

Beauty Representation in Skin Game's Instagram Post *#BornThisWay*

Nabila Cahyaning Wargi

UPN "Veteran" Jawa Timur

ABSTRACT

Beauty is something that is considered quite important to have and is every woman's dream. Even though each individual's standard of beauty is different, there is a kind of unwritten standard that is embedded in people's minds regarding what beauty is. Over time and the development of technology, the dominance of the media, beauty standards have become narrowed to one point, namely Western-style beauty. This research aims to analyze how Skin Game, as a local beauty brand, contributes to changing the beauty narrative in Indonesia through the *#BornThisWay* campaign. This research uses a qualitative descriptive research type using Rholand Barthes' semiotics. The research subjects were 8 Skin Game Instagram posts with the hashtag *BornThisWay*. The reason for choosing the subject for the hashtag *#BornThisWay* is because posts with this hashtag are also a form of campaign carried out by Skin Game and have received a lot of positive responses from their followers as evidenced by the large number of Instagram users who have joined in using the hashtag. Then the object of research is the representation of beauty in Skin Game Instagram posts with the hashtag *BornThisWay*. In this research, researchers used the documentation method. According to Sugiyono in Gumelar (2020), the documentation method is a technique used to obtain data and information in the form of archives, books, writings or images or documents collected in a report for research purposes. Qualitative data analysis according to Bogdan and Biklen in Aldrian (2022) data analysis can be done through organizing data, sorting data so that it can be managed, synthesizing data, and continuing to search until it can produce something for other people from the research carried out. Through the results of this semiotic analysis, it can be interpreted that the *#BornThisWay* campaign by Skin Game succeeded in creating and communicating strong messages about self-acceptance, self-love, and celebrating individual physical uniqueness

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Corresponding author

Name: *Nabila Cahyaning Wargi*

Email: *19043010147@student.upnjatim.ac.id*

INTRODUCTION

Today, women are increasingly striving to become beautiful. Beauty is seen as an important attribute and an ideal for many women. Although beauty standards differ from person to person, an implicit standard of beauty exists within society's collective perception. Over time, with the development of technology and the influence of media, beauty standards have increasingly converged towards a Western ideal (Rahardaya, 2021).

As we know, Western beauty ideals differ greatly from those in Indonesia (Saraswati, 2017). Factors such as skin type and environment play a significant role in determining whether women can adhere to these standards. Western or European beauty ideals are not directly applicable to Indonesia, a diverse archipelago with a variety of ethnicities, customs, cultures, and traditions (Saraswati, 2017). Additionally, the Indonesian climate is very different from that of Western countries, with a predominantly hot environment due to its proximity to the equator and only two main seasons. This context explains why Western beauty standards may not align with those in Indonesia.

As the desire to be beautiful intensifies, individuals are increasingly willing to take steps to achieve beauty. Consequently, body and skincare awareness has risen dramatically. This trend is evident in the high number of skincare users and the proliferation of brands offering skincare products. According to *Compas.co.id*, in early 2021, beauty care topped e-commerce sales transactions, accounting for 46.8% of sales. Furthermore, the total value of online beauty care transactions surpassed IDR 40 billion (Haasiani, 2022). Numerous skincare brands have emerged, each highlighting their unique qualities. Initially, skincare products were popularized by Korean brands promoting a "glowing" or bright skin aesthetic. However, local skincare products have now emerged and diversified. Brands are increasingly leveraging promotion and advertising to secure a place in consumers' minds.

Instagram is currently the most popular platform for introducing and selling skincare products. Through Instagram, consumers can easily access information about a product's promised benefits and advantages. Many skincare brands engage in branding and promotion through posts on their official Instagram accounts. Social media representation, especially on Instagram, which emphasizes visual appeal, contributes to the perception that "beauty is white" (Situmorang & Hayati, 2023). In Instagram promotions, skincare brands often select models with similar features that convey the message that their products will make the skin fairer. Additionally, these products often feature foreign models, particularly from Korea and Europe, in their advertisements.

Promotion is essential for a brand, not only for profitability but also to educate consumers about the product. Advertising creates its own culture (Utami & Firdaus, 2018), with messages absorbed and normalized by the audience, gradually becoming cultural norms. This is also true for beauty product advertisements, which promise certain outcomes that align with a specific "beauty standard." Most beauty advertisements feature models with fair skin, straight hair, and slender bodies, reflecting conventional ideals of beauty.

Skincare products often feature models with fair, flawless, tall, and slender appearances, reinforcing certain beauty stereotypes. Representations of beauty among women are often influenced by beauty standards shaped and reinforced by social media. Instagram, as one of the largest social media platforms, plays a significant role in shaping societal perceptions of beauty. Wallis (2013) found that intensive social media use can reduce body satisfaction, as users are frequently exposed to visual content that promotes specific beauty standards. However, amidst the dominance of conventional beauty ideals,

local brands like Skin Game have emerged to challenge these stereotypes through campaigns like #BornThisWay. Skin Game adopts a different approach, featuring a more inclusive and diverse representation of beauty, showcasing models with characteristics rarely seen in traditional beauty ads. This campaign promotes the value that beauty does not have to conform to pre-existing standards but can be celebrated through self-acceptance and individual uniqueness.

Skin Game's approach is significant not only as a branding strategy but also for its social impact. The #BornThisWay campaign aims to change the narrative of beauty in Indonesia, educating society that beauty is not limited to fair skin or a slim figure but includes the variety of skin tones and body types present in Indonesian society. By featuring models with physical characteristics that deviate from conventional beauty standards, Skin Game seeks to broaden the definition of beauty and encourage self-acceptance among women.

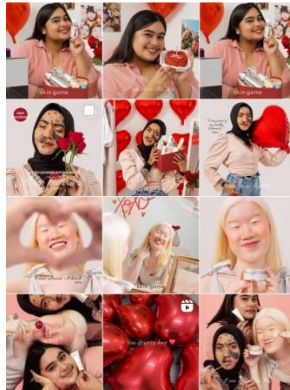


Figure 1. Skin Game BornThisWay Campaign

Skin Game's promotions and branding on its official Instagram account also showcase a range of models. Skin Game features women with inclusive forms of beauty, such as women with albinism, facial hair, and freckles. Through its #BornThisWay campaign, Skin Game features three models with unique characteristics: a freckled woman, an albino girl, and a plus-size woman with facial hair. This contrasts with typical beauty product advertising, which often promotes fair, flawless, and smooth skin stereotypes. This study seeks to understand societal beauty constructions and how Skin Game addresses them with new representations of beauty. In this context, beauty is not merely about smoothness, fairness, etc., but also about embracing one's natural form through the #BornThisWay campaign. The campaign encourages women to accept their insecurities because they were born with those unique qualities. This initiative aims to help women accept their insecurities and confidently display them on social media.

This study aims to analyze how Skin Game, as a local beauty brand, contributes to shifting the beauty narrative in Indonesia through the #BornThisWay campaign. Beauty standards are a result of constructed ideals, aligning with Berger and Luckman's (1966) assertion that reality and social constructs are human-made. Melliana (2006) also stated that construction results from environmental stimuli seen, heard, and experienced by

individuals. Beauty constructs are further reinforced through media, which acts as a control mechanism that influences changes in beauty standards. Through social media, contemporary women are increasingly exposed to ideal beauty representations circulating within it (Natari, 2016). Skin Game's continuous body-positive messaging through its social media shapes a new beauty standard. Thus, the urgency of this research lies in how Skin Game fosters societal acceptance of physical diversity as part of individual identity, promotes mental health, and reduces stigma associated with body image.

This research aims to identify the meaning Skin Game attempts to convey through its official Instagram account. The #BornThisWay campaign showcases women's insecurities and embraces non-traditional beauty. This unique beauty should not be seen as odd or marginalized but rather as something to be proudly displayed, thereby creating new beauty and strengths.

METHOD

The researcher uses a constructivist paradigm as a guide to analyze the meaning of beauty values in Skin Game's Instagram posts under the hashtag #BornThisWay, aiming to understand the various values constructed by Skin Game regarding the concept of beauty. This study employs a descriptive qualitative research approach, utilizing Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. Qualitative research is a problem-solving and analytical strategy that focuses on exploring meanings, symbols, and descriptions of a phenomenon, using holistic methods and prioritizing data quality, which is then narratively explained (Darmalaksana, 2020). Qualitative research emphasizes the naturalness of the object, with the researcher acting as the key instrument. Data collection is conducted through triangulation (combining multiple sources), which the researcher interprets; the analysis is inductive, and results focus on meaning (Chatra, et al., 2019).


The subject of this research is eight Instagram posts by Skin Game under the hashtag #BornThisWay. This hashtag was chosen because the posts featuring it form part of Skin Game's campaign and have received positive responses from followers, evidenced by the many Instagram users who also used the hashtag. The object of this study is the representation of beauty in Skin Game's Instagram posts with the #BornThisWay tag. This research object was chosen because the researcher observed a difference in the messaging of beauty conveyed by Skin Game in these posts compared to other beauty products. In this study, the researcher uses a documentation method. According to Sugiyono in Gumelar (2020), the documentation method is a technique used to obtain data and information in the form of archives, books, writings, images, or documents that are collected in a report for research purposes.

According to Bogdan and Biklen, as cited in Aldrian (2022), qualitative data analysis involves organizing data, sorting it for manageability, synthesizing, and continually seeking insights to produce something meaningful from the research for others. In analyzing the representation of beauty in Skin Game's Instagram posts under the #BornThisWay tag, the researcher examines visual portraits of several models using Roland Barthes' semiotic model, which includes connotation, denotation, and myth.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH RESULT

Table 1.


Signifier	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
	<p>Shows Nasya, a woman holding a Skin Game product in her hand, with other products placed in a container. In the background, there are heart-shaped balloon decorations, a red rose, and a poster on the wall.</p> <p>The lighting in the photo appears bright and illuminates the model's face well, without distracting shadows.</p> <p>Dominance of bright and warm colors, such as red, pink, and white.</p> <p>The image is taken in a close-up format, focusing on the model's face and the product in her hand.</p>	<p>The Skin Game product being held appears as the main product being promoted. Decorations such as heart balloons and red roses convey a sense of love and care, potentially linked to self-care. The poster on the wall may reflect the personality and preferences of the room owner.</p> <p>The bright lighting conveys a positive, warm, and clean impression. Good lighting also emphasizes a sense of healthy, glowing skin, supporting the concept of the product being held.</p> <p>The color red conveys energy and love, while white symbolizes cleanliness and simplicity, suitable for a skincare theme. The pink adds a feminine and gentle touch, reinforcing the product branding.</p> <p>The close-up emphasizes the model's smiling expression, showing happiness. This angle makes the photo feel more personal and intimate.</p>

The use of close-up and medium shots with an eye-level angle in Skin Game's campaign aims to portray beauty naturally and realistically, emphasizing that it needs no manipulation. This approach contrasts with typical media beauty standards, long hair, tall and slim figures, and fair skin, that are largely constructed by the fashion and cosmetic industries for commercial purposes (Yuliani & Saleha, 2022; Adlin & Kurniasih, 2006). By rejecting these rigid standards, Skin Game promotes a more inclusive and diverse perspective, suggesting that beauty is unique to each individual and worthy of appreciation in all forms.

The front lighting technique, balanced with normal key lighting, highlights the model's features without concealing natural characteristics, conveying authenticity and reinforcing Skin Game's message of genuine beauty. The choice of pink tones, soft lighting, and minimal makeup not only emphasizes the model's uniqueness but also aligns with the campaign's Valentine's Day theme, enhancing feelings of self-love and acceptance.

This campaign defies traditional body ideals that often pressure women to conform to narrow standards. Studies indicate that repeated portrayals of ideal body shapes can lead to body dissatisfaction and societal pressure to conform (Sandhy, 2016). Skin Game, however, celebrates natural beauty and individuality, asserting that self-acceptance and self-love define true beauty. By challenging these myths, Skin Game creates a powerful narrative that beauty is diverse, authentic, and deserving of celebration just as it is.

Table 2.

Signifier	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
	<p>The photo uses a zoom-out method to capture the full range of the model's emotions.</p>	<p>The image captures Emily's pride in her body and unique features, shown through her gaze in the mirror and wide smile, signaling her acceptance of her insecurities.</p>
	<p>The red "XOXO" text, adorned with heart shapes, where "XOXO" is slang for "hugs and kisses," expressing affection.</p>	<p>"Born This Way" is a campaign by Skin Game for Valentine's Day, celebrating self-love. The "XOXO" and heart symbols in the photo show how Emily expresses affection for herself through acceptance of her</p>


<p>A red rose is included as a decorative element or prop in the photo.</p>	<p>uniqueness. The red rose symbolizes love and care. In this context, Emily gives herself a rose, representing self-love and acceptance of her individuality.</p>
<p>The photo's soft pink tones highlight Emily's beauty.</p>	<p>Pink, associated with Valentine's Day, combined with minimal makeup that accentuates Emily's unique features, reinforces Skin Game's message of self-love and acceptance, captivating the audience.</p>

The zoom-out technique in this photo reveals the model's full range of emotions, with Emily proudly admiring herself in the mirror and smiling, symbolizing self-acceptance and love. This challenges conventional beauty myths, which, according to Mapped (2023), psychologically harm women by promoting unattainable beauty standards. Wolf (2005) advocates for a fresh perspective on beauty, crucial today as media myths continually shape perceptions of physical ideals.

Skin Game's campaign reframes beauty as unique and diverse rather than confined to a single standard, encouraging self-celebration. Each visual element, from "XOXO" text and heart images to the red rose, builds a narrative of self-love. Emily's gesture of offering herself a rose becomes a powerful act of self-acceptance and affection, while the soft pink tones and minimal makeup enhance her distinct beauty as an albino. Pink, a color associated with Valentine's Day, strengthens the theme of the "Born This Way" campaign, promoting self-love as the truest form of beauty.

Mapped (2023) emphasizes that media-perpetuated beauty myths can lead women to chase unrealistic ideals. In contrast, this campaign embraces individuality and reframes beauty as inclusive. By presenting Emily authentically, Skin Game counters uniform beauty standards, aligning beauty with self-acceptance, empathy, and the courage to be oneself.

Table 3.

Signifier	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning
	<p>The close-up shot captures Nana's face and body clearly, displaying the skincare product in her hand.</p> <p>A birthmark, visible as dark spots on Nana's skin, is highlighted with bright lighting.</p> <p>Nana wears a pink outfit with black cuffs, a black hijab, and jeans.</p>	<p>This clear, unfiltered image of Nana's birthmarks across her body signifies her acceptance of insecurities. By openly showing her birthmarks, the photo communicates that her unique physical traits are embraced and celebrated as part of her identity, rather than hidden. Skin Game uses this approach to reinforce the message that true beauty lies in self-acceptance, regardless of one's physical appearance.</p> <p>The birthmarks covering Nana's skin are portrayed as an integral part of her distinctive beauty. The lighting draws attention to these marks, symbolizing how Nana has overcome insecurities about them and now celebrates them as a source of beauty. This representation challenges traditional beauty norms that often demand uniformity.</p> <p>The dominant pink color, associated with affection, highlights the Valentine's Day theme of the campaign. Nana's choice of modest yet stylish clothing, combining a hijab with jeans, expresses her self-acceptance and self-love, reflecting her personal</p>

Nana holds a red, heart-shaped balloon.

identity while respecting her cultural and religious beliefs.

The red, heart-shaped balloon symbolizes love, especially within the context of Valentine's Day. Here, it serves as a representation of Nana's love for herself, embodying acceptance and appreciation of her unique traits. This reinforces the campaign's message that self-love is essential to celebrating true beauty.

In this photo, the use of a close-up and medium shot with an eye-level angle creates a denotative meaning that offers a realistic and authentic portrayal of the model's body, without manipulating their appearance. The connotative meaning of this approach is that Skin Game aims to showcase beauty in its true form, reflecting the reality of each model's body, rejecting angles that may create illusions or artificially enhance appearances.

Furthermore, the visual element of Nana's birthmarks, highlighted with bright lighting, deepens the meaning of the image. Denotatively, the photo displays the birthmarks spread across Nana's skin, while connotatively, this element emphasizes that Nana has fully accepted and is proud of her unique beauty, which has been with her since birth. Nana does not feel insecure or ashamed of her distinctive physical trait; instead, she demonstrates that self-acceptance is a key part of beauty.

Aligned with Yuliani's research (2022), which highlights that media often promote ideal beauty standards such as long hair, tall and slim bodies, and flawless white skin, creating a narrow and damaging construction of beauty, Skin Game's campaign challenges this myth. Skin Game constructs a narrative that true beauty is not about meeting conventional beauty standards, but rather about the decision to love and accept oneself. By showcasing Nana, who embraces her birthmarks with pride and self-love, this campaign emphasizes that beauty stems from mental and spiritual well-being, not just physical aspects. In doing so, Skin Game successfully challenges the narrow beauty myth and redefines what is considered beautiful, encouraging audiences to see beauty in diversity and to celebrate individual uniqueness as the highest form of self-love.

DISCUSSION

A. Close-Up Shots and Self-Acceptance

The close-up shots in this campaign carry a clear denotative meaning: showcasing the model's face and body in high detail. Connotatively, these close-ups communicate that the model, in this case, Nana, has embraced her insecurities, particularly her birthmarks covering her body. Skin Game's approach emphasizes that beauty does not need to be hidden or altered to meet specific standards. By openly displaying physical uniqueness, this campaign promotes self-acceptance and confidence as core aspects of true beauty, aligning with the beauty industry's growing trend of inclusivity and authenticity in visual representation (Maddox, 2006; Wallis, 2013).

B. Lighting and Focus to Emphasize Authenticity

The lighting in these images uses a front light technique with normal key settings, balancing light and dark areas. The denotative meaning of this lighting choice is to clearly highlight the details of the model's face and body. Connotatively, this lighting reflects Skin Game's intent to portray Nana's beauty realistically and authentically, without excessive visual manipulation. By focusing on Nana's face and expression, the narrative is strengthened that beauty is about authenticity and self-acceptance, rather than merely adhering to conventional beauty standards (Calogero et al., 2007; Hidayanti, 2018).

C. Self-Love and Acceptance

The red rose used as a prop in the images serves as a decorative element in a denotative sense. Connotatively, however, the red rose symbolizes love and affection. In this campaign context, the rose that Nana gives herself represents self-love and acceptance of her uniqueness. This reinforces the message that loving oneself is the first step toward full self-acceptance and appreciation of individual uniqueness (Listyani & Aprilita, 2016).

D. Use of Minimalist Makeup

The minimalist makeup worn by Nana in this campaign serves the denotative purpose of highlighting physical features, such as the birthmarks spread across her body. Connotatively, this makeup choice supports the narrative that beauty does not need to be concealed under heavy layers of cosmetics but can be celebrated in its natural, unique state. The soft pink tones dominating the image, associated with Valentine's Day, add an aura of affection and self-acceptance, reinforcing the message that beauty arises from self-love (Wallis, 2013; Maddox, 2006).

E. Beauty in Diversity and Self-Acceptance

The myth that emerges from the analysis of these elements is that beauty does not need to conform to rigid, conventional external standards. Instead, beauty is seen as originating from the individual's decision to love and accept themselves as they are. Through this campaign, Skin Game aims to construct a narrative that every person possesses unique beauty, which should be celebrated and appreciated. This myth challenges traditional beauty narratives that often promote uniformity and

ignore physical differences. By emphasizing the importance of self-acceptance and self-love, Skin Game seeks to offer a more inclusive and diverse perspective on beauty (Calogero et al., 2007; Wallis, 2013).

Through this semiotic analysis, it can be concluded that Skin Game's #BornThisWay campaign successfully creates and conveys powerful messages about self-acceptance, self-love, and celebrating individual physical uniqueness. Using simple yet meaningful visual elements, this campaign challenges traditional beauty standards and offers an alternative that is more inclusive and authentic. The myth shaped by this campaign underscores that true beauty comes from self-acceptance and self-love, not from striving to meet unrealistic beauty standards (Hidayanti, 2018; Wallis, 2013).

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, the key conclusion is that the #BornThisWay campaign successfully presents a more inclusive representation of beauty compared to the conventional beauty standards commonly seen in the media. By showcasing models with diverse physical characteristics, Skin Game has communicated the message that beauty does not have to conform to a single standard. This campaign promotes individuality and authenticity as forms of beauty that deserve to be celebrated.

Through this campaign, Skin Game leverages the power of social media, particularly Instagram, to shift the beauty narrative among Indonesian women. The use of social media enables the campaign to reach a wider audience and shape a new perception of beauty. Skin Game demonstrates that social media can be effectively used to introduce and popularize a more inclusive and diverse beauty standard.

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