun to see from all problems contextually and specifically. Society does not just look at general problems. So that currently, in the 21st century, people's thinking has changed a lot regarding gender equality and the flow of gender justice. Even in print media, past and present, gender inequality is still present (Zarra & Muhammad, 2022; Momsen, 2009; Tippett, 2023).

Besides that, the media often perpetuates this, which can be seen in broadcasts on TV, advertisements, and even on social media. Public trust is gathered through social media. This is a natural form of the power of social media. Where social media can reach the widest audience, curiosity, and management of public opinion can be formed through social media. Both negative and positive opinions or messages (Rosyidah & Nurwati, 2019). Through this, social media has a significant impact on people's minds. The media plays an active role and is also used by capital owners to convey the messages they want to convey through various means. The media uses various methods, although stereotypes are still attached to women (Kassa & Sarikakis, 2022).

One is advertising, which can be used as a product campaign. According to (Adiyanto & Saptiyono, 2022), product campaigns effectively voice specific issues. A study related to advertising shows that the ideal man is shown as someone strong, active, independent, accessible, and assertive in the public sphere. However, in his research, not all men get the exact representation, meaning that the media still has room to display equality (Adiyanto & Saptiyono, 2022). Advertising seeks to present more inclusive advertising that addresses gender developments in a changing world (Eisend & Rößner, 2022).

Advertising helps introduce, convey, and promote information to the broader community. *Advertising* is a non-personal communication tool that persuasively sells messages from sponsors to influence audiences to buy products by paying for the media used (Hestin, 2020). According to (Kotler, 2001), advertising is a mass communication process that involves certain sponsors or advertisers (advertisers) who pay the services of mass media for broadcasting advertisements. The most critical component of an advertisement is the message that the advertisement will convey. Therefore, a brand or product needs to determine how they market their product, with minimal costs but maximum results. Several companies that understand their audience use brand campaign strategies as advertising.

The rapid increase in social media users has given rise to a new form of advertising for businesses called social media advertising. Advertisers have long faced one of their most critical challenges: low consumer acceptance of advertising. Identifying the most salient elements of a social media advertisement that influence how consumers perceive it is essential. Creative characteristics, attention-grabbing details, emotional appeal, and celebrity endorsements all influence how a social media advertisement is evaluated (Sriram et al., 2021).

The purpose of a brand campaign is to differentiate one product from another, such as there are products that use storytelling in their sales. Product campaigns also utilize communications as a way to grow their brand. This section is part of brand management and can be directly seen or felt by consumers (Nurfadhila, 2018). For (Kotler, 2001), the things that must be mastered in a product campaign strategy are 1, what to say (message strategy), 2, how to say it (creative strategy), and 3, who should say it (message source). Communication is an essential key in formulating these problems.

One of the local products that uses campaigns in its product advertising is HMNS. HMNS is a local perfume product that creates perfume with a characteristic aroma and is liked by many

people, which is the main principle of the local perfume brand from Jakarta, HMNS (pronounced: Humans). This brand, founded in September 2019, has a unique selling product, giving each user a unique fragrance character that differs from others (Alfairoza, 2022). Therefore, researchers are interested in examining HMNS products in the "HMNS Perfection" edition, which includes the issue of gender equality. The "HMNS Perfection" advertisement became a topic of conversation on X's social media because it featured Christian Sugiono in a kitchen setting making food (@tubirfess, 2023). For example, advertisements for soap, shampoo, body scrubs, and sanitary napkins show that female actors are shown with a focus on showing their body shape or curves rather than highlighting their potential. Meanwhile, in advertisements that use male models, they are depicted as competent figures. The brand chosen to be advertised is considered a quality brand, one of which is Ruang Guru (Zarra & Muhammad, 2022), so the audience's attention is focused on the products offered and the gender issues that arise.

Method

This research is qualitative and uses qualitative content analysis. The object of this research is the HMNS product advertisement for the "HMNS Perfection" edition. HMNS has more than ten perfume products, so each edition has its campaign. In this research, the "HMNS Perfection" edition was chosen because this edition contained issues of gender equality. HMNS was widely discussed in its campaign on social media X (@tubirfess, 2023).

Data collection methods in this research are observation, documentation, and literature study. Observation: Researchers select research objects and campaigns related to the research issue. Documentation of what researchers do *screenshots* on selected campaigns and group them according to research indicators, namely the elements of equality taken through gender inequality theory, namely that equality is the absence of stereotypes, discrimination, subordination, and double burdens (Fakih, 2008; Wall, 2021). Meanwhile, in literature studies, researchers analyze data by looking at or referring to previous research, whether from books, journals, etc. The first stage of this research is conducting observations on social media. Second, determine the object. Third, researchers collect data; fourth, data is processed from research objects, related media, and literature studies. Fifth, conclude and also verify by triangulating data sources.

Data collection stage: In this step, the researcher collects image posts from the HMNS thread, namely HMNS advertising posts related to the "HMNS Perfection" campaign on social

media and gender equality. The elements of equality are the absence of stereotypes, discrimination, subordination, and double burdens (Fakih, 2008; Wall, 2021). Presenting the data, the researcher explained the depiction of the product campaign in the image uploaded by HMNS from the research results. Concluding, the researcher summarizes the results that have been found and looks for research gaps to suggest for further research.

Result and Discussion


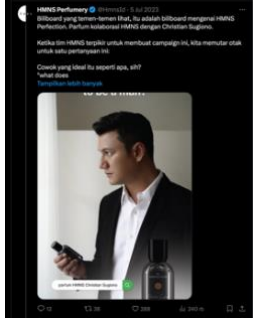

It started with a post from HMNS replying to a post from an account on social media X. This post was widely discussed and replied to by user X. Here is the beginning of the post:

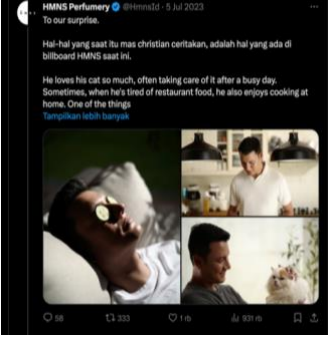
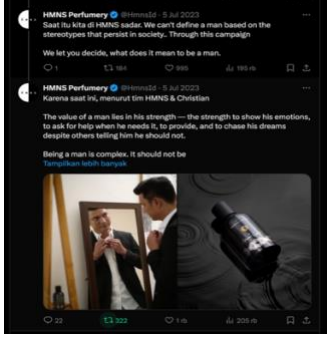
Figure 1



On the account, there is a picture of a man cooking in the kitchen, with the words, 'Could it be someone who cooks for this family?' There was also a black bottle with the words 'Tokopedia' written on it. The caption of the post is '*2beeri! If this is the story, it is about the guy who grooms, cooks, and goes to the market; his wife works, and her husband stays home and takes care of the cat and children. The world has turned upside down, signs of the end of time!*'. This post got the attention of Citizen X, with as many as 7,000 comments and *likes* as many as 10,000. After the post became a hot topic of conversation on X's social media, HMNS confirmed an explanation regarding the image. Here are the series of replies:

Table 1. Post Analysis

No	Post	Information
1		<p>In the first post with caption</p> <p><i>"Hello Twitter friends. Since yesterday, many people have DM'd the HMNS team about this tweet, and first of all, because it's so busy, we'd love to express our apology.. And here in this tweet we want to make things crystal clear.."</i></p> <p>Comments on the post 373, likes 3.000</p> <p>HMNS opened a thread on</p>
2		<p>In the second post with caption</p> <p><i>The billboard that you guys saw was a billboard about HMNS Perfection. HMNS collaboration perfume with Christian Sugiono. When the HMNS team thought about creating this campaign, we racked our brains on this one question: 'What's an ideal guy like?'"</i></p> <p><i>"what does it mean to be a man?"</i></p> <p>The post shows that HMNS is trying to describe the choice of actor Christian Sugiono, referring to how the image of an ideal man meets standards.</p>
3		<p>In the third post with caption</p> <p><i>We spent weeks thinking about that. Initially, we thought about showing Christian's masculine figure. With suits & ties, cool cars, motorbikes and more. Until finally we brainstormed directly with Mr Christian at that time. We ask "Ma'am, what do you do every day?"</i></p> <p>5 comments, 239 likes</p> <p>The next post explains that HMNS is looking for actors who can represent men who meet standards such as men who are masculine, use cars, dress neatly, etc.</p>

<p>4</p>		<p>In the fourth post with caption <i>To our surprise. The things that Mas Christian told me about at that time are the things that are on the HMNS billboard today. He loves his cat so much, often taking care of it after a busy day. Sometimes, when he's tired of restaurant food, he also enjoys cooking at home. One of the things he enjoys most? The pampering 'me-time' session after a long day spent taking care of his kids.</i> 58 comments, 931 thousand likes</p> <p>HMNS explained that the selection of Christian Sugiono was different from HMNS' expectations. In fact, Christian Sugiono is a figure who <i>family man</i>. It is written that he loved his cats very much, often taking care of them after a busy day. Sometimes, when she gets bored with restaurant food, she also enjoys cooking at home. One of the things he loves most? A pampering 'me-time' session after a long day of looking after her kids.</p>
<p>5</p>		<p>Fifth post with caption <i>Saat itu kita di HMNS sadar. We can't define a man based on the stereotypes that persist in society.. Through this campaign We let you decide, what does it mean to be a man. Because right now, according to the HMNS & Christian team The value of a man lies in his strength — the strength to show his emotions, to ask for help when he needs it, to provide, and to chase his dreams despite others telling him he should not. Being a man is complex. It should not be defined by stereotypes. Love, HMNS & Christian</i> 22 comments, 1,000 likes</p> <p>In the closing thread, HMNS emphasized that HMNS cannot define men based on stereotypes that exist in society. Through this campaign, HMNS lets the public decide what it means to be a man. A man's value lies in his strength - the strength to show his emotions, to ask for help when he needs it, to meet his needs, and to pursue his dreams even though others tell him he shouldn't. Being a man is complicated. This should not be defined by stereotypes.</p>

Source: Processed by Researchers

Based on the post-analysis results, HMNS, as the message's sender, would like to convey that gender has nothing to do with the choice of activities undertaken. This is in line with HMNS's post that the campaign they created cannot be a reference for defining men based on stereotypes that exist in society. Starting by asking what the ideal man is like, HMNS appointed Christian Sugiono to collaborate in realizing the HMNS Perfection campaign. The word Perfection for HMNS is not merely to show that the perfect man belongs to the model, but Perfection is aimed at how the man, namely Christian Sugiono, does all the activities he likes. HMNS, through this advertisement, created Exclusivism by presenting Christian Sugioyono as the main star. This is supported by (Tohir et al., 2023) that Exclusivism is currently a concern for advertisers when

presenting their work in connection with society's tendency to worship or glorify something, whether in the form of an object or person, and to consider themselves as part of a community. This trend attracts consumers' attention to the goods or services advertised.

Even though this is against tradition, HMNS, and Christian Sugiono show that gender differences are not rigid and fluid. Both men and women have the same opportunity to determine what they want. Hobbies and liking something are not driven by gender. This refers to gender and sex differences. Sex is different from gender; put, gender is a gift from God, while gender is an inherent thing that the social environment gives to men and women. For example, men must be strong and not wear accessories. Hair must not be extended, etc.

Meanwhile, women must be gentle, wear accessories, have long hair, etc. Both men and women are separated by the social environment, which ultimately creates gender inequality. The music has finally responded to this, so the media becomes an intermediary medium in spreading gender inequality (Kartini & Maulana, 2019); (Santonniccolo et al., 2023).

Gender equality is proven by the absence of stereotypes (negative labeling), discrimination (treatment that puts others in a bad light), subordination (considering one gender to be the most dominant or superior), and double burdens (more burdens on the public and domestic sectors) that appear in HMNS advertisements. From *the thread*, HMNS explained that there was no form of negative labeling, even though initially, HMNS set expectations regarding ideal male standards. Discrimination also did not appear and was denied by a statement from Christian Sugiono, who willingly and willingly took part in working in the domestic sector. He did not consider that it was an extra burden. Christian Sugiono puts gender roles and gender differences separately. It also proves that HMNS campaigns that men and women do not have to have rigid roles. Like women, they have to cook in the kitchen (domestic), while men work (public). Gender equality is not only about being treated equally and equally but also being given the right to choose and to determine whatever one desires. HMNS perpetuates that the media can be an agent of gender equality by appointing Christian Sugiono, who is the opposite of the ideal male standards in society.

Even so, the movement to show gender equality continues to be carried out by the media, especially in the 21st century. The media is more open to seeing gender equality. Today's media is more *fluid* in examining issues widely discussed in society. In several advertisements, it is the same as HMNS, which creates equality campaigns, such as in the advertisement for the beauty product Dear Me Beauty, which uses social media as a medium to campaign for beauty inclusivity

as a form of gender equality (Nur, 2023). Various types of activities on social media make social media a choice to mediate to the public that, currently, gender has melted. Men and women can determine their desires without negative labeling. Over the past decade, gender equality has increasingly been motivated by economic gain and described as crucial to economic growth and "good for business" (Petersson McIntyre, 2021).

The media represents various forms of gender equality, including HMNS. This product campaigns for Perfection for men who can make their own choices. Working in the kitchen, looking after animals, and doing housework is contrary to social standards in general. Although some netizens on social media oppose this, HMNS proves that social assumptions about the ideal man (macho, burly, etc.) are incorrect. More precisely, HMNS shows that the ideal man can make choices, not just based on his physical appearance. However, in the end, this product is a promotion that directs the audience to buy. HMNS tries to display advertisements that do not emphasize sexuality; this is in contrast to the type of advertisement that sells sexuality. Because the media wants things that are easy to remember, especially regarding sexuality (Yoo et al., 2022), at least HMNS can show that in an advertising campaign, there is value that can be spread to the public. As well as providing values regarding gender equality.

Conclusion

HMNS, as a local product, represents gender equality through a Perfection campaign. The absence of stereotypes, discrimination, subordination, and double burdens in the built advertising narrative shows this equality. HMNS built its campaign narrative by breaking the standards of male representation in the media. Men can make their own choices and even do housework, care for children, etc. HMNS shows that gender roles are very *fluid*. HMNS shows that men can also make their own choices. Men are judged by their physical appearance and only sometimes talk about ideals created by the social environment. Social media acts as a medium for campaigning for this form of gender equality. This research is limited to examining one thread on social media X on the HMNS account, while HMNS also has other social media accounts, such as Instagram. Future research can use the HMNS Instagram account to view other HMNS campaigns.

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