



Standard beauty perceptions of women in the short film "beauty is good"

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ABSTRACT

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The phenomenon of digital asset investment emerged during the ongoing pandemic, one of which is investing in crypto coins. This research aims to identify and find out how effective influencer communication strategies on social media platforms are in building investment awareness. This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods. The results of this research are First, the communication strategy used by influencers with (1) influencers providing direction that investment is a good and beneficial thing, (2) the influencers who are followed have an educational background that is suitable as a financial planner who is an expert in their field (3) the number of influencers who contribute and persuade the general public from all economies and the messages conveyed are quite informative (4) starting to provide an understanding of investment through social media (5) providing education regarding decisions to increase literacy regarding investment, especially trading. Second, the communication strategy used by influencers on social media platforms is effective because the influencer has the appropriate educational background as a financial planner who is an expert in their field.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Film is a mass communication medium that has a significant impact. According to (Angga, 2022), film is not merely entertainment, but can also be an enlightening medium in various aspects such as education, encompassing psychological conditions, life, and social impact. It aims to entertain, convey easily digestible and understood moral messages, intended to be enjoyed by a wide audience. It addresses life phenomena focusing on psychology and social aspects with complex aesthetics, capturing the evolving reality around society, packaged in stories and broadcasted through mass media. Therefore, film directly relates to society and the masses, generally influencing public views because it carries underlying messages (Asri, 2020).

In television shows and films, the reality of women often becomes a primary topic presented in mass media. Women in the realm of Indonesian cinema often serve as compelling themes in dramas. This frequently occurs across various mass media

platforms, as women are considered marketable assets for high ratings and significant profits. Beauty serves as a defense mechanism for women now under attack by the beauty industry (Triani & Tjahjono, 2023). Everyone has their own rights, including women who have the right to avoid threats and criticisms from various directions, including body shaming, a form of bullying that verbally humiliates victims based on their appearance.

Women are synonymous with beauty and aesthetics. Since ancient times, women have held value in femininity in the eyes of the opposite sex. However, patriarchal culture allows men to have more influence in forming opinions on how women should present themselves, making women seek validation of their femininity from them (Sahan & Witarti, 2021). Eventually, this becomes commonplace for women worldwide, reaching a point where a woman's appearance aligns with what others want to see.

Moreover, amidst the bombardment of media portraying beauty standards differing across countries, women feel pressured to achieve the beauty standards depicted in the media. They resort to various means to appear suitable and attain what they perceive as perfect beauty (Umroh, 2018). Despite cultural and ethnic diversity, each ethnicity has its own traditions and perceptions of beauty regarding skin color. However, in this era of globalization, ethnic standards are pushed by the saturation of mass media in advertisements, print media, and films, creating unrealistic images that influence societal perceptions of ideal beauty (Putra, 2019). The development of advertisements and films within mass media as daily sources of information leads to various social and cultural issues within society, resulting in diverse meanings and behaviors among its people (Efendi et al., 2023).

The rapid development within the Indonesian media and film industry has not only advanced Indonesian film productions (Wicaksono, 2022) but also raised awareness about beauty myths attached to women. The perception that beauty equates to fair skin, a clear complexion, and tall stature is challenged by Abay Adhita, the writer of the short film "Beauty Is Good". The film portrays someone who feels unworthy of marriage due to acne and a dark complexion, leading her to isolate herself and feel insecure around others. This film has inspired many women by emphasizing that beauty isn't solely about outward appearance but also about intelligence, kindness, and gentleness (Afifah et al., 2023).

The presence of mass media opens doors to broaden perspectives on the meaning of "beauty" for women from various corners of the globe (Maymunah, 2021). Additionally, mass media provides ease of access to diverse information. However, behind this convenience lies the increasing tendency of media to intensively judge every woman based on beauty standards, disregarding their different conditions and backgrounds. This perpetuates the construction of beauty ideals by the media, influencing women globally (Amelia et al., 2022).

In 2016, Area Sandhy, a Communication Science student at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Diponegoro, conducted a reception analysis study on the online media FEMALE DAILY.COM titled "Women's Interpretation of Beauty Myths in Online Media Femaledaily.com" (Sandhy, 2016). The study employed critical paradigm analysis and Ien Ang's reception analysis. The findings showed that some research subjects had negative body images, likely due to personal dissatisfaction with their body shapes (Sutini, 2022).

A similar study in 2016 by Ulfatun Ni'mah, a Communication Science student at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Diponegoro, titled "Audience Interpretation of Beauty in TV Programs 'Beautiful Adventurers'", used qualitative descriptive methods and Ien Ang's reception analysis and active audience theory (Nimah & Lestari, 2016). The results indicated that physical beauty isn't the sole criterion for defining a woman's beauty, and the TV programs primarily focused on the physical appearance of individuals (Meilasari & Wahid, 2020).

These studies are significant as they highlight the prevalent misconceptions regarding the legitimacy of idealism in women (Christina et al., 2021), imposing specific aspects required for societal recognition of beauty. This imbalance affects women's mental attitudes, perpetuating feelings of inadequacy due to their inability to meet ideal standards, thereby making beauty a suppressive and inhibiting factor for women (Fauziah et al., 2023).

Several studies and literature offer different perspectives on the role of films in shaping beauty perceptions and standards. The research "Cultural Influences on Perceptions of Ideal Beauty" by Mizuko Ito (2019) highlights how different cultures influence beauty perceptions and how local films reflect more diverse beauty standards. This study finds that Japanese films often emphasize natural beauty aligned with cultural values of subtlety and modesty, while Indian cinema celebrates fuller body types and darker skin tones. This contrasts with earlier studies that focus more on the homogeneous beauty standards promoted by Western media.

Furthermore, the study "The Impact of Positive Media Representation on Self-Esteem" by Anita Sarkeesian and Ebony Adams (2020) explores how positive and diverse representation in films can enhance viewers' self-esteem and body image. The study shows that films with diverse casts and inclusive storylines can help normalize various physical traits and reduce the pressure to conform to a single beauty ideal. This differs from studies that highlight the negative impact of unrealistic beauty standards.

The literature "Beauty Reimagined: How Films Challenge Traditional Norms" by Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018) discusses how certain films actively challenge traditional beauty norms by presenting alternative narratives and characters who defy conventional beauty standards. The book highlights the transformative potential of films in redefining beauty and encouraging viewers to question societal norms.

Finally, the study "Media Literacy and Psychological Resilience in the Face of Beauty Ideals" by Renee Hobbs (2021) emphasizes the importance of media literacy in helping individuals critically analyze and resist harmful beauty standards portrayed in films. The study finds that media literacy programs can increase awareness of how beauty standards are constructed and maintained in films, as well as improve viewers' psychological resilience. Thus, this research offers a broader perspective on the role of films in shaping beauty perceptions, highlighting the importance of cultural context, positive representation, and media literacy in fostering healthier and more inclusive beauty standards.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. Qualitative descriptive research emphasizes data without quantifying it (Fiantika, feni rita, 2022). The researcher aims to gain a deeper understanding of how messages conveyed by mass media are received by the audience from their respective perspectives. The qualitative descriptive method is effectively used to describe a phenomenon experienced to interpret social reality.

The researcher used purposive sampling for data collection. This method is employed to align the research discussion with identities that match the phenomenon occurring in the field, aiming to fulfill the research needs Teknik Pengambilan Sampel Purposive Dan Snowball Sampling. *Historis: Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian, & Pengembangan Pendidikan Sejarah* (Lenaini, 2021).

The data analysis technique in this study employs data triangulation by gathering specific information through structured interviews conducted with participants selected according to the researcher's criteria. The results will be processed with observations involving journals and reference books. The diverse results will create a broad knowledge base to achieve the most accurate outcomes (Nasir & Sukmawati, 2023).

The data analysis used in this research is an interactive model of data analysis. In this process, the researcher systematically seeks and arranges data obtained from interviews, reduces it by simplifying, classifies, discards unnecessary data, and provides accurate conclusions based on the obtained data (Moleong, L, 2022).

(Ariestyani & Ramadhanty, 2022) Stuart Hall's reception analysis explains the process of audience encoding within media. It explores how audiences interpret and derive meaning from messages conveyed through mass communication media. The initial aim of this research is grounded in the assumption that meanings in mass media extend beyond textual content. Texts within mass media acquire specific meanings as audiences receive or 'recept' them, thereby positioning audiences as consumers of mass media. Reception analysis focuses on how audiences respond to the content provided by media, especially since media messages can be interpreted in multiple ways. In this process, audiences absorb and define the information they receive based on their individual perspectives.

According to Stuart Hall, as cited in (Indah Mar'atus Sholichah et al., 2023), there are three forms of interpretation experienced by readers concerning how these messages are read by the readers: a) Dominant interpretation where the message is interpreted and accepted as a whole, so there is no difference in acceptance between the writer and the reader, b) Negotiated interpretation accepted by the audience according to beliefs and convictions so that, the message received is negotiated, c) Oppositional interpretation occurs when the writer and the reader have different interpretations

In this study, data triangulation will be conducted through several steps to enhance the credibility of the findings. First, data will be collected through structured interviews with participants selected purposively, providing in-depth information about their perceptions of media messages. Next, observations will be carried out to gather contextual and behavioral data that complements the interview findings, such as how participants interact with media. Additionally, a review of journals and reference books will provide theoretical and empirical background to support the interpretation of the data.

Integrating data from these three sources involves comparing and contrasting findings to identify consistencies or discrepancies. For example, if interview results align with observations and literature, this consistency strengthens the validity of the findings. Cross-validation will be performed to ensure accuracy by using data from one source to validate or challenge findings from another. The process of synthesizing information from interviews, observations, and literature will offer a comprehensive understanding of the researched phenomenon.

Through these steps, data triangulation will not only enhance validity and reduce bias but also provide a more comprehensive perspective and strengthen the reliability of the research conclusions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Film is one of the aesthetic works created by filmmakers, requiring a long process and significant costs, from story ideas to how those ideas are transformed into audiovisual form. The final result must align with the process undergone. Many moral messages must be conveyed through films, which can serve as valuable lessons for film enthusiasts. One film that provides valuable lessons is "Beauty is Good." Respondent R stated:

"For me, this film is very inspiring, and playing the role of Ibu Daud carries a message for the millennial generation that every mother dreams of having a righteous, beautiful daughter-in-law in the sense of having a 'pure' heart for her son."

This short film aims to remind women not to focus solely on improving their outer appearance but also their hearts. A Muslim woman in Islam is a woman who follows the

Islamic religion, fulfills all of Allah SWT's commands, and avoids His prohibitions according to the Quran and Hadith. Islam emphasizes that its followers should focus on piety and faith in the Almighty. It is the heart that Allah truly values, not physical appearance. Therefore, a Muslim woman should balance beautifying herself; having a beautiful face is important, but having a beautiful heart is far more important and valuable (Rahmawati, et al., 2023). Respondent S also said:

"A short film titled 'Beauty is Good' has managed to capture attention and inspire many people through YouTube. The film tells the journey of a young woman in seeking the true meaning of beauty, which is not only about outer appearance but also the goodness of the heart and behavior."

One of the myths often accompanying women is the myth of beauty. The concept of beauty myths changes over time. Some say that beauty is relative for each person, but in reality, consciously or unconsciously, many parties try to create a definition of beauty, such as mass media, the government, beauty product manufacturers, and others. Beauty is a word that refers more to physical attributes, where beauty is an ornament (Rhesa and Azis, 2022). Respondent A also agrees with beauty standards in Indonesia:

"It doesn't change my perception because, in reality, beauty is now a privilege. When you are beautiful with fair, smooth, and glowing skin, many people are attracted to you. In other situations, you are often prioritized, such as in queues."

Beauty standards change over time. A woman's body can be considered beautiful not only because of her facial beauty but also because of having fair, smooth, and firm skin, as well as a body shape that highlights certain features like the chest and hips, pronounced curves, and sensual lips. This becomes the beauty standard that develops in society. Respondent S commented:

"The film 'Beauty is Good' has been praised for successfully conveying a strong message about the importance of internal values such as kindness, empathy, and integrity over mere physical beauty. This is an important reminder in the current social media era, where many people, especially the younger generation, often get caught up in comparisons and unrealistic beauty standards. However, I feel this film might discourage women from growing or taking care of themselves to look more beautiful. Although in the role of Sarah, she tries to use skincare to be beautiful, in reality, when women want to be beautiful and use skincare, it's not always effective immediately. The process of becoming beautiful is not instant; women generally have good hearts, and physical beauty is a bonus. Therefore, women should be smart in taking care of themselves."

The numerous beauty standards make women willing to change themselves only to get validation from their surroundings, ultimately harming themselves. As depicted in the film "Beauty is Good," it portrays a woman who is willing to change her body just to get validation from her environment. When women live in an environment with specific beauty standards, they lose their self-confidence. They lack confidence and are always dissatisfied with what they have. According to Stuart Hall in Angelique, et al. (2022), there are three forms of meaning that readers have regarding how the message is read by the reader.

3.1 Dominant Meaning: This is where the message is understood and accepted in its entirety, resulting in no difference in reception between the writer and the reader.

The short film "Beauty is Good" comes to remind women not to focus solely on improving their outer appearance but also their hearts. The connotation is that Sarah is a Muslim woman with a good and sincere heart. The heart is the center of all beauty and goodness. Therefore, a woman who desires complete beauty should first take care of her heart and then her physical appearance (Afifah et al., 2023). This is also conveyed by Respondent R, stating that a mother, in seeking a daughter-in-law, does not only look at physical appearance but also at the sincerity of her heart.

This finding aligns with the study conducted by (Umami Ningsih et al., 2023), which asserts that the beauty every woman should pursue is to beautify her character, including instilling a sense of modesty, maintaining dignity, not revealing one's own or others' faults, being patient, and guarding one's speech.

Respondents who received the message dominantly said that the message conveyed by the film "Beauty is Good" encourages women to always be confident, be themselves, and let their inner beauty shine. With this film, they will find their desires and can take pride in who they are.

3.2 Negotiated Meaning: This is accepted by the audience according to their beliefs and convictions, so the message received is negotiated.

In the film "Beauty is Good," the message conveyed is that beauty is not only about a woman's physical appearance but also about the goodness within the heart. However, Respondent A does not agree with this notion because, in reality, Indonesians consider beauty to be about appearance and physical attributes. When someone is beautiful, they receive privileges.

This creates a reality for women that beauty must be understood as the ability to control their bodies according to social perspectives that emerge in society. Additionally, this means that women must fully conceptualize how to present a good, ideal, and standard body according to societal expectations (Pratiwi & Abdul Azis, 2022).

The negotiated meaning occurs because beauty standards are still used in society, and the message from the film "Beauty is Good" is seen as inconsistent with these standards.

3.4 Oppositional Meaning: This occurs when the writer and reader have different interpretations.

The concept of beauty presented in the film portrays that beauty is not just about physical appearance. In the film "Beauty is Good," the character Daud likes Sarah because she has good manners and is compassionate towards other living beings. However, Respondent S disagrees, stating that the film "Beauty is Good" discourages women from taking care of themselves to have better physical appearance. While inner beauty is essential, not all women are willing or aware of the need to take care of themselves to become better.

Based on Respondent S's oppositional interpretation, individual shortcomings and fears can be categorized as beauty. They state that with proper management and acceptance of fear and flaws, these can be transformed into beauty. If we can make peace with ourselves, we can accept ourselves as we are, and what is usually considered negative can become a form of beauty.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the short film "Cantik itu Baik" (Beauty is Good), it can be concluded that this film successfully communicates a profound message about beauty. The film not only emphasizes physical appearance but also underscores the importance of internal values such as kindness and morality as key elements of true beauty. The majority of respondents positively received this message, feeling inspired to accept themselves better and develop deeper internal aspects. However, some negotiated the film's message with their own values and beliefs, particularly regarding dominant societal beauty standards. Some respondents even held oppositional views, feeling that focusing on kindness could diminish motivation to care for physical appearance.

This research also highlights the social impact of beauty standards perceived through mass media, reflecting the challenges women face in meeting or rejecting these

social expectations and their impact on self-esteem and self-perception. Therefore, "Cantik itu Baik" is not merely a visual art piece but also an instrument that expands awareness about a more holistic understanding of beauty in contemporary society.

This research also highlights the social impact of beauty standards perceived through mass media, reflecting the challenges women face in meeting or rejecting these social expectations and their impact on self-esteem and self-perception. Therefore, "Cantik itu Baik" is not merely a visual art piece but also an instrument that expands awareness about a more holistic understanding of beauty in contemporary society. The short film "Cantik itu Baik" (Beauty is Good) effectively communicates a nuanced understanding of beauty, emphasizing the importance of internal virtues such as kindness and morality alongside physical appearance.

The film's positive reception among most viewers suggests that it has successfully inspired greater self-acceptance and encouraged the development of inner qualities. However, some viewers grappled with reconciling the film's message with prevailing societal beauty standards, with a few expressing concerns that focusing on internal beauty might reduce motivation for physical self-care.

For filmmakers, this highlights the importance of integrating messages that balance both internal and external aspects of beauty, potentially fostering a more inclusive narrative. Policy makers can support this shift by advocating for media literacy programs that help individuals critically engage with beauty standards and promoting media inclusivity that challenges traditional norms.

For the general public, embracing a broader view of beauty and reflecting on personal beliefs can aid in navigating societal pressures more effectively. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of such films on self-esteem and behavior, cross-cultural analyses to understand global responses to beauty standards, and impact assessments to evaluate how these messages influence societal perceptions over time. These steps will help build upon the insights from "Cantik itu Baik" and advance the discourse on beauty in contemporary society.

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