

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In this modern era, where everything is fast-paced, the chances of being out of date or trending are very small. All humans are technology literate and even anything can be accessed easily via smartphone. People will not miss the news and trends that are phenomenal in the world, one of which is the beauty trends that never fade from civilization. Beauty trends are certainly based on the beauty standards that exist in society and are accepted by the people. Beauty standards are also made by people who are moved by their hearts and bodies to have a beautiful face and attractive appearance, especially women (The Beacon 2018). All of this is based on the belief that when they are beautiful, they will easily have a better life, one of which is the easy way to get a job. Plus, having a beautiful face and attractive appearance will make them more easily accepted in society than those who do not follow beauty standards at all, making them believe that appearance is everything (Yonce 2014). The incessant standard of beauty that exists in people's lives certainly has a strong background why this beauty standard is present on the sidelines of human life. One thing that can be taken as an example of how beauty standards can be accepted and followed by society is the entry of colonialism (Aprilia, Faisal and Mahmudah 2021).

As a developing country who had been oppressed by the colonizer for 350 years, Indonesia has received so much great trauma that has been affected mentally or physically amidst people's lives (Annisa 2020). With the many pressures that have been given by the colonizers, the Indonesian people inevitably have to accept the policies and provisions imposed or made by the colonizers ranging from work, education, ways of dressing, norms, and not least the standard of beauty so that they are seen as better than most people (Tifada, VOI 2021). This was due to the strength or power they had as people who were currently controlling Indonesia, ranging from economic, social, educational, and even political. The striking difference in their skin color is also one of the factors why inequality and social level were felt during the colonial period. It is hard to believe that Indonesians had no choice to follow what they, the Dutch, wanted. Indonesians had been enslaved to fulfill the life of the colonizers even to the point of being unfit to have a higher level job or even go to school. That was because Indonesian people back then believe, those who are born from the Dutch lineage or come from well-known and wealthy families are more likely to be successful in living their life. It is also a plus for those who were born to be beautiful or handsome, even without skill, they might tackle the cruel social life (Annisa 2020).

With the pressure they receive even to be beautiful, they begin to believe and accept the existing beauty standards that being beautiful and being socially accepted is beautiful like their invaders or Dutch women; high bridge of nose, wide eyes, and white skin (Tifada, Peran Belanda Membentuk Standar Kecantikan Wanita Nusantara 2021).

They begin to dislike their natural skin and the shape of their body or face. They worry that they are considered as people from the lower class because their appearance does not match the beauty standards set by the colonizers which are then accepted by the wider community. They are also worried that their presence will not be considered or their voice will not be heard by those who have succeeded in meeting these standards or those who come from well-known families and have status in social life. This greatly affects the way Indonesian people think, especially women, which in the end has been blindsided by the fact that to be beautiful, we must have a white skin like white people do so that their lives can be happier and are no longer looked down on by the society (Annisa 2020). Indonesians began to change their appearance by adopting the colonizer cultures. That was a way to win over their colonizers so that the Dutch would be aware of their presence and not look at them for their differences (Moritz, Werner and Collani 2007).

Dutch women's beauty standards are increasingly widespread with the role of the media pioneered by the Dutch themselves, which is what makes Western beauty standards widely accepted by the Indonesian people. They make leaflets promoting beauty products or everyday life items whose models are Dutch women. Starting from how beauty products such as soap, perfume, lotion, powder use white-skin-women or Dutch women and then move on to using Indonesian women who have beauty standards similar to the colonizers as advertising objects (Janti 2018).

The commercial media even preferred Dutch women to Indonesian women, so most of the advertisements in Indonesia, at that time, were Dutch women. They are reluctant to use native Indonesian women for their advertisements because they are believed to be less attractive women and may not achieve their sales target. Indonesian women started competing to be beautiful in order to attract the attention of the people who saw them and slowly began to apply Western beauty standards as the true ideal of beauty that they should look beautiful with white skin accompanied by big beautiful eyes, high nose, nice hair that is not outdated, and a slim body (Beauty standard 2021). This proves how big and strong the colonizers who stopped in Indonesia were. All cultures and trends are dominated by those in power and they cannot refuse what the colonizers gave instead as a form of progress of a civilization.

Things like this subconsciously affect their mental state that no matter how hard they try to meet the existing beauty standards, they will still never be able to be beautiful as the standard has been set. They must be aware that they come from different backgrounds and different genes. A study by Petric (2020) entitled “Beauty Bullying” stated that to be beautiful, people have to struggle and be mocked by society to be fit in that beauty standard. Many women even went through mentally problems such as stress, depression, anxieties, and inferiority complex. They think that it is important to be beautiful since other than that, people will not recognize you or pay attention to you. Beauty is the only thing that matters in society and without it, we might not fit the beauty standard, myth, or stereotype (Petric 2020).

Along with the development of the era, the role of the media in promoting beauty trends or beauty standards is much more attractive and convincing (Rizkiyah and Hapsari 2019). One of them is how beauty standards are brought through phenomenal culture, namely Korean Wave or Korean *Hallyu*; the popularization of Korean cultures and products in the whole world which developed in 2002 (Trunfio n.d.). With the rapid development of the media and the high interest of the Indonesian people that began in 2002, the phenomena of Korean *Hallyu* or Korean Wave has influenced any structure of life in Indonesia starting from Korean dramas and Korean music, Korean food, Korean style, Korean makeup, and Korean beauty products (Sinaga 2017). The high interest of the Indonesian people towards Korean popular culture makes Korea reluctant to continue promoting its culture, including Korean beauty standards depicted through Korean idols or actresses from the ginseng country. The beauty they have is considered to have an attractive beauty and different from the Western beauty standards. Korean beauty products also have unique, interesting, attractive, adorable, and eye-catching packaging, besides that, of course, how these products use advertising stars who have perfect skin conditions without the slightest gap at all (Wang 2022).

In a beauty advertisement, a product will use a model that meets the existing criteria or standards regarding beauty in general, such as white skin, smooth skin, no pores, glowing, and fair (Puspitasari and Suryadi n.d.). The model in the beauty advertisement, actresses in television and influencers in social media is expected to be an inspiration or even the main idea about beauty (Stepfanni Rahardjo n.d.) The

incessant standard of beauty that is promoted through the media certainly makes women not confident in what they have or their natural beauty because their beauty is no longer appropriate due to the established standards promoted through the media (Rizkiyah and Hapsari 2019).

Media has been promoted the existing beauty standard and the complexities of Indonesian women which somehow can make them developed a shame, hatred, and inferiority toward their appearance and self-confidence (Rizkiyah and Hapsari 2019). Quoting Naomi Wolf, beauty advertisements on television or social media have made women depressed and stressed over the existing beauty standards because they feel they are unable to fit the standards (Dukut 2005). In addition, they might receive so many insults about their appearance and even willing to hurt themselves by starving just to meet the beauty standards promoted by the media (Dukut 2005).

The media is too touting about “white skin” through skin lightening beauty products in order to make the audiences believe that beauty products containing whitening can make dark skinned women become more beautiful and happier (Gill, Kausar and Khan 2021). Sentences that are made with frills are possible to attract the attention of the audience through advertisements for beauty products such as "this product is believed to change your skin to become brighter and more radiant in an instant", "clinical and halal tested", "make you beautiful instantly", "say no to dark skin", "light skin can make you more confident", and so on (Gill, Kausar and Khan 2021). As for advertisements that use the favorite models of the people who have

beautiful faces that meet beauty standards in general, it proves how a media also keeps up with the times, such as Pond's beauty products that use Wendy, the singer of popular group from South Korea Red Velvet who is keen by both women and men, as the ad star so that when we use Pond's we can be as beautiful as Wendy (Arsitowati 2017).

In order to make an item selling well, an advertisement must be able to make the item look attractive and have persuasive language to attract the attention of the audiences (Gill, Kausar and Khan 2021). Similarly, in promoting beauty products, there is a target message to be addressed and conveyed for the audiences. The message has been prepared related to what item is being sold by the producer who handles the advertising of the item in the media (Aligwe, Nwafor and Alegu 2018). Hall believes that the meaning contained in a media can have many meanings for those who receive or absorb the information (Laughey 2007). He stated that communication failure represented in society is caused by how people failed to understand what the media is trying to convey (Laughey 2007).

Media is a deadly tool and a way to satisfy the desires of the audience. The message conveyed by a medium of course has great power to attract the attention of the audience so that the message can be accepted and embodied (Aligwe, Nwafor and Alegu 2018). Those who are responsive to an advertisement or any other medium tend to be affected by a message conveyed by a media compared to those who are not responsive or do not feel influenced by the intention message of a product (Damon 2005). For Hall, not everyone can accept the message conveyed by a media because

each audiences receive a different intent, meaning, and purpose from a media (Laughey 2007).

A study conducted by Fandy Zenas Tjoe and Kyung-Tae Kim in 2016, “The Effect of Korean Wave on Consumer’s Purchase Intention of Korean Cosmetic Products in Indonesia” stated that Korean Wave has affected Indonesia’s purchase intention on buying Korean cosmetic products. That Indonesia likes beauty products from Korea because of what the media shows about Korea; developed country with high technologies, actors and actresses who look attractive and neat, interesting shows, and songs that are pleasant to hear. This can give Indonesians positive aspects and positive images toward Korea, so that cultural connoisseurs are reluctant and believe in their products, that the products are not just random products (Tjoe and Kim 2016). Indonesian people who are open to Korean culture, keen or interested in Korean culture, and follow Korean culture or the Korean Wave, are more likely to buy products from Korea than those who do not follow or are not open to that culture at all. With the help of the media regarding the positive image of Korea, the desire to continue to buy products from Korea can help economic relations between Indonesia and Korea, how high Indonesia's interest in beauty products from Korea is (Tjoe and Kim 2016).

“Korean Beauty Market’s Trendsetter: A Case Study on Mediheal” a study by Andi Aisyah Nurul Alifyanti Hidayah, Lim Li Chen, Poon Wai-Chuen Eugene, and Morakinyo Dada claimed that Mediheal tries to reach its customer by giving them an

exclusive mask that can treat all skin types problems (Hidayah, et al. 2019). All masks are made and adapted to facial skin conditions whose composition is made from natural ingredients that can give the impression of a glowing face without make-up after wearing a mask from Mediheal (Hidayah, et al. 2019). This is what makes Mediheal best-selling in the market because they do not prioritize body beauty only, but also how the face must be paid more attention if you want to have a dazzling, radiant, and smooth appearance (Hidayah, et al. 2019).

What has been portrayed by Korean dramas, Korean idols, and the Korean influencers successfully giving the audiences an influence or a new concept of beauty that having a fair skin, glowing skin, not textured, and no pores are the reason why Indonesians are starting to questioning about what are the skincare used by the Koreans; how they can have such smooth, clear, and clean skin (Arsitowati 2017). Hereby, the media plays a big part in promoting Korean beauty or Korean looks that can influence the perspective of the people who see the ads to have the same beauty as the Koreans (Prianti 2013). The media, with an uproar, is busy promoting the new beauty standard of Indonesia that unconsciously affects Indonesian inferiority complex about the beauty of Korean women (Puspitasari and Suryadi n.d.). This is the real beauty, beautiful like Koreans, whose skin is clean, not textured, not porous, bright, glowing, and white (Prianti 2013). Some may not agree with this change in Indonesian beauty standards because Indonesians will never be able to have skin like Koreans (Halim and Kiatkawsin 2021).

According to a book review about *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (Dukut 2005) the meaning of “beauty” itself has changed day by day by how the media promotes the word “the beauty of a women” or “beautiful women”. Women who have dark skin, too skinny, or too fat are considered to be ugly. Meanwhile, those who look like the depicted standard of beauty in the media and society are considered to be beautiful; have a white skin, fair skin, not too skinny, and not too fat (Arsitowati 2017).

As what already represented in a study by Winta Hari Arsitowati in 2017 about “Kecantikan Wanita Korea Sebagai Konsep Kecantikan Ideal Dalam Iklan New Pond’s White Beauty: *What Our Brand Ambassador Are Saying*”, she stated that the inferiority experienced by Southeast Asians, especially Indonesians, has influenced a beauty product called Pond’s to make its products respected by people who are experiencing Korean Wave. The products are made with ingredients that are currently selling well in the Korean market such as ginseng and saffron. The model used is also a model from Korea itself, namely the singer from the Red Velvet group, Wendy. Wendy is shown as the ideal beauty face of Korea because it fits the characteristics of Korean beauty; white, smooth, and glowing face. Everything is about Korean, even the advertisements plunged into frills to be beautiful like Korean women. The greatness of the media and brand ambassadors in promoting this product makes the audience even more convinced to buy this product from Pond’s because the words are so bewitching and the beauty emitted by the brand ambassador. Things like this can move the audience to buy these

products, especially Southeast Asians with tropical climates, thus enabling them to have darker skin than Koreans. The desire to be beautiful like Koreans or having a Korean Look is certainly motivated by the fact that Korea is also part of Asia and is considered superior to other Asian countries in introducing their beauty trends, so there is a possibility for them to have skin like Koreans. The possibility of colonization is also found in Arsitowati's case study that a country's power can dominate a country that is interested in that culture, and that Indonesians themselves have most likely been colonized by Korean beauty standards (Arsitowati 2017).

The high level of inferiority among Indonesian women is also due to the media's game of promoting beauty standards. A study by Diana Puspitasari and Yudi Suryadi in 2020 about “Discourse on the shifting of local beauty: Concepts in an Easternization era” claimed that beauty products in Indonesia has changed the way of promotion which initially focused on Indonesian beauty with local products that emphasize the beauty of Indonesian women and basic ingredients from Indonesia shifted to natural beauty from Asian countries such as Korea, China, and Japan. The ingredients used by beauty products usually contain a bleach who claims to be able to make users have white skin quickly and instantly in just a matter of weeks. Coupled with the low self-confidence that Indonesians have, they have succeeded in making local beauty products inspired to use ingredients from Korea, China, and Japan so that they can have white skin like Korean, Chinese, and Japanese women (Puspitasari and Suryadi n.d.).

Therefore, this study intended to find a gap between previous studies and current research, to find out what are the striking differences between one study and another which will then be compared with the current study by adding some information that was not included in the previous study. Studies about Korean looks, Korean beauty standards, and Korean beauty have been conducted these past several years. It can be seen in a study by Abie Besman, Rani Septrina, Putri Halleyana Adrikni Rahman entitled “The Change of Beauty Standard, A Korean Wave Phenomenon Findings from Bandung City” in 2018 that this study surely has different object also issues with what the writer is going to write. While that study is more concerned about how the Korean beauty standard has affected Indonesian beauty standards in terms of plastic surgery (Besman, Rahman and Septrina 2018), the present study will put its focus on how the Korean wave doesn't always influence them to do plastic surgery.

With Korean beauty products selling well in Indonesia, it is enough to make the consumers happy with the significant changes they have experienced. Besides, plastic surgery is so expensive and it takes a lot of consideration to do the surgery, people prefer to play safe by buying beauty products from Korea. Also many women don't want to change the shape of their face even though it happens to some people.

Previous study by Aldilla and Dhita's (2021) entitled “The Impact of Black Female Influencers on Transnational Korean Beauty: A Case Study of Two Black Beauty Vloggers” put their focus on how Korean beauty has influenced dark skin women,

especially two black beauty vloggers, by giving impact about how black women able to adapt and continue to strive to create a Korean Look for black women despite the limitations of beauty products that don't match their skin color or tone (Audy S. and Hapsarani 2021). Contrary to previous studies, the present study wants to prove that not everyone believes in their dark skin, especially Indonesians. Although previous studies explained how the Youtuber continued to use beauty products from Korea even though the product did not have a suitable skin tone, so that users and viewers were still proud of their skin color and confident that Korean Look could be applied to their skin, it is opposite to Indonesian people who prefer to use Korean beauty products so that their skin can look like a Korean woman or succeed in realizing a Korean Look on themselves. With this, the role of the media does not always build the confidence of the audience but can also influence the consciousness of the audiences.

To prove the correlation between how the media represents Korean beauty standards in a brand and the inferiority of its audience, this study will contradict the previous studies. The first study entitled "Discourse on the shifting of local beauty: Concepts in an Easternization era" (2020) by Diana Puspitasari and Yudi Suryadi and "Kecantikan Wanita Korea Sebagai Konsep Kecantikan Ideal Dalam Iklan New Pond's White Beauty: *What Our Brand Ambassador Are Saying*" (2021) by Winta Hari Arsitowati where the two previous studies used the discourse analysis as the method to find out how beauty products can affect the inferiority of their audiences. Current studies will explore further how a beauty advertisement can affect the inferiority of its

audience by collecting a lot of data which is done by interview method and assisted by Stuart Hall's theory to help solve this problem of how an audience can be influenced by their inferiority by the messages conveyed by an audience that is being represented in beauty product advertisement.

Defeated with its inferiority complex and in order to remain accepted in the community, beauty products with Korean elements emerged and even from Korea itself by starting to open branches in Indonesia. Hereby, the present study will use two advertisements from *Laneige* which promote two different products but have the same result in brightening the skin or avoiding the face from dullness. Beforehand, *Laneige* is one of the beauty products from Korea which is very well known in Indonesia. Starring Korean actresses with criteria that match this product, people believe this product is a good and guaranteed product. Contains organic ingredients and can provide perfect and natural results, not a few who buy this product, and it is very popular among Indonesian women who believe that this product can make them look like the new beauty standard, Korean looks. *Laneige* has a variety of beauty products such as powders, foundations, eyebrow pencils, eyeshadows, blushes, lipsticks, and also skincare products (Laneige: Feel The Glow n.d.).

Laneige certainly provides the best offers through advertisements available on its youtube account. The advertisements are also made as convincing and attractive as possible to attract the hearts of the buyers. Skin care products from *Laneige* are selling

well in Indonesia because their advertisements claim to protect their users from dull skin, uneven dark skin, large pores, and texture. As for comparison ads, which are broadcast from *Laneige*'s own Youtube channel, each ad always promotes the best products which, if purchased, will not disappoint. *Laneige* also uses convincing actresses like Song Hye Kyo, Lee Sung Kyung, and Kim Yoo Jung that meet Korean beauty standards and the claims made by *Laneige* regarding its skincare products.

To continue, the aim of this present study is to understand the perspective and the view of the audiences toward two YouTube advertisements owned by *Laneige* in promoting *Laneige* Clear-C Advanced Effector and *Laneige* Radian-c Cream by seeing how these products promote or represent the Korean beauty standard that is familiar in Indonesia. In addition, the writer also wants to know how this advertisement can affect the inferiority of the audience when watching the two advertisements from *Laneige* and whether the complex inferiority experienced by the audience is related to the existing beauty standards..

Moreover, to find out by how the audiences received the messages these two products, decoding by Stuart Hall used as a theory of this study and tool to analyze the type of the audiences in receiving the encoding messages from *Laneige*. The way the audience receives the message that has been delivered will be divide the audience into three types which are dominant type, negotiated type, and oppositional type. These ways of decoding belong to the audiences used to find the correlation between how

beauty standard that being represent in the *Laneige* advertisements can affect the audiences' inferiority complex.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

1. How does the Korean beauty standard represented in *Laneige* advertisements?
2. How does *Laneige* advertisements affect the inferiority complex of Indonesian people?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. This study tends to determine the impact of beauty standards that have been built in society.
2. This study proposes an understanding toward how the media plays its parts to promote the beauty standards through this product by letting the audiences have different perspectives and responses toward the advertisements in accordance with how *Laneige* presented a new standard of being beautiful.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to prove how a beauty standard portrayed in the beauty product ads owned by *Laneige* can affect the inferiority of the audience. In addition, this study also aims to prove that the media plays a major role in promoting beauty standards in order to motivate or persuade the audiences to try those beauty products advertised by *Laneige* and to be beautiful like the advertisement stars. The writer surely believes that the media has built the concept of beauty standard itself due to big

phenomena amidst the society, for instance Korean Wave, with the help of the audiences toward the media.

Since these topics are hot issues in Indonesia, it hopes that this study will give the reader the awareness to love themselves, to appreciate how they look or who they are, and that they should not have to worry about how we have to follow the phenomenal beauty standard which is the Korean look. This study will help another researcher who has the same topic and issues to be discussed about as additional information and data sources to prove that the beauty standards have a special correlation with inferiority complexes as what is depicted in society by the media.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Korean Wave/*Hallyu* : Globalization of Korean culture starts from traditional and modern cultures such as K-Pop, K-Drama, K-Fashion, K-Beauty, and K-Food, the majority of which are followed by teenagers aged 18 years and over (KOREA.net n.d.) (Halim and Kiatkawsin 2021)
2. Korean beauty standard : Beauty standard that was set by the Koreans which they are supposed to have a pale or white skin, smooth face condition, youthful look, glowing and fair skin, no big pores, and no dull skin (Asia Society n.d.) (Arsitowati 2017).

3. Decoding : A long process belongs to the audiences by how they receive and perceive a message from a media or viewing a message from an advertisements and any other medium of a media (Laughey 2007).
4. Inferiority Complex : Inferior feelings toward the superior because we feel no better than what the superior has or has which subconsciously influences our subconscious to act or behave or look like those who are superior (Moritz, Werner and Collani 2007).