

## **Feminist Consumerism Discourse in Dove Advertisements on *Dove US* YouTube Channel**

**Hermilawanda<sup>1</sup>, Ela Martisa<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>English Literature Study Program, Language and Literature Department, Faculty  
of Humanities University of Halu Oleo

*Corresponding Email: hermilawanda@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

The objective of this research is to find out how the feminist consumerism discourse described in “Dove” beauty in terms of gender identity, fashion, beauty standards and feminine beauty ideology by Talbot (2020). Feminist consumerism discourse is an ideology that forms a person or group carrying out the process of using or consuming goods produced in a sustainable manner based only on desires, not needs. This research used a descriptive qualitative method. The source of data in this research is Dove advertisements taken from the Dove US YouTube channel. Data collection was done by downloading, watching, transcribing, selecting and coding based on Talbot’s theory. Data analysis is carried out by presenting data, describing the context and situation, interpreting the data, and concluding the results of data analysis. The data for this research are 11 feminist consumerism discourse data in Dove advertisements to support the analytical process that the researcher is conducting. The researcher found that several elements of the feminist consumerism discourse that can be seen in the Dove advertisements video are in four aspects, such as gendered identity, fashion, beauty standards and feminine beauty ideology. From the several aspects above, the feminist consumerism discourse is found in Dove advertisements and there are also persuasive elements.

**Keywords:** *advertisements, dove, feminist consumerism discourse*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Everything about women is always interesting, especially if it is related to the mass media that we enjoy every day, both print and electronic media. There is even something lacking if a show, either on television or on social media, does not show a female figure with all her charms. But in fact, women's presence in the media for years has been described as merely sex objects or a housewife.

The female figure highlighted by the media, the audience accepts the media's message as a realistic truth. Audiences are constantly confronted with shows that present women as complements to men rather than stand alone. Women are seen not by their intellectual capacity but by their ability to flaunt their bodies. According to Busby and Leichty (1980)

advertisements use a woman's body (the outer body of women) as a tool to create the image of a particular product or at least, a woman's body has a function as a decoration for a product. This is one of the structures formed by commercial advertising, as well as social structures that view media messages as natural and commonplace with the aim of driving public interest to increase sales. Media messages are taken for granted and acknowledged by the wider community that the results can bring significant benefits.

In this modern era, advertisements are usually packaged in an attractive form and according to today's human needs, one of which is in the form of audio visual or video containing explanations. Currently, advertisements are not only used as a medium to promote a product, but also as an entertainment medium. Electronic media is still seen as the most effective medium in conveying messages.

One product that uses advertisements and women as models is Dove, a well-known beauty brand, which turns out to be a special body care product launched from Unilever. Dove with the slogan "real beauty" where Dove tries to deconstruct the meaning of beauty which should not be seen physically, but as a source of self-confidence. This brand creates an image that wants to make everyone think that beauty takes many forms. Women as models actively participate, spending their creative energy and time to produce quality advertisements that can attract buyers, while beauty standards and fashion are formed naturally so that women remain themselves.

This research focuses on gendered identities, fashion, beauty standards, and feminine beauty ideology who analyzed the words used in the advertisements and also focused on the audio visual in the advertisements about how the model tells people how they feel after using Dove. Therefore, the four aspects feminist consumerism above are important to study because the four aspects of feminist consumerism in Dove advertisement have never been studied in the context of previous research that is research related to feminist consumerism.

The importance of this study is to describe purchases that focus on gendered identities, fashion, beauty standards and feminine beauty ideology. And to describe how the consumer's consumption level is and based on what, whether based on his womanly needs or based on an ideology that could make him better. Also to define beauty based on the perspectives of men and women and to define beauty standards according to men and women. The researcher wants to describe the elements that influence women's view on

beauty, gender identity, fashion and feminine beauty ideology in the eyes of men or how women perceive their own identity through a woman's perspective and how advertising can affect consumers.

The rationale is the researcher has conducted a preliminary study and made comparisons of Dove advertisements on YouTube with existing beauty advertisements such as Garnier, Pond's, Loreal, Vaseline and Dove advertisements and it turns out that the feminist consumerism aspect of Dove advertisements is more dominant and more prominent than Garnier, Pond's, Loreal, and Vaseline advertisements.

Dove is a beauty advertisements with a different standard of beauty that is "real beauty", another reason is because the researcher want to elaborate in depth on skin care advertisements that are identical to women, besides that there are aspects of feminist consumerism that need to be studied more deeply and interesting to study because there are aspects of capitalism that want to raise. Feminist consumerism in Dove advertisements has never been studied before, which focuses on feminist consumerism theory. That is the reason why the researcher chooses Dove advertisements as the object of this research.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used descriptive qualitative research to describe data analysis in the form of information from monologues. This is related to the characteristics of the research in discussing feminist consumerism discourse in Dove advertisements on the Dove US YouTube channel, along with its types based on Talbot's theory (2020). Qualitative research develops explanations for social phenomena (Hancock, 2009). Qualitative research can help researchers to dig up more detailed and in-depth information regarding a phenomenon that occurs. Therefore, researchers use a qualitative approach because the data model and research questions are descriptive in nature.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the researcher presents the results of her research on how the feminist consumerism discourse described "Dove" beauty in terms of gender identity, fashion, beauty standards and the ideology of feminine beauty. Which is based on Talbot's theory, where the

researcher describes the findings which will then explain the meaning of the findings as in the points below.

### **Feminist Consumerism Discourse in Dove Advertisements**

The purpose of this section is to present the results and discuss the findings of the researchers regarding the feminist consumerism discourse in Dove advertising. This aims to answer the research questions in chapter 1. In analyzing the data, the researcher uses the theory of feminist consumerism from Talbot (2020). Based on the research, the researcher identifies and classifies four types of aspects of feminist consumerism that exist in Dove advertisements. The source of the data in this study were Dove advertising videos on the Dove US YouTube channel and were analyzed using the theory of feminist consumerism from the aspects of gender identity, fashion, beauty standards and feminine beauty ideology.

#### **Data 1**

Nicole : *"Oh, My God"*  
Janie : *"That's such a big difference"*  
Nicole : *"It looks a little bit more like it's all one color"*

Nicole who is a personal trainer, and Janie who is a nanny, have dark underarm skin. They tried using Dove products, namely deodorants, for 21 days and then they noticed a noticeable change in Nicole and Janie's underarm skin color, which was different from before using Dove products. Nicole and Janie smiled with satisfaction and became more confident about their armpit skin by wearing revealing clothes that showed their armpit skin. This data is included in the element of feminist consumerism discourse in beauty standards (BS) where persuasive elements are also included in this advertisement. Without realizing it, the reviews given by Janie and Nicole as models and consumers influenced the audience to become Dove consumers so that many women have bright underarm skin tones. Underarm skin color is the same as other skin that conforms to today's beauty standards and is more confident to appear in public, especially in front of men.

#### **Data 2**

Stephanie Rose : *"Amazing difference. My hair feels so much more moisturized and hydrated and silky and smooth right after the shower."*

Stephanie Rose is a YouTuber who loves to color, cut and style her hair until it is damaged hair with lots of split ends and dryness. It took Stephanie a while to find the right hair care routine and products that worked for her thick hair. Stephanie then tried using hair care products from Dove and felt an extraordinary difference, her hair was softer and more hydrated, even though her hair was blonde, her hair was thick and healthy like the hair of other beautiful women. Based on the description and monologue above, the data is included in the feminist consumerism discourse in beauty standards (BS), namely shoulder-length blonde hair and healthy and thick hair are definitions of beauty.

#### Data 3

Stephanie : *“My hair is really important to me because your natural hair is who you are, it's where you come from.”*

Stephanie says that healthy hair is very important in showing who you are and where you come from and in fact she is very proud to tell people that she got her thick hair from her father. The data includes elements of the feminist consumerism discourse in gender identity (GI), pride in showing oneself because of beautiful hair and caring for hair so that it remains natural as it was since birth is a form of Stephanie's awareness of her gender as a woman.

#### Data 4

Stephanie : *“and it's also in a huge way a form of expression it is fashion because you can do so much with your hair makes you who you are and it's your statement to the world”*

After showering and washing her hair using Dove products and her hair was dry Stephanie flipped her hair and smiled happily because her hair was healthy again Stephanie then left the house, according to her hair is fashion with beautiful blonde hair that can be combined with any outfit including a t-shirt with jeans and white sneakers. The data includes elements of feminist consumerism in fashion (F). The clothes Stephanie uses are in accordance with modern women's fashion styles. By looking at Stephanie, consumers will not only use Dove products but can also follow Stephanie's fashion style.

#### Data 5

Stephanie : *“My hair journey has affected me in a positive way because it's helped me to love my hair and to love myself it's much more bigger than hair it is all about confidence”*

When Stephanie's hair was damaged, she became insecure about going to school, even because her hair had split ends, she cut her bangs short so she had to wear a bandanna at school for a few months, after using Dove products and taking care of her hair in a positive way, her hair back to health and she regained her confidence to appear in public. Based on the picture and monologue this data is included in the elements of the feminist consumerism discourse in the Feminine Beauty Ideology (FBI) to look beautiful is an identity that must be maintained.

#### Data 6

Elissa : *“I had to look in the mirror at this face and it wasn’t mine and I couldn’t fix it. Having Psoriasis like that makes me feel...helpless. the woman next to me turned her head and she whispered. Do you know you are covered in spots? When I was at my worst, those negative thoughts were fueling my skin to get bad”.*

Elissa is an American before she had dry skin and her skin was full of reddish spots so people around her talked about it until her confidence was disturbed. Then she tried Dove Dermaserie products and saw changes in her skin which felt softer and no longer had red spots.

The data includes elements of the feminist consumerism discourse in Beauty Standards (BS), even though she has blonde hair, white skin and a sharp nose, but her dry skin and freckles Elissa is still insecure so she looks for skin care so that her skin is soft and moist and so no more reddish spots after using Dove products. Her skin has improved as can be seen from the photo shown before using Dove and her skin condition after using Dove, Elissa becomes more confident and feels better.

#### Data 7

Alyssa : *“As I was doing Yoga for two months or so, I started noticing that my skin was actually getting better. Like this thing that I really enjoyed doing is actually...It’s my own medicine for me”.*

Alyssa is an American before she had dry and reddish skin. When she looked in the mirror she couldn't see herself and felt desperate because there would be no way to fix her skin. Then she tried Dove Dermaserie and saw changes in her skin which were softer and no longer reddish as can be seen from the comparison photo before Alyssa used Dove products and after using Dove her skin condition was better.

The data includes elements of the feminist consumerism discourse in Gender Identity (GI), Alyssa as a woman who always looks in the mirror and feels insecure about the condition of her skin, has awareness to take care of her skin, routinely and likes to do yoga, a sport that is often done by women. In addition, the data is also included in the BS, Alyssa who has white skin, blonde hair and a sharp nose and a good body takes care of her skin so that it is moisturized and not reddish so that her skin looks perfect.

#### Data 8

Elissa : **“I had to address it not just on a physical level but on a... you know, emotional, mental, spiritual level. I am determined to be a happy, healthy person.”**

After her skin was better, no longer dry and with reddish spots, Elissa was more confident to leave the house. As seen in the picture, Elissa went to New York feeling happy and full of confidence after her skin improved physically, emotionally, and her mental and spiritual health also improved. Elissa is determined to be a happy and healthy person.

The data includes elements of feminist consumerism in Fashion (F), seen in the picture Elissa goes to New York wearing a long jacket, scarf and boots in a fashion style that suits New York's cold. The data is also included in the Feminine Beauty Ideology (FBI), after her skin improves Elissa is confident to leave the house she uses an outfit that matches fashion trends and outfit colors that match her blonde hair and white skin so that she looks beautiful even though she is simple is a permanent identity. Elissa kept it up after her skin got better.

Based on the above findings, the researcher aims to answer the purpose of the study to describe the discourse of feminist consumerism that appears in "in Dove Advertisements on Dove US" based on Talbot's theory. Researchers used several aspects of Talbot's theory, including gender identity, fashion, beauty standards and the ideology of feminine beauty.

In the in-depth research that was revealed by the researcher in finding the data above, it can be concluded that the aspects of the six advertisements above depict feminist consumerism. With different characteristics in every aspect, because gender identity is an awareness to take care of oneself and a form of freedom in lifestyle as a form of identity and self-actualization, fashion is a resource for creating femininity, beauty standards are women will be said to be feminine if they meet beauty standards and the ideology of feminine beauty, namely looking beautiful and attractive is an identity that must be maintained. From

the several aspects above, it is clear how gender identity, fashion, beauty standards and the ideology of feminine beauty describe feminist consumerist discourse, how elements inserted in advertisements influence consumers, and how persuasive elements are closely related to the four elements of feminist consumerist discourse above. . How do models as well as consumers describe their level of consumption as people who want to follow beauty trends based on their feminine needs that can make them better and more beautiful. Therefore the researcher believes that from the several aspects above, the researcher can conduct research to describe the feminist consumerism discourse that appears in the "Dove" advertisement on the Dove YouTube channel based on Talbot's theory carefully and thoroughly from a rectangular aspect.

When viewed from the findings of the data above and also its relation to persuasion, it shows that advertising is symbolic violence where advertising is used as a rhetorical tool to normalize gender inequality and spread awareness to the general public subtly, for example in some data it is found that models who are also Dove consumers feel uncomfortable with their damaged skin and also damaged hair finally they use Dove to regain confidence with beautiful skin and healthy hair hidden advertisements impose the ideal of beauty, the use of language and appearance in cosmetic products where the language used is a language that contains solicitation and is persuasive even though the model gives an honest review but with statements that the model gives such as "I have been using Dove beauty bar for 20 years and when I use other products the effect is different" such language is what influences the audience to believe and willing to try Dove products , Feminists respond to the normalization of the female body in western culture where the western cultural current is very strong in the sense that beautiful is defined like western women, that is, white, thin and blonde hair. blonde and white skin, for example in the Dove Derma series ad in data 6, the models are western women with sharp noses, blond hair and white skin western women are the definition of beautiful women even some Indonesian women are vying to care for and improve themselves to look like western women, as well as feminine complexity and gender identity where advertising contributes significantly to creating feminine subjects, Dove advertisements contain calls to take care of yourself so that identity and femininity can be created.



## CONCLUSIONS

Based on feminist consumerism discourse theory by Talbot (2020), researcher analyze elements of feminist consumerism discourse in terms of gendered identity, fashion, beauty standards and feminine beauty ideology, then researchers draw conclusions about how feminist consumerism describes gendered identity, fashion, beauty standards and feminine beauty ideology in advertisements Dove on Dove US YouTube channel. The data found in this research includes 11 data based on the various topics discussed by Talbot.

Some of the monologues in Dove's advertisements on the Dove US YouTube channel do not contain elements of feminist consumerism discourse, however, these elements of feminist consumerism can be seen from the pictures that display elements of feminist consumerism presented in the advertisements through the appearance of models. The four elements of feminist consumerism discourse that researchers use as keys to show the elements of feminist consumerism from Dove advertisements include gendered identity, fashion, beauty standards and feminine beauty ideology.

## REFERENCES

- Adorno, T. 2020. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, New York, Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. 2002. *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Davis, K., Evans, M., & Lorber, J. 2006. *Handbook of gender and women's studies (Ed.)*. London: Sage Publications.
- Fairclough, N. 2003. *Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. London: Routledge.
- Gee, J.P. 2011. *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method (3rd Ed.)*. NY: Routledge.
- Lazar, M. 2005. *Feminist critical discourse analysis: gender, power and ideology in discourse*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lazar, M. 2014. "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis Relevance for Current Gender and Language Research." In *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, edited by Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, and Janet Holmes, 180–199. 2nd ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Talbot, M. 2020. *Language and Gender 3rd edition*. UK: Polity Press.

- Talbot, M. 1990. *Language, Intertextuality and Subjectivity: Voices in the Construction of Consumer Femininity*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Lancaster University.
- Talbot, M. 1992. *The construction of gender in a teenage magazine*. In Norman Fairclough (ed.), *Critical Language Awareness*. Longman.
- Talbot, M. 2010. *Language, Intertextuality and Subjectivity: Voices in the Construction of Consumer Femininity*. Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Talbot, M. 2014. *Language, gender and popular culture*. In Ehrlich, Meyerhoff and Holmes 2014.