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# The Exploitation of Women's Body and Sensuality: The Attraction of Newspaper Movie Advertisements in Local Daily Newspapers

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| ARTICLE INFO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | ABSTRACT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <b>Article history:</b><br>Received 11 October 2022<br>Revised 26 November 2022<br>Accepted 20 December 2022<br>Available online<br>28 December 2022<br><br>ISSN: 2986-3848                                                                                                                 | Newspaper advertising experienced a significant increase in the 1970s. During that period, three local daily newspapers were established in Medan, namely: Waspada, Sinar Indonesia Baru, and dan Analisa. These newspapers displayed various advertisements in their publications; one of which was the advertisement to promote the film that would be shown in theaters at that time. In promoting films through these advertisements, many producers women as a means of promotion. Women seemed to have their magnet to attract the audience's interest. This journal explains how the women's representation in the local daily newspaper advertisements in Medan in the 1970s, and how the exploitation of women's bodies and sexual attractiveness in the advertisements for the promotion of the film was related to global discourse, especially in terms of women's appearance. The four stages of historical methods are applied to conduct the research, namely heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The results of the research show that advertising producers often showcased pictures of beautiful and sexy women and even displayed vulgar words to attract the audience's interest which didn't represent the storyline of the film itself. |
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## 1. Introduction

The problem of women's representation in the media industry, in this case in the national film industry, has always been an interesting study to discuss. History records, since the emergence of the cinematography industry, the presence of women has always been interesting to be observed and discussed. The compelling thing is that the presence of women is often highlighted not only in the film itself but also in the film poster. Almost every national film poster in circulation always shows a woman's face and body to attract the audience's interest to watch the film. Unfortunately, women's representation in film posters often gets negative views (Rahmat Edi Irwan, 2014).

In the 1970s in Indonesia, the political policies carried out during the New Order period greatly influenced various sectors of people's lives at that time, not to mention the national film sector. During that period, the pace of urbanization was growing rapidly and films became the most popular means of entertainment for people at that time. The development of urbanization gave birth to various new forms of entertainment from an economic and social perspective and marked the rise of popular cultures such as comics, novels, music, and films (Elvy Maria Manurung, 2017). The impact is that there was a conflict between anarchic censorship and the growing diversity of popular cultural expressions. At that time, there were various national films were shown in theaters, and they always received appreciation from the public, even though in fact, it is the films from *Hollywood*, *Bollywood*, and Hong Kong that dominated the market. The diversity of popular cultural

expressions that developed at that time was evidence of how the censors were more open to things that were sexual, and this can be seen from the film posters which was advertised through the mass media, in this case, the newspapers.

Mass media is such an interesting thing because they indirectly get profits from consumers and directly from the advertisers (Hendro Aryanto, Asidigisianti Surya Patria, and Nova Kristiana, 2019, p.201). Therefore, the media are also competing to create a creative and unique picture so that consumers are interested in the products offered. That's what happened to the film posters circulating in local daily newspapers in Medan at that time. It can be said that the advertising industry experienced very rapid growth in the 1970s. The economy experienced significant development where the government and private sectors helped each other in playing a major role in all wheels of the economy. In Medan, there were three major local daily newspapers at that time; *Waspada*, established in 1947, *Sinar Indonesia Baru*, established in 1970, and *Analisa*, established in 1973 which added color to the dynamics of advertising, especially newspaper movie advertisements where they often displayed women's body and sexual attractiveness to attract the audiences to watch the film.

In its promotion, advertising is not only promoting its products but also trying to build the value or image of the products it offers (Endah Siswati, 2014). The problem that often arises is how to build the value or image of the product, every so often the advertisements use politics to invite and attract the public by using signs, images, or words that are gender biased. Gender bias is the most serious and frequent problem and is still happening in various aspects of social life, especially with the depiction of women in newspaper advertisements. Therefore, this paper seeks to find answers to these problems. The focus of the discussion is how the exploitation of women's bodies and sexual attractiveness in movie posters in local daily newspapers in Medan, namely *Waspada*, *Sinar Indonesia Baru*, and *Analisa* in the 1970s which is related to how women were used as an attraction for the movie promotion. *Waspada*, *Sinar Indonesia Baru*, and *Analisa* were chosen as the objects of writing with the following considerations: 1) They are local daily newspapers that were established in the post-independence era and the old order and are still circulating up to this day. That makes them amongst the oldest local daily newspapers in Medan, 2) They have a daily publication schedule, and each publication always displays advertisements for movie promotions on a full page.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Dynamics of Indonesian Films

Based on Law no. 8 of 1992 concerning National Film, the film is the result of artistic and cultural creations as a medium of mass communication through sight and hearing which is made based on the principle of cinematography by being recorded on celluloid tape, videotape, and then shown through a mechanical and electronic projection system (Anisa Eka Pratiwi, 2019). The history of cinema in Indonesia was first introduced on December 5, 1900, in Jakarta (formerly Batavia) (Manurung, 2017, p.69). The film tells the story of the journey of the King and Queen of the Netherlands in Deen Haag. The first local story film produced was a film entitled "Loetoeng Kasaroeng" in 1926 which was produced by NV Java Film Company. This film with a Sundanese legend background was the first silent film in Indonesia at that time.

From Indonesia's independence until 1947, film production was temporarily suspended. It was later in 1948 that films were produced again such as *Air Mata Mengalir di Tjitarum* (Tears flowing in Tjitarum), *Anggrek Bulan* (Orchid Moon), and *Jauh Dimata* (Far to the Eyes) (Wishnu Agung Prayogo, 2009). In the early days of independence, the theme of the national film industry was marked by the spirit of revolution. There were eight films produced in 1949, 23 films in 1950, and 65 films in 1965 (Graphics of Indonesian Story Film Production: Sinematek Indonesia Film Center H. Usmar Ismail, p.22). Two major factors played a big role in the development of national films in the 1950s; **Firstly**, film companies founded by the Indonesians themselves emerged, namely the Indonesian National Film Company (Perini) which was founded by Haji Umar Ismail and the Indonesian Artists Company (Persari) which was founded by the Indonesian Film Distributors Association (IPEFI). **Secondly**, the birth of several associations of film distributors and importer organizations such as the Indonesian Film Distributors Association (IPEFI) on February 19, 1953, and the Indonesian Film Importers Association (GIFI) (Hamidy T. Jamil, and Sutrisno, 2006, hI). Behind the excitement of the development of national films at that time, imported films produced by the United States were also widely circulated which made the development of national films meaningless because people preferred to watch imported films over local ones. In 1955, the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI) was held for the first time as the highest award event for Indonesian filmmakers. Then, the Indonesian Cinema Entrepreneurs Association (PPBSI) was formed on April 10, 1955 (Prayogo, 2009).

Entering 1964, national cinema developed into a political issue. It started with a dispute between film producer organizations that joined PPFI and film workers in Sarbufis over the issue of circulation of imported films (Budi Irawanto, 1999, p.80). Another problem was the demand for restrictions on American-produced

films, plus the tension due to the ‘commander-in-chief’ political concept (*konsep Politik ‘Panglima’*) by Lekra in the cultural field. The impact is that there were no less than 13 films produced in 1966, where it decreased to only 9 films in 1969 (Prayogo, 2009).

During the New Order era, the government banned all films by directors affiliated with Lekra to mark a new era. In addition, all film and broadcast organizations were fully supervised by the Ministry of Information. At that time, the government established the Television of the Republic of Indonesia (TVRI) as a means of government propaganda to grow and instill the identity and spirit of Indonesian nationalism.

One of the government policies during the New Order era was economic stability which turned out to have a good impact on the Indonesian film industry. The year 1974 is considered the turning point of the revival of the film industry in Indonesia, which previously experienced a drastic decline. There were 75 films produced in that year. While in 1975, it decreased to 38 films, and in the following year, it rose again to 55 films. The surge in film production occurred in 1977 with 143 films produced. However, in 1978 and 1979, there was another decline in film production with 74 and 54 films being produced respectively (Anselmus Ardhiyoga, 2008, p.30).

## 2.2 Movie Posters

Movie posters are an effective and efficient tool in the visual and commercial communication process (Aryanto, et al, 2019, p.202). At the beginning of its development, around the 19th century, the technology used in designing poster graphics was still in a simple form which was in the form of *fine art*, but with technological developments, posters are now designed using digital devices such as computers and printers (R. Kuncoro Wulan Dewojati, 2009, p. 175).

In the 1950-the 1980s, movie posters were designed manually, using painting techniques with large illustrations. They also displayed the film title in large letters as a point of interest so that potential viewers could spot it immediately. In addition, the names of the cast, directors, crews, and the date of the show known as ‘credit titles’, are also displayed. It was used as a promotional advertisement that was displayed not only outside the cinema but also in the newspapers.

## 2.3 Gender Perspective

Gender bias has become a deep-rooted problem up until now. Society always associates gender with values and norms which often obscure the understanding of gender itself. Therefore, when talking about women, most people only limit it to the biological-reproductive realm. Talking about gender, we must talk about the inherent nature of men and women in sociocultural construction and it can be exchanged (Liga Astuti Ningsih, 2020, p.12). God distinguishes between men and women sexually or gender, not socially or culturally. Faqih in her book entitled "Gender Analysis and Social Transformation" states that gender bias has been going on for a long time due to socio-cultural construction, religion, and government policy itself so that gender is always identified as the nature of men and women (Mansour Faqih, 2008). This is what causes gender bias or gender inequality still happening to women now.

Indonesia has indeed created regulations and policies through the state minister for Women’s Empowerment to address the problems experienced by women. Unfortunately, gender bias or injustice regarding the position of women still happens, for instance, in the way advertisement portrays women. The problem is even more complicated because the mass media also participate in perpetuating this discriminatory practice. In the context of newspaper movie advertisements, many of these film posters showed the faces and shapes of women's bodies as an attraction, whether in the form of paintings or real pictures. In addition, many women were depicted as mere sex symbols. Women were like objects that many people enjoyed as mere sex objects. In the newspaper movie advertisements, women were like commodities that had to be shown optimally. The impact is that stereotypes or prejudices against women in advertisements, especially in newspapers, thrived in society.

## 3. Methods

In this paper, the authors applied the historical method with a qualitative descriptive approach. The stages carried out in the historical method include; **First**, the stage of data collection called heuristics. This stage aims to collect primary and secondary sources. **Second**, after obtaining the source through heuristics, the next step is to verify or source critique. At this stage, the authors criticized the sources to verify the truth value and authenticity. **Third**, data interpretation or analysis. At this stage, the authors interpreted the data obtained to become objective data. This paper used a qualitative analysis method. Newspaper movie advertisements were analyzed through the images or words they use, then the content of the message whether it contains gender bias or not with the basis of whether they contain exploitation of women's bodies and sexuality, symbols like

tight or revealing clothes, visualization or verbalization with stimulating pose or seductive and cheap impression, and the use of women's body or expression as an object to attract attention. **Fourth**, historiography is the last stage in the historical method. At this stage, the author described the facts obtained chronologically and systematically to produce scientific and objective writing. The process of presenting data in this stage used a qualitative descriptive method. Thus, the data are described deeply by following the principle of causality (cause and effect) and are chronological.

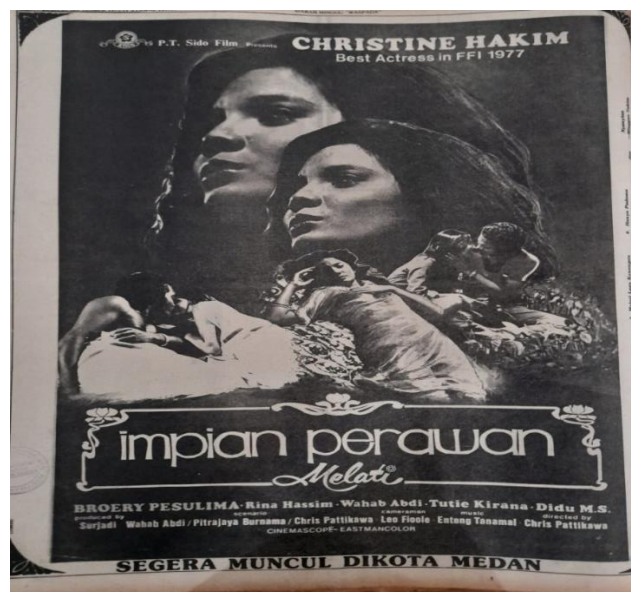
#### 4. Results

##### 4.1 *The Exploitation of Women's Body and Sensuality: The Attraction of Newspaper Movie Advertisements in The Local Daily Newspapers (Waspada, Sinar Indonesia Baru and Analisa) In Medan in The 1970s.*

Waspada is a newspaper founded on January 11, 1947, in Medan by Mohammad Sain and Ani Idrus. Sinar Indonesia Baru Daily Newspaper was founded by GM Panggabean on May 9, 1970. Analisa was founded on March 21, 1973, by H. Soffyan (See the thesis of Ahmad Rizqon Amri and Fenrico Anggi Anugerah Pasaribu).

Following the data collection and analysis of advertisements in the newspapers of Waspada, Sinar Indonesia Baru, and Analisa in the 1970s, the overall newspaper movie advertisements in these three newspapers were viewed from the issues of image, meaning and content related to the gender ideology. Thus, the analysis of advertising representation is divided into two, namely: the representation and depiction of women in film posters, and whether there are any exploitation and commodification of women's body and sexual attractiveness in it.

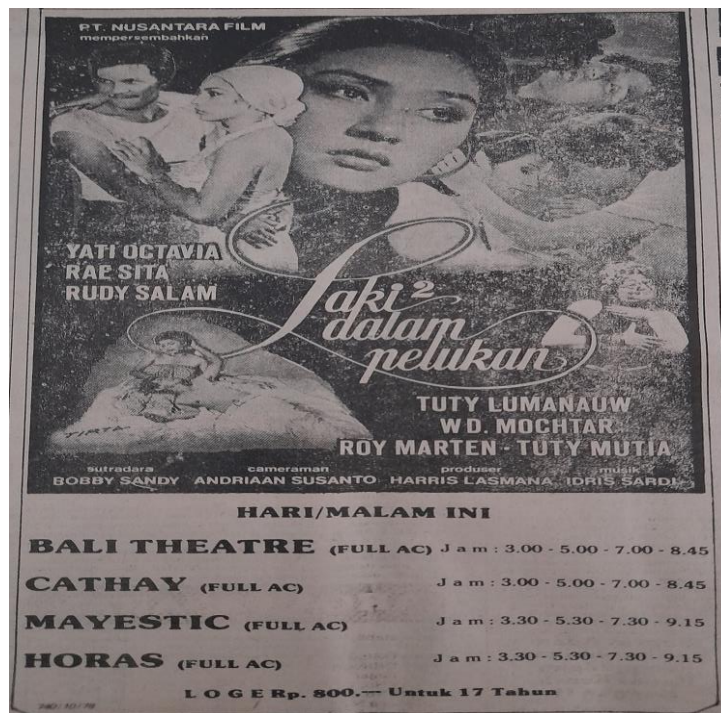
Regarding the representation of newspaper movie advertisements which show the exploitation of stereotypes on the woman's bodies and sexual attractiveness found in Waspada, Sinar Indonesia Baru, and Analisa, there are seven newspaper movie advertisements to be presented and discussed consisting of four national films and three imported films for comparison as shown in Figure 1 to Figure 7 as follows:



**Figure 1.** The first example of woman body exploitation in News Media  
(Source: Waspada, September 1977)

The picture above is a representation of a newspaper movie advertisement entitled “*Impian Perawan*” (Virgin's Dream). The film itself tells the story of the two main characters who fall in love with each other. Long story short, it turns out that the father of the male main character and the mother of the female main character was previously married. In this film poster, it can be seen how the female figure object dominates the image. The woman in the poster is illustrated by exploiting her face that seems sad but seductive by revealing her cheekbones and sensual lips, then in the middle of the image, there is an illustration of a woman lying in a quiet sexual pose. In addition, women are also exploited for their sexuality by showing scenes between the male main character and the female main character kissing in bed.





**Figure 2.** The second example of Body exploitation in Newspaper Media  
(Source: Waspada, October 1978)

The image is from a movie entitled “*Laki-Laki Dalam Pelukan*” (Man in an Embrace). This film tells the story of the male main character played by Rudy Salam, where along the way he falls into the arms of different women until he finally finds the woman of his dreams who turns out to be the wife of another man. In this film poster, women are still used as the dominant figure object. The woman’s face is still the main attraction. In addition, there’s an image of a woman in revealing clothes getting hugged by the waist by a man. Once again, the film poster also features a scene of a girl and boy kissing in bed.



**Figure 3.** The third example of Body exploitation in News Media  
(Source: Sinar Indonesia Baru, July 1971)

It can be seen how female or male figure objects are illustrated in the form of paintings instead of photographs, but similar to the previous image, the female figure is still illustrated in intimate scenes. This film itself tells the story of the male main character who works as a pimp and later gets married but the wife does not know anything about her husband's past. The film poster contains a verbal expression: "To sin in this

world is very easy, but to not sin is very difficult to do" which is very suitable to describe the illustrations of the images displayed so that the audience can get a glimpse of the film's storyline.



**Figure 4. The third example of Body exploitation in News Media**  
(Source: Sinar Indonesia Baru, October 1978)

The representation of the newspaper movie advertisement in Figure 4 is the 1977 film entitled "*Janda Genet*" (Flirty Widow). It is about the main female character who is divorced from her husband and then decides to migrate to Jakarta. Arriving in Jakarta, she joins eight other widows in a house, where they decide to work as models. Once again, movie posters exploit women's bodies and attractiveness to attract audiences coupled with the title of the film that increasingly stereotypes women, especially widows. As we know that in a society that still upholds patriarchal values, being a widow is not an easy matter. The film poster reinforces and legitimizes the stigma with illustrations of scantily clad women in seductive poses. To confirm the illustrations, verbal expressions are also used such as: "*Flirty widow, sexy widow, widow meets widow, nine of them all, the widow is not just any widow, the young widow is young, her smile is seductive, nine flirtatious widows will shake your city*".



**Figure 5. The third example of Body exploitation in News Media**  
(Source: Analisa, May 1978)



The fifth picture comes from a foreign movie. It tells the story of a king who gets messed up by his empress and concubines. The storyline and the illustration on the film poster also depict a female figure making out with a male figure. One picture shows the expression of a woman's sensuality with her eyes closed while making out with her male figure. To show that this film is in the adult category, on the poster is placed a sign that means 'for the audience of 17 years old and above.'



**Figure 6.** The third example of Body exploitation in News Media  
(Source: Waspada, October 1978)

Figure 6 is a poster advertisement for the film entitled “*Naked Wind*” which is a Swedish film. It tells the story of a boy and a girl's love story in the summer. The film poster depicts an unclothed male figure and a female figure embracing affectionately. To complete the poster illustration, verbal expressions are used, such as: “The Naked Wind: The bombastic movie, we re-show at the request of *HOT* movie fans and it's satisfying. The original copy is smooth and full of sex scenes.”



**Figure 7.** The third example of Body exploitation in News Media  
(Source: Sinar Indonesia Baru, October 1975)

The poster comes from the movie originally entitled "*Juventud Desnuda*." This film tells the story of a young man who is trapped in the lives of two women. This Hollywood film poster is illustrated with a female figure and a male figure hugging and kissing. The poster itself comes with verbal expressions, such as: "*The intimacy of a love story is expressed with innocent and serene maturity and courage.*"

Figures 1-7 show how women as object figures have their body shape and sexual attraction exploited to attract fans to watch the film. What is shown in the newspaper movie advertisements in the three local daily newspapers in Medan also happened to almost all mass media, both print and electronic. The woman in the poster is nothing but an object. In the context of the illustrations depicted on the film poster, it can be seen how women's faces, bodies, and sexual attractiveness are exploited in such a way as to trigger erotic and biological arousal, even though sometimes the film's storyline and the posters are not in line. The newspaper movie advertisements also show that the exploitation of women's bodies and sexual attractiveness is increasingly legalizing the pornography culture in which women always become the victims in the industry. The women in the film poster are illustrated in a sexual pose, scantily clad as if trying to provoke the lust of the beholder (Kasiyan, 2008, p.260). The pornography culture that has flourished in society until now is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, society condemns it on moral and religious grounds. On the other hand, society explicitly supports it, either through advertisements or other media, and once again the victims are still women.

## 5. Conclusion

Advertising is created as a means to invite people to buy the products it offers. Likewise, film posters are made as a reflection of the film's storyline so that potential audiences are interested in watching it. As a means of mass communication, newspapers have been around and alive in the midst of Indonesian society long before this nation liberated itself. Thus, newspapers have become evidence of the history of this nation's journey in spreading communication from rural areas to urban areas. Local daily newspapers like *Waspada*, *Sinar Indonesia Baru*, and *Analisa* have witnessed the journey of the people of Medan since this country was free from the colonizers. This is what made these three local daily newspapers loved by the local people. Therefore, there are many ad producers put their ads in these three newspapers, including film producers to promote their films. The problem is how the film posters in the 1970s mostly exploited women's bodies and sexual attractiveness so that it further legitimized the injustice and gender bias against women themselves. National film posters as well as foreign productions in the 1970s showed a negative stigma against women who were only used as a tool to stimulate the audience, either with illustrations or verbal expressions. The women on the film poster were pictured from the side of her sexuality only, this is because it used men's point of view in designing it. Most importantly, the three daily newspapers participated in perpetuating the gender bias culture. Advertising has indeed become part of the traditions and culture of this nation, but it is time, the mass media, in this case, the newspapers, are more sensitive in communicating their messages and not cornering one particular gender. What is shown in the film poster advertisements in these daily newspapers indicates that gender inequality and bias have been felt by women since ancient times and even more so than that, it might have still been alive today had the producers of any product advertisements continued to use women as objects; a certain commodity figure and not as a subject figure who could determine their destiny.

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### Newspapers

- Local Daily Newspaper Analisa (1976-1979)
- Local Daily Newspaper Sinar Indonesia Baru (1971-1979)
- Local Daily Newspaper Waspada (1975-1979)