

# Beauty Representation in Scarlett Whitening Advertisement: Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis

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## Abstract

*Purpose:* This research delves into one of Indonesia's current popular beauty product advertisements, namely Scarlett Whitening, with the objective of understanding how beauty representation is presented in these ads through Stuart Hall's representation theory and Roland Barthes' semiotic theory.

*Methodology* The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, analyzed through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, which explains the denotative, connotative, and mythical forms of signifiers and signifieds. The study uses three advertisement videos from Scarlett's official Youtube channel, each viewed by over ten million individuals, as samples. The data collection process involved three stages: non-participant observation, documentation, and literature review.

*Result:* The findings indicate that the Scarlett Whitening advertisements attempt to reflect a change in beauty standards, inspired by the white and glowing skin criteria and colorful hairstyles of South Korean and Japanese women in line with current trends.

*Applications/Originality/Value:* Furthermore, the advertisement aims to illustrate that attractive women receive significant social media attention and define beauty through the image of men constructed with the trend of soft masculinity.

## Introduction

Mass media is a powerful tool used for social control and construction in individuals' lives (Lubis, 2014). Advertising, a component of mass communication, is designed to influence audiences to take an interest in particular products. Recently, the development of advertising in society has brought forth various socio-cultural issues, including the use of signs, images, information delivery, and the resulting meanings. All of these factors influence people's perceptions, comprehension, and behaviour (Piliang, 2003). Presently, advertisements are not solely confined to mass media but are increasingly prevalent in online new media platforms, such as Youtube, allowing easy access to advertisement messages via internet-enabled devices.

The primary function of an advertisement is not limited to selling products; rather, it serves as a tool for communicating messages, including motivation and solutions to social issues. For this reason, advertisements must be aesthetically appealing and use both verbal and nonverbal symbols to captivate audiences. An advertisement plays a crucial role in shaping the public's perception of a product or service. Interestingly, advertisements often emphasize appearance, gender identity, and beauty in their depictions, as noted by (Winarni, 2010). Different products have their own unique way of presenting their promotional messages through advertisements. One such category worth examining is cosmetics.

The media bombards us with countless advertisements daily. These ads often feature women who meet the "ideal criteria," a set of standards for female beauty that has become a generalized norm due to their portrayal in the media (Sandhy & Dwiningtyas, 2016). For instance, advertisements for beauty products showcase stunning women with specific features who serve as "ad stars." In the 20th century, the global spread of capitalism in the beauty industry led many Asian women, including those in Indonesia, to believe that western beauty standards represented the epitome of female beauty (Melliana, 2006). During the post-colonial era, Indonesians viewed westernized beauty concepts, such as fair skin, tall stature, and prominent noses, as the ideal, while those who were short, dark-skinned, or plus-sized were regarded as unattractive (Rizkiyah & Apsari, 2019). As early as 1990, Indonesian beauty trends began to favor fair, smooth skin (Wirasari, 2016), prompting

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local beauty products to feature ad stars with western or mixed-race features. As a result, the construction of female beauty in these ads has expanded to include not only physical attributes such as fair skin and a slim body but also a "glowing" skin type.

The term "glowing" refers to the state of facial skin appearing fresh, healthy, and shiny. As reported on [www.inews.id](http://www.inews.id) (accessed April 8, 2022), the 2020 Zap Beauty Index Survey disclosed that fair skin and a glowing complexion is now considered the epitome of beauty by 82.5% of the 6,640 female respondents in Indonesia. This trend is a byproduct of the Korean Hallyu, which has brought about a standardization of skin beauty, leading to numerous Indonesian skincare brands vying to align with these beauty standards. Researchers are intrigued by the societal phenomena surrounding beauty ideals propagated by the media, which often results in debates and perpetuation of stereotypes for women based on their physical appearance.

Scarlett Whitening is a local skincare brand that was founded in 2017 by Felicya Angelista, a prominent actress in Indonesia. The brand partners with PT. Opto Lumbung Sejahtera and PT. Motto Beringin Abadi in its production process, as stated on <https://scarlettwhitening.com> (accessed April 23, 2022). Scarlett Whitening offers a range of products, including body lotion, shampoo, serum, toner, and other skincare items. According to <https://compas.co.id> (accessed October 3, 2022), the brand attained the highest sales in 2021, accounting for 57 percent of the market share, while other well-known brands like Vaseline and Lifebuoy trailed far behind at 15 percent and 8 percent, respectively. Scarlett Whitening has also become a top-seller in the Tenbrand skincare category, suggesting that its popularity has risen since the start of the pandemic, as both men and women have widely purchased and used its products.

Based on information from <https://youngster.id> (accessed May 23, 2022), Scarlett Whitening is currently engaged in extensive promotional activities in order to attract a large consumer base. These promotional efforts involve collaborating with artists and influencers in Indonesia to endorse their products on various social media platforms. Furthermore, Scarlett Whitening has also partnered with well-known Indonesian artists such as Agnez Mo, Natasha Wilona, and the girl band JKT48 to promote their products. In addition, the company has secured popular South Korean celebrities such as Song Joong-ki and the girl band Twice as brand ambassadors, resulting in significant attention. "Scarlett Official", the company's official YouTube channel, has shared a total of 68 promotional videos featuring ad stars promoting Scarlett Whitening products, which will be the focus of this research due to their distinct beauty concept. This study aims to explore how Scarlett Whitening represents the current beauty standard by formulating the research question as "How is the Representation of Beauty Standards in Scarlett Whitening Advertisement?"

## **Literature review**

### ***Beauty Representation in Advertisement***

Representation refers to the act of displaying a sign to create meaning. Stuart Hall's theory of representation is commonly employed to examine the way women are portrayed in the mass media. Thus, the term "representation" has become a ubiquitous concept in media studies. According to (Hall, 1997), representation theory encompasses three approaches: (1) the reflective approach, which asserts that language reflects true meaning; (2) the intentional approach, which utilizes language to convey meaning in both oral and written forms; and (3) the constructionist approach, which views language as a tool created and defined by humans to express meaning. This practice of representation is crucial in comprehending and articulating our understanding of media content.

Representation, as described by (Grossberg et al., 2006), refers to the act of forming a version of reality that is not necessarily the actual reality. It is a crucial element in the media's ability to shape perspectives, with various forms of media content, including movies, commercials, drama series, music videos, and the like, often serving as objects of representation. Unfortunately, when such representations are disproportionate to reality, biased, and inaccurate due to generalization and oversimplification, they can lead to the development of harmful stereotypes within society. The representation process is grounded in a system that encompasses two distinct yet interconnected concepts: mental representation and language (Hall, 1997). Mental representations refer to the systems of concepts that exist within our minds, which we then communicate through language in a universal way. This language allows others to comprehend and derive meaning from our representations indirectly.

The topic of beauty is frequently portrayed and discussed in the mass media. Western beauty standards, particularly in American society, are typically attributed to individuals with fair skin and blue eyes, as influenced by the mass media (Islam, 2019). Similarly, beauty standards exist in Indonesia, where physical appearance is often used to measure beauty. Many people argue that beauty is a subjective concept (Purba & Tambunan, 2021). The significance of beauty is closely linked to advertising, which typically depicts a narrow definition of beauty. This emphasis on beauty is particularly significant for women, particularly those in the public eye. The ideal beauty in Indonesian advertisements tends to prioritize physical attributes, such as youthfulness, fair skin, smooth skin, and a slim figure (Abdullah et al., 2021). Conversely, in foreign media like Pakistan, women are frequently portrayed as sexy and alluring advertising models (Davis, 1990). This trend is reinforced by (Barber, 2011), observation that the physical appearance of women is frequently utilized in advertisements to sell products on television.

A study conducted by (Abdullah et al., 2021) revealed that MS Glow, a beauty product in Indonesia, promotes white, clean, and flawless skin as the ideal and desirable type, leading to the perception that those without such skin are unattractive. Additionally, (F. D. R. Sari et al., 2016) discovered that beauty myths in Indonesia revolve around Javanese, Balinese, and Sumbanese women in image advertisements. The previous studies suggest that every beauty product advertisement has its own beauty standard concept. The spread of East Asian cultures, particularly through the Korean Wave, has influenced cosmetic products in representing existing beauty standards. Therefore, the Scarlett Whitening advertisement is assumed to align with the latest trends by promoting the beauty concept of South Korea and Japan, as evidenced by the use of models in several versions.

### ***Teori Semiotika***

Roland Barthes' semiotic theory builds upon the work of his predecessor, Ferdinand De Saussure. The use of semiotics in media theory, particularly in mass media studies, has gained significant importance in analyzing signs and symbols. Semiotics can be applied to various forms of communication media, such as advertisements, videos, films, video clips, caricatures, and verbal and nonverbal signs, to identify and convey existing meanings (Bouzida, 2014). Semiotic techniques are a critical tool for advertisers to persuade their audience, as they enable the presentation of specific meanings through symbols and signs. Barthes proposed that media undergoes a process of meaning, with the denotative (primary) meaning and the connotative (secondary) meaning leading to the formation of a myth (Lubis, 2014). Therefore, the semiotic theory's myth is the outcome of the interpretation and analysis of connotative and denotative meanings.

According to Roland Barthes, advertisements often use myth to convey a message of meaning, rather than an idea, object, or concept (Amalia & Kalaloi, 2022). In Indonesia, the myth surrounding beauty has evolved from valuing olive skin, as exemplified by the Princess of the Palace, to valuing white skin as the standard of beauty. (Kwanda et al., 2014) have found that beauty is crucial to women's happiness, with clean and bright skin being particularly important. As a result, Indonesian beauty product advertisements often perpetuate the myth that a woman must possess flawless, white, and glowing skin to be considered beautiful.

### **Methodology**

This study utilizes a qualitative research methodology that employs a descriptive approach to comprehensively examine and describe the data gathered. Descriptive qualitative methods facilitate researchers in obtaining and collecting detailed information in the form of sentences. The critical paradigm is employed in this study, which considers reality to be mediated by power and inseparable from the knowledge produced. For the purpose of selecting samples from an existing population, purposive sampling was employed. The Scarlett Whitening ad video, which was shown on the official YouTube channel with 68 advertising videos, was used as the population in this study. Researchers selected a sample of three videos that were watched by more than ten million people on the channel. These include Twice's version of the advertisement video "Reveal Your Beauty With Twice and Scarlett", the Scarlett Whitening advertisement video version of Song Joong Ki "Get Ready to Meet Song Joong

Ki's New Love", and the ad video version of JKT 48 "Scarlett Officially Launching Jingle Pertama "Happy and Pretty" These videos are available on YouTube channel, "Scarlett Official".

The data collection techniques utilized in this study consisted of three stages: observation, documentation, and literature review. Non-participant observation was employed to directly observe and comprehend video advertisements, particularly those that pertained to the research object. The documentation technique was then employed to capture scenes that portrayed beauty in advertisements. These captured scenes were utilized to represent the portrayal of beauty in the advertisement. Furthermore, a literature review was conducted to gather data from previous studies, which were utilized as a reference to strengthen the research results. The primary data source of this study was advertising videos that were showcased on Scarlett Official's official YouTube channel, while the secondary data sources were articles from the internet and previous research journals. The unit of analysis for this study was the scenes portrayed in each Scarlett Whitening commercial video shown on The Official Youtube channel, which portrayed images related to aspects of beauty such as faces, skin color, hairstyles, and clothing in Scarlett's advertisements.

This research employs Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis model to investigate the signs present in the Scarlett Whitening advertisement. The researcher selected this model because it has the ability to decode the signifiers and signified present in the advertisement, which allows for the discovery of connotative and denotative meanings, as well as the emergence of myths that are closely tied to real life. Furthermore, Roland Barthes' semiotics is comprehensive and can logically connect elements of a sign, providing a structural description of the entire system of marking and signifying (Sobur, 2003). The validity of the data in this study is tested using theoretical triangulation, a method that employs multiple perspectives in the analysis of a problem to ensure more thorough conclusions are drawn (Kriyantono, 2014). This technique is used to avoid subjectivity in the study. The researcher incorporates Roland Barthes' theory of beauty representation and semiotic theory in the analysis.

## **Results**

In this section, the researcher analyzed three Scarlett Whitening ad videos used for the sample in this study, namely the "Twice version" of Scarlett Whitening Ads, released on October 29, 2021, with a duration of 60 seconds, the "Get Ready to Meet Song Joong Ki's New Love" version featuring Song Joong Ki, released on September 27, 2021, with a duration of 60 seconds, and the "Scarlett Officially Launching Jingle Pertama "Happy and Pretty" version for JKT 48, released on January 15, 2022, with a duration of 60 seconds. By utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis and emphasizing the identification of connotative and denotative signs, myths were formed and analyzed. The following section presents the findings and results obtained from the analysis of the three videos.

### ***Beautiful Women Are Whom Look Like East Asian Women***

Over time, the definition of beauty in Indonesia has undergone transformation in response to prevailing trends, ultimately giving rise to a popular culture that is shaped by advertisements. Women in Indonesia now aspire to possess the fair and luminous skin commonly associated with East Asian countries such as South Korea and Japan. This trend is evident from the plethora of cosmetic products available in Indonesia that feature models with appearances similar to those of these two countries, sometimes even using foreign models or advertisement stars to promote their products. An example of such a product is the Scarlett Whitening advertisement, which employs the South Korean girl group Twice as its model.

#### ***Beautiful like K-Pop Idols***



**Figure 1.** Eight members of Twice in a Scarlett Whitening commercial

Figure 1 depicts eight members of South Korean girl group, Twice, who are wearing pink and purple dresses, holding Scarlett skincare products, and sporting beaming smiles. The sound bite, "This is Twice's favorite skincare... Scarlett," is also featured in the scene. The connotative meaning of the advertisement implies that the beauty standards for Indonesian women have been redefined to include fresh, glowing, and radiant skin, exemplified by the beauty of South Korean women. This is reinforced by the choice of Twice as the ad model. The women in the ad convey elegance and femininity, exuding class and luxury through their brightly colored dresses. The combination of these two symbols perpetuates the myth that white skin is still a desirable beauty standard, even with the addition of the term "glow," which has become synonymous with "beautiful" in South Korea. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by the Hallyu wave, which has swept across multiple regions, including Indonesia.

*Beautiful like Japanese Women*



**Figure 2.** Four members of JKT48 in the Scarlett Whitening advertisement

Figure 2 illustrates four female members of JKT48, a girl group dressed in colorful clothing, dancing happily with fair skin. This scene implies that women who resemble Japanese beauty standards with fair, bright, soft, and simple appearance will be viewed as beautiful and content. However, the selection of an Indonesian girl group made in Japan as the advertisement model perpetuates the myth that white and bright skin are still the ideal beauty standards in Indonesia, despite the fact that the majority of Indonesian women have brown skin.

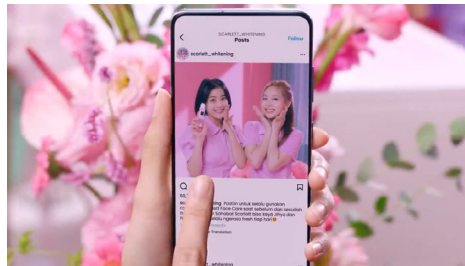
***Beautiful Women Get More Attention on the Instagram***



**Figure 3.** The model is doing a live broadcast on Instagram

Figure 3 shows that the denotation marker in the advertisement is a beautiful woman with a beautiful face glowing on Instagram, where @scarlett\_whitening has reached 1012 views. The connotative meaning shows a woman who has a glowing face. Actively interact on Instagram. They tend to get more attention and are liked more by other Instagram users. The myth is that Instagram social media still perpetuates patriarchy, which makes women objects to be judged and their physical appearance shown. This makes women appear on social media by indirectly achieving existing beauty standards.

### ***Beauty Increases Self-Confidence and Happiness***



**Figure 4.** Instagram post shows two female members of Twice

Figure 4 portrays two models exhibiting confident and happy expressions on social media with fresh facial skin, indicated by a marker. The connotative meaning of this scene implies that physical changes, particularly on the face, result in improved self-confidence and a happier disposition. However, it is a common misconception that a person's physical appearance is a determinant of their confidence level. The societal construct of associating a woman's appearance with beauty standards is prevalent and the advertisement validates this notion. The advertisement reinforces the belief that women who enhance their physical appearance tend to possess higher levels of self-confidence.

### ***Beauty is Represented by a Male Model***



**Figure 5.** Song Joong-Ki in a Scarlett commercial

Figure 5 portrays the denotative meaning by featuring a man from South Korea in a room with white skin, physical attributes, and a neat white shirt. The man is seen with a smiling expression and appears glowing. The connotative meaning is conveyed through the choice of an advertising model from South Korea with proportional body, white skin, and a confident and well-groomed appearance that still exudes masculinity and gentleness, consistent with the traits of South Korean masculinity, known as "soft masculinity" Indonesia, a society that upholds patriarchal culture, still clings to the myth that care products are exclusively used by women. Nevertheless, Scarlett's ad introduces a new perspective: beauty products are no longer a feminine concept. The image of beauty in men refers to the concept of masculinity, as they are often depicted as having a softer side and exhibiting self-care, which characterizes the concept of masculinity in men.

## DISCUSSION

This section presents the researcher's analysis of three versions of the Scarlett Whitening Ads, which have already garnered 10 million views on the "Scarlett Official" YouTube channel. These videos depict the concept of beauty, which is influenced by certain standards in the media. The media holds a significant influence in shaping the notion of beauty, leading to continuous shifts in beauty trends in response to market developments. This discussion will utilize Roland Barthes' three semiotic stages to analyze the ads that portray the meaning of beauty.

### *Shifting Standardization of Beauty in Indonesia*

The media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and trust towards different phenomena. This development has a significant impact on how society constructs its reality, and one of the factors that contribute to this is advertising. A particular area that has been significantly affected is the depiction of beauty. The concept of beauty has had a social influence on society and has become a yardstick for interpreting the meaning and image of beauty among a vast number of women worldwide. Cosmetic industry advertisements have eroded the meaning of "natural beauty" and created a standard in the minds of society. Consequently, the standards of beauty for Indonesian women are influenced by modernism, which is recognized in the country. However, the beauty of Indonesian women is diverse, depending on the ethnicity, race, and culture. The characteristics of Indonesian women's beauty that are recognized by local and foreign communities include tan or olive skin, slightly visible facial bones, and a pink-shaped nose that displays an elegant side.

The presence of various cultures from other countries leads to a shift in the definition of beauty to align with current trends. (Mondong, 2011), notes that during the 18th century in Indonesia, the concept of beauty was modeled after European women while still retaining the yellow and brown skin color and wavy hair that were prevalent among the Indonesian population. However, the current trend favors fair skin and long, straight, and shiny hair. The notion that "white is beauty" persists as the dominant standard of beauty in mainstream culture. This standard creates immense pressure on individuals with black skin, particularly in African-American culture, as per research by (Makkar & Strube, 1995). Moreover, Asian women also conform to this standard of beauty with their main characteristic being white skin, as noted by (Chin Evans & McConnel, 2003).

After the emergence of Korean Hallyu, Indonesian cosmetic companies began to feature models with Korean-style faces in their advertisements in an attempt to embody the image of beauty (Satria & Junaedi, 2022). In this current discourse on beauty, physical appearance from head to toe is regarded as the cornerstone. Consequently, the shift towards East Asian-style beauty has led to the emergence of new physical beauty standards, such as the quality of skin, the facial features, and hair trends.

### *Skin and Face*

Bungin, (2008) suggests that the media in Indonesia portrays diverse tribes, ethnicities, races, and religions, including women's beauty ideals. These ideals are characterized by features such as fair skin, thick and straight black hair, a slim and fresh body, and a clean, luxurious, elegant, and charming face. Fair skin is a key component in assessing a woman's beauty, particularly in Asian cultures (Li et al., 2008). The Korean Wave in Indonesia has led to an abundance of beauty product advertisements showcasing Korean beauty standards, such as glowing skin (Satria & Junaedi, 2022). The criteria for beauty in Korea date back to its first dynasty, which emphasized smooth, scar-free skin resembling white jade, leading Koreans to adopt various skin-lightening techniques (Li et al., 2008). As per (Satria & Junaedi, 2022) study, the prominence of bright, glowing South Korean skin in advertisements signifies the arrival of post-colonial ideology, which promotes the image of Eastern women as the ideal, rather than Western women.

The myth that women with white and bright skin are considered beautiful has developed over time. The Scarlett Whitening advertisement reinforces this idea by suggesting that women must have bright, soft skin to be considered beautiful, in contrast to Japanese women who are believed to have dull skin. This advertisement perpetuates the notion that modern beauty standards are influenced by Japanese standards. In Japan, white skin is also considered an essential element of femininity, chastity, purity, moral virtue, and motherhood.

However, Japanese women tend to prefer using traditional methods, such as applying powder made from natural ingredients. The criteria for ideal facial features in both countries, as depicted in Scarlett's ad, are remarkably similar, including a V-line jaw, double eyelids, a sharp nose, and a small face.

In comparison to Japan, South Korea has a relatively high standard of beauty, which has led to an increase in the trend of plastic surgery to enhance facial features. Cosmetic plastic surgery is widely accepted in South Korea, with many individuals considering it a valuable investment in their appearance (Holliday & Elfvig-Hwang, 2012). This reinforces the notion that "beauty is pain" as women are often willing to undergo painful procedures in order to meet beauty standards. As noted by (Wolf, 2004), women are consistently taught to strive for beauty in modern society, leading to the use of various cosmetic products and surgeries to conform to accepted beauty standards within their social environment.

### *Hairstyle*

Hair is a crucial aspect of beauty, with both men and women valuing its importance in their appearance. Often referred to as a woman's crown, the beauty of hair requires upkeep. The global beauty industry heavily markets and explores hair, making it one of the most sold body parts (Intan, 2021). Hairstyle trends in Indonesia are also heavily influenced by Western trends, in addition to conventional norms dictating that men typically have shorter haircuts than women. Short hair on women may be perceived as more masculine due to societal norms, and this trend is perpetuated by various media outlets, including advertisements, films, and social media, where artists and models showcase these styles.

The Scarlett advertisement featuring Twice showcases a diverse range of hairstyles, including various colors. This allows women with black hair to express their femininity without any constraints. In certain countries, blonde hair, which is commonly associated with Western culture, has emerged as a recent trend. Despite going against societal norms, hair color has always been a controversial topic, particularly when associated with race or skin color, as per Thompson, (2009) research. Nevertheless, the media continues to promote hairstyles that align with current trends. The Scarlett advertisement employs models to demonstrate that beauty is not limited to black hair, contrary to societal beliefs. Instead, beauty can be defined through any hairstyle or color.

### ***Beautiful Women Get Attention and Appear Confident on Social Media***

According to Kertamukti et al., (2018), social media is a virtual space that can influence social, cultural, and behavioral shifts. The presence of social media has led to the emergence of various societal issues and topics that can easily spread, such as women's issues, which are predominantly discussed by 76 percent of female social media users (Lubis, 2014). In Scarlett's ad, she actively utilizes Instagram by tagging the female model, revealing the platform's widespread usage among women as a means to showcase their beauty. This also perpetuates the myth that an ideal woman who fits society's standards of beauty is more successful in attracting attention from other users on Instagram.

Instagram is a social media platform that contributes to the construction of beauty ideals through its unique features, allowing users to upload photos that align with their self-actualization goals (Andreas, 2019). However, this platform also creates a sense of pressure for women to appear perfect in each of their posts (Kertamukti et al., 2018). In addition to uploading photos and videos, users can interact with each other using functions such as "like" and "comment". These actions hold significant meaning for the uploader and emphasize the importance of appearance and social interaction on Instagram (Jarman et al., 2021). Unfortunately, the platform also perpetuates patriarchal culture by objectifying women's bodies and promoting them as objects to be enjoyed and admired (Jarman et al., 2021).

Women who conform to societal beauty standards are more likely to feel confident when sharing their pictures on Instagram and other social media platforms. When posting photos that align with these standards, it is common to receive a significant amount of likes and comments from other users, even if the intention is merely to gain more followers (Andreas, 2019). This phenomenon proves that a woman's attractiveness is a magnet for others to follow her on Instagram. In this platform, beauty is defined by traits such as white skin and a slender body, which are considered dominant. Those who do not fit these standards are often discriminated



against. Editing and filtering tools are also commonly used by women to create the ideal appearance in their pictures on Instagram (Fardouly et al., 2018). Unfortunately, patriarchal beliefs still prevail on Instagram, resulting in women being objectified and judged based on their physical appearance. As a result, women using Instagram often feel pressured by the beauty system portrayed in the media and compare themselves to popular accounts. This pressure is supported by research conducted by Hendrickse et al., (2017), which suggests that Instagram influences users to compare their physical appearance to others and leads to dissatisfaction with their body image. This dissatisfaction has a detrimental effect on women's self-esteem.

### ***Beautiful Male Image with Soft Masculinity Concept***

Facial care products have historically been associated with women, but there is now a growing trend of cosmetic products geared towards men. This development has brought the construction of male beauty and masculinity into closer connection. Masculinity is a significant topic related to gender and mass media, as demonstrated in the research conducted by (Rani et al., 2022). Their study uncovered a significant discrepancy between the beauty standards imposed on men and women, with the use of grooming products considered taboo for men and a must for women to maintain their appearance. However, Rani et al., (2022) also discovered a break in the societal stigma of male beauty standards, suggesting that men also need to use beauty products and maintain their appearance. This research indicates a correlation between the concept of beauty for men and the new concept of soft masculinity. Through various mediums, the male body is being redefined and visually represented, as demonstrated in the work of Senoaji et al., (2021) who examine the impact of clothing choices on the physical presentation of masculinity.

The representation of masculinity values in various media often follows a specific concept of masculinity (Riskiy, 2022). The prevalence of East Asian popular culture, particularly Hallyu culture, has significantly impacted the Southeast Asian region's notion of masculinity (Ainslie, 2017). The cosmetic industry, utilizing South Korean artists to endorse their products, benefits from the spread of Hallyu. This influence has caused the South Korean-style masculinity concept to enter and spread throughout Indonesia. Society holds a growing myth that the majority of Indonesians associate beauty with women and consider it taboo for men. Due to the prevailing patriarchal culture in Indonesia, advertisements for men's care typically depict male activities outdoors, extreme sports, and showcase a strong and charismatic posture as per societal norms (Miranda et al., 2022). As illustrated in the advertisement, the male model exhibits soft masculinity, characterized by a cute face but still possessing a strong posture. Soft masculinity is a blend of Seonbi (the traditional Korean masculinity concept), Bishounen (pretty boys in Japan), and global metrosexuality (Fauzi, 2014).

The film portrays men who value physical appearance but also exhibit gentle and caring behavior, aligning with (Maliangkay, 2013) observation of a trend towards a softer, more fashion-conscious and helpful image of South Korean masculinity. This portrayal of "soft masculinity" challenges the notion that masculinity must be rugged and dominant, and shows that it is acceptable to embrace good manners and emotions, as is common in Western culture (Jung, 2011). The advertisement featuring Song Joong-Ki in *Scarlett* offers a fresh perspective on masculinity, and shows that Indonesian society, despite its patriarchal roots, has come to accept this evolving concept of masculinity (Fauzi, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the research analysis, it can be deduced that the media endeavors to create a notion of beauty by promoting cosmetic products through advertisements. The focus of this portrayal of beauty is predominantly on women. Furthermore, the advertisements also showcase men as new faces in the process of representing beauty in cosmetic products in Indonesia, where masculinity is the underlying concept. The concept of beauty is gradually transitioning towards the East Asian region, particularly South Korea and Japan. This shift is reflected in the advertisement models, with an emphasis on ideal physical appearance for women, featuring fair skin, a radiant face, a fresh and glowing appearance, as well as soft skin that is not dull.

Assessing a woman's beauty involves not only considering her skin color and facial features, but also her physical appearance, including her hairstyle. In some cases, having black hair is seen as a limitation to female

femininity. However, with current hair coloring trends and western hairstyles, beauty is not restricted to a particular hair type. This is evident in advertisements featuring models with diverse hairstyles. Instagram has also influenced women to strive for the ideal look, as research indicates that being perceived as beautiful can increase confidence and attract more likes, followers, and viewers. In South Korean men's fashion, masculinity is being redefined to encompass beauty. Both men and women now place greater emphasis on their physical appearance, although self-care is still not fully normalized in Indonesian culture. Beauty care products are no longer the sole domain of women, as men are increasingly recognizing the value of self-care.

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