

## ABSTRACT

This study originates from an awareness of a prevailing issue among Indonesian male audiences who tend to criticize the portrayals of male skincare users as deviating from traditional masculinity. Challenging these conventional ideals, MS Glow x Keanu advertisement features Indonesian male influencer, Keanu, who defies traditional male beauty notions by presenting traditionally feminine visual elements and practices that contradict the established standards of male beauty advertising. By involving this advertisement, this study provides fresh insights into the perspective of young male audiences who are active skincare users in interpreting male beauty messages. Using a reception analysis approach, the study considers informants' level of involvement in skincare use and the influence of other internal and external socio-cultural factors on their interpretations. The findings of the study indicate that interpretations of skincare usage practices are more closely aligned, either partially or fully, with the preferred reading compared to interpretations of counter-stereotypical male beauty depiction in the given advertisement, which exhibit greater variation. Significantly, informants in predominantly oppositional and predominantly negotiated positions tend to reject Keanu's portrayal, indicating a lack of acceptance for the message of counter-stereotypical male beauty across the indicators of bodywork, non-traditional roles, metrosexual, and a pro-male narrative. These informants view Keanu's inclusion as a mere marketing communication ploy by MS Glow, revealing a double standard in their construction of meaning. These informants' major reading positions are primarily influenced by adherence to traditional values propagated by their social circles and media consumption. In contrast, a smaller number of informants, characterized by better access to gender-related information and a more open-minded social circle, predominantly interpret the MS Glow x Keanu advertisement in a dominant-hegemonic manner, interpreting Keanu as a powerful messenger of the encoded messages.

**Keywords:** Counter-stereotypical male beauty, reception analysis, skincare advertisement, young male audience, masculinity.