



Men's skincare trends: Korean wave hyperreality media men's beauty standards

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ABSTRACT

The desire for a white and smooth face is not only a woman's need, but has become a man's need as well. This new phenomenon is influenced by the globalization of the Korean wave, which has created contemporary cultural standards. Such as the increased need for facial skin care products among men. Therefore, this paper discusses how the development of the Korean Wave affects men's skincare needs that are provided through Instagram. It even leads to the emergence of a new hyperreality that replaces the previous cultural standard. Hyperreality is the result of postmodernism, which makes the role of media a source of new human needs. The preparation of this paper is through the netnography method and literature review. The netnography method itself is a development of ethnography that uses Internet media to find information and connect with informants. Netnography helps research to examine social phenomena that appear in the Internet world, and has special methods in interviewing and validating information data obtained from Internet media. This paper shows that Somethinc's local product is a symbol of hyperreality that shifts the special needs of one gender to a common need raised by the globalization of the Korean Wave at this time. The new standards of life brought by the media show that the media has penetrated human life. It has even become a new standard or a standard for the continuation of life.

Keywords: Gender; Hyperreality; Men's Skincare.

ABSTRAK

Kebutuhan memiliki wajah yang putih dan mulus tidak hanya menjadi kebutuhan perempuan, tetapi sudah menjadi kebutuhan pria. Fenomena baru ini dipengaruhi oleh globalisasi dari Korean Wave yang menciptakan standar kebudayaan kontemporer. Seperti peningkatan kebutuhan produk perawatan kulit wajah di kalangan pria. Maka tulisan ini mendeskripsikan bagaimana perkembangan Korean Wave yang mempengaruhi kebutuhan skincare pada pria yang termediakan melalui Instagram. Bahkan berlanjut pada kemunculan hiperealitas baru yang menggantikan standar budaya sebelumnya. Hiperrealitas merupakan bentuk hasil posmodernisme, yang menjadikan peran media menjadi sumber kebutuhan baru manusia. Penyusunan tulisan ini melalui metode netnografi dan kajian pustaka. Metode netnografi sendiri merupakan perkembangan dari etnografi, yang memanfaatkan media internet dalam mencari informasi dan berhubungan dengan informan. Netnografi membantu penelitian untuk mengkaji fenomena sosial yang muncul di dunia internet, dan memiliki metode khusus dalam mewawancarai dan mengvalidasi data informasi yang didapatkan dari media internet. Karena banyaknya informasi yang beredar di interne, khususnya pada platform tiktok dan Instagram yang menjadi pusat lokasi tulisan ini, maka dibutuhkan metode yang dapat mengvalidasi fenomena yang muncul. Tulisan ini menunjukkan bila produk lokal Somethinc merupakan simbol hiperrealitas yang menggeserkan kebutuhan khusus pada satu gender menjadi kebutuhan bersama, yang dimunculkan dari globalisasi Korean Wave pada saat ini. Standar-standar kehidupan baru yang dibawa oleh media, menunjukkan media telah meresap ke dalam kehidupan manusia. Bahkan menjadi standar atau pakem baru untuk melanjutkan kehidupan.

Kata Kunci: Gender; Hiperrealitas; Perawatan Kulit Pria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of popular culture, also known as pop culture, has become a pervasive aspect of contemporary society, accessible to a diverse range of individuals. The popular element is the fundamental aspect of popular culture, which is defined as a form of entertainment. A conceptual framework posits that popular culture manifests in two forms (Istiqomah & Widiyanto, 2020). The first category encompasses tangible forms such as food, music, movies, advertisements, architecture, and interpersonal relationships. The second form is that of abstract concepts, including values, ideologies, norms, and traditional beliefs. In this context, popular culture is generally considered a form of culture that exerts a material influence on society through consumption.

Among the various forms of popular culture, the Korean Wave is currently experiencing a surge in popularity on a global scale. The Korean Wave is a form of popular culture that originated in the South Korean region. The Korean Wave is also regarded as a form of soft power emanating from the South Korean state, which has become an export commodity and a significant source of foreign exchange for the country (Putri, Liany, & Nuraeni, 2019). It is therefore evident that the South Korean government has provided substantial support for the Korean Wave, which has enabled it to become an export commodity that has successfully penetrated the Asian market, including Indonesia. Notable Korean exports to Indonesia include

K-pop music, K-drama films, culinary items, fashion, beauty products, cultural artefacts, and the Korean language as well as tourism-related services.

In some instances, the term "Korean Wave" is defined as the dissemination of South Korean popular culture. In detail, the term "Korean Wave" was first used by the Chinese media in 2002 to describe the growing popularity of South Korean culture (Valentina & Istriyani, 2017). The year in question marked the inaugural phase of the Korean Wave, which was symbolized by the surge in sales of music albums by the artist Kwon Boa (Setiawan, 2014). In addition to music, the Korean Wave attracted global attention in the same year through the medium of Korean drama. The *Winter Sonata* drama achieved legendary status due to its immense popularity (Pemita, 2015). The popularity of these two entertainment products can be attributed to the successful integration of Western and Eastern cultural elements, while maintaining the distinct characteristics of each culture. This is further evidenced by the growing prevalence of Korean-themed eateries that offer a diverse array of Korean specialties, while incorporating flavours characteristic of their respective countries (Kim & Ryou, 2007).

The popularity of Korean culture is not limited to the entertainment industry, it is also evident in the culinary world where Korean food is rapidly gaining a foothold in people's lives. The advent of various types of Korean street food on luxury restaurant menus, served in a manner consistent with Korean cultural traditions but adapted to Indonesian tastes, has become a favoured culinary experience among Indonesian consumers. Additionally, the availability of Korean cuisine in the form of fast food is pervasive, with numerous establishments offering these items in Indonesian supermarkets. The phenomenon of Korean food has become an integral part of the dissemination of South Korean culture, which has been aptly described as "gastrodiplomacy" (Septyan, 2022).

The Korean Wave, a form of popular culture, has had a profound impact on all aspects of Indonesian life. One such area of influence is the lifestyle of how to care for the body. The Indonesian population adheres to a set of ideals regarding beauty that places a premium on the concept of whiteness. This perception of beauty is often interpreted as a standard for Indonesian women's physical appearance. Nevertheless, this concept of beauty ultimately results in the indirect discrimination of women in general. This phenomenon is then leveraged by the South Korean beauty industry to bolster the country's economic standing. According to data the import value of South Korean cosmetics and skin care reached USD 6.12 billion in 2020 (Zahira, 2021). This achievement provides evidence that the country's diverse range of beauty products has enabled it to attract global consumer trends, including those observed in Indonesia.

The advent of digital technology has facilitated the growing prevalence of Korean skincare products among Indonesian consumers. This is due to the ease with which individuals can procure and peruse information about a plethora of skincare products currently available on the market. The impact of the increasing use of skincare is not limited to women; it is also widely used by men. In the past, the maintenance of one's body was traditionally perceived as a feminine domain, as women were often regarded as the epitome of physical beauty. However, this viewpoint is gradually evolving in tandem with advancements in science and technology.

A study has indicated that 81% of men claim to use skincare products on a regular basis in order to enhance their self-image (Anam & Khoiryasdien, 2020). This assertion is corroborated by the findings of a previous study conducted in 2011, which indicated that the purchasing decisions of Indonesian men with regard to skincare products are more influenced

by the composition of the products, their self-image, and the effects of aging. This indicates that skincare needs among men are more subjective and not influenced by external norms (Irawan & Widjaja, 2011). Consequently, at this juncture, facial care products are no longer exclusively perceived as a domain reserved for women. Rather, the prevailing evidence indicates that skincare is a product category that caters to the needs of men.

The practice of self-care for the purpose of achieving beautiful skin is a fundamental human activity, one that is not exclusive to women but is also practiced by men. This is influenced by the changing times and the effects of globalization brought about by South Korean culture, which has disseminated its beauty products across the globe. This change can be considered a form of shifting standards, and it is a natural and humane consequence of cultural productions (Asmanidar, 2017). The primary factor responsible for these changes is the human species itself, which creates culture and functions as a cultural entity.

The objective of this article is to examine the transformation in cosmetic requirements, which initially constituted a component of women's needs and subsequently evolved into a domain pertaining to men's needs. Consequently, cosmetics are regarded as a subject that exemplifies a shift in gender norms. The FAO posits that gender is not merely a matter of discussing the physical attributes of women or men, but also encompasses the social conditions that shape these attributes (Zulkarnain, 2018). Typically, gender discourse is initiated to advocate for the advancement of women's status and role. However, in this article, gender discourse is employed to illustrate the emergence of a new set of needs among men that were previously exclusive to women, namely cosmetics and self-care.

This paper describes a cultural change based on the influence of the Korean Wave, which has become a product of globalization. The practice of personal care, particularly with regard to the face, has become a necessity for men. The market for skincare products is dominated by those originating from South Korea. This has led to the emergence of new needs among men with regard to their facial skin. This has the effect of becoming a standard of self-confidence and a new standard of masculinity. The rapidity with which this new culture has disseminated is comparable to that of other contemporary cultures, namely through the medium of technology and the internet. The phenomenon of this paper demonstrates how modern male culture is disseminated through the use of Instagram media, which has become the medium of the Korean Wave hyperreality in the realm of skincare products for men in the contemporary era.

2. METHOD

This article presents the methodology employed in the research, which is qualitative in nature. The objective is to describe the results of the research in written narratives that contain accurate data. Qualitative research is defined as research presented in the form of words, schemes, and images (Sugiyono, 2019). To obtain the requisite data, researchers used a virtual ethnography or netnography approach, which is anticipated to yield data necessary to comprehend the phenomenon of the Korean Wave Hyperreality in the context of the local products utilized by Indonesian men in the Trend of Using Somethinc Skincare.

Netnography is a methodology that offers certain advantages over other methods. One of the benefits of netnography is that it is not impeded when conducting in-depth research into the minutiae of the internet. Kozinets defines qualitative research methods adapted from

netnographic research techniques and used as a way to study culture and community in computer-mediated communications and develop into research techniques for the field of social media (Kozinets, 2015). Moreover, netnography is defined as the most recent research methodology employed to investigate the forms of communication and behaviour exhibited by internet users. Netnography, or virtual ethnography, is an ethnographic activity conducted in cyberspace with the aim of providing a distinctive understanding of the significance and implications of internet users (Hine, 2000).

The phenomenon under investigation in this research occurs within the vast digital domain of the Internet. Consequently, the netnography method is well-suited to the identification of patterns of online behaviour, life, and social relations within the context of cyberspace. The netnographic approach allows for the examination of the experiences of Indonesian men who are influenced by the Korean Wave culture. In more detail the researchers will examine the purchasing activities and use of local skincare Somethinc products carried out by Indonesian men displayed through TikTok social media. In order to demonstrate the concept of masculinity among male users of Somethinc local skincare products.

Moreover, the netnography approach allows researchers to access two distinct data sources: primary data and secondary data. The primary data was obtained by directly monitoring the official Somethinc TikTok account, which was observed to be actively live streaming the sale of its products. In addition, researchers monitored several TikTok accounts that posted reviews of personal experiences with Somethinc's local skincare products. Virtual direct observation can provide realistic data sources and facts as they are through TikTok social media (Bungin, 2017). To enhance the value of the research findings, researchers also utilise several scientific publications that address similar objects and themes as a source of secondary data. Obtaining the requisite data enable.

The reduction process is a preliminary stage conducted prior to the analysis of data obtained from TikTok media. The data reduction process will focus on the influence of Korean Wave culture on men's use of Something's local skincare products, particularly in the context of masculinity in Indonesian society. Subsequently the results of the data reduction will be simplified into a data presentation that can be analysed and validated. In conclusion the data obtained through this research can be drawn together in a systematic manner.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Development of Indonesia's Beauty Industry

The Indonesian beauty industry has experienced a notable expansion in recent years. This is evidenced by the proliferation of skin care products, including facial cleansers, toners, moisturizing serums, and others. This skin care product has become a significant factor in the high demand and business growth in the skin and facial beauty sector over the past decade (Keshia, Sesilya, & Zane, 2020). The development of the beauty industry has presented marketers with a challenge, to continue developing and improving care products in order to provide customized solutions to the skin care problems of Indonesians.

The competitive landscape of the Indonesian beauty industry has also influenced perceptions of masculinity among the Indonesian population. The current skincare trend is not only favoured by women, but also has a high market potential for men. Consequently, this has resulted in a dynamic and novel growth trajectory for the beauty industry sector. The most

compelling rationale for the proliferation of beauty products in the form of skincare for men is the imperative to maintain optimal skin health. Skin problems such as acne, oily skin, dull skin, and UV burn are not gender-specific. It can be argued that this should be a primary need to be fulfilled, not only by women, but also by men. Indeed, men can also use it as a skin care effort to make their skin look healthy and clean (Purnomo, Yanti, & Widyassari, 2021). The incorporation of skincare products into one's routine is a method of maintaining the health and appearance of the skin. These products utilize specific ingredients, which are designed for use on the face (Pratiwi, Suroso, & Endri, 2020).

In order to meet the needs of Indonesia's growing skincare user market, the government has encouraged various beauty industries to produce skincare products specifically for men. This strategy proved to be effective in attracting male consumers, as evidenced by the results of a survey indicating the presence of male skincare products, such as Nivea Men Indonesia, which has prompted 95% of men to be highly concerned about the condition of their skin (Tarigan, 2017). The existence of men's skincare products can be attributed to the varying facial needs of individuals. In contrast, women tend to prioritize social needs when purchasing facial care products, whereas men tend to prioritize the functional aspects of these products (Sanny, Arina, Maulidya, & Pertiwi, 2020). Gender is therefore one of the factors that can influence product purchasing decisions.

In order to boost sales of their products, some beauty industries have begun incorporating local brands into their product lines. The objective is to evoke a sense of curiosity. Some of these products are also designed for men, including Kahf skincare products, MS Glow Man, and Luckyman.

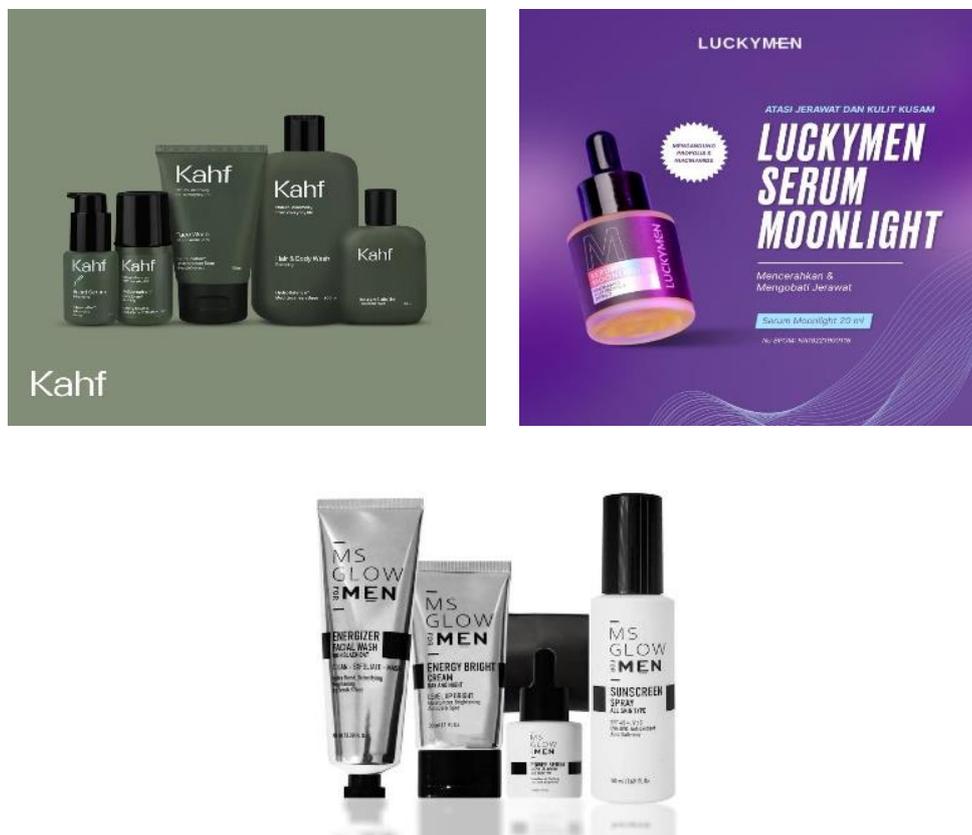


Figure 1. Types of local Indonesian men's skincare products.

The advent of local men's skincare has constituted a significant breakthrough in the construction of gender norms. The traditional masculine ideals of strength, power, action, control, and independence, which are often perceived as innate, are in fact the result of social construction. The emergence of discourses such as "new men" and "metrosexual" is therefore considered to represent a lifestyle that has succeeded in changing the way society views traditional masculinity. The growth of the beauty industry in Indonesia has had a profound impact on society. One of the consequences of this phenomenon has been the dissemination of information to the general public regarding the importance of maintaining optimal skin health. Furthermore, the Indonesian beauty industry has demonstrated that masculinity is not monolithic by producing a range of skincare products tailored to the needs of its users. This evidence challenges the notion that masculinity is an innate quality.

3.2. The Effect of Brand Image and Brand Awareness as Intervening Variables on Local Skincare Products Somethinc.

The growing prevalence of skincare products as a means of promoting skincare awareness is an intriguing subject worthy of further investigation. In this case study social media is identified as a platform utilized by the beauty industry to introduce its products. Social media represents a competitive arena for local Indonesian skincare products, as evidenced by the utilization of social media marketing strategies employed to market these products. Individuals who actively utilize social media platforms utilize them to obtain information about products currently available in the market and subsequently make purchases. The utilization of social media by the general public is then leveraged by businesses to facilitate customer comprehension of the products they offer. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to create a positive and compelling brand image and brand awareness for the company.

In accordance with the established definition, brand image can be defined as the description of consumers' associations and beliefs pertaining to a particular brand (Tjiptono, 2008). The brand image is a means of distinguishing products of the same type and use but with different brands. This is employed as a marketing strategy to enable the skincare products on sale to compete. In contrast, brand awareness is defined as a consumer's ability to recognize and comprehend the suitability of a product within its product category. Brand awareness is typically initiated by potential consumers, who introduce the product to others in a conscious manner and attempt to attract their attention. In order to stimulate potential consumers to purchase a specific brand. The objective of brand awareness is to ensure that customers are confident in their purchasing decisions.

Local skincare products have endeavored to maintain their brand image and brand awareness. This is evidenced by the fact that the brand is currently a well-known skincare product among the people of Indonesia. Somethinc is a local beauty product brand that adheres to international standards. The product was first released in 2019 and continues to be available on the market to this day. The Somethinc brand has a significant presence on social media, with a notable following on TikTok. The official account @somethincofficial has amassed 1.9 million followers. Its exceeding the number of followers on the official Instagram account page @somethincofficial, which has 1.5 million followers.

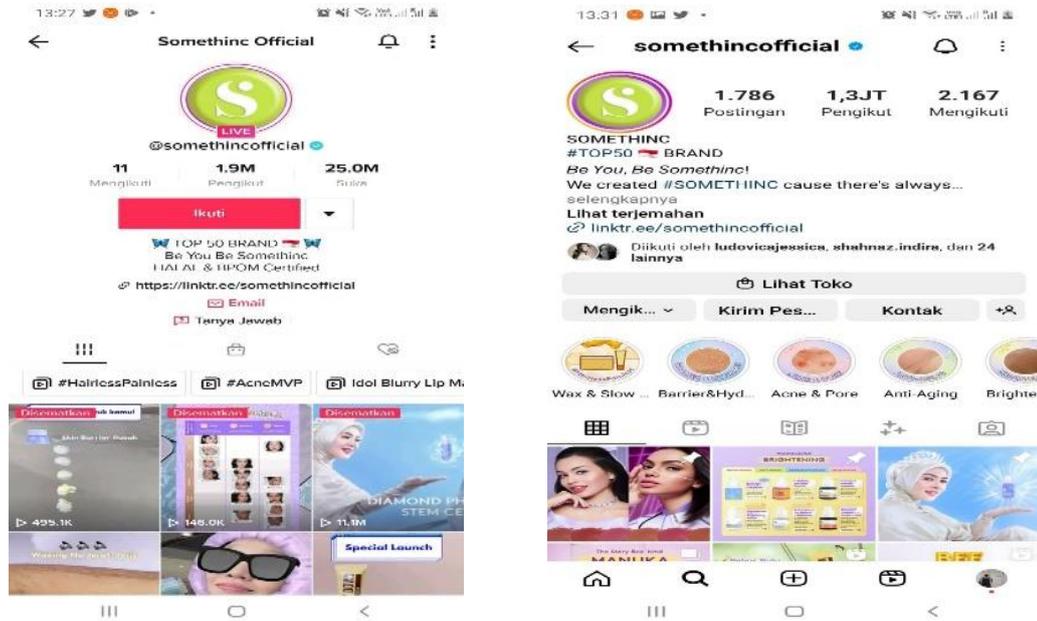


Figure 2. Official Instagram account @somethincofficial.

The results of the researcher's analysis indicate that the increase in followers on the @somethincofficial TikTok account is due to the implementation of a feature that facilitates direct product purchasing through the live shopping feature. In the sales process, the @somethincofficial account team employs marketing techniques, engaging in online interactions with followers while introducing the products being sold. The brand's marketing efforts have resulted in the creation of a positive brand image that is easily recognizable to the public. Moreover, in order to market its products, the company provides numerous benefits and facilities to followers who participate in its live shopping events. These benefits include discounts, free shipping, and product bundle offers that are designed to attract consumers.

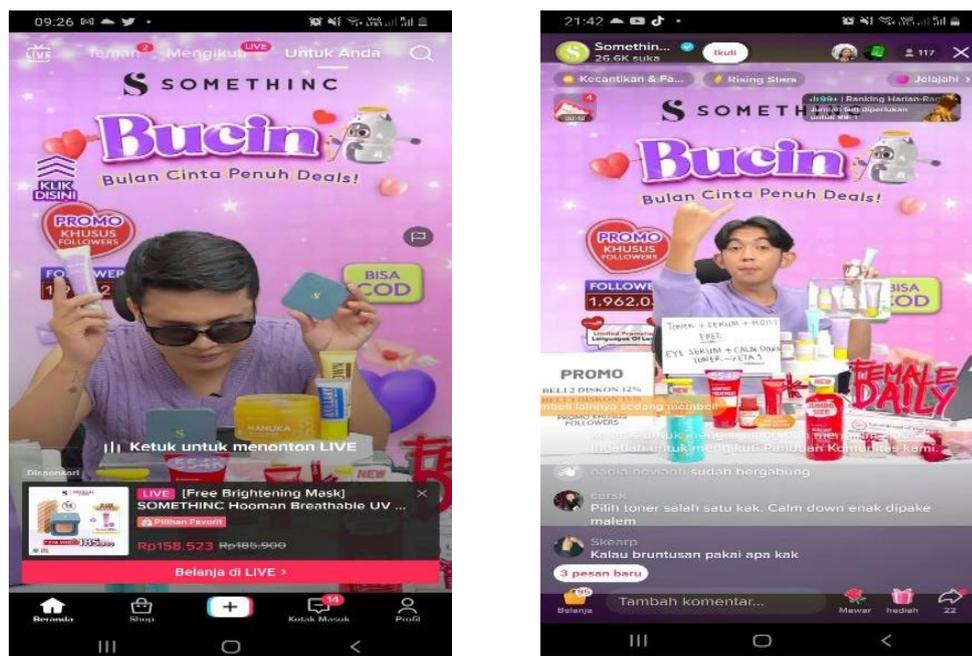


Figure 3. Tiktok live marketing form on official instagram account @somethincofficial.

In addition to maintaining the brand image of its products, the company also increases brand awareness by engaging several TikTok content creators to test the use of its skincare products through the creation of content on their personal TikTok social media accounts. The results of the researchers' searches on the TikTok social media platform revealed three content creator accounts that create content related to reviews of local skincare products. The first account, with the username @mrwinton, has 14 followers. The first account @mrwinton, has 14 followers. The second account @brogamal, has 225.1K followers. The third account @abaydabi, has 5,136 followers. The content created on these three accounts reviews various types of skincare products, including serums and sunscreen creams.

For instance, the @mrwinton account has conducted a content review of the use of something skincare products. One of the products he utilized was the 5% Niacinamide Serum, which garnered 595 likes. In addition, the @mrwinton conducted a review of the Somethinc Creamic Skin Savior Moisturizer, which garnered 227 likes. He also evaluated the Propolis Sleeping Mask, which received 1,850 likes.

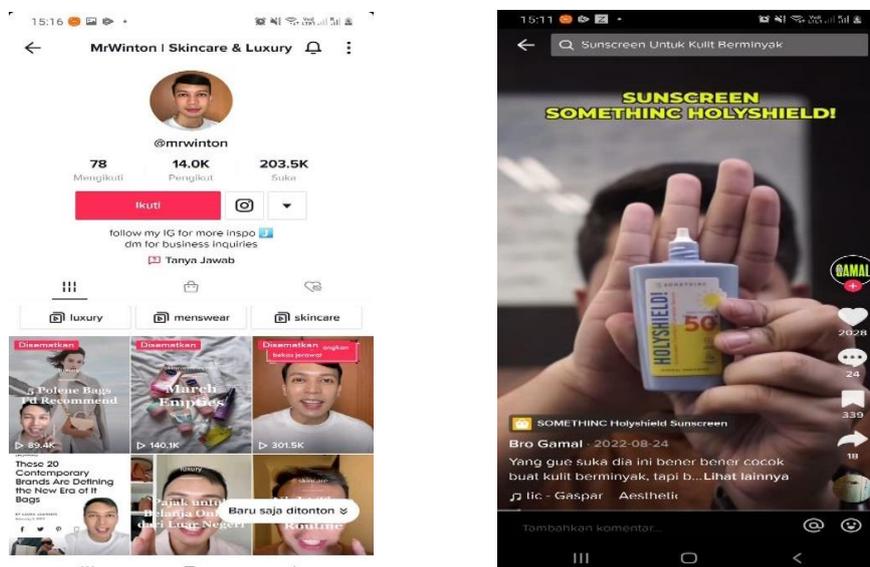


Figure 4. Account @mrwinton (left) and account @brogamal (right) as something product review content.

The results of the analysis conducted by researchers on the social media platform TikTok indicate that the local skincare brand something has successfully employed social media to promote their products while maintaining quality through brand image and target marketing through brand awareness. Moreover, if one considers this phenomenon in light of Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality, it can be seen as evidence that the media world has constructed an engineering (distortion) of the meaning of each content in the form of photos or videos displayed through social media. The phenomenon of branding is indicative of the utilisation of media that creates communication hyperreality. This is a state of media and meaning related to a condition that is more real than reality. Consequently, falsehood is considered the truth. Furthermore, the Somethinc brand indicates that skincare products are not exclusively utilized by women within the beauty industry. Although the brand does not explicitly target the male consumer, it has managed to attract this demographic through its brand image and brand awareness.

4. CONCLUSION

The success of the Indonesian beauty industry is a testament to the positive influence of the Korean wave culture on the local economy. The emergence of the Somethinc brand is a case in point. The Somethinc brand has succeeded in marketing its products on a global scale by creating local products with international quality. This has enabled the brand to become a brand that can be used by any gender. Furthermore, the Korean wave culture has facilitated the dissemination of knowledge among Indonesians who are still conceptualized in traditional masculine constructs, namely that skincare is not a gendered phenomenon but a fundamental human need for the maintenance of skin health. The local skincare product Somethinc has been successfully integrated into Indonesian society, creating a sense of belonging for all users.

It is anticipated that this research will serve as a foundation for further inquiry, particularly in the context of examining the role of social media in the evolution of popular culture as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The presence of narratives with a similar theme will facilitate our understanding of the gender construction that should be, as well as our ability to use social media as a result of popular culture in a strategic and intelligent manner.

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