

*CONFERENCE PROCEEDING***Break the Stigma: Reconstructing the Negative Stigma of Gender Bias through Skin Care Inclusivity for All Genders**

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ABSTRACT

The response from netizens on social media regarding the men embracing skin care might often appear. Despite societal norms allowing men to take care of their skin, and it is a practice that should be available to all regardless of gender, the belief that skin care is primarily for women persists, fueled by negative stereotypes like 'toxic masculinity'. This study aims to propose strategies to eliminate these society's negative stigma and harmful stereotypes surrounding men's skin care, through the various solutions from researchers and from the community. Researchers utilized descriptive qualitative methods with a gender theory and social reality approach. Purposive sampling interview techniques and Forum Group Discussion (FGD) were conducted in collecting data to explore and discover the strategies that have been carried out. Next, the data was processed and analyzed based on gender theory and social reality approach. The research results showed that the solution to deal with negative stigma in society comes from community aspirations, such as educational movements about skin care inclusivity for all genders and voicing gender equality in social media and advertising. This movement supported the concept of gender theory which believed that negative stigma stemmed from societal assumptions that had influenced each other. Therefore, strategies that came from the community could eliminate the prevailing negative stereotypes.

Keywords : *stigma, masculinity, toxic, skin care, gender*

INTRODUCTION

Perceptions of skin care products should not be tied to a particular gender, but should be seen as gender-neutral to address skin problems, including acne, blocked skin follicles that lead to oil, bacteria and dead skin buildup in the pores. This problem might happen to all genders, not only women. Shadrina's (2023) stated that beauty vlogger influencers often only discuss skin care for women, but nowadays there are often male influencers who play an active role in promoting skin care. Unfortunately, the negative stigma still attached has made many men reluctant to use skin care products, even though skin care should be considered an essential need for skin health, regardless of gender. Skin care has now become an integral part of life in supporting the self-care and appearance of modern lifestyles (Putri & Apriani, 2022). Social norms around skin care allow individuals to express themselves without being

shackled by gender stereotypes, describing behaviors that are appropriate to the social context.

Sensitive understanding of male skin care creates toxic masculinity behavior. This is in line with a study by Ramadani (2023) which discusses the 'Reality of Toxic Masculinity in Society'. This change in view reflects the inclusiveness of society. For example, on August 27, 2023, it was circulated on social media that there was a promotion of skin care products by JKT 48 members in Malang which was visited by many people, including many male consumers. This case proves that the stigma against the use of male cosmetics has been considered a normal thing in society.

Based on the research conducted, it showed the reconstruction of masculinity stereotypes is in line with Fauziah & Asrita's study (2022) which calls for defending gender equality rights for boys in the White Ribbon version of the "Boys Don't Cry" campaign video. Several studies have shown that negative comments are related to the character of the content from a masculinity perspective. Nur Hayati et.al. (2023) examined the modernization of masculinity through an advertisement for a shampoo brand in Indonesia that introduced the concept of 'new masculinity'. Fauziah and Asrita's research aligns with the study conducted by Andriana et al. (2023) who also examined "Toxic Masculinity" in one of the popular advertisements in Indonesia with the theme 'Laki Berani Beda', found elements of toxic masculinity in the form of behaviors displayed that can affect the perception of masculinity in the eyes of the audience. However, there have been limited studies in contributing effective insights in dealing with these problems. Negative stigma is also widely spread through social media such as Instagram and TikTok. Information from one platform to another spreads quickly, and is often considered accurate by the public without considering the facts attached, because it is considered to match the existing reality. Therefore, researchers use social media such as Tiktok and Instagram as educational and campaign platforms, considering that technological advances have become absolute for modern society.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a mixed method between quantitative and qualitative approaches were involved. These approaches were combined in order to provide a more complete and in-depth picture and in more detail so that certain qualities and standards can be met. The plot of the research method of this research will be shown in this following figure:

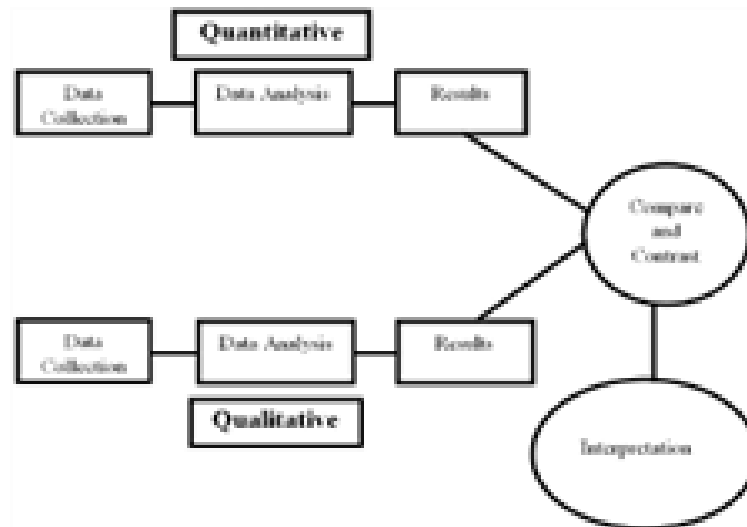


Figure 1. Plot of Conducting The Study

This research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection. Quantitative data collection was done through questionnaires which was reinforced by interviews using a purposive sampling method. Regarding the data collection for quantitative design, we selected the sample from the population. The reason the researchers gave the title "Break the Stigma" is to invite people to be open-minded about the use of skin care among men. The negative stigma regarding the use of skin care among the men still occurs in MAN 2 Kota Malang. Therefore, the population we utilized were all students at MAN 2 Kota Malang. After we selected the population, several representatives from each class were taken as the sample of the study by using snowball random sampling.

Data analysis for the quantitative data was conducted by referring to the Guttman Scale and Forum Group Discussion (FGD) as well as a theoretical framework based on gender theory or feminism and social engineering theory. According to the book *Descriptive Statistics* written by Rahardja et. al. (2023), the Guttman Scale is a research tool that contains data in the form of numbers to help researchers comprehensively understand a single dimension of the attitude or trait being investigated, which is often referred to as a universal attribute. FGD theory is used to explore the views of the participants involved.

On the other hand, the qualitative approach was involved in this study by analyzing the verbal interaction in the form of interviews with a structured list of questions. Interviewees were selected using the purposive sampling method. Then, the observation was conducted and the data was analyzed by the descriptive qualitative approach referring to gender or feminism theory, and social engineering theory as an analytical framework. We observe social media by reading the comments, and see the impact directly in everyday life such as by interviewing students who use skin care. FGDs were also implemented as a tool to better understand participants' perspectives. Overall, this method allowed for holistic and in-depth data collection in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result from Quantitative Data through Questionnaire

According to the Guttman Scale, the questionnaire results shows that 25% of the respondents with a scale of 0.8 who scored 'Nearly Agree' (MS) considered that men are reluctant to use skin care because skin care products are still considered exclusive for women. Meanwhile, 18.8% of respondents with a 0.7% scale who scored 'Close to Agree' (MY) also stated that skin care products have very distinctive differences between men and women. In their view, 65.6% of respondents with a scale of 1 who scored 'Agree' (S) believed that skin care for men is used as a tool to maintain skin hygiene and health. As for women, in line with Lestari's research (2023) the use of skin care is able to increase self-confidence and be more enthusiastic about activities. Thus, overall, all interviewees agree that skin care should not be limited by gender, and each individual has the freedom to choose products according to their needs.

Table 1. Modification of Interpretation Guttman Scale

Value	Interpretation
0	Disagree (D)
0.10 - 0.33	Close to Disagree (CD)
0.34 - 0.66	Neutral (N)
0.67 - 0.99	Close to Agree (CA)
1	Agree (A)

Result from Qualitative Data through Interview

The interviews in this research showed the complexity of the issue in society, with different perspectives and influences from different media and generations. Some interviewees felt that skin care does not change masculinity and is an important step to maintain healthy skin. However, there are a few who still think that skin care is more suitable for women. There is debate about how skin care use affects perceptions of masculinity. Most of the interviewees thought that men who use skin care are still masculine, while a small number said some men feel that using skin care can reduce their masculinity. The interviewees added that there should be a solution in the form of a social media campaign accompanied by socialization in an effort to change the stigma of society. This proves that campaigns and socialization are the right steps to overcome the stigma of using skin care on men.

Result from Social Media Analysis

The #BreakTheStigma campaign through the Instagram page @breakthestigma.m2km is an innovation that is expected to address the stigma issues identified by the interviewees. Through this platform, researchers aim to spread a broader understanding of the issue, promote open dialogue, and remove negative stigma in society. By utilizing highly influential social media such as Instagram and TikTok, this campaign is expected to create a safe space to share experiences, stories, and knowledge about skin care inclusivity, so that people can better empathize and support affected individuals. In addition, the Instagram page will also utilize various types of

creative content such as illustrations, infographics, and testimonials to raise awareness and motivate positive attitude change towards the stigma issue at hand. As such, this campaign has great potential to achieve the goal of broader understanding and prevention of stigma in society.

CONCLUSION

Society's negative understanding of men's skin care use reflects the stigma that still exists. Negative reactions to men using skin care can potentially fuel wider gender discrimination, negatively impacting society. However, there are a handful of people who accept this difference. The interviews suggest the importance of socializing change in today's social era, opening people's minds to change over time. "Break the Stigma" proved to be an effective step, both as a preventive measure and intervention in changing society's views towards men who use skin care.

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