

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Beauty standard has been a dynamic concept through time by time, mostly caused by the development of media and technology. This issue brings a shift to the beauty standard itself and is successfully constructed by the society since what they consume from the media, especially through advertisement. There is also an advertisement script in the commercial that influences how customers view the marketed goods. Advertising also has a significant impact on setting trends and models, as well as developing consciousness and constructing human's thought (Rachman, 2021). The use of attention-getting symbols in advertisements aims to influence the audience, and these symbols may also be translated successfully and affect the audience (Bungin, 2008).

As the development of the media goes by, and so does the beauty standard itself, hence, the shifting of beauty standard has become a global issue that is wrapped through the skincare advertisements nowadays. The shifting is oriented to the Western and East Asian, exactly Korean skin tone, that is white skinned tone. Therefore, the targeted audience perceives the meaning of the advertisement that

beauty is white, hence, they neither consume the brand that the advertisement promotes, instead, they consume the beauty myth that the advertisement brings.

Hence, the phenomenon of the shifting of beauty standard itself brings an effect to the skincare market in Indonesia, especially for the body care, that is body lotion. Historically, beauty issues are always concerned about women. The word 'beauty' itself is commonly constructed only for women, until the existence of feminine beauty ideal that refers to a set of standards for attributes that are regarded to enhance a woman's physical appeal. Many women over the world are affected by it, albeit the characteristics differ by nation and culture. Furthermore, the manufacturers increase their skincare production that has many functions due to the demands such as for brightening, moisturizing, and whitening the skin. Skin whitening itself is the latest skincare trend since the beauty standard nowadays is shifting from brown skin to white skin. The shifting of beauty standard can be seen for example in the *Citra Tone Up Cream* advertisement about the stereotypes that exist in Indonesian society, which if we, exactly women have dark skin, we are judged not to fit in the existing beauty standards.

However, this kind of beauty issues surprisingly does not only affect for women, yet men too. Beauty has recently been concerned by males too. There is a growing tendency among men to be concerned about their appearance, not in a feminine sense, but rather because they are recognizing that males have different demands than females. As a result of this tendency, manufacturers are attempting to fulfil the demand of men by producing personal care products, or called as male

grooming. According to the most recent update on this trend in Indonesia, the market value of this specific male grooming product has increased by roughly 14% from 2009 to 2010 (Herdiyanti and Titus, 2013). It can be proven from the existence of some specific male skincare from particular brand in Indonesia such as Vaseline for men for their skincare ranges are quite complete such as face wash, serum and moisturizer (cream) for men.

Since beauty issues are no longer only for women, in this current time, men also need to take care of their appearance. As not only women who need beauty care, men also care more for themselves (Khuong and Duyen 2016). In Indonesia, the beauty industry for men are increasing. From 2010 to 2011, Nielsen data showed a 13.5 percent increase in the Indonesian market value of male grooming goods, as well as the increases in household spending, purchase frequency, and volume per trip on male grooming products. It can be assumed that the consumption of whitening also happen in men, especially in Indonesia, remembering that Indonesia's beauty standard has been shifting following the bandwagon.

Thus, it can be assumed that the whitening concept for men is slightly different from women, which whitening in boys is more about brightening and clearer skin, and it does not eliminate the masculinity side. However, it can still be assumed that the shifting of beauty standard affects the consumption of male skincare, including the consumption of whitening. The rise in the number of men who are increasingly concerned about their appearance and grooming, commonly known as metrosexuals, demonstrates that the beauty business is no longer just focused on

women (Fen Chong and Kaur 2019). While metro sexuality is becoming more prevalent in society, it suggests another trend: male skin whitening. This movement subverts two gender stereotypes: beauty practices and light skin as a beauty ideal, both of which are generally associated with women.

The depiction of masculinity character in Indonesia still seems to be hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity specifies ideal male behavior in society and is often intended to justify male control over women, therefore supporting patriarchal social institutions (Connell, 1987, 2005). Furthermore, according to Yuliyanti et al., (2017), the perspective of ideal masculinity in Indonesia depicted as men who look firm or assertive and manly and gallant leader. It is also delivered by some of male grooming product advertisement especially facial wash. In the advertisement, mostly the model looks so muscular and strapping or sturdy. Moreover, their goals are just to be clean and fresh, not to be white.

From the explanation above, the fact is that in Indonesia, the tendency of male grooming behaviour is to be more 'clean' and 'fresh' rather than to be 'white'. Men are increasingly use skincare products such as anti-aging cream, eye cream, energy-boosting, that mostly concern about their goals to have 'healthy' skin such as to be fresh, clean, cool and moisturized (Herdiyanti and Titus, 2013). Men's grooming products are rarely focused on whitening, since they used to treat their skin only to sanify their skin, such as by using oil control, deep pore cleansing, anti-dark spot and acne treatment, yet since beauty standard nowadays is shifting from brown to white

skin, and so is men's grooming, they tend to use a whitening product especially body lotion.

Men who tend to take care of themselves may frequently be called as new man, or could be metrosexuals. According to Mitchell and Lodia (2017), metro sexuality is associated with lower levels of masculinity, but not with femininity or gay desire. Hence, society has perceived a man's metrosexual side as a sign of his diminishing masculinity. Due to the association between women identity and an unhealthy obsession with looks, some people think that metrosexual males completely lose their identity (Putranto, et al., 2020, even for sports. Particularly, men who engage in sports that are stigmatized as feminine, such as cheerleading, are frequently mocked or tormented for doing so since they defy expectations of masculinity (Jewell, 2015).

Since men are more aware about their appearance than they have ever been, this study concerns more about young male consumers who live in urban area, especially in capital cities in Indonesia such as Surabaya, Jakarta and so on. An urban consumer, especially young male, tends to be more flexible towards their masculinity identity. They feel like they have a freedom to choose their masculinity identity since they are not being confined and bounded towards their choice to express their masculinity identity. They are not being confined by the traditional masculinity depiction that is constructed by the society itself. The traditional masculinity identity said that masculine man is the one who have dark skin, the one who are muscular and sweaty. However, an urban lifestyle, especially for Z Generation provides a freedom

idea for man to express their own masculinity, and that is where a new man and metrosexual have started to exist. Indonesian social media users consists of all age groups yet they are currently dominated by the generations Y and Z of 18 to 34 years of age (Putranto et.al, 2020). Hence, this study concerns about young male consumers of *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion who follow its official Instagram account.

This study more concerns about the urban young male consumer since people who live in urban area tend to be more privileged than the one who lives in rural area. People who live in metropolitan regions have a higher income and more time to spend on their looks and lifestyle, as well as connect with their feminine side (Brune, 2004; Donna, 2004; Donoghue, 2005). In the other words, the urban consumers can get the things that they want more easily and they can fulfil their wish list easier, especially in accessing social media. After primary and secondary needs, there have to be tertiary needs that need to be fulfilled. A consumer who lives in urban area is identically more often to afford the tertiary things that they want, such as skincare products. It can be assumed that the tendency of an urban consumer is easily to spend their money to buy a skincare.

Along with the shifting of beauty standards in Indonesia, there finally appears a local skincare brand that represents whitening concept as part of the beauty myth in Indonesian advertisement, called *Scarlett Whitening*. *Scarlett Whitening* is one of Indonesian skincare brand that was built in 2017 by Felicya Angelista. This skincare brand has various kind of treatment of body and face care, such as body lotion, body scrub, serum, day and night cream. This study will be concerning on the consumption

of the body lotion, since it contains of the strongest construction of beauty myth in the product.

The strong beauty myth also can be seen from the title of the product itself, that is ‘whitening’. On the other hand, Felicya strengthen the beauty myth about ‘whitening’ through the way she promotes her body lotion products by giving a testimonial to the audience or target, by showing her arms ‘before’ using the *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion, compared to the ‘after’ using the *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion. It shows the result of using her body lotion product. The before one looks darker, and the after one looks fairer. Felicya implicitly expects that the audience will perceive the message of the advertisement that ‘to be beautiful, you have to be white’, as the following picture below:



Figure 1. The Advertisement of Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion

Scarlett Whitening was first actively promoted by the owner itself, Felicya Angelista. She started to promote her own product via social media, especially Instagram, since she had 20 million followers in 2017, hence, she saw it as a big opportunity, and recognized herself as a celebrity too, she would like to endorse her friends to promote *Scarlett Whitening*. As what she had expected, the demand that she got was quite high, so she continue promoting her product through her Instagram and also *Scarlett Whitening's* official Instagram account, named @scarlett_whitening that has already had 5 million followers. It can be assumed that Instagram is a great platform for selling that has a huge impact towards the seller. According to We Are Social statistics, the Instagram app ranked sixth in the globe in the category of most extensively used social networks as of January 2021, with 1.2 billion accounts (Kemp, 2021). Instagram is indeed known to be one of the platforms that can be used as a marketing communication medium to support the growth of a brand.

As the years go by, there are more and more *Scarlett Whitening* enthusiasts, not only women, but also men starting to use this Scarlett Whitening body lotion, since *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion is not only targeted for women, yet for men too, hence, this product is claimed as unisex product. To gain more male consumer, *Scarlett Whitening* does not produce a specific male grooming product such as Scarlett Whitening for men, yet they try another strategy to ensure the audience that *Scarlett Whitening* is a unisex grooming product. *Scarlett Whitening* starts to increase their brand awareness by promoting their product by endorsing some male actors, to show that their brand can be used by men too. *Scarlett Whitening's* Brand

Ambassadors recently are an actor and male public figures to shoot the targeted market widely.

The action that *Scarlett Whitening* takes to increase their brand awareness is affecting their followers, especially male followers on their official Instagram. It shows a significant number in their followers column, the researcher found out 11 from each 20 followers that the researcher counted, and it is assumed that it is a significant and dominant number.



Figure 2. Song Joong Ki, the official Brand Ambassador of Scarlett Whitening

As the attached picture above, *Scarlett Whitening* is using Song Joong Ki, Korean actor as their brand ambassador currently to gain their brand awareness more. The researcher discovered that in TC Candler's official website "Independent Critics"

published a list of the world's most attractive and beautiful men and women in the middle of 2019, and Song Joong Ki was listed in those 100 nomination for the most beautiful faces of TC Candler.

Unlike common promotional contents of grooming product in Indonesia that uses male figure dominantly depicted with hegemonic masculinity, this promotional content uses a different type of masculinity. Soong Jong Ki is a South Korean actor who becomes an ambassador of *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion and frequently appears in @scarlett_whitening's official Instagram account as an advertisement. A South Korean masculinity type is one of the indications of dynamic masculinity (Praptika, 2016). The mainstream or conventional stereotypes or hegemonic masculinity side that related to power and strength are not applicable to the characteristic of South Korean masculinity. In other words, South Korean males have varied ways to express their masculinity, as well as different perspectives on what it means to be manly. They tend to create a new kind of masculinity that is later known as soft masculinity. Soft masculinity is defined by Geng Song as "male images that seem extraordinarily feminine to Western sight." (Geng Song, 2016). Soft Masculinity can be seen in cultural items from all throughout East Asia, but the emergence and export of Korean pop culture stands out (Ainslie, 2017). Hence, in this position, it can be assumed that the term "beautiful" is not formed only for women yet men too.

Furthermore, the purpose of *Scarlett Whitening* using Song Joong Ki as a Brand Ambassador is to make him an example of beautiful face of men, that is white

skinned and pore less. Not only once, *Scarlett Whitening* tries to gain brand awareness for male by posting an actor (Brand Ambassador)'s photos with their body lotion product repeatedly. The existence of a male brand ambassador in *Scarlett Whitening*'s official Instagram account could be depicted as their product, especially that body lotion is a unisex product, where men can wear them too with the same exact function, that is whitening. The producer expects the audiences to accept that whitening product could be consumed either for women or for men too. Hence, it can be concluded that *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion is also included as male grooming product in Indonesia. *Scarlett Whitening* also implicitly tells the society that beauty and whitening idea also happens in men, not only in women's circumstance.

Actually, there are particular skincare manufacturer in Indonesia that produce specific male grooming product since the arise of the number of man's demand towards their appearance. One of the famous skincare product that has a specific male skincare range is Vaseline Men from Unilever. Vaseline Men offers three different types of personal care products: face cleanser, face moisturizer, and body wash. It once had Darius Sinatria, an Indonesian actor, as its brand ambassador, but now Joe Taslim has taken over. Even though Vaseline also produces a brightening body lotion for men, yet their most consumed male grooming products are their face wash, face cream and body wash. Their skincare products are functioning to moisturize, brighten, freshen, clean and cool the skin. Compared to *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion, Vaseline and Nivea men never have a product that claimed as 'whitening',

meanwhile *Scarlett Whitening* is the one and only body lotion product that clearly offers ‘whitening’ as the goals, no longer only about being fresh and clean only.

The researcher also compiled some previous studies to find the gap and to accomplish this study. The previous studies that the researcher use are talking about the same issues, that is the shifting of representation of beauty standard in Indonesia, the consumption of body lotion that brings a beauty myth issue and whitening consumption on male consumer or male grooming. First, a study of the representation of Indonesian women’s ideal skin through advertisement conducted by Nurlia and Hidayati using semiotics approach found that image advertising represents the meaning of beauty by having bright white skin and is not striped. This follows the stereotype that applies in Indonesian society where beautiful women are those who have white and bright skin.

The second previous research is a study conducted by Windasari, Pratiwi and Yusriana about how the consumer’s reception towards the concept of beauty in the advertisement by using reception analysis method through an interview with particular participants and it applies the Encoding Decoding Model by Stuart Hall, based on the theory, the result shows that there are three categories in the advertisement. The third study written by by Herdianti and Titus is aiming to investigate the trend of male customer behaviour toward face cleansers products, using quantitative study by questionnaires and FGD (Forum Group Discussion), and it finds that face cleansers are a high-potential market in Indonesia with over 80% of participants utilizing the category now.

Subsequently, the fourth previous study of the depiction of Indonesian woman's ideal skin done by Pratiwi analysed by using Roland Barthes's semiotics, has the result that shows that the representation of white women deliberately shaped by the media is still very strong. The last study of representation of male skin whitening was done by Huey Fen Cheong and Surinderpal Kapur by applying semiotic approach, with the result that shows that a male grooming product replaces key notions behind skin whitening, e.g., replacing skin whitening and skin lightening with skin brightening and non-whitening.

The expansion of male skincare existence could probably affect men's behaviour too towards their appearance. The fact strongly said that in the last decade, men's masculinity has changed, and their concern towards their appearance is getting increased. It can be proved by the increasing of men's grooming product, yet there is still a distinction within men and women's concern about grooming (skincare) product, since the beauty standard itself shows that ideal women have to be white skinned, yet men do not really focused on whitening but more on brightening and clean. Men and femininity are separated by the male version of skin whitening and fair skin, which creates a masculine space inside the feminine realm of skin whitening. Antifemininity creates a new gender boundary by distinguishing between male and female skin whitening. Consumption has spoken to a female consumer, establishing her as a commodity to be stared at as well as an active purchaser (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998). With the disintegration of the consumption–production dualism, consumption is no longer only a female activity, but rather an active one for

male consumers (Firat, 1993). As a result, retail purchasing has become a more acceptable practice for men in their quest for self-expression (Firat, 1993; Kacen, 2000; Gill et al., 2005).

Those mentioned previous studies firstly can enlighten the researcher to find how media, especially advertisement have a big power to influence society's mindset about beauty standard, how they represent the concept of beauty in the advertisement and how some people accept an advertisement's message towards the concept of beauty. The researcher's study is supposed to be an improvement for those previous studies by implementing some approaches from those previous researches. Hence, the researcher tries to improve the study by not only depicting the representation of beauty, yet by exploring the concept of beauty, especially whitening through the male consumer of *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion's point of view, exploring their urge of using *Scarlett Whitening* products; whether they consume the product to fulfill society's beauty standard or just want to consume the benefits.

To fulfil the previous study, the researcher is doing an observation to the male consumers of *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion with the intention to discover the concept of whitening and beauty through the product that they use, especially their consumption motive as well as how they define their masculinity during their consumption. As the discussion and the explanation above mainly describes about the shifting of beauty standard in Indonesia, it may be assumed that the male consumer of *Scarlett Whitening* use the product due to fulfilling the society's expectation about beauty standard in Indonesia that have to be white skinned. The consumption theory

by Mike Featherstone is a precise method applied in this research since the observation is to discover about the mindset effects of consumers about beauty through the consumption of whitening advertisement through *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion. By the help of R.W. Connel's theory of Hegemonic Masculinity and other masculinity concept, this study could also find the concept of masculinity in male consumption of skin whitening product. This study uses ethnography approach since it is a field research that involves a respondent to be interviewed.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the researcher states two problem statements in this analysis below,

1. How do the male consumers define their masculinity during the consumption of *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion?
2. How is whitening idea constructed in *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion advertisements consumed by male consumers in @scarlett_whitening Instagram account?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The purpose of this research associated with statement of the problems is to reveal about how do the male consumers define their masculinity during the consumption of *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion as well as how the whitening idea constructed in *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion advertisements is consumed by male consumers in @scarlett_whitening Instagram account.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research tries to discover the concept of beauty that is presented through Indonesian skincare brand body lotion product named *Scarlett Whitening* in Indonesia given by male consumers, and to reveal the masculinity identity in male consumer of *Scarlett Whitening* body lotion during their consumption. In analyzing the concept of beauty in society through *Scarlett Whitening* brand, the researcher uses consumption theory by Mike Featherstone. This research also tries to discover the probable effect of social construction of beauty concept that is brought by *Scarlett Whitening* skincare brand toward women and men's self-confidence and their self-identity. Therefore, this study also aims to reveal how people receive the concept of beauty in their mind so that they can determine what is called beautiful and what is not. The findings of this study will contribute to the benefit of common people that beauty standard is only constructed by the society itself, and the effects of mass media play an important role in societies today.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- a. Beauty Standard: A sets of ideology about beauty that is socially constructed through time and culture (Wolf, 2002)
- b. Consumption: A method for combining actions in order to make use of economic resources. Consumption also refers to having an object or

service, owning it, using it, or disposing of it in order to meet certain demands (Featherstone, 2007).

- c. Hegemonic Masculinity: Other masculinities, particularly marginalized masculinities, were set apart from hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005)
- d. New Man: possibly the most prevalent and persistent constructs of masculinity that have been circulating in Britain over the past ten years (Gill, 2003).
- e. Scarlett Whitening: Local products engaged in cosmetics and skin care (Trisia and Hasanah Sudrajat 2021)
- f. Whitening: An attempt to achieve a skin color to be whiter than their own (Noe 2002)