The Ideal Image of Girls in The Fashion Rubric of
Gadis 2020 Annual Edition

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ABSTRACT

Gadis is the oldest girl's magazine in Indonesia. In 2020, *Gadis* published its annual edition with its trademark theme that is Fashion and Beauty. As part of the media, *Gadis* must select certain pictures to be published in the magazine, thus the pictures are the ideal portrayal of girls. I used Semiotics theory by Roland Barthes to know the girls' ideal image and how *Gadis* constructed it. I found out that confidence, friendliness, and playfulness are three ideal images in the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition. The finding of my analysis is that: girls' ideal image that *Gadis* represents is influenced by the characteristics of generation Z who are the target market of *Gadis*, as well as Indonesian culture that is being friendly.

Keywords: Girls' magazine, Gadis magazine, Ideal Image, Semiotics

INTRODUCTION

Girls' magazine is one of the popular magazine genres in Indonesia. The average age of the readers is usually between thirteen years old up to nineteen years old. The oldest girls' magazine in Indonesia is *Gadis*. It was established in November 1973 by Indonesian senior journalist, Pia Alisjahbana, (Oetama, 2001, p.197). *Gadis* segments for girls between thirteen years old until nine-teen years old. In 2003, based on the data Gadis's research team, 63% of young girls in Indonesia were the readers of *Gadis* (Kusumaningrum, 2003, p.37)*,* and up to 2016, *Gadis* has printed and distributed more than 1000 copies per edition. To engage with the development of technology and stay connected with the readers, *Gadis* also has online platforms such as Website, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, and YouTube. Up to now, *Gadis* has 94,100 followers on Instagram, 12,000 followers on Pinterest, 588,000 likers on Facebook, 4,953 followers on Tiktok, and 30,200 subscribers on YouTube.

Nowadays, girls mostly search for information through social media or the internet. *Gadis* uses that moment to be more engaged with the audience by getting involved in digital platforms as Indonesian girls now have high mobility and high intensity to use their mobile-phone (Larasaty, 2016, p.66). Although *Gadis* expands its platform to social media and the website, the printed version of *Gadis* is still worth reading. Those innovations can happen because of the creativity of *Gadis's* chief editor, Leoni Sihombing. The innovations that have been made by Leoni Sihombing and the team do not affect the quality printed version of *Gadis*. Even it has become interesting because each printed version of *Gadis* raises an interesting theme for its readers such as #collegelyfe, You and your body and the text that I choose is *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition which specifically talks about fashion and beauty.

I specifically chose the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition as the object of my analysis. The topic of my analysis is girls' ideal image. As part of mass media, the content in *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition represents reality as Stewart et al. (2007) said "the media do not present reality—they *represent* it by offering a selection of realities. In the case of television, the scriptwriter, camera operator, editor, and producer all make selections and changes" (p.35). The content of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition has been through a similar process to the other media. Such as editing and some other selections, including the models' pictures in the fashion rubric. It can be said that

the models' pictures are the ideal representation of girls because the pictures have been through the selection process. Therefore, I will analyze how the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition represents the ideal image of girls. The purpose of my analysis is to identify the portrayal of ideal girls in the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition through the images in the fashion rubric.

The significance of my analysis is that: as the oldest girls' magazine in Indonesia, *Gadis* has represented its ideal image of girls through its content. According to Stewart et al. (2007) the image in media "is based on the values of the producers and, in turn, the values of the larger society and culture" (p. 35). For this reason, the girls' ideal image is influenced by two things: the values of the producer and in turn the values of the larger society and culture, which is the Indonesian society.

Theoretical Framework

I will use the semiotics theory by Roland Barthes to find out how the girls' ideal image in the fashion rubric of the magazine is formed. Barthes develops the existed theory of Ferdinand Saussure. Barthes sees that the semiological system does not stop at signified, signifier, and sign. So, he comes up with another stage of signification that is Myth. Barthes (1967/1972, p.107) stated that myth is a message, it is a communicational system. Myth is a unique system, it is formed from the semiological system that has appeared before as the second order of semiological system Mythologies (Barthes, 1957/1972, p.113). In Myth the third stage of the language is the first stage of the myth that becomes the signifier that is the denotation. The second is the connotation, and those two become the myth that is the message.

Figure 1. Semiological system
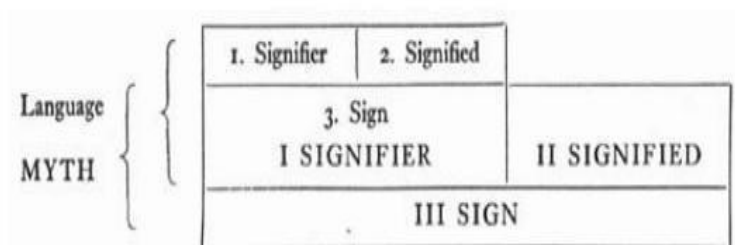
Note. This image is taken from Barthes, R. (1972). Mythologies. A. Lavers, Trans. Jonathan Cape Ltd. (Original work published 1957), p.113.

Roland Barthes's theory has been widely used to analyze many kinds of texts include magazines. Understanding this theory, and how this theory has been used to analyze the pictures in magazines, therefore I will use this theory to analyze how the visual signs in the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition represent the ideal image of girls. I will look at the body language of the models, the outfit of the models, the hairstyle of the models, and the colors of the clothing as the denotative signs that *Gadis* uses to represent the girls' ideal image. Then, I will analyze the connotation of the visual signs. Relate it to the ideal image that I found; confidence, friendliness, and playfulness.

ANALYSIS

To know how the girls' image represents in such a way in the fashion rubric of *Gadis 2020* Annual Edition, *Gadis* uses the denotative signs to represent the ideal image in the fashion rubric. Denotative signs are the literal meaning or the visible image. Body language of the models, outfit

of the models, and the colors of the clothing are the denotative signs that *Gadis* uses to represent the girls' ideal image in its fashion rubric.

The Representation of Confidence

Gadis uses the body language aspect specifically the models' posture to represent confidence. The next aspect is the outfit of the models, namely Sportswear that represents confidence. Lastly, the colors of the outfit: purple, green, yellow, and dark blue.

Figure 2. The gesture represents the image of confidence

Note. This image is taken from Tranggono, H. (2020). *Gadis 2020 annual edition.* PT. Gaya Favorit Press, pp.12, 81.

There are similarities of gestures in figure 2. First is the eye contact of the models. They are looking straight at the object that they see. Secondly, their back is straight. Thirdly is the standing position. According to Musayeva (2020), the models' postures are the ideal postures for women when standing or walking. It gives a sense of confidence and elegance. Musayeva (2020) stated that to look confident, the models need to apply good posture while they standing or walking. So, the connotation of good postures is confidence. Thus, the gesture of models one in figure 2 matches the image of confidence.

Clothing is the next aspect that *Gadis* uses to represent the image of confidence. The outfit that represents confidence is a graphic pantsuit. The pantsuit that the models wear is the combination design of a graphic t-shirt. The counterculture influences how the shirt designers recreated graphic t-shirts. Counterculture is "a sociopolitical term indicating a point dissent between dominant or mainstream ideologies and alternative value systems, so creating a collective voice that can be considered a significant community" (Wright & Whiteley,2015, pp. 80-86). This movement was developed in the middle 1960s by the United States middle-class youth against existing cultural standards. The freedom attitude towards other self-identities such as gender, politics, drugs, marked the trends of graphic t-shirts (Bucci, 2017). The pantsuit that the models wear is considered as opposed to the mainstream culture of pantsuits because it is different from conventional pantsuits. It is considered unique because of the graphic design of its garment. So, the connotation of a graphic pantsuit is unique. By clothing, the model with such choice, *Gadis* represents the image of confidence by combining graphic design and pantsuit.

Figure 3. The models wear pantsuits

Note. This image is taken from Tranggono, H. (2020). *Gadis 2020 annual edition.* PT. Gaya Favorit Press, p.12.

The last aspect that *Gadis* uses to represent confidence is the models' outfit colors. There are five colors that portray the image of confidence: purple, green, yellow, and dark blue. There are three connotations that I found: independence, integrity, and optimism. Connotations of purple, green, yellow, and dark-blue are related to self-confidence. Independence means having the qualities of being independent. It means that not influenced or controlled by others such as opinions or beliefs; so being confident about own perceptions. Integrity is firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values, so if people are sure with what they believe, it means they are confident. Hill (2014) mentioned that people who have optimism are more likely to have self-confidence. That is how integrity, independence, and optimism are related to confidence.

The Representation of Friendliness

The representation of friendliness can be found through the body language of the models, specifically the smiling faces and the hand gesture. Next is the lace dress. Lastly is the color of the outfit, specifically light-orange, light-grey, and white.

Figure 4. The models represent the image of friendliness

Note. This image is taken from Tranggono, H. (2020). *Gadis 2020 annual edition.* PT. Gaya Favorit Press, pp. 79,81.

Friendliness is the quality or state of being friendly. The qualities of being friendly are disposition to goodwill, warmth, or kindness to others. These qualities can be seen through the smiling faces and hand gestures of the models. According to Allan and Barbara Pease (2004, p.70), smiling is a symbol to tell another person that someone is not threatening. In other words, someone who is not threatening is kind. Thus, the smiling faces exemplify friendliness because it connotes

kindness and goodwill. The hand gesture that *Gadis* uses to represent the image of friendliness is the shoulder hold. Pease (2004, p.56) mentions that this gesture connotes intimacy or closeness. Thus, the image of friendliness is matched with the hand gesture of the models.

The image of friendliness can be seen through the outfit of the models, which is lace dress and sportswear. Lace is commonly associated with femininity. Joy Buttress mentions that lace has a feminine quality (Buttress, 2013, pp.24-25). Then, the connotation of a lace dress is feminine. *Gadis* represents friendliness through the lace dress of models because it connotes femininity. One of the qualities of the feminine is friendly (Marini, 2020). The second outfit that shows the image of friendliness is Sportswear. *Gadis* represents the image of friendliness through sportswear because it connotes casual. Casual clothes, according to Adam & Galinsky (2012, p.918) can make people appear friendly.

The image of friendliness can be found through the color of the lace dress. models' outfits use three pastel colors: light pink, light orange, and light grey. According to Bourn (2010), the connotation of light pink is tenderness. Light orange connotes friendliness. Light grey connotes femininity. White can be associated with humility. Hence, there are four connotations that I found: tenderness, friendliness, humility, and femininity. *Gadis* represents friendliness through the color used in the lace dress. The colors connote the qualities of being friendly, which are disposed to goodwill, warmth, or kindness to others.

The Representation of Playfulness

The image of playfulness can be found through the body language of the models, specifically the facial expression and the gesture. Especially for this subchapter, the image of playfulness can be seen through the hairstyle, styling of the outfit, and color of the outfit.

Figure 5. The models represent the image of playfulness

Note. This image is taken from Tranggono, H. (2020). *Gadis 2020 annual edition*. PT. Gaya Favorit Press, p. 13.

The last ideal girls' image is the image of playfulness. Playfulness is the quality of being funny and not serious. The first model's body language that I am going to analyze is the model who is standing with a saluting pose. Saluting is a symbol of respect. It is commonly used in a military context to give trust and respect among soldiers. The ideal positions of salute are: the back is straight; the eye contact is straight; the right hand is on the corner of the eyebrow or hat; the other side of the hand is upright. The facial expression is serious since this is a gesture to give respect. *Gadis* combines a saluting gesture with a duck-face. Duck-face is a photographic pose, pushing the lips outward. The image that *Gadis* creates is considered playful. It combines the saluting gesture with a duck-face, which is a funny expression. The image of playfulness can be seen also through genuflecting model. Genuflect has two connotations, as a symbol of respect and as a symbol of submission. *Gadis* combines genuflect gestures with funny facial expressions. It

emphasizes that *Gadis* represents the image of being playful because it combines a symbol of respect, which is traditionally used in serious situations, with an expressive facial expression.

Another aspect to emphasize that *Gadis* represents playfulness is the child-like hairstyle of the models. There are two child-like hairstyles that *Gadis* uses for the models: mini-buns and bunches hair-style. So, the connotation of the models' hairstyle is child-like. Generally, kids like to play and have fun. Wang & Aamodt (2011) mentioned that through play children learn to interact and build their skills. Thus, *Gadis* represents the image of playfulness through the child-like hairstyle as this hairstyle implies the characteristics of children who like to play and having fun.

The next aspect that represents the image of playfulness is the clothing of the models. Both of the models wear formal suits. The model one wears a blouse and pants. Normally, the styling of the blouse is neat. *Gadis* gives a different look by giving the messy style. The messy style of wearing the outfit that is usually worn very neat implied that *Gadis* represents the image of being funny and not serious.

Lastly, the image of playfulness can be identified through hot pink outfits. Bourn (2011) mentions that Hot-Pink symbolizes playfulness. For this reason, the ideal image of a playful girl can be seen through the hot-pink outfit that the models wear because it represents playfulness.

Summary of the Analysis

As a summary, the visual signs in the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition that I used in my analysis: body language, outfit, hairstyle, and outfit's color can reveal the ideal image of girls in the fashion rubric of the magazine. By finding the connotation of each aspect that I analyzed, I was able to show that confidence, friendliness, and playfulness are the myth or the ideal image of girls in the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition.

CONCLUSION

There are three ideal girls' images that I found: Confidence, Friendliness, and Playfulness. To reveal the connotations of the pictures, I applied the semiotics theory of Roland Barthes to look at four aspects of my analysis: body language of the models, outfit of the models, hairstyle of the models, and the color of the outfit.

The finding of my analysis is: by bringing the trademark theme of *Gadis*, the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition shares a message to its readers who are young girls between thirteen up to nineteen years old that the ideal girls are girls who are confident, friendly, and playful. Those ideal images that I found were influenced by the characteristics of Generation Z and Indonesian local values.

Research conducted by Kim, A., Mclnerney, P., Smith, T.S, & Yamakawa, N. (2020, p.3) toward Generation Z in the Asia Pacific mentions one of the tendencies of generation Z is to choose a brand that shows their identity. This characteristic is close to the girls' ideal image that *Gadis* represents is choosing a brand that shows the identity. Although it is talking about the brand, how the generation Z considers the brand that shows their personality and uniqueness, it can be implied that this generation is confident to express themselves because they want to look different and stand out.

Generation Z also can master technology in just a short time. It could happen because generation Z was born when technology has grown rapidly. Hackl (2020) mentions that for generation Z "technology isn't something to be feared, it's something to master and make the world a more fun place (while making themselves more money)." How generation Z reacts toward technology

development related to the image of friendliness. This generation can make technology become a fun thing related to the image of playfulness. It implies that this generation can respond in a fun way to something difficult to master.

Friendliness as the girls' ideal image is related to Indonesian culture that is being humble. Fatmawati (n.d.) stated that Indonesian people are humble and always greet people when they meet each other. So, being friendly, as the character of Indonesian people, is depicted as the ideal image of girls that are being Friendly.

In summary, there are two things from a society that influenced the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition. As a girls' magazine, the fashion rubric of *Gadis* 2020 Annual Edition tries to create an image that still relates to generation Z that is confident and playful. However, *Gadis* is an Indonesian magazine. Therefore, it added local value that is friendly as the ideal image of girls. It means that visuals in popular culture are not only visuals. They always bring the current social issues or situations. And the culture's values, as well as the way the society at the given time, believes what is ideal.

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