

## **The Construction and Adoption of Beauty Standard by Youth Female as the Consumer of K-Beauty Products in Indonesia**

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### **Abstrak**

*Setiap budaya memiliki definisi tersendiri mengenai kecantikan. Budaya berkaitan dengan proses bagaimana pengetahuan membentuk individu dalam mengkonstruksi dan menginterpretasikan dunianya. Dua garis pemikiran tesis ini yaitu konsep budaya dan jumlah konsumsi produk kecantikan di Indonesia yang berfokus pada pergeseran produk kecantikan lokal ke produk kecantikan Korea oleh perempuan Indonesia generasi Z. Teori konstruksi realitas sosial digunakan untuk menganalisis konsumen perempuan Generasi Z terkait produk K-beauty yang menggambarkan standar kecantikan mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan paradigma konstruktivisme dan teori konstruksi realitas social sebagai cara untuk menganalisis topik ini. Hal ini dikarenakan penelitian ini menganalisis konstruksi konsep standar kecantikan wanita muda Indonesia yang menjadi konsumen produk kecantikan Korea, dan menganalisis bagaimana mereka mengadopsi dan mempersepsikan konsep standar kecantikan. Wawancara satu per satu dilakukan dengan informan terpilih. Terdapat tiga informan utama dan 2 informan pendukung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Media sosial, TV, film, iklan, komunitas, dan key opinion leader telah memberikan kontribusi dalam membuat standar kecantikan. Korean wave telah memberikan peran signifikan dalam menggeser standar kecantikan yang ada. Masuknya produk kecantikan baru dan penggambaran tipe kulit ideal memunculkan kesepakatan baru tentang standar kecantikan oleh komunitas tertentu.*

**Kata Kunci:** standar kecantikan, konstruksi realitas sosial, produk K-Beauty, wanita Indonesia

### **Abstract**

*Every culture has its own definition of beauty. Culture is concerned with the process of how knowledge shapes individuals in constructing and interpreting their world. The two lines of thought in this thesis are the concept of culture and the amount of consumption of beauty products in Indonesia which focuses on the shift of local beauty products to Korean beauty products by Indonesian women of generation Z. The theory of social reality construction is used to analyze Generation Z female consumers regarding K-beauty products which depict their beauty standards. This research uses constructivism paradigm and social reality construction theory as a way to analyze this topic. This is because this study analyzes the construction of the concept of beauty standards for young Indonesian women who are consumers of Korean beauty products, and analyzes how they adopt and perceive the concept of beauty standards. One-on-one interviews were conducted with selected informants. There are three main informants and 2 supporting informants. The results show that social media, TV, movies, advertisements, communities, and key opinion leaders have contributed to setting beauty standards. The Korean wave has played a significant role in shifting the existing beauty standards. The influx of new beauty products and the portrayal of the ideal skin type gave rise to a new agreement on beauty standards by certain communities.*

**Keywords:** *beauty standards, social reality construction, K-Beauty products, Indonesian women*

## INTRODUCTION

Each of every culture in this world has their way to define something, which is the right thing to do and do not. Norms and values within a culture, which are believed by certain societies, might be different from one another. The culture itself is related to the process of how knowledge shapes the process of the individuals in constructing and interpreting their world (Baylis, 2011). "Few societies or individuals, however, believe that their values are binding simply or even primarily because they happen to be widely endorsed within their culture." (Donnelly, 2007). Furthermore, the process of how an individual perceives something and value themselves is based on what culture they are believed. Since both history and demography significantly influence a culture, thus, there is a possibility of having numerous definitions of women beauty by every culture (Prianti, 2013).

The emergence of a notion of "*beauty standard*" or "*beauty ideals*" might often be discussed when we are talking about a women beauty from every culture. Every country across the world has its beauty standard and it varies from one another. This is influenced by beliefs, culture, and how society's perspective defines the word "beauty". However, there is no exact definition of beauty standard or being ideally beautiful, as beauty itself could not be standardized. The standard of beauty set by society often puts pressure on women themselves. Moreover, this led to many women seems eager so hard to fulfil the existing beauty standard in their society. Some women willingly perform changes on their facial features and bodies, or, even did some beauty treatment in a beauty clinic to fulfil their desire to be beautiful, indeed, according to their ideals. Yet, we could not deny that there some women who do not put their attention on following this standard.

This research departs firstly from the case of the high consumption of beauty products in Indonesia especially for makeup, brightening and whitening products. Based on the 2019 statistic of the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia, there is an increasing number of total sales of cosmetics, skincare, fragrance, and personal care, average cosmetics spending per capita, and sales growth from 2015 - 2019. Even, they have its future projection until 2023 (<https://koran.tempo.co/read/ekonomi-dan-bisnis/449594/perubahan-gaya-hidup-dorong-industri-kosmetik>) The increase in the average cosmetics spending per capita by Indonesian consumer in 2015 to 2019 is starting from USD 21,51 million to USD 25,50 million.

Moreover, the beauty products consumption in Indonesia has increased especially for whitening products, the growth increases from 21.1% in 2010 to 28.4% in 2011 (Winahjoe, 2014). Furthermore, there has been research that has analyzed the underlying factors, which motivate Indonesian to pursue brighter skin complexion (Olawale, 2020). This notion came from the L'oreal research results in 1997 shows that 85% women in five big cities in Indonesia believe that they have dark complexion skin and 55% expressed the desires to have brighter skin complexion (Winahjoe, 2014).

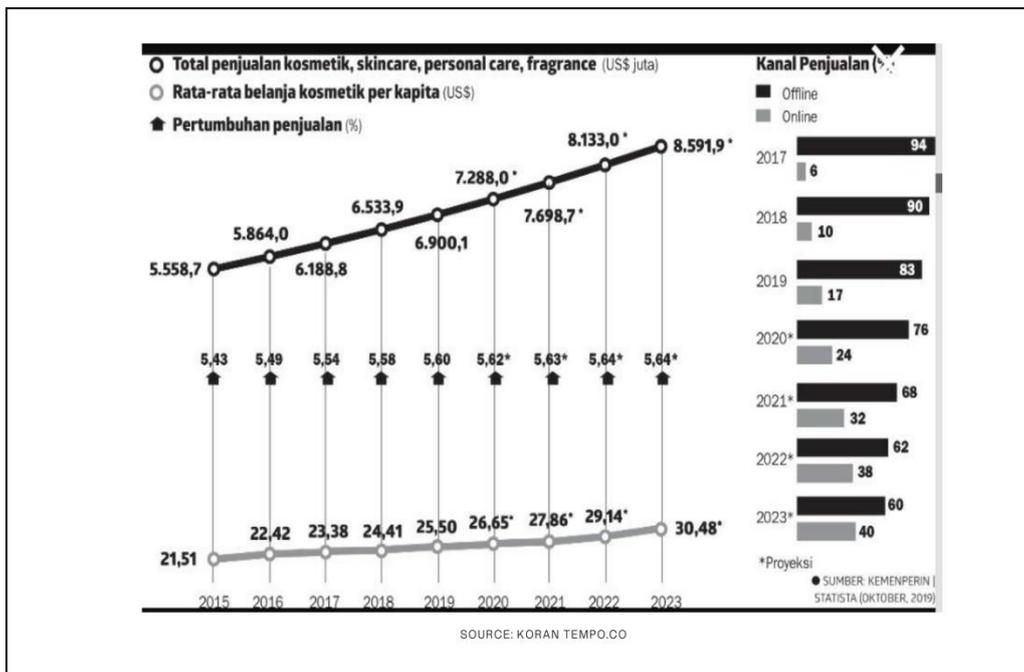


Figure I.1.1 Perubahan Gaya Hidup Dorong Industri Kosmetik  
 Source: <https://koran.tempo.co/read/ekonomi-dan-bisnis/449594/perubahan-gaya-hidup-dorong-industri-kosmetik>

Besides, in Asian countries (Cardoza, 2009), such as India and Indonesia, skin-whitening products are ranked the highest sold beauty products due to their desire to pursue brighter skin complexion (Saraswati, 2012). “These facts show that there is a relationship between the mainstream beauty discourse and womanhood” (Larasati, 2018). As stated before, some women are consciously to adapt and fulfil the existing beauty standard. “The way individuals perceive skin tone depends on how they channel their self-representation” (Larasati, 2018), which is known as identity negotiation (Bosson, 2008). Seeing from those facts and statistics shows that those groups of people who become the consumer of those products are putting their attention on how to beautify and care for their appearance. Additionally, for those groups who have consumed the brightening products means that there is a desire to have a brighter skin complexion. Indeed, it is related to the beauty standard that has been constructed and adopted in their minds.

Beauty standard is changing time to time and influenced by several factors, one of them is the globalization and culture. The new trend and culture that enter into a society create an option for people within the society itself, either to accept or reject the emergence of new culture and trend. “As a social construct, the ideal of beauty and attractiveness is not immune from the pervasive trend of globalization.” (Besman, 2018). However, the unique standard of beauty lies within the traditional or local beauty of a culture. For example, how Indonesian perceive beauty might be different from how Korean perceive beauty.

A journal article entitled “Discourse on the shifting of local beauty: Concepts in an Easternization era” (Suryadi, 2020), explains that there was an influence of East Asia countries to the construction of beauty in Indonesia. The beauty concept of Indonesian women today is

heavily influenced by East Asia beauty concept. The desire to be beautiful by Indonesian women are no longer seen as tanned or brown skin, instead, white as 'snow'. Additionally, the change of course when producing beauty products by the capitalist is due to the high demand from Indonesian women who want to pursue brighter skin complexion. According to Beauty Brand E-commerce Report 2020, some of the top ten highest sale beauty brands are coming from K-Beauty products including Nature Republic, Innisfree, and Laneige (Asosiasi Digital Marketing Indonesia, 2020).

By seeing from those statistics, phenomenon, and data, means that there is a desire of those consumers to follow the Korean beauty standard to have glowing or brighter skin, or who want to have an identity relation with Korean. On other hand, there must be a beauty standard that has been constructed in their mind. This lead to one specific point of research which is how Indonesian women see the beauty standard. In this research, it will analyze the construction and adoption of the beauty standard of youth female as the consumer of Korean beauty products in Indonesia.

This research will use the Social Construction of Reality as its main theory. Berger and Luckman have introduced the term of social construction in their book entitled *The Social Construction of Reality*. However, the term social construction has roots in American pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism (Luckmann, 1966). According to Berger (2009:891), "Social construction theory addresses the processes by which people jointly construct their understandings of the world". We construct the social world and our understandings of it. We create *the social* world through our words, our actions, and our media products (Littlejohn, 2009).

The Social Construction of Reality theory will support the writer of this research to analyze the processes by which youth female who are the K-beauty products consumer jointly construct their understandings of the beauty standard. Furthermore, the processes on how the beauty standard is being adopted by this group. Moreover, according to Berger and Luckmann, the Social Construction of Reality arises out of a continuous dialectic process of "externalization," "objectivation" and "internalization" of meaning (Pfadenhauer and Knoblauch, 2019). "*Externalization is nothing else than designing, constructing and reworking buildings*" (Pfadenhauer and Knoblauch, 2019). Construction has become one of the vital parts to social construction since it is the verb to construct, "which implies building something, making something, or bringing something into being that had no existence previously" (Littlejohn, 2009). In regards to this research, a beauty standard is constructed since the group of people build or make it happen to be brought to this world.

Objectivation is interaction with an institutionalized or institutionalized intersubjective world. "All human activity is subject to habitualization. Any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be performed again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort" (Luckmann, 1966). "Internalization means more than simply understanding the socially constructed objectivations. It means "the reappropriation" by human beings of the objectively shared reality, "transforming it once again from structures of the objective world into structures of the subjective consciousness and into the body". The incorporation of objective reality into the consciousness, as well as the body of a person, happens through socialization processes. Through these, individuals adopt a

certain worldview, which is assigned to them. At the same time, they learn how to deal with material objects; that is, they acquire certain “body techniques” and forms of movement that fit with them. Through successful socialization, the socially interpreted world becomes an individual’s own world and he or she can then skilfully and naturally move within it.” (Pfadenhauer and Knoblauch, 2019). When we discuss about the concept of beauty, there is no exact definition of beauty. According to Merriam-Webster, Beauty defined as the quality or aggregate of qualities in a person or thing that gives pleasure to the senses or pleasurably exalts the mind or spirit (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). “The term “beauty” is customarily associated with aesthetic experience and typically refers to an essential quality of something that arouses some type of reaction in the human observer” (SEP, 2012).

The Concept of beauty standard was heavily influenced by the culture. Resulted, culture has a significant role in defining the differences of beauty concept. Dian Puspitasari and Yudi Suryadi (2020) wrote the shifting of local beauty in Indonesia and how eastern culture affects the beauty standards in Indonesia. Furthermore, this article explains the influence of East Asia to the construction of beauty in Indonesia. The beauty concept of Indonesian women today is heavily influenced by East Asia beauty concept. The desire to be beautiful by Indonesian women are no longer seen as tanned or brown skin, instead, white as ‘snow’. According to ZAP Beauty Index 2019, 82.5% of Indonesian women define beauty as a person with bright skin and glowing (ZAP, 2020). This definition is still the same as the ZAP Beauty Index 2018 (ZAP, 2018). In addition, the most beauty products that Indonesian females want is Korean skincare with a total percentage of 46.6% (ZAP, 2018). Thus, Korean beauty standard had already influenced the Indonesian women which in this study the author would like to analyze the construction and adoption of beauty standard by youth female as the consumer of K-Beauty products in Indonesia

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses constructivism as the paradigm. The reason why is because this research analyzes the construction of beauty standard concept young Indonesian female who becomes the Korean beauty product consumers, and analyzes how they adopt and perceive the concept of beauty standard. The writers do believe that the research study is viewed as the relativism and subjectivist. The construction and re-construction are always associated with constructivism. The relativism laid out the social construction as the reality.

“Viewing social science as a systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through direct and detailed observation of social actors in natural daily settings, in order to be able to understand and interpret how social actors concerned create and maintain their social world.” (Littlejohn, 2009). In seeing a social reality and phenomenon, it is required to use a specific point of view or perspective in which this paradigm is considered as important that suit to analyze the social reality.

The components which are included in constructivism are construction and reality. This become one of the vital parts to social construction since it is the verb to construct. Furthermore, it underlines on how knowledge shapes the process of the individuals in constructing and interpreting their world. According to Michael Barnett further discusses the process of reality which stated that “Reality does not exist out there waiting to be discovered;

instead, historically – produced and culturally – bound knowledge enables individuals to construct and give meaning to reality.” (Baylis, 2011). In regards to this research, a beauty standard is constructed since the group of people build or make it happen to be brought to this world. Moreover, Indonesian women do create the social world which is in this case is the beauty standard that they made. This group of people invented the concept of beauty standard.

One-on-one interview will be conducted with the selected informants. This thesis will directly immerse to the k-beauty product enthusiast and community, interview the informant who are related to thesis issue. There will be three main informants and 2 supporting informants. The following informants will be used as the primary data. **Primary Informants:** Five Consumer of Youth Female of K-Beauty Products in Indonesia. The criteria are as follows: Indonesian Female, the generation born between 1995 and 2010, open for any background, understand regarding the importance of skincare / Beauty products consumption, She ever used an Innisfree or Nature Republic product. The 3 of informants are Ayuni Sekarsari, 23 years old, Entrepreneur ; Ani Nurhani Rakhmah, 23 years old, HR staff; Mawar Salem, 20 years old, Miss Metropolitan Tourism International 2021 .

The validation in qualitative study become importance to establish the trustworthiness of a study (Creswell, 2007). “In triangulation, researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence” (Creswell, 2007). In this thesis, the validity of sources will be used data triangulation. “Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena” (Nancy Carter, 2014). “Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources” (Nancy Carter, 2014). There are four types of triangulations that had been used by social researchers, include: triangulation of measure, observers, theory, and method (Neuman, 2014).

“(1) Triangulation of measure, meaning that we take multiple measures of the same phenomena. (2) Triangulation of observers is a variation on the first type. In many studies, we conduct interviews or are the lone observer of events and behavior. (3) Triangulation of theory requires using multiple theoretical perspectives to plan a study or interpret the data. (4) Triangulation of method mixes the qualitative and quantitative research approaches and data.” (p. 166)

The author of thesis will have a depth-interview with the experts as the supporting informant such as but not limited to: Expert: Beauty Influencer/Skincare Enthusiast. The informant has some criteria such as: Indonesian, Well-known Instagramer / Tiktoker/ YouTuber (Having more than 100K Followers on TikTok / more than 30K Followers on Instagram / more than 20K Subscriber on YouTube, Beauty Content Creator, Beauty / Skincare Enthusiast esp, and Korean Beauty Products. Christy Raina Septiningrum Mamesah, (@christyrm) Beauty Content Creator and Influencer on TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. In addition, The expert: A Doctor has some criteria such as: Indonesian, A Doctor and Beauty Doctor, Work or own a skincare / beauty clinic, Understand the beauty industry development and Korean culture. The informant is dr. Cut Nadirasari, Beauty Doctor and Owner of Spicebydr.Na skincare products.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Information related to K-beauty products and beauty standards was mostly obtained by informants from social media platforms. But not limited to Twitter, websites, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, but also other conventional media.

“From Twitter base for skincare and makeup” (Rakhmah, 2021).

“I was a Kpop Idol fan but mostly I found information about K-Beauty products from Korean vloggers, and Indonesian beauty websites such as FemaleDaily” (Sekarsari, 2021).

“I get information about K-beauty products from social media: Instagram, TikTok, Youtube. Because I happen to follow beauty accounts like Sociolla. And I also follow beauty brand accounts that are originally from Korea such as Axis-Y. And usually I get information about K-beauty products from that social media.” (Mamesah, 2021).

“I found information about Korean beauty products from my friends and also from social media” (Salem, 2021).

The word of mouth through friends and other testimonials from key opinion leaders has played a vital part too in disseminating the information for them. Another significant influence is coming from Korean celebrities who has Korean glass skin type which attract people to be like them or at least to follow their standard. Even, some of them have already followed the beauty brand social media account, Korean vlogger, news portal for skincare and makeup, and beauty account like Sociolla. To validate this notion, the beauty doctor that the author had interviewed with, stated that she obtained the information regarding Korean beauty products from the television and social media. Thus, it is believed that social media and television has a significant role in disseminating the Korean beauty standard through the experiences and story of a person.

“I found the information of K-beauty products from television and social media i.e., Instagram and Facebook” (Nadisari, 2021).

The reason why people have the purchase intention towards K-beauty products is because of the Flawless skin of Korean celebrities that they saw, positive review from many beauty content creators, and the quality of their production and ingredients.

“Because they usually have better ingredients than what made in Indonesia and other countries” (Rakhmah, 2021).

“Korean celebrities always glorified for their flawless skin, usually known as "Korean glass skin". I used to have skin problems growing up and I wanted to achieve the clear skin type like these celebrities.” (Sekarsari, 2021).

“What made me want to buy K-beauty products was because I listened to positive reviews from many beauty content creators. For skincare, maybe now there are a lot of local brands, but before the proliferation of local brands, my choice was indeed the fall in Korean skincare because considering that Korean is still suitable for Asian skin, that's why it's really close to compounding the skincare formula. That's why I chose to spend it on the k-beauty product earlier.” (Mamesah, 2021).

“The beauty products that I use are very suitable and have a good effect on my skin” (Salem, 2021).

Those responses are in accordance with the study of Arsitowati entitled *Kecantikan Wanita Korea Sebagai Konsep Kecantikan Ideal Dalam Iklan New Pond's White Beauty: What Our Brand Ambassadors Are Saying* (Arsitowati, 2017). Yet, South Korean has successfully attracted Indonesian women to follow their popular culture known starting from the rise of Korean drama series on Indonesian television in the 2000s. Not only Korean serial dramas but also, they have successfully influenced lifestyle and production items in Indonesia (Arsitowati, 2017). The portrayal of Korean beauty images can be seen from their actresses. One of the things about Korean actresses that is often highlighted by the public is the flawless white skin that they have. Korean women in general do have white and smooth skin in which led Indonesian women to pursue having white skin complexion and glowing skin. The number of Indonesian who want to have skin like Korean women is considered as not a small number of people. Thus, it is a reason why there is an inclining rate of Korean beauty products in Indonesia (Arsitowati, 2017).

### **The Construction of Beauty Standard**

In the matter of this research with the supportive data obtained through the interview, it means that to construct the beauty standard, it requires the interaction between the people or jointly construct that idea. Furthermore, it can be seen by the interaction from the community or society from those people are part of that led to the construction of beauty standard. It can be constructed become the agreement of one beauty standard and they will adopt it. However, in some cases, people try to reject the existing beauty standard, instead they made their own beauty standard for themselves aims to have self-satisfaction. Littlejohn and Foss (2009) explained the relevancy context of interpretation of a particular social construction,

“The context relevant to the interpretation of a particular social construction. Whatever exists in the social world does so as a result of the words and/or actions of people talking and interacting together. Each culture or social group develops its own understandings of the world, creating its own meanings for behaviour and how this is to be understood.” (p.892)

From the statement above, this means that the beauty standard concept that different from one another is the result of the words and/or actions of people talking and interacting together. Based on the answers obtained from the author depth-interview with the informants. Surprisingly, the definition of beauty for them is not about physical rather being confident and comfortable in our own skin. Furthermore, it is more likely about the attitude, intellectual, compassionate, confident, and kind are considered as beautiful.

“Beauty is relative. one maybe beautiful for someone but not for the other. one may look good for a certain community but not in the other community. If we follow one beauty standard, we may not fit for the other. So it's best for us to set our own beauty standards, looking good for ourselves, and be satisfied for what we have, although we want to change something, also do it for the sake of ourselves” (Rakhmah, 2021).

“Beauty is when someone is comfortable and confident in their own skin.” (Sekarsari, 2021).

“Beauty in my opinion is not a physical thing. But we know who we are and what our goals are. We know our strengths and weaknesses so that we know exactly what we

are doing and what we are going to do. Know how to communicate well, solve problems well and look good this is the definition of beautiful in my opinion.” (Salem, 2021).

“Beauty is when we feel confident with ourselves. In my opinion, I define beauty as something that not only come from the physical, but from our hearts as well. Because when someone only has the physical that is beautiful but the heart is not beautiful, personally, I don't think it is considered as beauty. So indeed, beauty is a whole package with heart and body. You can't just say you're physically beautiful, but you have to be beautiful in your heart. And that is a balance that must be taken care of together, developed together so that it becomes even better.” (Mamesah, 2021).

From those perspectives, it is believed that someone can be considered as beautiful when they are confidently accepting who they are and try to take of them. To validate those notions, the beauty doctor stated this,

“Beauty can be revealed in any kind of forms. Since beauty definition can be changed every era, so there can a boundary to be broken depends on society, corporate brand, women, and taste of men. The real beauty is when you feel confident with yourself, you can bring yourself confidently, you are comfortable, and be who you are.” (Nadisari, 2021).

Since, there are numerous definitions of beauty, yet somehow, we could not neglect the idea of beauty standard in which it is what society think what is beautiful.

“It is when a certain community believe that some characteristics (usually physical) seen as better than the other, then they treat people who have those characteristics as a superior, making the other people who does not look like that wanting to change themselves to look similar with them, then the standard was created.” (Rakhmah, 2021).

“In Asia including Indonesia, the exposure of global media and economy class contributed in the beauty standards construction in a toxic way. As in Indonesia, someone with fair skin and well-groomed is considered beautiful and has a wealthy background. Meanwhile, someone with a darker skin is considered as someone from a poor economy class.” (Sekarsari, 2021).

“Almost everyone interprets that beauty is beautiful or physically pleasing to the eye. Even though there are many other aspects that can be considered to define beauty. Beauty in everyone's eyes is also different, but many people or the majority of people think that people who are physically good, people who have clean skin are beautiful people. Then this opinion spread widely and made people with clean skin more confident and people with darker skin less confident so that no one argued or those who tried to defend themselves were not heard. Finally, people thought that the standard of beauty was physically beautiful people.” (Salem, 2021).

“The construction of the beauty standard begins with what we see everyday. We can see from the media, when we watch an advertisement. People with lighter skin, usually symbolized by the Queen of the School, get the attention of the crowd. However, when her skin is dull, she is immediately shunned by his friends, and even bullied. And that's what creates a stigma in society that "oh I have to be a white person if I want to be

Queen of the School and appear to be the center of attention". Finally, when this has been constructed in the minds of many people, it becomes like a culture. A culture that is continuously passed down which construct a beauty standard that is indeed followed by many people. It is undeniable that we unconsciously think so. The construction process comes from the media, from what we consume every day." (Mamesah, 2021).

Based on the responses above, the beauty standards tend to be an inequality phenomenon for some people in certain society. Moreover, it become a double-edged sword. It depends on how people perceive towards the beauty standard. For certain people, they might reject the idea of mainstream beauty standard, instead they set their own beauty standard. It becomes their choice to be fit in society or not. Meanwhile, for some people who would like be accepted in a community where they belong to, various actions will be taken by them to fulfill the standard.

### **The Adoption of Beauty Standard**

The acceptance to follow to the existing beauty standard depends to the choice of people themselves. It is their rights and preferences whether to take it or just toss away the standard. Besides, the four informants have given their thought on how they adopt the beauty standard.

"I personally set my own beauty standard, as long as I'm looking beautiful for myself, then that's what I'm going to hold onto. I'm not trying hard to brighten my skin just to follow Korean beauty standard, and I don't intentionally tan my skin just to fit onto western beauty standard. I'm focusing on making my appearance look healthier so I can be more satisfied with myself." (Rakhmah, 2021).

"As for me personally, I would feel insecure if I don't fit in the standards of beauty of my surroundings. I would at least try my best to look presentable by doing my skin care routine, putting some makeup, and wear my best." (Sekarsari, 2021).

"I don't really follow these beauty standards because these standards are much different from us Indonesians who have dark skin. but the standard of beauty is based on the physical while in my opinion beauty is not everything about the physical." (Salem, 2021).

"Usually, the way we adopt beauty standards is from the community. In the sense of society. Because the people around us tend to be like that, finally we are carried away to follow, accept, and adopt the beauty standard. So it's because of the environment." (Mamesah, 2021).

The author does believe that there are two lines of thought in regards to the adoption of beauty standard. First, the category of people that would like to set their own standard to have self-love and self-satisfaction. The other one is the category of people who would like to fulfill the beauty standard set by the society. However, both categories led to the same goal which is self-care and a new lifestyle they will implemented. This can be proven from the majority responses of informants who were being asked regarding beauty standard created by Indonesian women in general have become part of the lifestyle. In regards to the implementation of this research theory which is Social Construction of Reality, according to Berger (2009:891), "Social construction theory addresses the processes by which people

jointly construct their understandings of the world”. We construct the social world and our understandings of it. We create *the social* world through our words, our actions, and our media products (Littlejohn, 2009).

Referring to the statement above, people before us are the one who have constructed the idea of beauty standard through their actions and media by having majority people to agree on that notion. We have seen a various definition of beauty and how certain communities have constructed their own definition and understanding regarding beauty. Difference community or culture have constructed their understanding of the world. The social world that they have made might be different from one to another. Thus, this become the proof that people understanding on beauty standard are different. Given example, the global beauty standard will much more different with Indonesian local beauty standard. In addition, another example can be taken in Indonesia. Kalimantan people will have a different perspective to define Java local beauty. Hence, the various definition of beauty was created.

The beauty concept in Indonesia has changed time to time due to the emergence of other beauty concepts from other countries (Suryadi, 2020). The beauty concept of Indonesian women today is heavily influenced by East Asia beauty concept. The desire to be beautiful by Indonesian women are no longer seen as tanned or brown skin, instead, white as ‘snow’. In the article journal of Dian Puspitasari and Yudi Suryadi entitled “Discourse on the shifting of local beauty: Concepts in an Easternization era” examined that the shift in the construction of beauty of Indonesian women with the period 1990-2000 and 2001-2010 through the cosmetic advertisements, that appeared on television using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Suryadi, 2020). Additionally, the change of course when producing beauty products by the capitalist is due to the high demand from Indonesian women who want to pursue brighter skin complexion (Suryadi, 2020).

“Asian women are presented to Indonesian society through movies and other popular culture media that encourages Indonesian women to be like someone else. The desire to be beautiful, for women, encourages capitalists to collect a profit. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Jafra Tribunnews found that 68% of women did not feel pretty when they did not use cosmetics, 58% women admitted that they used cosmetics to look beautiful and 28% of women said that cosmetics made them confident.. It can be seen from the results of this survey that women and cosmetics are two things that cannot be separated. Cosmetics are a response to the construction of beauty for women. This phenomenon has been responded to by capitalists in the form of cosmetic products that offer a wide range of beautiful concepts to the consumers.” (p.36)

Furthermore, Suryadi (2020) provided the explanation of the beauty construction from various perspective which to support the notion that there is a shifting beauty concept in Indonesia from other countries culture is through cosmetic advertisements.

“Sugani discussed the myth of beauty that is reflected in the works of Indonesian short story writers. In her analysis, the myth of beauty that oppresses women is that they are to be physically perfect, symmetrical, sexy, lovable, white, with a slim body, a fashionable appearance and that they are both flexible and practical. The representation of beauty is not only for women. This leads to male beauty as well. This

appears in the cosmetics advertising of a Korean soap brand paired with the concept that carries with it that of white, soft skin and cleanliness (Vidyarini 2007).” (p.37)

Moreover, the author believe that the advertisement media of a cosmetic brand plays an important role to construct Indonesian women as the consumer to change their beauty standard gradually as Suryadi (2020) has mentioned,

“Sari discussed the beautiful representation of the image of women in Indonesia through the television advertising of hand and body lotions. Kusumawati et al (2016) investigated the meaning behind ‘beautiful’ in labelled halal cosmetics, namely Mazaya. Another study was about tanning the body, a beauty concept that brought up the issue of having a brown skin colour like Asian women. Nikmah and Liana (2016) used historical literature to examine the changes in the concept and meaning of beauty in the magazine Femina from 1977 to 1995.” (p.37)

Seeing this circumstance from a continuous dialectic process of “externalization,” “objectivation” and “internalization” of meaning towards the beauty standard, the process of beauty standard construction might be different for one community to another. However, the pattern of the process itself is remaining the same. The difference of the process is depending on someone’s background, culture, what kind of society they are including, and understanding to the social world. In this matter, the process of externalization occurs, Pfadenhauer and Knoblauch (2019) clearly explained,

“Externalization means any form of human action that implies some sort of interpretation, or – in the words of Berger and Luckmann – some “externalization of subjective meanings”. Our interpretive interactions with this world depend on the social structural position we assume in it and the perspective on the world linked with this position.” (p.83)

In regards to this research, a beauty standard is constructed since the group of people build or make it happen to be brought to this world. The sense of collaborative actions is made to accomplish the process of beauty standard construction in certain society. “One of the implications of social construction theory is the acknowledgement that social reality requires interaction between people” (Littlejohn, 2009). “Externalization is nothing else than designing, constructing and reworking buildings; these buildings, in turn, can be understood as material objectivations...” (Pfadenhauer and Knoblauch, 2019). “Construction is social in the sense of requiring collaborative rather than individual effort” (Littlejohn, 2009).

The externalization which involves the social construction, generally understood to incorporate four stages based on James Carey. Those four stages are construction, maintenance, repair, and change (Littlejohn, 2009). How four informants who represent Female Gen Z consumer of K-beauty products create their beauty standard through the construction process. The first stage is the construction. In this stage, “social actors develop a concept and then figure out ways to make it concrete” (Littlejohn, 2009). In regards to the data obtained, they develop their concept of beauty standard and try to make it concrete through the power of social media and portrayal of Korean Celebrities that they saw. For instance, they develop the concept of having a healthy skin and being confident as the standard. Then, they will try to figure out ways to bring into this world as the concrete concept. The second stage is maintenance. In this stage, “people need to actively maintain a particular social construction

if it is to remain viable, for if it is no longer relevant, it will be ignored and thus dissolve” (Littlejohn, 2009). As they are the one who have developed the first concept of their beauty standard for having healthy skin and being confident, they need to maintain it whether this beauty standard is longer relevant or not. The third stage is for repair. In this stage, “social actors need to periodically repair their constructions because aspects may be inadvertently forgotten or deliberately changed over time” (Littlejohn, 2009). Beauty standard concept might be evolving that requires those people to repair their construction due to several factors. For instance, the informants used to want to follow the existing beauty standard to have a glowing and white skin like Korean celebrities. However, due to other understanding towards their social world, they change the idea of having white and glowing skin into having a healthy skin, or vice versa. The last stage is change. In this stage, “there are many times when the construction that worked in one time period conveys a message that is no longer supported, so it needs to be changed for the next generation” (Littlejohn, 2009). If having healthy skin and being confident are no longer relevant to the current beauty standard, they need to change it and reconstructing again the concept from the beginning.

The author does believe that even though the informant define beauty as being comfortable and confident to their own skin, and created their own standard. Still, the idea of having “a standard” is there. The author perceives that the shifting of value beauty standard among current generation might happen. The beauty standard that used to be measured physically by skin complexion or body ideals, instead more into a person’s persona, self-presentation, and being compassionate. Yet, someone’s beauty could not be standardized.

The four informants were being asked regarding their point of view towards the existence of beauty standard today that whether or not is formed by the acceptance of the community. The socially meaningful and collaborative actions, and agreement of majority to follow the same thing are the essentials to the process of construction of beauty standard. In addition, all of the informants agree that the existence of beauty standard today is formed by the acceptance of community.

“Yes. different community, different beauty standard. beauty standard would not be existed if all people accept other people for who they are, not treated based on their physical characteristics.” (Rakhmah, 2021).

“I believe that beauty standards exist today because people used to agree with them. However, if you look at it now, there are also many people who oppose beauty standards that every woman who is considered beautiful must have smooth white hair and straight hair because people are now starting to be critical and intelligent and realize that beauty standards cannot be standardized.” (Salem, 2021).

“Yes, I agree. Because indeed, for beauty standards, it must be a construction. A construction that does not come from one or two people, but are constructed by many people. So indeed the construction of the beauty standard comes from the acceptance of many people who accept it and finally they form the beauty standard”.” (Mamesah, 2021)

They do believe that the previous people before them or the community are the one who constructed this beauty standard. It is in accordance with Berger statement that, “Social construction theory addresses the processes by which people jointly construct their

understandings of the world” (Littlejohn, 2009). We construct the social world and our understandings of it. We create *the social* world through our words, our actions, and our media products (Littlejohn, 2009). To validate the writer argument and the informants’ perspectives, the beauty doctor also believed that the construction of beauty standard was existed due to the previous community had formed it due to the culture, women, and the taste of the men.

“I think it is formed because of Indonesian men like women who are skinny, white skin, and black long hair. But, if we compare to American or European men, they prefer to like women who are dark or brown skin. In the past, Indonesian women usually tried so hard to have a white skin, skinny body, and long straight hair. But it is different with women nowadays. They can be themselves. As long as they have a good smell, smart, and can take care of yourselves. Anybody can look beautiful.” (Nadisari, 2021).

Dr. Cut Nadisari believed that there was a relation between culture, the taste of men, and women’ motive to actually change their appearance to fit the men’s expectation towards them.

“Many Indonesian women were sick and bored to have a white skin, long straight hair, and skinny body which was considered as their beauty standard in which it had been created like that. The true is that most of Indonesian women are not always described like that. we have different ethnicities and background, some people are Javanese, Acehnese, Chinese Indonesian, and etc. Nowadays, many beauty influencers embrace to the public about being ourselves and self-acceptance. So, it influenced other people to do the same.” (Nadisari, 2021).

The construction of new beauty standard was existed due to the acceptance of previous community and people jointly constructed the ideas of being beautiful.

“Beauty standard change every era. Another explanation can be seen from the beauty of Cleopatra. In ancient Egypt, the beauty can be standardized by having a short hair. Nowadays, it is different. So, I think it is shaped because of the culture, women, and the taste of man in that country. it was also influenced by the acceptance of the previous community and certain people in that country. (Nadisari, 2021).”

Objectivation is interaction with an institutionalized or institutionalized intersubjective world. Seeing from the Institutionalization, which is, “implanting a convention or norm into society, created by agreement of others before us and exists by consensus, both prior and current” (Luckmann, 1966). In regards to the discussion above, a beauty standard exists as a beauty standard and not just as a standard because some of us agree that it is a beauty standard. In addition, how those informants agree to believe that the beauty standard is exist and constructed by community, is part of institutionalization. In sense, it was created by the agreement of others before us (Luckmann, 1966). Furthermore, the internalization reality of the primary and secondary socialization had a crucial role in adopting the perspective of beauty. One of the examples is coming from Mamesah as one if the informant said that she join the beauty content creator communities which against the beauty standard.

“I’ve never interacted with K-pop communities, because for now I’m interacting with communities for beauty content creators in Indonesia. And to follow the beauty standard as well for now, even I am against the beauty standard. Because in my

opinion, we should love ourselves instead of pursuing the beauty standard itself.” (Mamesah, 2021).

Based on the responses from the previous informants discussion, the beauty standards tend to be an inequality phenomenon for some people in certain society. Moreover, it become a double-edged sword. It depends on how people perceive towards the beauty standard. For certain people, they might reject the idea of mainstream beauty standard, instead they set their own beauty standard. It becomes their choice to be fit in society or not. Meanwhile, for some people who would like be accepted in a community where they belong to, various actions will be taken by them to fulfill the standard.

To see a wider perspective of this phenomenon, a journal article was written by Widya Paramita and Sari Winahjoe *entitled* “Analyzing Fundamental Factors of Indonesians’ Skin Color Preference: A Qualitative Approach to Develop Research Framework” is provided as the supportive elaboration. Firstly, the research is analyzed from the cultural perspective using the Hofstede Cultural Dimension. These three dimensions that have been used in this study (Winahjoe, 2014). First, the power distance in Indonesia is quite high in which describe that the power distributed in Indonesian society is unequal (Winahjoe, 2014). There is a social hierarchy within the social system and skin complexion is associated with the social and economic status within the society. The whiter skin you have, the high status you will earn.

“Indonesia is categorized as having large power distance in which powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. In large power distance cultures, one’s social status must be clear so that others can show proper respect. In large power distance cultures, people are well-groomed, in particular when going out in the streets as your position in the social hierarchy is defined by the clothes you wear, your shoes, your posture, and your make up. As other appearance-related attributes, skin complexion serves that purpose. White skin complexion is associated with high social and economic status and vice versa.” (Winahjoe, 2014).

Second, the masculinity dimension in Indonesia scored low. The need to be stand out or different from others is one of the manifestations of this dimension (Winahjoe, 2014). In this case, the skin tone plays a vital role. People perceive white skin colour, which makes the tendency for people to pursue brighter skin complexion. As Winahjoe (2014) explained,

“Indonesia scored moderately in masculinity dimension. Masculinity dimension is manifested through the need of togetherness, modesty, and the need to be stand out. As generally, Indonesians have yellow to brown (dark but not black) skin complexion, apparently there is a need to pursue brighter skin complexion as people perceive white skin colour better than a darker one. Respondents also explicitly stated that by having brighter skin colour, they will receive privilege from others (i.e. from friends at school, from others in a random situation, etc.)”. (p.112)

Finally, yet importantly, the individuality dimension in Indonesia scored low (Winahjoe, 2014). This means that Indonesia lives with collectivism culture. The degree to maintain the interdependence among the members within society (Winahjoe, 2014). They need to follow whatever that suits them to the social system to which they belong. So, if in one society, its members’ skin complexion is white, then, other members will pursue to have brighter skin tone aims to be accepted by the social system.

“Indonesia scored low in individuality dimension, which means that Indonesians belong to collectivity culture in which people give priority to a relationship with people than to the task, they identify themselves based on the social system to which they belong, and avoiding loss of face is important. Therefore, it is plausible that parents (especially mother), boyfriend, and friends influenced their attitude and behaviour in pursuing a brighter skin colour.” (p.112)

Besides, there is a psychological perspective that has been studied in the journal article. (Winahjoe, 2014) believe that external motivation plays a significant role for an individual to have a brighter skin tone (Winahjoe, 2014). White skin complexion generates self-confident and several positive associations. The whiter skin you have, the greater outcomes you will achieve.

“Indonesians view having brighter skin as an instrument to achieve other outcomes or terminal values such as self-confident, success in a career as well as in love life, acceptance and admiration from others. They associate white skin complexion with several positive associations such as beauty, cleanliness, feminine characteristics, and high social and economic status. Therefore by having brighter skin, they feel more confident in communicating and making a relationship with others as well as performing any job assignments”. (p.113)

How we see the global beauty ideals, how society sees us, and how we see ourselves are the things that were discussed in actual and ideal self-concept (Winahjoe, 2014). Based on the writer’s interview with their respondents shows that having brighter skin complexion gave them a positive sense about themselves.

“It is found out that respondents in this research expressed their negative attitude toward dark skin colour although generally accepting that their natural skin colour (as Indonesian) is not as bright as local artists or Korean celebrities. Besides, they explicitly stated that having brighter skin complexion allows them to feel more positive sense about themselves and indirectly generate self-confident as they associate white-skinned individuals with several positive characteristics, especially for women (i.e. feminine, beauty, high social and economic status, clean and fresh).” (p. 114).

Beauty standard could not be separated from the semiotic perspective. Brighter skin complexion and cleanliness are the ideal images that individual want (Winahjoe, 2014). Brighter skin complexion is represented as the soft symbol of beauty for women. Meanwhile, cleanliness is represented as having a brighter skin tone, the ideal image for men. Winahjoe (2014) explained this as follows,

“For women, white skin complexion is deemed as one characteristic of beauty in addition to soft and gentle. While for men, cleanliness is apparently to be the ideal image they want to convey publicly by having a brighter skin tone. As no negative associations mentioned by respondents in the interview, it is hypothesized that Indonesians hold a positive attitude toward having white skin complexion and thus performing activities to pursue brighter skin.” (p. 114)

“I think it has become a lifestyle in a way that Indonesian women starting to be aware of the importance of self-care.” (Sekarsari, 2021).

“Yes, beauty standards come from the people themselves as well as the source of Indonesian Beauty comes from the lifestyle or appearance of the majority of Indonesian people who are considered beautiful by the public.” (Salem, 2021).

“Yes, I feel that, because it is undeniable that it is a lifestyle. When we create a beauty standard, it will make us follow a lifestyle. For example, people want white skin, they finally make a lifestyle using skincare, continue to use umbrellas or hats when we go out of the house. So this makes a lifestyle.” (Mamesah, 2021).

In addition, the informants were being asked regarding the reason why they want to beautifying themselves. There are diverse thoughts that lead to a fruitful discussion on how to analyze the beauty standard construction and adoption case in this research. Self-satisfaction and care, and the acceptance to fit to a certain society become the main conclusion from the data obtained.

“For self-satisfaction purposes.” (Rakhmah, 2021).

“I was bullied for how I look in the past that I have been diagnosed with depression and social anxiety. I try to beautify myself not only to feel confident but also to better my mental health. I beautify myself to overcome my fear of socializing with others.” (Sekarsari, 2021).

“Everyone wants to look beautiful, everyone wants to be the best version of themselves and everyone likes to be seen and so do I.” (Salem, 2021).

“Surely because I believe that what is in our bodies is a gift from God. Which we have to take care of. It's not that we just were being given by God and continuously we don't care about our bodies. And beautifying ourselves is included in taking care of our bodies. So in my opinion, this is a responsibility because God has given this body for us to care for, not to change it. That's why we take care our body and skin by using skincare and makeup. To make it look more beautiful.” (Mamesah, 2021).

In refer to the previous discussion on how any actions become a habit and new culture, this is accordance to process of objectivation which is Habitualization. “Any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be performed again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort” (Luckmann, 1966). Not only do the group women construct their beauty standard but this group also accept it as it is because others have created it before them (Luckmann, 1966).

Based on the result analysis, the beauty standards tend to be an inequality phenomenon for some people in certain society. Moreover, it become a double-edged sword. It depends on how people perceive towards the beauty standard. For certain people, they might reject the idea of mainstream beauty standard, instead they set their own beauty standard. It becomes their choice to be fit in society or not. Meanwhile, for some people who would like be accepted in a community where they belong to, various actions will be taken by them to fulfill the standard.

The author does believe that there are two lines of thought in regards to the adoption of beauty standard. First, the category of people that would like to set their own standard to have self-love and self-satisfaction. The other one is the category of people who would like to fulfill the beauty standard set by the society. However, both categories led to the same goal which is self-care and a new lifestyle they will implemented. This can be proven from the majority

responses of informants who were being asked regarding beauty standard created by Indonesian women in general have become part of the lifestyle

## CONCLUSION

The power of social media and the role of institutions in disseminating a various information has a significant role in helping the socialization of foreign culture to shape people's perspective towards beauty standard. Moreover, other media platform such as but not limited to TV commercial, movies, advertisement, communities, and key opinion leaders had contributed the influence of beauty standard development. Every culture has their own definition in defining a beauty. Moreover, there is not exact definition to standardize the beauty itself. Beauty could not have calculated by the number or statistical measurement. Therefore, the notion of beauty standard emerges due to the majority of people within certain environment who agreed to that idea. Then, it is passed down from one to other generation. Besides, other society can be influenced by another. For instance, the Korean wave that entered Indonesia in the 2000s had given a significant role in shifting an existing beauty standard. The entry of new beauty products and portrayal of ideal skin type led to the new agreement of beauty standard by certain communities.

Seeing from Social Construction of Reality, it can be said that beauty standard as part of culture is the result of social construction. This means that there was a dialectic process between society and beauty standard. The beauty standard which become the objective entity will undergo the process of objectivation as well as when beauty standards are within the norm. The norm then undergoes the process of internalization into the individual because it has been interpreted by the community around them to become beauty ideals portrayals. Moreover, beauty standards also undergo an externalization process because beauty standard becomes something that had been shared and jointly agreed in society.

The continuous dialectic process of "externalization," "objectivation" and "internalization" of meaning, had resulted the new construction and adoption of beauty standard in Indonesia for Indonesian female of generation Z. Due to the obtained findings, the authors do believe that there are two lines of thought in regards to the adoption of beauty standard. First, the category of people that would like to set their own standard to have self-love and self-satisfaction. The other one is the category of people who would like to fulfill the beauty standard set by the society. However, both categories led to the same goal which is self-care and a new lifestyle they will implemented.

This research is expected to bring implications for helping to fulfil the gap within academic literature regarding the case of beauty standard in Indonesia. Due to the unavailability of a study that there has not been done to analyze within the social-cultural and deep analysis regarding the construction of beauty standard concept of Generation Z of Indonesian female who becomes the K-beauty product consumers, the author tried to combine comprehensive data and framework in analyzing the construction of beauty standard concept of Generation Z of Indonesian female who become the K-beauty product consumers and how they adopt and perceive the concept of beauty standard itself in-depth analysis. This study is recommended for such as but not limited to beauty enthusiasts, cultural expert, Indonesian and Korean beauty brands, feminists, and academician.

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