ANALYZING LITERACY BEHAVIOURS PRESENTED IN AN INDONESIAN AND AMERICAN TEEN MAGAZINE

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Abstract

This article discusses the comparison of adolescent literacy attitudes in Indonesia and the United States which is described through the advertising content published in each magazine which is studied based on a qualitative approach. In this project, one Indonesian magazine (Annida) and one United States magazine (Discovery girls) were used as samples. Both are young women's magazines that have similar components such as reader letters, short stories, fashion tips, consulting, and advertising. The reason for sampling these two magazines is because of their availability and the purpose is to compare the advertising components in the two magazines and see the frequency of categories related to literacy behavior such as books, magazines or novels and other types of literary texts. Although these two magazines do not fully represent Indonesian youth and American youth, the advertisements in both magazines can help explain the reality of literacy behavior in the two countries in question, Indonesia and the United States.

Keywords: Indonesia and the United States; literacy behavior; magazines.

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang perbandingan sikap literasi remaja di Indonesia dan di Amerika Serikat yang digambarkan melalui konten iklan yang dimuat di masing-masing majalah yang dikaji berdasarkan pendekatan kualitatif. Dalam proyek ini, satu majalah Indonesia (Annida) dan satu majalah Amerika Serikat (Discovery girls) digunakan sebagai sample. Keduanya adalah majalah remaja putri yang memiliki komponen serupa seperti surat pembaca, cerita pendek, kiat fashion, konsultasi, dan iklan. Alasan pengambilan sampel kedua majalah ini adalah karena ketersediaannya serta tujuan untuk membandingkan komponen iklan di kedua majalah dan melihat frekuensi kategori terkait perilaku literasi seperti buku, majalah atau novel dan jenis teks literatur lainnya. Meskipun kedua majalah ini tidak sepenuhnya mewakili remaja Indonesia dan remaja Amerika, iklan di kedua majalah tersebut dapat membantu menjelaskan realitas perilaku literasi di kedua negara yang dimaksud, Indonesia dan Amerika Serikat.

Kata Kunci: majalah; Indonesia dan Amerika Serikat; perilaku literasi.

INTRODUCTION

International literacy assessment conducted by Miller and McKenna(Miller, J. W., & McKenna, 2016) puts Indonesia at the 60th rank in terms of literacy behaviors and characteristics of the people. The study examines literacy behaviors worldwide, in terms of both the ability of populations from a wide variety of nations to read and practice other literacy behaviors which include reading and writing effectively. As an Indonesia, it is not

very surprising for the researcher to see the result of the study since, reality-wise, people do not read as much as people from top ten countries on literacy behaviors which include the United States at the 7th position (Miller, J. W., & McKenna, 2016). The illiteracy rate in Indonesia is not poor at all because the majority of people can read and write. Indonesian Culture and Education Minister of the 2014-2016 period, Anies Baswedan, stated that the illiteracy rate in Indonesia had, in fact, significantly decreased in the past 10 years but the habit of reading is destitute among Indonesians. "Indonesia has seen its illiteracy rate decrease significantly and we have many libraries, but the reading habit is still low because of the lack of passions"(Ribka, 2016). However, the study does not measure literacy rate of the people in each country but the literacy behaviors of the people which show different result.

Some people might argue that Indonesians are reading more than ever. However, the researcher's observation suggests that people are only interested to read sensationalized and controversial posts or news which might not be very significant to their literacy behaviors. Reading books, which seem to be daily basis activities for people I have met so far here in the US, is something unusual for the majority of people in Indonesia. Reading is widely and solely considered as an academic responsibility and thus, people who are not part of any academic institution does not need to read.

For this matter, there are two possible theories that might underline such phenomenons. One is because people do not have access to books. Books are expensive and within the poverty-stricken society, it is easy to say that books are not the top priority of most people in Indonesia. Second, the advertising of books is not common at all in Indonesia which the researcher believes lead to an unfamiliarity of good reading habits to people. Advertisements can greatly promote certain behaviors in society, as implied by Bandura's theory. Most people in Indonesia are familiar with advertisements promoting foods, clothes, and other things in TV, Radio, printed or social medias but are not familiar with book advertisements specifically. It is quite unusual to see advertisements promoting interesting and newest books, novels or encyclopedia on TV, for instance. While the report from (World Bank, 2020) does show a huge improvement on the overall ability of Indonesians aged 15 and above within 96 percent, literacy behaviors in the country are still is still far from how they are in develping countries, in which Indonesia ranked the 61th, according to (S, 2016).

This might be due to the fact that books are not very accessible for the major population epsecially for those who live in rural and isolated parts of Indonesia.It is also due its high price and people's unfamiliarity with books because of the lack of advertisements for such sources of literature in Indonesia. Communities need to be imposed with popular books or magazine that they like at the first place before moving on to the heavier themes of readings.

This topic is of a huge topic of interest to the reseacher because, first of all, the type of products being advertised in teen magazines cna certainly help establish a much better understanding about the Indonesian litercary behaviors as portrayed in a particular printed media. Second of all, examining how they are different or similar in comparison considering that the United States is the seventh most literate country in the world can deepen our understanding in attempts to find factors leading to the behaviors.

In this study, one Indonesian teen magazine (Annida) and American magazine (Discovery girls) are taken as conveniently-available samples. Both magazines have similar components such as readers' letters, short stories, fashion tips, consultation, and advertisements in their pages. Although these two magazines do not totally represent Indonesian teen and American teens, the advertisements in both magazines might help explain the reality of literacy behaviors in both countries, Indonesia and the United States.

Post-positivism critical realist is chosen as a paradigm in this project because the observation is in this project is fallible which makes the findings later revisable. Furthermore, the observations and analysis are strongly influenced by the researcher's previous experiences and knowledge of Indonesian society's literacy behaviors and characteristics which might lead to bias.

For the data source, two magazines were being analyzed: 1) Annida Magazine: A couple of years back, Annida is one of few Islamic teen magazines that was presented in the common sructure of most teen magazines at that time which offered parts like Islamic lifestyles, long and short stories, Islamic articles and information about literacy in each edition. Some other teen magazines that were very popular are Aneka Yess, Gadis, Go Girl! but they mainly present their contents in more contemporer ways.

In 2008, Annida magazine stopped the printed-version production because they wanted to go go-green. Annida was, then, transformed to an online version at www.annida-online.com. The sections in the online version were the same with the

those in printed one such as books reviews, short stories, poetries, travelling tips, foreign countries news, fashion and profiles of talented people. However, although the online version was easier to access at this time, some people still had to lose Annida because they could not access the online version either, due to various reasons. This is what also makes it hard to find the information of the advertisements in Annida because as of now, there is no bookstore in Indonesia that sales this printed version of Annida magazine from years ago. 2). Discovery Girls: Discovery Girls magazine is a bimonthly preteen magazine for girls ages 8–13. Its goal is to be a magazine "by girls, for girls," and honestly address the issues faced by tween girls. It is based out of Campbell, California. First published in 2000, Discovery Girls has received the Parents' Choice award, National Parenting Publications Award, Mom's Choice Gold Award, and the iParenting Media Award (Discovery Girls, n.d.)

Based on the observation on the advertisements of both magazines, the following research questions were formulated: 1.   What is the biggest component of the advertisements in both magazines? 2.   What kind of category does show up the most in the advertisements of both magazines? Sub-questions: 1.   How are advertisements in Annida and Discovery Girls different? 2.   How are advertisements in Annida and Discovery Girls magazines similar?

RESEARCH METHODS

The data from Annida magazine is obtained from series of photos of the printed version of the magazine. Although the online version can be used as a comparison to the American teen magazine used in this study, it is not conducted to keep the same format. The Discovery Girls magazine's data is obtained from the printed version of the magazine itself.

Visual data collection and analysis are applied in this project. The reason to choose visual data is because it fits the nature of the source of data which is in visual format and because, as pointed out by Mayan (Mayan, 2009) and Willing (Willig, 2013), visual data allow the researcher to study a preexisting visual representation for information about literacy behaviors among teens in Indonesia and the United States.

In the pursuitof the findings of this study, the following steps were then conducted:

1. *Selecting unit of analysis*

As the first step, the data are selected and separated according to certain unit of anaylis. In this case, each advertisement will be taken as a particular unit of analysis.

2. *Numbering*

The next step is assigning numbers to each advertisement in both magazines. Names are not used because it is easier to put them in order. The researcher came up with different numbers of advertisements in each magazine. Annida has only five advertisements and Discovery girls has eleven.

3. *Unit analysis description*

The next step is describing each advertisement by using open coding. In this phase, phrases are used instead of words to describe each unit because it is clearer. The following table provides data of codes on each of the unit analysis in both magazines:

Annida Magazine	Discovery Girls Magazine
School	Fab girls' books
School	Magazine Subscription
Halaal Butcher service	The mysterious Benedict society books
School	Play dolls
Zikrul remaja books	Tulip fabric spray paints
	Plastic jewelries (beads)
	Faith girls' books
	Beads for crafting
	Magazine subscription
	Chitchat beauty (website)
	Bella Sara adventures (website)

Table I: Each unit analysis's description

4. *Salient Categories*

Now that open codes are created, the categories are converted into smaller salient classifications. In this step, the researcher assigned abbreviations to make it easier to note. The category is formed by assigning repeating codes and similar codes to the same category

or creating a new category for the codes with similar content as presented in the following table:

Category (Abbreviation)	Keyword included in category
Books (B)	Books
Coupon (C)	Magazine subscriptions
Girls' fun Time (GT)	Play dolls, Tulip fabric spray paints, Plastic jewelries (beads), Beads for crafting
Education (E)	Schools
Beauty (BY)	Chitchat beauty
Adventure (A)	Bella Sara Website
Butcher (BU)	Butchery service

5. *Creating themes*

Three major themes are created as in the folllowing table:

Themes	Categories
Literacy	Books, coupons, education
Girls	Girls fun time, beauty, adventure
Others	Butcher

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

After the analysis, it is clear that the most salient theme shows up in the advertisements in Annida and the discovery girls are the theme of literacy. This finding also answers the first research question about what the biggest component of the advertisements available in both magazines is. The second resarch question was answered through the finding that the most frequent theme is the literacy one that shows up nine times in both magazines (4 times in Annida and 5 times in Discovery Girls).

Although advertisements in Annida magazine and Discovery Girls seemed similar because they mainly promote books and some other additional items, advertisements in both magazines are slightly different. In terms of the nature of the advertisements, Annida's advertisements are all reflexive whereas Discovery Girls' advertisements are both reflexive

and embedded. Although the research questions focuse on asking the frequency of each advertisement, this information can answer the question of how Annida and Dicovery girls' magazines are different from each other in two ways.

Discusssion

This study does confirm the study by Miller and McKenna (Miller, J. W., & McKenna, 2016) that puts Indonesia in one of the lowest rank in literacy behavior among 61 countries in which Indonesian magazine shows a bit less literacy-related advertisements compared to the American magazine. This first theme is the essence of the project, as mentioned earlier, how literacy behaviors portrayed in both magazines. Going back to the Miller and Mc Kenna 's study that reports nations literacy behaviors and characteristics rank based on the indicators above, the discovery girls shows higher literacy theme frequency compared to Annida magazine.

The literacy theme shows up five times in the discovery girl magazine with three books advertisements (Advertisement number 1, 2 and 3) and two magazines subscriptions advertisements (advertisements number 7 and 9). Annida magazine, however, came across literacy theme four times with three school advertisements (advertisements number 1, 2 and 4) and one book (advertisement number 5) advertisement. The reason to include books, coupons, and education categories to literacy theme is based on the Miller and Mc Kenna 's study which employs indicators of libraries availability, newspapers, education inputs and outputs and computer availability to conduct their assessments. Thus, besides books and coupons, education fits that theme as well.

The following pictures are the advertisements from Annida and the discovery girls respectively:

Picture I: Advertisements number 1 and 2 from Annida Magazine
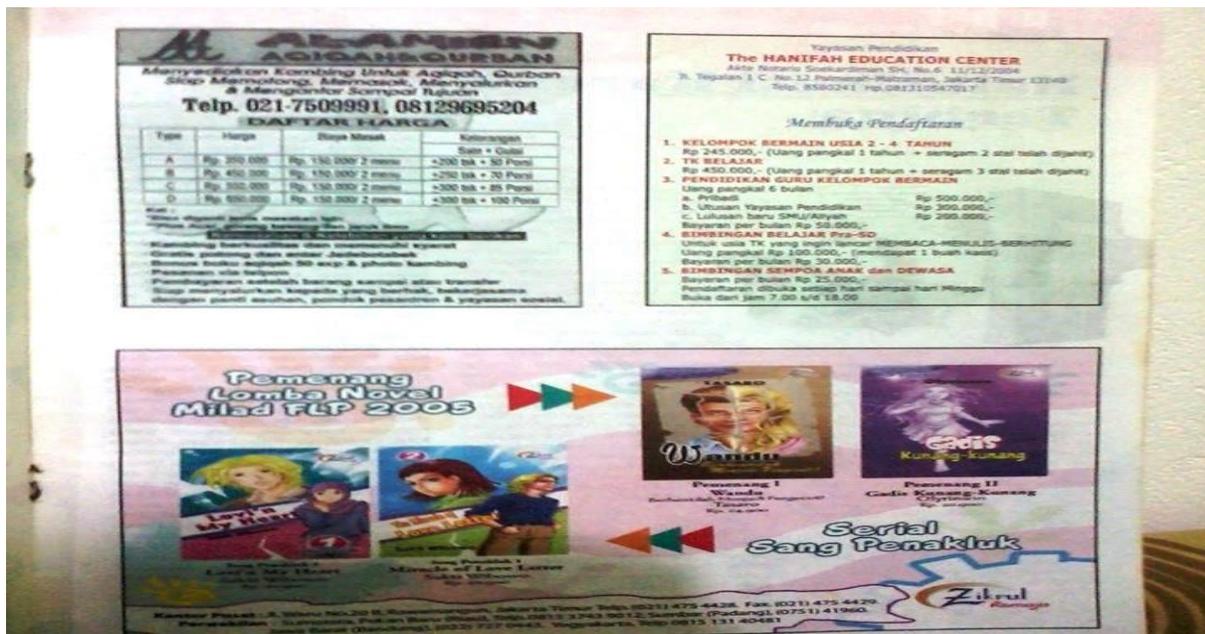
Picture 2: Advertisements number 3, 4 and 5 from Annida Magazine

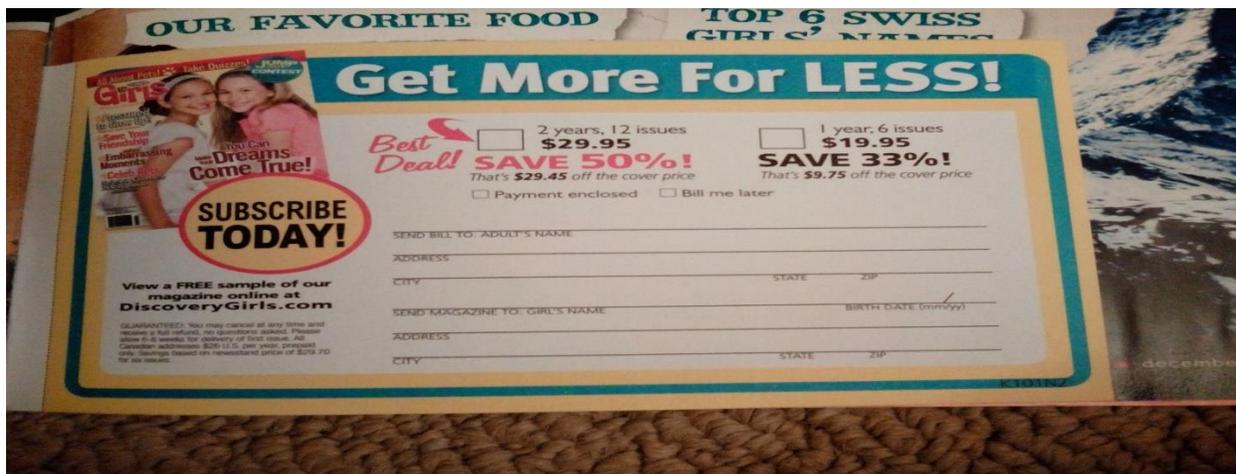Picture 3: Advertisement number 1 from Discovery girl magazine

Picture 4: Advertisement number 2 from Discovery Girls

Picture 5: Advertisement number 3 from Discovery Girls magazine

Picture 6: Advertisement number 4 from Discovery Girls magazine

Picture 7: Advertisement number 5 from Discovery Girls

Girls

This second theme covers girly items and activities that only present in the Discovery Girls. This theme comes up 4 times in Discovery Girls. The advertisements in this theme are advertisements of Play dolls, Tulip fabric spray paints, plastic jewelry, and beads for crafting. Although Annida magazine normally has sections for girly themes, there is no advertisement of the related theme in the magazine. The following pictures are two examples of advertisements for this theme:

Picture 8: Advertisement number 4 from Discovery Girls

Picture 9: Advertisement number 5 from Discovery Girls

Other

This theme covers the topics that are unrelated to literacy and girls theme for this project. There is only one category of advertisement for this theme, Halaal butcher service. This one is themed "other" because it is different from the other two themes and unrelated to them in any way. It shows up in Annida magazine as an advertisement number one as in the following picture:

Picture 10: Advertisement number 1 from Annida magazine

The above data goes to show that the hyphotheses that the teens' literacy behaviors in Indonesia is poorer than that of the US, judging from the advertisements portrayed in the magazines.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study is to measure the frequency of the literacy theme in Annida magazine from Indonesia and Discovery Girls from the United States. The most frequent

theme is literacy theme that shows up nine times in both magazines (4 times in Annida and 5 times in Discovery Girls). The frequency of this theme shows that American magazine has more literature advertisements that might be related to the fact that the US ranked higher in terms of literature behaviors in comparison with Indonesia which ranked far lower in that category. Annida magazine, otherwise, shows more advertisements of educational institutions rather than literature. While the sampling for this study is small and might not be very representative, the finding of this study can explain why Indonesian people are not very familiar with literature advertisements which further lead to a serious issue of the utter lack of readings, besides the fact that Indonesia also has a serious issue of providing reading materials and institutions for its people. Other themes appear five times.

Advertisements in Discovery Girls are more varied compared to Annida magazine which consists of one theme, literacy. The advertisements in Discovery Girls magazine has more categories and themes. In terms of the location of the advertisements, Annida uses only two consecutive pages for the advertisements like a special section for advertisements and Discovery Girls use eleven pages that are put in the different sections of the magazine.

. Annida's advertisements are all reflexive whereas Discovery Girls' advertisements are both reflexive and embedded. Another thing that distinguishes Annida and Discovery Girls is that Discovery Girls has advertisements for websites which does not available in Annida. Although the research questions basically asked the frequency of each advertisement, this information can answer the question of how Annida and Dicovery girls' magazines are different from each other.

This project ends with an emerging personal interest to look further into this issue in an actual future content analysis research that focuses on looking into the problems surrounding the literacy behavior of Indonesians through the content of social media such as Facebook, tiktok, linkedin, insagram and Twitter or other popular means of communication in Indonesia.

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