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Visual representation of strength and masculinity in male supplement product packaging

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ABSTRACT

This study critically investigates the visual strategies employed in the packaging of male supplement products in Indonesia, emphasizing how prevailing design practices frequently prioritize erotic imagery and hyper-masculine aesthetics over educational and ethical communication. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method grounded in semiotic analysis and visual communication design (VCD) theory, this research examines selected product packaging through the lenses of color, typography, composition, and imagery. The findings show a tendency to sexualize visual elements, like exaggerated male symbols, overtly sexualized depictions of women, and overly aggressive color schemes. This reduces health products to sexual commodities. These strategies not only disregard local cultural values but also obfuscate crucial medical information, including dosage, ingredients, and potential side effects, thereby undermining consumer health literacy. A critical evaluation of the subject packaging reveals its contribution to the perpetuation of patriarchal gender norms and reinforcement of toxic masculinity. Furthermore, there is a failure on the part of the packaging to adequately address the professional responsibilities inherent to health communication. This phenomenon reflects a systemic failure within the industry to understand design ethics and cultural representation. The study calls upon producers to transition from superficial marketing tactics to more reflective and responsible design strategies. Integral to this approach is the fostering of interdisciplinary collaboration among designers, experts in gender studies, and cultural scholars with the objective of developing packaging that respects social values while conveying accurate information and building long-term brand credibility. It is imperative to reposition packaging as a medium of education and ethical representation to transform the male supplement market into a space that supports both health and dignity.

Keywords: packaging design; male supplement; semiotic; visual perception; literature studies

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Implications for Male Vitality Product Packaging Design

The discipline of packaging design constitutes a pivotal component of the broader realm of product marketing. Its strategic implementation encompasses two primary functions: first, it provides a physical protective barrier for the product, and second, it serves as a visual medium for communicating information to consumers. This visual aspect of packaging design exerts a direct influence on consumer perception, thereby affecting their decision-making processes. In the domain of pharmaceuticals, particularly concerning male supplements or performance-enhancing drugs, packaging design fulfills a dual role. It is responsible for establishing a professional image and effectively conveying the product's message. In consideration of the particular and delicate characteristics of its consumer demographic, the packaging design for this category must consider visual components that are expressive, educational, and not obscene (Nurhakim & Sugiyanto, 2020).

Visual elements play a crucial role in creating a strong first impression. A study indicates that colors, fonts, and images in health product packaging can enhance perceptions of trustworthiness and professionalism. For instance, darker hues such as dark blue and black have long been associated with strength and masculinity. Instead of brighter colors like orange and yellow are often linked to enthusiasm and energy (Tijssen et al., 2023; Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2021). Visual designs that implicitly convey masculinity have been demonstrated to engender stronger emotional connections with consumers when contrasted with explicit, vulgar visuals (Delivett et al., 2020).

For additional information on this field, aesthetic considerations must be balanced with functional design principles, including information readability, visual balance, and graphic consistency. Research by Reimann et al. (2021) demonstrates that aesthetically pleasing packaging can stimulate the prefrontal cortex area of the brain, which is associated with positive decision-making regarding products. Design elements such as visual emphasis, visual rhythm, and balance are critical to ensure that the product's primary message is communicated efficiently and without any potential for misinterpretation (Ahmed et al., 2020). Evidence suggests that clear and professional visual communication on packaging has been proven to increase consumer loyalty and strengthen brand identity (Makri et al., 2020). The design of strong medicine packaging must also consider ethics. Packaging must attract attention in a competitive market while upholding professional values to avoid stigma or negative associations. Studies show that overly explicit packaging can reduce consumer trust and weaken the product's image (Yeo et al., 2020; Huang & Wan, 2019). Therefore, visual elements must be carefully selected to stay communicative and ethical.

This research is highly relevant in the context of packaging design for male enhancement products, given the growing need for a visual approach that is not only market-oriented but also builds trust and improves the image of products that are often associated with taboo issues in society. The present study has been developed with the aim of examining the role of graphic design components, including color, typography, illustration, and composition, in the formation of consumer perceptions and the understanding of pertinent product information, with a specific focus on adult male consumers. In the context of the competitive vitality supplement market, packaging assumes a pivotal role as the primary point of interaction that shapes consumer purchasing decisions. Moreover, packaging functions as a medium for communication, influencing the social interpretations of the product (Ahmed et al., 2020). Designs that fail to consider aesthetic, ethical, and professional values may potentially diminish product credibility and reinforce vulgar stereotypes, thereby harming the industry's image (Yuan et al., 2023). Therefore, this study is expected to provide strategic contributions to the development of product packaging that not only sells visually, but also upholds educational, ethical, and socially acceptable values (Nurhakim & Sugiyanto, 2020).

1.2. Constructing Masculinity: Visual Cues in Male Enhancement Packaging

Packaging design serves as a significant medium for conveying messages to consumers, and visual semiotics facilitates comprehension of the processes through which these messages are formulated using signs and symbols. Within the domain of male enhancement pharmaceutical packaging, specific visual

components, including dark hues, bold fonts, and imagery that evokes notions of strength, collectively contribute to the establishment of a masculine representation. It is imperative to acknowledge that these signs do not remain constant; their interpretations are influenced by cultural and societal influences, as [Chandler \(2020\)](#) has observed. Each component of packaging design communicates to consumers what the product is capable of and what it looks like.

The symbolic connotations inherent in the color choices utilized for the packaging of male vitality products extend beyond mere aesthetic considerations. The utilization of dark colors, such as black and dark blue, is frequently linked to attributes of strength, endurance, and dominance. These associations are congruent with the objective of promoting robust medicinal products ([Tijssen et al., 2023](#)). In the domain of semiotics, color functions as a sign system, signifying identity and social affiliation. This, in turn, can foster an emotional connection with the target audience. However, if colors are not selected with precision, they may become excessively ostentatious or indecent, thereby detracting from the primary message and undermining the product's credibility among adult consumers.

The type and layout of packaging for potent medications is often designed to convey a sense of potency, professionalism, and directness. Capital letters, bold fonts, and sans-serif fonts are frequently employed due to their ability to convey an impression of strength and clarity ([Delivett et al., 2020](#)). From a visual semiotics perspective, typography is a means by which textual information is conveyed; it is also a means by which the visual and emotional experience of consumers is shaped. The strategic placement of visual elements, such as logos, illustrations, and white space, within the packaging plays a pivotal role in shaping the perceived message. These visual elements significantly influence how the packaging is perceived, affecting whether it is perceived as a credible medical product or as something that is vulgar or suggestive of visual pornography.

Packaging for strong medicines must attract the market while maintaining ethical standards. Critical semiotics underscores the necessity of circumventing representations that reduce men to mere sexual objects. Excessively masculine, explicit, or suggestive images have the potential to engender stigma and reinforce negative stereotypes, particularly in the absence of educational content and visual aids to counterbalance them ([Yeo et al., 2020](#)). It is therefore imperative for packaging to strike a balance between a visually appealing design and ethical considerations if it is to be regarded as socially acceptable rather than merely commercially successful. Packaging design needs to be visually appealing and informative. From a neurasthenic perspective, the integration of attractive and well-structured designs has been demonstrated to enhance readability and stimulate regions of the brain linked to positive decision-making processes ([Reimann et al., 2021](#)). The field of semiotics provides a theoretical framework for the analysis of how information is visually encoded through icons, labels, and visual hierarchies. When designed with function and communication as priorities, packaging can serve as a valuable educational instrument, assisting consumers in making informed decisions regarding product utilization.

Indeed, the function of packaging extends beyond mere product protection; rather, it serves as a social construction instrument that influences the perception and significance of the product within the broader societal context ([Ahmed et al., 2020](#)). This assertion is particularly salient in the context of strong medicines, a category characterized by social stigma and vulnerability. The design of product packaging must, thereby, embody a professional aesthetic and serve to normalize the utilization of the product within a healthcare setting. A semiotic approach enables researchers to examine the processes by which visual symbols are created and interpreted by society, as well as the potential of design to challenge or support prevailing narratives concerning masculinity and male vitality ([Nurhakim & Sugiyanto, 2020](#)).

2. METHODOLOGY

The present research utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach, bolstered by semiotic analysis, to investigate the way visual components inherent in male supplement product packaging serve to shape and communicate constructions of masculinity. Primary data was obtained through the selection of samples of male vitality-enhancing products that were commercially circulated in Indonesia, using a purposive sampling technique. The selection of the sample was based on variations in visual style, color palette,

typography, as well as the use of certain images that represent strength, virility, and trustworthiness. The present study utilizes the semiotic framework to decipher denotative and connotative meanings in visual communication (Chandler, 2020), with the aim of uncovering the implied messages and cultural codes inherent in packaging aesthetics. The data were collected through visual documentation and literature triangulation and were then analyzed using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2021) grammar of visual design approach. This analysis encompasses aspects of composition, salience, modality, and framing, and is developed through thematic coding to classify visual strategies that represent masculinity. These strategies include the use of color symbols, bold typography, and graphic spatial arrangements. Furthermore, to evaluate the possibility of stigmatization or objectification resulting from the depiction of graphic or explicit visual content, this approach employs a sociocultural perspective grounded in extant studies (Yeo et al., 2020; Delivett et al., 2020).

This research explicitly integrates two fields of knowledge to enhance the visual and cultural approach. The field of Visual Communication Design (hereafter referred to as VCD) is closely related to the disciplines of literature and cultural studies. The implementation of a VCD perspective enables an examination of the technical and aesthetic dimensions inherent to the visual representation of the concept. This examination encompasses the effectiveness of color choices, typographic elements, and the arrangement of visual components. This collective influence of these elements on the perception and design of visual products by consumers is a pivotal aspect of the analysis. Furthermore, an Indonesian literary perspective, specifically within the framework of semiotic studies, is employed to interpret the visual representations in packaging as cultural texts. These texts symbolize notions of masculinity and embodiment, as well as prevailing societal ideologies in the Indonesian context. The integration of various academic disciplines fosters a comprehensive understanding of the role of packaging. It is imperative to acknowledge that packaging transcends its primary function as a promotional medium. Instead, packaging should be regarded as a medium of cultural expression that possesses significant values, meanings, and social implications.

Relevance to the explanation above, the purposive sampling approach adopted in this study was not designed to ensure statistical representativeness, but rather to safeguard the theoretical relevance of the data subjected to analysis. In qualitative research focusing on visual semiotics, the sample is selected based on the degree to which each object demonstrates dominant visual patterns, symbolic strategies, and recurring design conventions that are significant within a particular cultural context (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & de Lacey, 2020; Elo et al., 2020). For this reason, the selection of product packaging was carried out in a targeted manner to explore the visual meanings frequently found in men's supplement products available in the Indonesian market, rather than merely increasing the number of items.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gently acknowledgment for the reader that the present study does not seek to empirically assess consumers' responses or interpretations of product packaging. The analysis focuses on how masculinity and sexuality are visually represented through design strategies, symbols, and visual narratives that operate at the level of representation. Utilizing terms such as *toxic masculinity* and *offensive visuals* is informed by critical readings anchored in semiotics, gender studies, and extant empirical literature on sexualized marketing. These interpretations are not based on direct assumptions about audience reception.

Despite this limitation, the study does not preclude the potential for future research to explore additional complementary aspects. It is evident that this phenomenon presents a range of opportunities for future studies that integrate visual analysis approaches with audience research methods. These studies can contribute to the testing of the extent to which those representational constructions resonate with or are contested by consumers. This multifaceted approach holds the potential to broaden our understanding of the intricate relationship between design practices, cultural meanings, and social dynamics within the context of contemporary visual communication.

3.1. The Sexual Body: Visual Representation and Objectification

Related on VCD perspective, the utilization of sexual body imagery in the packaging of male enhancement products signifies an approach that prioritizes instant sensation and attention, exhibiting a disregard for established visual ethical principles. The visual representation of muscular men or women in sensual poses may, in fact, garner market attention. However, such designs fail to acknowledge the fundamental role of packaging as a medium for effective, structured, and professional information dissemination. In the domain of responsible design practice, visual media must be employed to convey health-related information, prioritizing factors that ensure visual comfort and information hierarchy. Furthermore, cultural sensitivity and consideration for diverse audience members must be considered during the design process. This approach, characterized by its crudeness and explicitness, serves to obfuscate the product's identity as a medical solution, thereby replacing it with the image of the product as a sexual commodity.

Based on the vantage point of literary and cultural studies, the body in this packaging functions as a visual text that represents the myth of masculinity in popular culture. This visual representation not only exemplifies the product's functionality but also contributes to the prevailing discourse surrounding the *ideal man* archetype, characterized by strength and perpetual sexual readiness. Such portrayals serve to perpetuate patriarchal discourse by reducing the value of males to their sexual performance, while exploiting women's bodies for the sole purpose of visual consumption. In the context of Indonesia, a nation with a rich cultural heritage, the use of such vulgar visuals is worthy of criticism. This is because such imagery reduces the human body to a commodity symbol and risks normalizing unethical visual practices that offend local standards of decency. To acquire a comprehensive understanding of this subject, refer to the visual depiction provided by the researcher, which includes illustrative examples of packaging currently available on the market (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Packaging of “Buaya Jantan”

Source: <https://bali.tribunnews.com/2024/10/14/bpom-denpasar-sita-1117-kemasan-obat-kuat-pria-ini-daftar-mereknya>

The packaging image of the *Buaya Jantan* product on the male supplement above offers a concrete illustration of the previously discussed challenges related to visual design in strong medicine packaging. An initial observation of the packaging reveals the presence of two salient elements. The first of these elements is an illustration of a crocodile, which symbolizes aggressive masculinity. The second element is an image of a woman in a provocative pose, which has been placed in the packaging without any accompanying informative context. The pair of visuals in question serve to bolster the critiques previously articulated from the viewpoints of VCD as well as cultural and literary studies.

Based on a VCD perspective, this design technically combines high-contrast colors (gold, red, and dark blue), bold and metallic typography, and wild animal icons as metaphors for sexual power. These visuals employ visual shock to capture the viewer's attention; however, they do so in a manner that disregards fundamental principles of information architecture, visual etiquette, and the effective

communication of medical functions. These elements should constitute the very foundation of professional pharmaceutical design. This results in packaging that is more evocative of vulgar entertainment media than of educational health media. From a semiotic and literary perspective, the absence of relational context in the portrayal of the female form on product packaging reduces the body to a mere visual sign and object, treated as a symbolic accessory to masculinity (Smith, 2020). This perpetuates patriarchal discourse by positioning women's bodies as passive recipients of male sexual performance, rather than recognizing them as integral components of a comprehensive and inclusive sexual health paradigm. The *crocodile* symbol, a recurring motif in Indonesian popular culture is often associated with promiscuous or hypersexual men, thereby serving to perpetuate stereotypical and demeaning symbolic associations. This conflation reduces the meaning of health to mere myths of virility, a reductive interpretation that diminishes the complexity and value of health.

Buaya Jantan packaging is more than a visual display. It is a failure of product design to effectively fulfill its ethical and communicative functions, especially when it prioritizes vulgar, sensational, and uncontrolled cultural stereotypes. This phenomenon underscores the importance of design criticism grounded in semiotic and cultural studies approaches, ensuring that health products continue to convey educational messages, uphold ethical values, and prioritize responsible aesthetics.

3.2. Color Codes and Masculinity: Rethinking Design Norms

In the domain of packaging design for adult male supplements, the employment of vibrant hues, such as bright red, neon orange, or striking yellow, is frequently adopted as the primary visual strategy to elicit instant impressions of vitality, dynamism, and passion (Jones et al., 2021). From the perspective of VCD, this approach is indicative of the market's demand for the generation of an instantaneous and attention-compelling effect. However, this approach frequently disregards fundamental principles such as color harmony, functional contrast, and visual comfort. While these colors are effective at capturing attention on store shelves, they frequently engender an aggressive and overly provocative impression, thereby risking the undermining of the professional image of pharmaceutical products.

Based on the perspectives of literature and cultural studies, however, color cannot be understood as an objective or neutral entity. Color is a symbol that is replete with social and cultural meanings, and these meanings undergo different processes depending on the cultural and historical context of the society concerned. In the Indonesian cultural context, for instance, red, in its brightest form, functions not only as a visual attention-grabber, but also as a symbol associated with values such as high ambition, a tendency to dominate, and even aggressiveness. These connotations reveal a discord with the medical image that is intended to promote trust, calmness, and emotional balance. When applied in the absence of a deliberate narrative or consideration for cultural nuances, color can lead to packaging designs that are decontextualized and potentially problematic. In the absence of proper control of meaning, the use of color may inadvertently reinforce harmful sexual stereotypes and perpetuate toxic forms of masculinity. This phenomenon underscores the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach in visual design, particularly when the design is directed towards markets characterized by cultural diversity and intricate social values.

As discussed above, the utilization of color in male supplement packaging design must be understood not as a superficial visual strategy or a mere attention grabber. In a more reflective and interdisciplinary approach, color is a semiotic element that carries symbolic meaning and plays a role in shaping the product's image and narrative. The judicious selection of color can serve as a medium for communicating the fundamental values of a product, including such attributes as quality, benefits, and brand philosophy. Furthermore, the strategic choice of color can evoke profound emotional resonance in consumers, thereby eliciting sentiments such as confidence, strength, or calmness. The potential of context-aware visual design to serve as a conduit between a product's functionality and the social values inherent in a target culture is significant.

Nonetheless, the implementation of colors in the absence of consideration for local narratives and norms can result in a superficial and problematic replication of visual symbols in packaging design. In this context, the pervasive use of ostentatious colors such as bright red or neon orange on male supplement packaging has the potential to perpetuate stereotypes associated with toxic masculinity and gender bias,

rather than promoting images of health or balance. The propagation of such fallacies is indicative of a systemic failure in the realm of visual communication, a failure that ought to be met with strategic responsibility. Therefore, the approach to color design should involve cultural awareness and ethical sensitivity so that it is not only aesthetically appealing, but also meaningful and relevant in the social landscape where the product is circulated.

3.3. Perpetuating Biased Discourse: Sexuality in Marketing



Figure 2. Packaging of “Tongkat Arab”

Source: [Shopee Indonesia](#) | [Situs Belanja Online Terlengkap & Terpercaya](#)

The ensuing discourse will employ an exemplification of the packaging for a potent medicine, *Tongkat Arab* (Figure 2). That packaging features images of scantily clad women, which are an explicit form of visual representation, but problematic from an ethical standpoint. In the domain of packaging design, the utilization of illustrations or photographs is contingent upon their direct relevance to the product's functionality and identity. However, on this packaging, the utilization of erotic imagery is employed not for informational purposes but rather to instigate immediate sexual associations. This approach stands in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of visual communication design, which underscore the importance of message readability, aesthetic function, and social responsibility in conveying a credible product image. By prioritizing visual sensuality, this packaging design disregards the informative purpose and professionalism that should be at the core of pharmaceutical product communication.

In the context of literature studies, particularly within the paradigm of cultural semiotics, the image depicted on the *Tongkat Arab* packaging is interpreted as a signifier that represents a sexual object rather than an autonomous subject. Women are often depicted as visual commodities that serve to reinforce the prevailing narrative of heteronormative masculinity, suggesting that male virility is demonstrated through domination over women. This phenomenon serves to perpetuate the prevailing patriarchal discourse structure within society, whereby women's bodies are regarded as a metric for men's performance and success. Such depictions function not only as a reduction of women to passive symbols but also as a shaping of a narrow understanding of unequal sexual relationships. Within the context of Indonesian culture, which places a high value on politeness, this visual may also be regarded as insensitive to local values that are more inclusive and humanistic.

This phenomenon is further highlighted by the depiction on the *Tongkat Arab* packaging, which utilizes the visual representation of women to promote the product. This practice underscores the ongoing societal acceptance of the sexualization of women in marketing strategies designed to promote products targeting male vitality. A critical interdisciplinary examination reveals that designs of this nature present aesthetic, ethical, and ideological challenges, contributing to the perpetuation of biased and reductive discourse surrounding sexuality. This narrative underscores the urgency of shifting the paradigm of packaging design from mere visual appeal to a medium of communication that educates and respects the dignified representation of humanity.

Relate to the explanation above, the prevalence of eroticized visual depictions on *Tongkat Arab* products indicates a significant disparity in contemporary Indonesian visual communication design practices, particularly concerning products targeting male health and well-being. The depiction of women in provocative or semi-nude poses on such packaging is not merely an aesthetic choice, but rather an integral component of a marketing strategy that is firmly embedded in patriarchal ideology. According to data from Komnas Perempuan (2022), a significant proportion of male product advertisements in Indonesia continue to depict women in a subordinate role, both verbally and visually. These portrayals frequently associate women with fulfilling or reinforcing masculine ideals, thereby contributing to gender disparities. This finding aligns with the findings of a semiotic study conducted by Maulia (2019), which asserts that women's bodies in advertisements are frequently objectified and commodified, rather than represented as autonomous subjects. In this manner, such depictions perpetuate entrenched gender norms, relegating women to passive roles that are of negligible significance to the functionality of the product.

This discrepancy is further pronounced in the context of the cultural values of Indonesian society, which prioritize modesty, social harmony, and respect for the human body. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) has articulated the significance of ethical principles in the depiction of women's bodies in media and advertising, including product packaging. This stance is outlined in the 2021 guidelines for the representation of women. In practice, the incorporation of explicit sensuality in a manner that lacks contextual relevance to health products results in the obfuscation of the informative message that ought to be communicated in a clear and responsible manner. A study by Wijayanto and Nurhadi (2020) of herbal product packaging in Indonesia also confirms the finding of gender-biased visual approaches. Such visual approaches have the capacity to reduce product credibility, disrupt public perception of its health value, and reinforce misguided associations of sexual performance as an indicator of dominance over women (Wijayanto & Nurhadi, 2020).

It is imperative to acknowledge the necessity of a paradigm shift in packaging design. The prevailing interpretation of design has evolved beyond its traditional role as an aesthetic medium or a mere catalyst for consumer impulses. Instead, it has come to be regarded as a conduit for social communication, one that places a premium on ethics, education, and cultural empathy. To this end, it is imperative that academics, creative industry players, and policymakers collaborate to cultivate synergies that foster designs that are attuned to local values and responsive to issues of gender representation. In a society that is increasingly aware of symbolic injustice, design must transform into a means of social advocacy that rejects the objectification of the body and promotes equality and respect for human dignity.

3.4. When Packaging Fails: A Responsible Instrument Undermined

One of the most fundamental flaws in the packaging design of the adult male supplement products analyzed here is the absence of informative content that should be at the core of pharmaceutical or healthcare product packaging. The packaging is characterized by its utilization of provocative imagery, exaggerated slogans, and visually stimulating elements, yet it conspicuously lacks crucial information such as the composition of active ingredients, instructions for use, contraindications, and warnings regarding potential side effects. This finding suggests that packaging may not be fulfilling its role as a responsible instrument of medical communication. In the domain of neurasthenics, Reimann et al. (2021) contend that organized visual structure and easily legible information play a pivotal role in enabling rational decision-making by consumers. In instances where visual elements fail to provide adequate support for this cognitive process, the likelihood of product misperception and utilization escalates considerably.

From an academic perspective, the packaging of goods is regarded as an instrumental medium for the dissemination of information, especially in the context of health-related products, where its role extends beyond mere aesthetic considerations. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2021), in the realm of visual design theory, the visual structure and hierarchy must embody a coherent, methodically arranged, and purpose-driven information system. It is unfortunate that packaging that focuses excessively on sexual visualization neglects the responsibility of educative and ethical communication to consumers. In the absence of an instructive narrative, the packaging of these products may inadvertently reinforce the

perception that they are instantaneous solutions that can be safely consumed without the need for guidance. However, it is important to note that these products can pose health risks and should be accompanied by transparent information to ensure safety. This phenomenon exemplifies the way the commodification of masculinity in design undermines the fundamental principles of visual health literacy.

In the context of semiotic theory, the absence of medical information is not a neutral void, but rather a meaningful sign. The absence of informative texts can be interpreted as a deliberate strategy by manufacturers to emphasize the image of *strong and instant* without creating space for critical narratives concerning safety or responsibility. This phenomenon can be characterized as a form of *semiotic silence* which obscures the relationship between consumers and products, while concurrently weakening the role of packaging as an educational cultural text. The optimal semiotic strategy for the design of male supplement packaging should not be confined to the evaluation of visual aesthetics; rather, it should be characterized by a symbiotic integration of visual allure with informational clarity. This entails the capacity of the design to convey an appealing visual message while concurrently providing accurate, ethical, and responsible educational information.

3.5. Practical and Regulatory Implications

In consideration of the preceding findings and discussions, this research makes theoretical and analytical contributions and has practical implications for stakeholders involved in the production, regulation, and education of health product packaging design. Recognizing the pivotal role of packaging design in facilitating visual communication, which in turn has social, cultural, and ethical ramifications, it is imperative to employ a cross-sectoral strategy to remediate the issues that this study has identified. The research implications are structured with consideration of the roles and responsibilities of the following actors: regulators, industry players, and design education institutions.

For the first, the implications for regulators refer to the result of this research which emphasizing the imperative to extend this focus beyond mere textual content to encompass visual and ethical dimensions in the design of health product packaging, particularly for men's supplements. Regulatory bodies such as the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (*Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan*) and advertising authorities must consider expanding the existing regulatory scope by incorporating principles of visual ethics, fair gender representation, and clarity of medical information as standards for evaluating packaging design. This approach is of particular significance given that packaging visuals play a substantial role in shaping public perception and can have a direct impact on health literacy and consumer protection. The implementation of more comprehensive regulations is anticipated to impede visual practices that may be regarded as misleading, discriminatory, or incongruent with local social and cultural values.

The second is implications for the marketers and the producers. This research showing that in the long term, brand credibility is more effectively established through packaging design strategies that are informative, medically transparent, and aligned with the cultural values of society than through visual approaches that are sensational and provocative. The packaging of products and services that emphasizes clarity of information, professionalism, and respect for social norms has the potential to increase consumer trust and strengthen a sustainable relationship between the product and its users. The implementation of an ethical and educational design approach by manufacturers has the potential to contribute not only to the enhancement of brand image, but also to an active role in raising awareness and fostering social responsibility within the health product sector.

Last, the implications for design educators. In the context of design education, these findings underscore the importance of integrating ethical aspects, gender awareness, and cultural sensitivity into the Visual Communication Design curriculum. It is imperative that education in packaging design transcend a mere focus on aesthetics and market appeal, instead emphasizing a critical understanding of the social and ideological impacts of design practices. It is anticipated that the inculcation of values of social responsibility and critical thinking during the educational stage will result in the development of designers who possess not only technical proficiency but also ethical conscience and the capacity for reflective thinking in the creation of visual products that contribute positively to society.

4. CONCLUSION

A comprehensive analysis of the prevailing findings reveals that the packaging design of nutritional supplements for adult men in Indonesia is not adequately fulfilling its role as an ethical, educational, and responsible medium of visual communication. A visual textual analysis approach was utilized in this study to reveal the prevalence of design strategies that accentuate sexual symbolism and aggressive portrayals of masculinity. These strategies supersede the presentation of essential health information, including composition, dosage, and usage warnings. Such visual practices reflect a short-term marketing orientation, one that disregards social values, local cultural norms, and health literacy principles. This orientation may result in the reproduction of gender bias, the normalization of body objectification, and the reduction of health issues to sexual commodities. Despite the limitations of this study, which preclude an examination of the dimensions of audience acceptance and consumer diversity in In

In line with the findings of the present study, it is imperative to emphasize the urgency of a paradigm shift in the design of health product packaging. This is particularly salient for packaging intended for male consumers. Manufacturers are encouraged to transition from sensational visual strategies to a more ethical, informative, and culturally sensitive approach, with trust, transparency, and education serving as the fundamental tenets of visual communication. This transformation necessitates the courage to relinquish conventional design styles that perpetuate patriarchal discourse, as well as a commitment to cultivating packaging as a medium for learning that upholds the values of health, equality, and integrity. Achieving these objectives necessitates cross-disciplinary collaboration between designers, academics, gender experts, and regulators. This collaboration is not only a strategic prerequisite to fulfil moral responsibilities but also a visionary step in building sustainable and credible brands

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable

Informed Consent Statement

Not Applicable

Authors' Contributions

HH contributed to the conceptualization of the research, development of the theoretical framework, visual semiotic analysis, and overall supervision of the study. RM contributed to the analysis of visual elements in packaging design, interpretation of findings within visual communication design theory, and manuscript drafting. NSA contributed to the discussion of ethical implications, cultural and gender perspectives, and refinement of arguments related to health communication and consumer literacy.

Disclosure Statement

The Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author for privacy.

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