
¹Demolishing the “Ideal” Concept of Beauty through a Skincare’s Advertisements on Instagram

Yasmina Namira Rahmania, Nurenzia Yannuar, Aulia Apriana

¹ Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Skincare companies purposely combine textual and visual features to create a compelling sign that can be correlated with beauty. In their advertisements (ads), their models are depicted as having bright, white, and pore less skin. These exaggerated and repetitive representations eventually build a certain concept of beauty, which is flawless-looking skin. In this paper, a preparatory approach is employed to investigate how an Indonesian beauty brand, Pore Hero, employs diverse promotional strategies. The analysis focuses on the textual aspects and discursive features of the posts and on how the campaign challenges the “ideological” concept of beauty. Data was collected from the brand’s Instagram account and analyzed with Fairclough’s three-dimensional model along with van Leeuwen’s word-image links. Results indicated that Pore Hero uses five distinctive techniques to promote the brand’s values and offerings: 1) exposition of existing ingredients 2) inspiring campaign 3) emotive contents 4) realistic representations 5) reviews by Instagram users. It is concluded that the Instagram promotional posts of the brand strive to change people’s minds to respect and accept themselves by changing the goal of having perfect skin to healthy skin.

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1. Introduction

In recent days, any type of advertising media is bound to be found anywhere. While some printed media along the lines of newspapers and magazines are still popular within the global society, the latest generations started to lean more on modern media. And as the world is facing a drastic shift towards a digital era, a lot of daily activities, including trade, are performed online. According to Wright et al. (2016), advertising in traditional-form media is not a part of the future as the trend of advertising is proposed to grow online. Those who are part of the advertising industry should move to the digital word, following the current trend (Bernoff, 2009). Smith (2016) confirms that compared to traditional ways of selling, internet marketing offers much effortless and faster procedures. In addition, Lawrence et al. (2018) state that “this new trend (of marketing and advertising) is much cheaper, easier, useful and proven to be successful” (13).

Up to recently, advertising via traditional media in the forms of television, radio, and the internet is still used and considered to influence its ability to reach large numbers of audiences. However, despite its ability to approach people, the trait also brings losses due to its breadth. In line with Keller and Kotler (2009), to acquire and retain a long-term business, a person has to build a comprehensive relationship with the customers. In creating such a relationship, a marketer needs to comprehend what the market demands by making interactions. The emergence of social media platforms has curved new paths with fresh possibilities for marketers coming from different places in the world. Smith (2016) affirms that

¹ Email Addresses: yasminanamirar@gmail.com (Rahmania), nurenzia.yannuar.fs@um.ac.id (Yannuar), aulia.apriana.fs@um.ac.id (Apriana)

social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, can act as platforms to change the business globally. Lamminen (2018) also declares that despite the association's size, Social Media Marketing (SMM) benefits can be implemented to achieve more excellent results in businesses. And social media features, especially Instagram, allow people to interact publicly and personally through its direct message (DM), comment section, polling, and question columns.

There is an adequate number of people who believe that advertisements displayed in the media solely serve the purpose of profiting the brand or company. Thus, due to the persuasive core aspect of advertising, the community hardly contemplates the discourse used in the promotional texts or images that they encounter. Whereas the act of advertising has a lot more purpose than just mere promotion. Earning revenue may be the final destination of selling something, but the other purpose of an advertisement is to deliver the idea of the brand to its possible buyers. In consonance with Goddard (1998), an advertisement can also be used to transfer the idea that creates the image of an individual or organization. The discourse used in the commercial may be able to conceive an idea that has the power to decide the attitude of the customers. For this reason, an advertisement may carry the ideology and values of its brand producers, and that it is one of many proofs that advertisements are by means powerful. This statement is in line with the study on techniques applied by product companies to reach more consumers conducted by Vahid and Esmae'li (2012), which conclude that "the power of an advertisement is within the act of persuasion exploited by the marketer to alter the beliefs and understanding of the consumers" (p. 47).

For centuries, face treatments and cosmetics have always been used to improve beauty, distinct social class, and advertise healthy skin. Along with the developments of knowledge and technology, beauty products are also getting more advanced, along with the increasing demand. According to research on prestige beauty done by the NPD Group (2020), the U.S. beauty industry generated \$18.8 billion in sales during 2019, and the number continues to grow each year. This idea is also supported by skincare growth's forecasts reported by Research and Market (2021, para. 2) stating that "The Global Skincare Products Market was valued at USD 140.92 billion in 2020 and is projected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4.69% during the forecast period 2021 - 2026". In this way, new brands are constantly emerging and competing in an increasingly fierce market. Skincare companies are going up against each other in a contest to create the most creative and convincing advertisement campaigns to attract customers through visual and textual aspects. However, these so-called creative campaigns oftentimes promote stereotypical depictions that create a standard of beauty. Kaur et al. (2013) discover that in advertisements, the "ideal" women are stereotyped through visual and textual aspects. Hidayah (2016) also concludes that the image of attractive models in advertisements induces the perception of "ideal" women and men. According to this study, the perception of "ideal" in Garnier advertising is implemented in words such as "perfect", "poreless", "pinkish", and "bright".

Previous researchers (Kannan & Tyagi, 2013; Nugrawidhanti, 2016; Zaharah, 2018; Hambur, 2019; Kaur et al., 2013; Hidayah, 2016) have conducted similar research on the concept of beauty using Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989). Conforming to Janks (1997), "this approach allows us to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtapositioning, their sequencing, their layout, and so on" (p. 329). Furthermore, it supports the reasoning with multiple layers of analytic stages which are interconnected with one other. Nugrawidhanti (2016), researching the promotional catalog of *Oriflame*, concludes that the texts and pictures composed in the catalog are partly responsible for the construction of the "ideal" beauty standard in the mind of Indonesian people, especially women. Kaur et al. (2013), investigating beauty ads on English magazines *Women's Weekly* and *Cleo* discover that beauty brands' advertisers tend to link their proposed goods with an improved life. The unending action constructs and controls the mind of people into believing that the advertisement is accurate. Moreover, Hambur's (2019) research on advertising slogans, taken from the official Instagram accounts of *Revlon* and *L'Oreal*, also suggests similar results. The study shows that the adjectives and verbs found in the discourse of the ads support each other to build a certain concept of beauty. In this way, the advertisers of both cosmetic brands employ the ideas of "becoming

something” as their marketing plan and it dictates certain beauty beliefs that the audience will earn the desired look if they buy and use their products.

Although many researchers have already applied Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework (1989) analysis on beauty advertisements, they mainly discuss how the discourse used in the promotions constructs the “ideal” concept of beauty. Thus, Fairclough’s CDA approach (1989) has not been extensively used to investigate advertisements that question the “ideal” concept of beauty. Hence, we wish to fill the gap by investigating Instagram promotional posts of an Indonesian beauty brand named *Pore Hero*. No previous study has provided linguistic analysis on *Pore Hero*’s advertisements. *Pore Hero* is an Indonesian skincare brand founded in 2020 and is actively promoting on Instagram. The brand strongly advertises its original campaign “*Show Your Pores*”, and up to today, it only has one face treatment product which is the *Matcha Clay Face Mask*. This brand was chosen because it applies fresh promotional activities and is distinct from other Indonesian skincare brands. In addition, we apply the multimodality approach to investigate the adoption of images employed in their Instagram posts. As described by Pauwels (2012), multimodality refers to a case where partially “two input (senses) or output (medium or device) modes (or sub-modes) are involved” (p. 250). In social media, particularly Instagram, these mixed modes involve the combination of verbal and image concurrently.

The depictions of both men and women having clear, bright skin displayed through advertisements eventually create a beauty standard. We believe that the promotional work of beauty products often manipulates the audience to compare themselves to what they see or read in the campaign and later sets a goal to have this acclaimed “ideal” identity. Therefore, this paper aims to give a different view on beauty advertisements circulating in the media and society. The analysis focuses on the textual aspects and discursive features employed in the Instagram posts of *Pore Hero* to attract and influence customers. The study also looks at how the Instagram campaign challenges the “ideological” concept of beauty.

1.1 Fairclough’s Three-dimensional Model

Following Fairclough (1995), “Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a form of research that analyses the relationships between discourse, society, power, and ideology” (p. 132). CDA offers help for people to understand the relationship between discourse and ideology, and how these two aspects may create meaning or be applicable to an entity. Therefore, CDA is very much related to society and is identifiable to be examined. CDA is implemented by Fairclough to comprehend the study of society and its changes, especially the relation between discourse and power. He constructed a CDA model that consists of three dimensions of analysis processes that are correlated with one another:

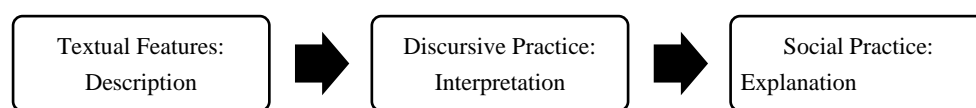


Figure 1. Fairclough’s Three-dimensional framework (1989)

The three measurements, or usually called the three-dimensional framework, include textual features (description), discursive practice (interpretation), and social practice (explanation). “The textual features or description include a series of linguistic features which consists of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, turn-taking, types of speech act, and the directness or indirectness of interactions” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 109). Concerning the discursive practice, the focal point is on how the text is composed, consumed, and interpreted in society. Discursive practice analysis associates with examining the text’s production, allocation, and consumption, while targeting how the power relations are achieved. The purpose of the explanation stage is to depict the part of a discourse in society: “It is in the analysis of the relationship between discursive practice and the broader social practice that the study arrives at its conclusions” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 87).

1.2 Van Leeuwen's Word-image Links

Discourse involves many functions, and it comes with the variability of semiotic modes. And this variability consistently links verbal and visual features in one meaningful information. Divergent types of modes require different analysis approaches and can be seen as a phenomenon of multimodality. Multimodality refers to the application of different semiotic modes at the same time. According to van Leeuwen (2005a), multimodality is much needed for us to learn more about how different modes are combined in multimodal texts.

Multimodality suggests that the multiplicity of modes grants contributions to meaning-making. Modes such as image, gesture, and sound are taken as groups of systematized resources to create meaning. In the approach of multimodality, the variety of modes are not seen as mere accessories to support the written or spoken language. Each mode has a particular function that contributes to the meaning of the complete text, and it compels the standing of multimodality. The mixture of modes, particularly the visualization of communication, is growing rapidly in the last few decades, and it designates the importance of multimodality in discourse studies (Renkema, 2004).

The linking method of texts and images in discourse is long-established. In previous decades, images are mostly reviewed as representations of language rather than its interactions. On the other hand, as described by van Leeuwen (2005b), images can also be applied to do things to or for or with people: to explain (diagrams), to persuade (advertisements), and so on. In the attempt of multimodal analysis, van Leeuwen's (2005b) approach of 'elaboration' and 'extension' can be applied to define the connection between the semiotic modes.

Table 1. van Leeuwen's Word-image Links (2005b)

Elaboration	Specification	The image makes the text more specific The text makes the image more specific
	Explanation	The text paraphrases the image (or vice versa)
Extension	Similarity	The content of the text is similar to that of the image
	Contrast	The content of the text contrasts with that of the image
	Complement	The content of the image adds further information to that of the text, and vice versa

2. Methods

This paper discusses the description of a beauty campaign using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and multimodality. Moreover, the data collected to conduct this study were accumulated from the skincare advertisement campaign of an Indonesian skincare brand *Pore Hero*. The analysis was carried out on the captions and images seized from the official Instagram account of the brand (www.instagram.com/poreherobeauty). In consonance with Bogdan and Biklen (1982), collected data in the form of words and pictures (not numbers) are descriptive data and fall into the qualitative field of study.

The necessary process to collect the data included a series of actions. First, a thorough exploration and observation of the official Instagram account of *Pore Hero* (@poreherobeauty) were carried out to identify how the brand interacts with their audience. Second, an in-depth selection of the Instagram posts was done. The posts were selected based on certain criteria: those with more than one sentence captions and those that clearly represented the brand's product and campaign. The official Instagram account of *Pore Hero* offers daily updates and is still expanding their breadth. By March 2021, the brand had 25 thousand followers with a total number of 80 posts on Instagram. Subsequently, 50 posts uploaded from September 23rd, 2020 up to March 10th, 2021 were selected and taken as the

data of this study. These 50 posts were chosen to best describe how the brand carries out promotional activities and interacts with their followers. Only eight posts are discussed in this paper, they were selected because the captions and photos well represent the brand's values contained in all 50 posts. Third, the discourse of the advertisement campaign was transcribed by noting the captions used in the brand's Instagram posts. Lastly, a study on the discursive features applied in *Pore Hero's* promotional Instagram posts was done and the posts were classified into groups. We found 5 discursive techniques while looking at the brand's Instagram account, namely: 1) exposition of existing ingredients 2) inspiring campaign 3) emotive contents 4) realistic representations 5) reviews by Instagram users. Finally, to obtain detailed and comprehensive analysis results, a total of four stages of analysis processes were accomplished for each post. And each process is presented in paragraph: 1) Fairclough's first-dimensional outline (1989) 2) Fairclough's second-dimensional outline (1989) 3) van Leeuwen's word-image links (2005b) 4) Fairclough's three-dimensional outline (1989).

To answer the first problem, Fairclough's first-dimensional outline (1989) was applied to the first paragraph to analyze the data. As the first dimension affirms discourse as a text, the collected data were only evaluated by its textual features. This paper only focuses on the adjective, verb, and directness, or indirectness of the caption. Then, to solve the second problem, a complete analysis of how the data were produced and consumed was performed in the second paragraph. In this study, this part of the analysis was associated with the discursive features which the brand implies in the posts to captivate potential customers. Next, van Leeuwen's word-image links multimodality approach (2005b) was adopted in the third paragraph to uncover the connection between the images and captions posted on *Pore Hero's* Instagram account. Then, for the third problem, a description of how the data take part in society was finalized in the fourth paragraph. We observed a wide range of current skincare advertisements on Instagram and compared them with the promotional posts of *Pore Hero's*. The comparison was needed to discover how the ideological concept of beauty values influenced *Pore Hero's* advertisement posts on Instagram. The extensive analysis done to complete this paper was completed by integrating a downloaded application named *Good Notes 5*. The application was used to compile journals, books, and other information referring to this study. Additionally, it was also needed to note down anything associated with the data collection. Finally, the final step was to draw a conclusion established from the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the research resulted from the classification were generated in the following themes: 1) exposition of existing ingredients 2) inspiring campaign 3) emotive contents 4) realistic representations 5) reviews by Instagram users.

3.1 Exposition of Existing Ingredients

The first discursive technique applied by Pore Hero in their Instagram posts is the exposition of existing ingredients. This technique informs the audience of the composition used to make the Matcha Clay Face Mask.



Figure 2. the Matcha Clay Face Mask, uploaded on March 4, 2021

@porehero beauty: Alcohol & Paraben Free

Ingredients list: Aqua, ... Sodium Chloride, Fomes Officinalis (Mushroom) Extract, Parfum
BPOM NA18190205616

‘Alcohol & Paraben Free

Ingredients list: Aqua, ... Sodium Chloride, Fomes Officinalis (Mushroom) Extract, Perfume
BPOM (National Food and Drug Agency): NA18190205616’

In promotion, *Pore Hero* often informs the composition of their products by directly displaying a list of ingredients, as shown in data (1). The complete list is offered in the caption without any use of any verbs or pronouns, but mostly scientific words. The use of scientific words reflects the brand’s professionalism and advancement in technology (Hidayah, 2016). However, there is an adjective “free” just before the ingredient list to briefly inform people who may have sensitive skin or are allergic to alcohol or paraben that the Matcha Clay Face Mask is produced without any of those components.

Exposing the ingredients list directly to the audience can be considered a reliable marketing strategy. It shows the brand’s attempt at transparency which can be considered as a positive point from the customers’ point of view. With this act of transparency, people can conveniently identify each component and decide on whether the product may suit their skin or not. It also favors the brand to be open on their offerings and avoid ambiguous information wandering in the Instagram comment section. And this strategy has a high percentage of gaining customer trust because the validity is directly given from the official store. Kappel (2019) states that consumers are loyal to trustworthy companies and that dishonest companies will be left behind. Moreover, *Pore Hero* also includes the BPOM registration number of their product in the caption. The BPOM registration number explains that the product is approved by Indonesia’s Food and Medicine Supervisory Board and is made by following the local cosmetic’s safety regulations. People can check the validity of the number via the BPOM website, and this certainly gives a positive impression on the public’s interpretation.

In the post, *Pore Hero* shows Matcha Clay Face Mask product being squeezed by hand while the caption characterizes the ingredients used to produce it. The uploaded image only displays the outer appearance of the face mask, and it adds no additional explanation other than the product’s shape and color. Therefore, as the content of the caption adds further information to the image, based on van Leeuwen’s word-image links (2005b), the caption performs extension in the category of complement.

In a broader social context, every company certainly wants sales that stable or continue to grow. And with the increasingly competitive skincare market, every brand is trying to have a strategy applied to survive in the industry. One of the ways commonly used is by not plainly exposing the product information, or just naming the main-beneficial ingredients only. This is done by many brands to avoid having their products copied by other parties, or there is an ingredient in their product that might irritate the skin. However, *Pore Hero* overrides this method even though their Matcha Clay Face Mask product is produced with perfume. Perfume is one of the most controversial facial care compositions as it may cause allergic reactions to sensitive skin. Bråred et al.’s (2016) study of fragrance in skincare concludes

that “contact allergies to fragrance chemicals are among the most common findings when patch-testing patients with suspected allergic contact dermatitis, as well as in studies of contact allergy in the general population” (p. 1). Despite that fact, they still include a complete list of product compositions for the sake of transparency and customer trust.

3.2 Inspiring Campaign

The second discursive technique used in the Instagram posts of Pore Hero is their original campaign: #ShowYourPores. The use of the hashtag symbol (#) in Instagram refers to assistance to categorize and make certain content more discoverable by other users. This campaign is promoted constantly on the pictures and captions uploaded on the brand’s official Instagram page.



Figure 3. An image uploaded by *Pore Hero* on October 1, 2020

@porehero: *It's okay to feel insecure! Setiap orang ingin jadi cantik, dan itu wajar2 aja. Tapi yang gila adalah standarnya. Kenapa society membentuk standar kalau cantik itu harus perfect? cantik itu cuma kalau kamu punya kulit yang putih, mulus, dan glowing? Sosial media dan iklan membuat kita lupa bahwa KITA SEMUA CANTIK. Kita semua berharga. Ayo kita berjuang bareng2 buat ngalahin insecurity dan overthinking kita pelan2. It's time to #ShowYourPores!*

‘It’s okay to feel insecure! Everyone wants to be beautiful, and that’s only fair. But what is absurd is the standard of beauty. Why does society set the standard that being beautiful must be perfect? Is it only beautiful if you have white, smooth, and glowing skin? Social media and advertisements make us forget that we are all beautiful and precious. Let’s slowly fight our insecurity and overthinking together. It’s time to #ShowYourPores!’

This post explains the standards of beauty that exist in Indonesian society but are impossible for everyone to meet. From a textual point of view, the caption uses a lot of verbs, adjectives, nouns, and pronouns. It starts with the verbs “feel” and “wants” to generalize that it is normal for someone to feel insecure about appearance and dreams of having the “ideal” skin. And the caption follows with the adjective “absurd” to describe the standard of beauty. It is used to give an impression that the standards set are unrealistic. Then the caption characterizes the alleged perfect skin with the adjectives “white”, “smooth”, and “glowing”. The characterization illustrates how the skin looks like in most beauty commercials shown on social media, and how they may make the audience feel. It is then followed by the verb “let’s” to encourage people to leave their insecurity and overthinking behind. In the context of the caption, *overthinking* is taken as a noun. *Pore Hero* uses direct interaction in this post by referring to the audience by the pronouns “you” and “we”. The word *kamu* or “you” is used when describing the beauty standards that are formed in society (white, smooth, and glowing skin). This is done as an illustration to emphasize the ‘demands’ of society on each individual. Meanwhile, when it comes to fighting against these standards, the pronoun changes to “we” so that readers feel invited and included in this campaign.



Figure 4. An image posted by *Pore Hero* on January 26, 2021

@poreherobeaity: *Real skin has texture and pores. The goal is healthy skin, not a perfect skin. I love my flawed skin, it's time to #ShowYourPores*

Real skin has texture and pores. The goal is healthy skin, not perfect skin. I love my flawed skin, it's time to #ShowYourPores

Following (2), (3) conveys the same campaign, but with a different message. Instagram post (3) invites people to normalize texture and pores. In conveying this, *Pore Hero* uses the adjective “real” to emphasize the idea that having pores and texture are traits of human skin. Then the caption is followed by two more adjectives: “healthy” and “perfect”. These adjectives are used to compare possible and unattainable skin goals. The brand wants to convey the idea of changing the reader’s goal from initially wanting to have perfect skin, to wanting healthy skin, promoting self-love and self-acceptance. The idea is emphasized more in the next sentence with the use of the verb “love” and adjective “flawed”. The caption ends with the original campaign, namely #ShowYourPores.

The act of publicizing incorporates a part more reason than fair mere advancement. It holds the power to transfer ideas created by a company to change the mindset of society. From a study of language and texts by Kannan and Tyagi (2013), they concluded that language has tremendous effects on individuals and society’s behavior. As a beauty brand that has a large following, *Pore Hero* can convey their value to a wide audience. In these two posts, the brand is campaigning for their signature slogan: #ShowYourPores. First of all, the slogan parades pore, acne, and texture normalization. *Pore Hero* delivers a message that real human skin certainly has pores and texture, and it is not as flawless as displayed on media. In her analysis, Hambur (2019) discovers that some beauty ad images could categorical social wrongs and that they are delivered through advertising to manipulate customers. Second, *Pore Hero* wants to encourage people to fight their insecurities, be confident, and eventually participate in the brand’s campaign. In an effort to change people's perceptions of their skin goals, *Pore Hero* is quite favorable as it came up with a new approach that caught the attention of Indonesia’s beauty community. Moreover, this new thinking has a big enough possibility to be accepted by society due to its level of relatability. The issue of acne and visible pores can be a sensitive concern for many people so that this campaign can be relatable for them. And in terms of marketing, people who are inspired by this campaign and participate in it will certainly benefit the breadth of the brand as well.

In fact, skincare brands or companies desire their products to be able to change the condition of their consumers for the better. For that purpose, they usually launch advertisements with the concept and frills of “being something”, “having something”, and “becoming something”. Ads with this concept usually show someone who experiences a problem due to his or her appearance, then suddenly the situation changes for the better after using the advertised product. This statement is in line with the analysis of Hambur (2019) that through some advertisements, people are subconsciously convinced that they are more appealing and that they can fulfil their ambitions. However, in the two posts above, *Pore Hero* applies a different advertising approach. In (2), the brand shows a picture of a girl with a facial skin condition that we may rarely see in advertisements for other beauty products. And similar to (3), the image shows the skin condition of the model without any edits that mask its true state. Furthermore, these two posts are also trailed by captions that extend the meaning of the photos. And in

the two captions, there are no words or sentences that imply that the state of *Pore Hero*'s consumers will flawlessly change if they use the Matcha Clay Face Mask. Instead, the message conveyed by the brand is about trying to accept and love their shortcomings together and gradually. As explained in the caption (2), beauty advertisements unconsciously build a concept of beauty that is impossible to realize. The campaign aims to break the chain of most skincare commercials featuring models with poreless skin and excessive editing. The images of attractive models in ads lower the confidence of people and it is associated with the claims of the product advertised that consuming the product will solve the problem (Kaur et al., 2013). And at the same time, the campaign also tries to change the way people think about true standards of beauty. As confirmed in description (3), it suggests people make healthy skin as their goal to use skincare.

3.3 Emotive Contents

The next discursive technique is the use of emotive content. Similar to the concept of emotive language, the emotive contents aim to evoke an emotional response from the audience.



Figure 5. AT THE END OF EVERY DAY candle, uploaded on January 2, 2021

@poreherobeaity: *Just in case kalo ngga ada yang bilang ini ke kamu hari ini.. aku bangga sama kamu. Aku sayang sama kamu. Thank you for being strong when shit got rough. Thank you for being kind even when people hurt you and act like you hurt them. Promise me to keep going. Even when the time comes that you feel like the world turned its back on you, promise me you will keep going ...*

'In case no one told you this today, I am proud of you. I care about you. Thank you for being strong when shit got rough. Thank you for being kind even when people hurt you and act like you hurt them. Promise me to keep going. Even when the time comes that you feel like the world turned its back on you, promise me you will keep going ...'

This post is an example of how *Pore Hero* implemented the use of emotive content on their Instagram account. First of all, the caption was written with first-person singular "I" and the possessive pronoun "you". This direct language style is used as if the brand is trying to speak face to face with the readers. The use of verbs "proud" and "care" represent what *Pore Hero* feels about their customers. The caption is followed by the brand thanking the audience and describing them with positive adjective connotations "strong" and "kind". Those adjectives were added to give a constrictive meaning in efforts to face the world and its people, delivered with the line: "shit got rough". The negative adjective connotation *roughly* describes the obstacles that occur in life. Henceforth, the verb "promise" and object pronoun "me" were used twice to further emphasize the directness of the narrative.



Figure 6. An image posted by *Pore Hero* on October 2, 2020

@poreherobeaauty: ... always remember that you're more than enough. You are beautiful. And most importantly, you are **LOVED**

In line with (4), (5) also use direct calls using a second person object pronoun *you*. In this post, *Pore Hero* advises their followers to hold on to their respective values. This idea is highlighted with the adoption of several words: “more than enough”, “beautiful”, and “loved”. In (5) the emotional aspects are emphasized by the use of adverbs. First, the adverb “always” is implemented to modify the verb “remember” to stress that the brand wants this encouragement to be remembered at all times by the readers. And second, the adverb “importantly” is modified with another adverb, “most”, to imply that the ultimate message of this caption is the line: “you are loved”. In addition, the line is also stressed with the use of all-capital on the word “loved”.

As shown in (4) and (5), *Pore Hero* often uploads posts that can be considered emotive content. The emotive content points to inspire an emotional reaction from the readers and it is one of the ways that the brand uses to interact with customers. The posts uploaded revolve around the topics of everyday life and the choice of words used is written to leave a warm impression that can make the reader feel comforted while reading. Although this content is not related to the products offered by *Pore Hero*, it can be considered an innovative and distinct marketing strategy. If seen from the customer side, the writings such as those in (4) and (5) can be considered as a form of concern from the brand for them to which they can relate. Furthermore, the two captions were written directly using informal language, and they bring out a familiar feeling like talking to a friend. As Hambur (2019) states that the situations created by pronouns “you” and “I” reduce social distance and create an intimate atmosphere (p. 45).

Both posts deliver encouraging words to the reader. In Figure (4), a candle that is lit is shown. The writing on the wax is entitled *AT THE END OF EVERY DAY*, but the content is difficult to read due to the small font. The image does not represent what is in the caption. However, the caption context relates to the title of the candle, and it explains the title in more detail. Furthermore, the image of the lit candle also gives a warm impression to the words of encouragement in the caption. After that, we are exposed to a picture of a woman who is smiling broadly in (5). And although a little faint, it can be seen that on her cheeks and forehead there are several blackish-brown acne scars. The caption of this post implies believing that we are beautiful even if we are imperfect, and this idea fits well with the image shown. Therefore, the essence of the caption adds further information to the image.

In an effort to sell something, it is essential for every company to make interactions with the customers. According to Chuang et al. (2012), customer interaction has the greatest direct impact on trust, followed by service quality, and customer loyalty. And in a far-reaching context, this interaction is built so that their products and brands are better known to a wider audience. Moreover, it has a big effect on sales. Thus, they should be active in engaging in interaction while promoting. Apart from that, *Pore Hero* chooses to often upload posts that are not related to product promotion. This kind of content is shared solely to build a more intense relationship with customers. Additionally, the brand uses the first-person pronoun to greet their Instagram followers. By targeting individuals directly, instead of a mass audience, the brand makes each customer feel appreciated (Hambur, 2019). It can prove one of the values upheld by the brand that being close to customers is as important as doing mere advertising activities.

3.4 3.4. Realistic Representations

The fourth technique used in the Instagram posts of Pore Hero is the act of providing realistic representations. This action explains how the label gives the “final results” of using the Matcha Clay Face Mask without the use of unrealistic exaggeration.



Figure 7. the Matcha Clay Face Mask, uploaded on December 15, 2020

@poreherobeauty: ... 2. Masker ini mengandung daun teh asli yang berfungsi sebagai scrub halus untuk mengangkat kotoran dan sel kulit mati secara lembut ...

Aku ingin masker ini bisa bikin kulitmu jadi lebih sehat dan kamu selalu merasa enjoy ketika memakainya. Buat temen2 yang baru mau cobain masker ini, aku cuma mau bilang.. semoga kita berjodoh ya

'... 2. This mask contains tea leaves which function as a fine scrub to gently remove dirt and dead skin cells ... I want this mask to make your skin healthier and you always enjoy wearing it. For friends who are just about to try this mask, I just want to say: I hope we are matched'

In the caption attached to post (6), *Pore Hero* is trying to inform the main ingredients of the Matcha Face Clay Mask. The second point tells that this mask contains green tea leaves and what it is used for. The brand wanted to emphasize that they are using actual green tea leaves, so that is made clear by the use of the adjective “real”. The word “real” is then followed by a second adjective, “fine”, to further explain that the leaves used have been cut in such a way that they are smooth and safe to use on the skin. Near the end of the caption, *Pore Hero* informs readers of their expectations regarding this product. The first belief is explained by the use of the adjective “healthy” to describe the expected skin condition, instead of projecting unrealistic and grand-sounding adjectives like "glowing skin" or "instant skin tightening". Further, the second belief is characterized by the verb “enjoy”. This verb implies that the brand expects customers to eventually have healthy skin while taking pleasure in the process.



Figure 8. A review given by @nafidwiana and re-uploaded by *Pore Hero*
 @poreherobeauty: *Thank you @nafidwiana buat racunnya. Tapiiii, aku harus remind juga kalau ngga ada skincare yang bakal cocok buat kulit semua orang. Meskipun jenis kulit dan permasalahan kulitnya sama, masih ada banyak faktor lain yang bisa bikin suatu skincare cocok atau ngga di kulitmu ...*
 ‘Thank you @nafidwiana for the recommendation. But, I have to remind you that no skincare will suit everyone’s skin. Even though the skin type and skin problems are the same, there are still many other factors that can make a skincare product suitable or not for your skin....’

Post (7) shows a caption written by *Pore Hero* in response to one of the Instagram users who has used the Matcha Clay Face Mask. The discourse begins with the brand thanking the Instagram user by mentioning her username (@nafidwiana). And it is followed up directly by a notice for the readers. The notice is done with the verb “remind”, and it uses direct language style with the subject pronoun “I” and object pronoun “you”. It delivers two ideas conveyed with a rather negative connotation.

As seen in examples (6) and (7), there are two ways that *Pore Hero* uses to show what effects the customer can get by wearing the Matcha Clay Face Mask. The first approach used is to describe the function of an ingredient contained in the mask. And as exemplified in caption (6), the brand only explained the functions of one of the mask ingredients, namely green tea leaves. It was explained that the leaves were added to the mask because it has a function as a facial scrub to remove dirt and dead skin cells. And it is important to note that caption (6) is written without using a word expressing the future tense which may imply that the mask will certainly provide these results. In consonance with the analysis results of Kaur et al. (2013), future tenses are added where suggestions are given on the benefits of using the advertised product. This method is also applied in the next two sentences. Instead of using the claim “this mask will”, the advertisers wrote “I hope” which is more in line with the brand’s expectations. And finally, the second approach in (7) is done by generalizing all skincare brands. In this post, the Instagram account @nafidwiana provides a review with claims as can be seen in the picture: “all your facial problems can be overcome with this mask”. But these claims were denied by *Pore Hero* in the caption linked to the image. In this way, the brand wants the readers to be aware of the fact that skincare is personal and a product can’t fit everyone’s skin. These two ways have the same core, namely by not making unrealistic final promises to prospective buyers. And for a sales strategy, this method has pretty good potential because it shows the brand’s attempts to stay honest with the audience.

Both captions express understated representations given by the brand. However, the text-photo relationship of the two is not the same. For post (6), the image only shows the front view of the Matcha Clay Face Mask’s packaging, and the caption explains the mask’s function as well as the brand’s expectations. Thus, it can be said that the caption of the photo extends further information of the image, and it complements the text-image context as a whole. And for (7), as the context of the writing in the image and caption is opposite, the text-image relationship is considered as a contrast.

Beauty advertisements shown in the media are usually followed by certain claims that promise something to their prospective buyers. Advertisement texts are created to ensure customers’ satisfaction by attracting attention, persuading, and appealing (Robert, 2013). These guarantees mostly relate to the end results that can be achieved only by the people using the advertised product. This is done by many brands to attract the attention of customers in an increasingly competitive market. However,

sometimes the diction used seems too excessive, even unrealistic. The sentences used to revolve around: “your skin will look flawless at once, are you ready to shine?”, and so on. From a study on advertising-slogans by Hambur (2019), the analysis carried out that the circumstance “to shine ” manipulates customer’s minds by assuring them that their skin can shine if they use the advertised product. Besides that, many promotional advertisements give affirmations that the product is suitable for all skin types. This action is carried out so that the doubts in the buyer’s mind are reduced or lost. Nonetheless, *Pore Hero*’s approach differs from all of these techniques. Their way of advertising is not spiteful of promises and words of interest. *Pore Hero* solely states their hopefulness that the Matcha Clay Face Mask can fit the audience’s preferences. And the brand also gave a reminder that like other skincare products, their clay mask cannot fit everyone’s skin. Captions (6) and (7) certainly have the potential to change the way many people think not to trust too many frills on advertisements. And that is one of the roles that this discourse has in society.

3.5 Reviews by Instagram Users

The last discursive technique discussed in this paper is the provision of Instagram users’ reviews. In this study, a review refers to the critical appraisal of a product that people upload through their Instagram posts.



Figure 9. A review given by @reggy__go and re-uploaded by *Pore Hero*

@poreherobeauty: I found myself gradually loving @poreherobeauty 's matcha clay mask ... Matcha has anti-inflammatory properties and can help fight hormonal acne. Other than matcha, the other star ingredients of this mask are GLYCERIN and BENTONITE (the type of clay that I really love but tends to be really drying), but this mask does not make the skin dry at all, the mixture of glycerin and bentonite in this mask is heavenly !! ... For me, the only downside to this mask is the Camellia Sinensis (Matcha) Leaves. Although they really elevate the natural matcha scent to this mask (it smells really, really good), I find them to be a bit harsh/aggravating; causing further redness on some parts of my skin ...

The post above is an upload with a review of the Matcha Clay Face Mask from the Instagram account @reggy__go. The photo and caption have been uploaded to her personal account and then re-uploaded by *Pore Hero* as a consideration for other people who want to buy the product. Firstly, this caption is written with the subject and object of the first-person pronoun. This explains that the caption was written to represent the opinions of the reviewer. At the beginning of the sentence, the reviewer uses the adverb “gradually”, explaining that she likes the mask after several applications and not instantly. Then she explains the advantages of using matcha on the skin with two adjectives. The first is “anti-inflammatory” which defines the characteristics of matcha, and the second is “hormonal” to explain what acne condition matcha can help. After that, she describes the other two ingredients, glycerin, and bentonite, with the word “star”. The word “star” in this caption does not refer to an actual star, but rather to an adjective that means excellent or splendid. The combination of these two ingredients is described by the adverb “heavenly”, which means it fits her preference satisfactorily. The

reviewer then explains what she doesn't enjoy about this mask. She adds an adverb "only" which clarifies that she likes everything in this mask except for the green tea leaves content. The adjectives "harsh" or "aggravating" are used to describe the effect the ingredient had on her face.

On their Instagram account, *Pore Hero* very often re-uploads the reviews they get from their followers. This is done so that other potential buyers can get an overview of the Matcha Clay Face Mask, such as its texture and how it affects facial skin. In re-uploading review posts of people who have tagged their account, the brand makes no exception nor edits. Most of those posts are reviews from Instagram users and skincare enthusiasts. As seen in (8), the caption does not only talk about the reviewer's superficial experiences. However, it contains a lot of detailed information about the composition of the Matcha Clay Face Mask, along with its functions, even its pros, and cons. Even the review post is completed by a picture of proof before and after @reggy__go wearing the face mask. *Pore Hero* chose to re-upload this review even though the content was not all positive because they wanted potential buyers to get input from a neutral side. This review is also given by someone who likes and understands skincare, so readers will get more information and knowledge about facial care. Moreover, if seen from a buyer's perspective, a neutral review followed by a photo like in Figure (8) will make them more assured of what the brand has to offer.

Figure (8) shows the results before, and after which can be said to be quite satisfying for the reviewer. It shows one side of the reviewer's cheeks, which previously looked dull, become brighter, and the redness is reduced. Even so, the accompanying caption adds a lot more information than just the photo. It explains what the reviewer likes and dislikes, along with what her favorite ingredients are. Therefore, the text-image relationship in (8) refers to the extension of meaning.

It seems that there are tons of brands that are willing to spend a lot of money to pay well-known artists or Instagram users to review their products. According to Patel (2009), celebrity endorsements have been established as one of the most preferred methods of advertising by marketers as it adds a new dimension to the product. Herjanto et al.'s (2020) study on the effect of celebrity endorsement (CE) suggests that CE on social media promotes a positive brand attitude and customer's purchase intention. Getting reviews in this way is safe for the brand because the people they pay for will be less likely to give bad comments. On the one hand, this benefits brands because they only get good reviews. However, from the buyer's side, this is very unfavorable for them as they get reviews from a biased side. This method has also become quite controversial because many people question the credibility of reviews uploaded on a skincare account. Therefore, the role of discourse like the one in *Pore Hero*'s promotional caption (8) certainly has an act in society. For other skincare brands, this can be an input for a new and more candid way of promotion. And for prospective buyers, this can be a helpful example not to be careless in buying a product and also be proof that not all brands rely on paid endorsements.

4. Conclusions

Based on the data analysis, we have shown that there are some textual aspects applied in the promotional captions of *Pore Hero*, and they are catchy slogans (*Show Your Pores*), direct address, negative and positive adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. The adjectives are mostly used to describe the ingredients of the Matcha Clay Face Mask (*free, real, fine, anti-inflammatory, star*) and the unrealistic "ideal" concept of beauty (*absurd, white, glowing, smooth*). In addition, the verbs and adverbs used in the promotional captions of *Pore Hero* suggest distinct beauty ideology. This ideology brings the value of beauty in the form of self-acceptance conveyed by the brand with words of encouragement. It invites readers to fight insecurities (*let's fight*) while providing comforting words (*care, proud*) that convey the brand's support on the readers' process. *Pore Hero* always uses personal pronouns (*I, you, your, we*) to talk to their consumers. And the use of direct language style by referring to the readers as 'you' carries a certain value that helps to create a friendly atmosphere as well as reflects equal power relations between the brand and its audience.

The results also presented that there are five discursive techniques applied to promote the product advertised and attract potential customers. The first technique is the exposition of existing ingredients which can be taken as the brand's effort in gaining consumer's trust through transparency. The second technique is the brand's inspiring personal campaign (*Show Your Pores*). It persuades people to normalize pores and textured skin, and one of their goals is to break the stigma of beauty advertisements

that often circulate in society. And it is followed by the use of emotive content. This approach is not applied to promote the Matcha Clay Face Mask, but to encourage and increase the closeness of relationships with customers. The next approach is realistic representations and it endorses promotion without using impractical and exaggerated claims. And the last technique is reviews by Instagram users which represents the provision of proof without paid endorsements through celebrities. The analysis results also showed that the text-image relationship most often used by *Pore Hero* is the extension of the information given in the caption to explain the photo in more detail.

In this paper, advertisers highlight how the ideological concept of beauty is challenged through the use of discourse and images used for promotion. The data analysis indicates that beauty advertisements often use a variety of strategies to manipulate people into buying certain products. The repetitive appearances of ad models with perfectly edited skin with absurd claims unconsciously construct an “ideal” concept of beauty that is futile to realize. This concept even ignores humanizing the nature of human skin by addressing the society to get that flawless complexion, as if it could be achieved. And based on the results, it can be summarized that the Instagram promotional posts of *Pore Hero* aim to break the chain of most skincare commercials that have been in the media for quite a long time. In addition to business purposes, the brand strives to change people's minds to respect and accept themselves by changing the goal of having perfect skin to healthy skin.

This paper contributes an improved view on beauty advertisements circulating in media and society. Thus, the possibilities for future research on this topic are far-reaching. Since this paper only focuses on the adjective, verb, and directness, or indirectness of the Instagram captions, the textual aspects of punctuation, grammar, code-switching, and code-mixing can be the focus of future research. And as Instagram continues to add new features for its users, the true nature of marketing and comment engagement with reels feature is yet to be explored.

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