

Digital Analysis of the Beautiful Man in Indonesian Students' Collective Memory

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how students collaborate to develop the concept of the “beautiful man”. It explores how gender and cultural context shape collective memories. Based on 66 infographics created by first-year English Literature students at a university in Surabaya, this study investigates how Indonesian students collaboratively construct the concept of “beautiful man” through collective memory. The research employs a qualitative, corpus-based approach using 66 student-created infographics, which were converted into text and analysed through Voyant Tools. The analysis focuses on four categories: similarity, difference, real-life examples, and slogans. This methodological design enables both quantitative text mining and qualitative interpretation. The study reveals that makeup and self-care serve as both boundary markers and shared practices, highlighting similarities and differences. This suggests that students are blending traditional views of masculinity with more inclusive ideas. Real-life examples illustrate how schools, friends, family, and society shape perceptions of acceptance, resistance, and stigma. These everyday settings reveal how people judge and challenge gendered appearances, making them essential spaces for testing and redefining ideas of masculinity and beauty. The slogan category highlights values such as “embrace,” “uniqueness,” and “diversity,” reflecting new ideas of masculinity. Overall, the findings show that students actively engage with and reshape the meanings of male beauty through group discussions and their work. They are not just accepting traditional views but are constantly renegotiating masculinity in their campus culture.

Keywords: Collective Memory, Beautiful Man, Gender, Indonesian Students

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INTRODUCTION

Recent trends suggest a notable increase in men's interest in makeup and skincare, challenging traditional notions of male appearance and self-care. Based on a socio-semiotic analysis of skincare advertisements in Bangkok, a study found that Thai male masculinity now combines a hegemonic form (heterosexuality/power) with a softer "new man" figure influenced by Asian beauty trends, thereby normalizing the modern lifestyle of the middle class (Saisuwan, 2024). Research on men's grooming habits has evolved in line with clinical guidance, given that men's skin differs anatomically and physiologically from women's and is exposed to specific environmental factors and shaving practices (Elsner, 2012).

In addition, a structural equation modelling (SEM) study of 476 men in Brazil found that vanity and masculinity were positively associated with grooming product consumption, whereas income was negatively associated (Sayon et al., 2020). Cross-culturally, research indicates that men's attitudes and motivations for consuming grooming products are driven by a combination of personal, social, and marketing factors (Khan et al., 2017). A survey of 178 respondents and SEM modeling showed that, among male consumers—especially Gen Z/Millennials—skincare purchase intentions increased when skin health concerns and positive perceptions of skincare and self-image strengthened (Duarte et al., 2025).

Byrne & Milestone showed that men's grooming attitudes and practices differ across age groups, with older consumers tending to keep skincare consumption "invisible." In contrast, younger consumers are more open—signaling a generation gap in the social acceptance of men's cosmetics (Byrne & Milestone, 2023). More academic research further supports this finding, highlighting how evolving ideals of masculinity intersect with consumer behaviour and digital culture, making beauty practices a site of negotiation for identity and social (Hamshaw & Gavin, 2022). These developments underscore that beauty practices are no longer gender-exclusive but are increasingly embraced by men, influenced by global media, social platforms, and shifting cultural expectations.

Based on PLS-SEM among Gen Y/Z male consumers, the research found that influencer characteristics (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness) increased the desire to mimic, which in turn mediated the effect of these characteristics on purchase intention for men's cosmetics. In contrast, congruence affected only the desire to mimic (Shailza & Sarkar, 2024). This trend is particularly notable in Indonesia. The rise of K-pop, the influence of social media creators, and evolving marketing strategies have contributed to the mainstreaming of male beauty and grooming products. Brand image associated with K-drama/K-pop and influencer mediation increases consumer interest, but halal knowledge, religiosity, and the presence of halal labels significantly influence purchase preferences and market acceptance (Widyaningrum et al., 2023). This shift suggests that what was

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once considered niche or taboo is becoming part of a broader cultural conversation about masculinity and self-expression.

Such visible changes in everyday practices intersect with how groups remember and reinterpret past norms, a process that collective memory scholars describe as the shared recollections and narratives that a social group constructs and sustains over time. This closely aligns with Pierre Nora's concept that "memory is life... [and] remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting." This perspective highlights that memory is never static but is constantly in flux (Nora, 1989). Similarly, Paul Ricoeur argues that memory is intrinsically linked to the interplay between remembering and forgetting—it is far more than a mere repository of the past. Instead, memory is an active process, continually shaped by our choices of what to recall and what to let fade away (Ricoeur, 2010).

In the university context, students jointly engage in discourse through conversations, symbolic practices, and artifacts that both draw on inherited norms about masculinity and project new ideals. Campus traditions, rituals, and various cultural or verbal artifacts play a significant role in shaping and reshaping group values. They serve as everyday conduits of collective memory (Theroux & Furukawa, 2022). This concept resonates with Halbwachs's assertion that memory is not merely individual; rather, it is intertwined with social frameworks that influence how groups remember and reinterpret their past. (Halbwachs, 1980). His theory of collective memory offers a valuable framework for understanding how student groups, as social communities, create and sustain shared narratives and ideals.

Maurice Halbwachs argued that our memories are not merely personal but are significantly shaped by the social groups to which we belong. Rather than recalling experiences in isolation, the meaning of our memories is shaped by the people and contexts in which we live. Thus, he asserted that memory is fundamentally social and connected to our social environment. As he writes, "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember. Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time" (Halbwachs, 1992). This perspective positions memory as a fundamentally social phenomenon: individual recollections are constructed, maintained, and even altered in relation to the values, practices, and narratives of the groups to which individuals belong.

Halbwachs highlights that space and time are vital in shaping collective memory. Group recollections are closely connected to shared experiences in specific places and significant moments, which deepen memories and anchor them in the group's identity. Social groups, according to Halbwachs, "locate their memories in a space that all members share, and they organize time according to events that are significant for the group as a whole, rather than by individual chronology" (Halbwachs, 1992). Collective memory is shaped by significant moments and places, not just conversations. Shared experiences, such as anniversaries and rituals, help groups understand

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their identity and foster their unity and uniqueness.

Halbwachs underscores that collective memory is crucial for shaping and preserving group identity. Shared memories help families, nations, social classes, and religious communities define themselves and distinguish themselves from others, acting as the binding force that unites a group while outlining its boundaries. Halbwachs observes, “It is in this sense that collective memory, as the memory of the group, confers upon it its identity, makes it conscious of its unity and its particularity, and enables it to distinguish itself from other groups” (Halbwachs, 1992). Collective remembrance is a means by which a group can affirm its identity and strengthen bonds through shared memories. This process fosters a sense of belonging, conveys core values, and links the past to the present, ensuring the group’s continuity.

Across recent scholarship, soft/androgynous masculinities are shown to emerge through mediated aesthetics yet remain tethered to familiar hierarchies. Research on Korean dramas popular among Malaysian viewers reveals the rise of “new masculinity,” characterized by fashionable men who embrace emotional openness. However, these softer traits often remain confined to private or aesthetic spaces, suggesting that traditional patriarchal power structures are still intact (Khair & Wahab, 2017). Complementing this, Ho demonstrates that *dansō* performance and *genderless-kei* fashion in Japan circulate and legitimate androgynous male beauty across cafés, fashion/media industries, and social platforms. Visibility is not simply given but is the result of careful negotiation. Although alternative styles expand the notion of “male beauty,” they remain shaped by market demands, audience expectations, and institutional constraints (Ho, 2023).

A second line of research examines the infrastructures that reinforce shared meanings. Meitzler et al. demonstrate how digital technologies—such as archives and online platforms—are transforming the way groups remember and engage with cultural figures and norms, moving memory work beyond traditional monuments into interactive, technology-driven spaces. (Meitzler et al., 2024). Komorowska demonstrates how different commemorative structures function to establish cultural memory through physical locations and temporal dimensions, while creating opportunities for narrative struggles to unfold (Komorowska, 2016). The combined research demonstrates how online and offline media environments provide communities with the tools, locations, and storylines to understand and reform the meanings behind the concept of “male beauty.”

The third research area links representational changes to ordinary purchasing habits and social standing management practices. Rangkaputi’s qualitative study on Thai men suggests that grooming—through the use of cosmetics, gyms, or spas—is closely linked to self-image and employability. It highlights a “softened” masculinity that embraces beauty practices while remaining conscious of social status. Male cosmetics are widely accepted, with peer influence outweighing celebrity endorsements, though societal pressures

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still compel men to maintain a polished appearance. The picture that emerges is not a simple break with the past but a recalibration: grooming becomes a socially legitimized strategy through which men navigate opportunity structures and visibility, aligning personal aesthetics with changing—but not boundary-less—norms (Rangkaputi, 2017).

Turning to Indonesia, a reception analysis of the MS Glow x Keanu campaigns illustrates how Indonesian skincare brands leverage counter-stereotypical male beauty to attract younger audiences. The study reveals that audiences react differently to new concepts of male beauty. Some embrace counter-stereotypical aesthetics (dominant), others take a moderate stance (negotiated), and some resist it (oppositional). These responses are shaped by family, peers, and exposure to influences like K-pop. For some young men, new beauty narratives are exciting and celebratory, while others uphold traditional or religious views of masculinity. Ultimately, the redefinition of male beauty in advertising reflects broader debates among Indonesian youth about gender roles and identity. (Rahmadani & Purwaningtyas, 2025).

At a different scale, Dewiyanti et al. illustrate how communities re-anchor identity by reconnecting collective memory to new places, rituals, and livelihoods after displacement—demonstrating the social frameworks through which meanings are preserved and recontextualised. These Indonesian studies reveal that evolving views of the “beautiful man” are not isolated but occur within specific cultural and institutional contexts, where traditional norms, local values, and global media intersect (Dewiyanti et al., 2021).

Lately, research examining how online trends and pop culture shape perceptions of what Indonesians consider beautiful men points to ads featuring K-pop stars. These brands tap into emotional lines and smart messaging on YouTube, pushing a sleek, global version of “hot guy” looks that quietly teach locals what’s attractive - like charm, closeness, or gentle vibes (Ronauli et al., 2024). On top of that, digging into web news titles about star troubles reveals how big sites use word picks, sentence flow, and story angles to build right-or-wrong tales tied to gender, nudging crowd opinions on famous people - a key way ideas about behavior and appeal stick in young viewers’ daily scrolls (Syartanti, 2021)). Going further, checking out Puja Astawa’s videos unpacks how he handles group chats using politeness moves like switching languages, repeating phrases, tossing in slang bits, keeping image intact; these tricks expose how influencers shape their public self - and lock in viewer memories of idealized men across social platforms (Mulyana & Qomariana, 2023).

While previous studies have examined male beauty through gender theory, consumer behaviour, and media representation, there is limited research on how these notions are negotiated within student communities as collective memory practices. Existing literature often focuses on structural or male-driven perspectives, overlooking the dynamic, socially framed processes through which young people recall, contest, and reconstruct beauty norms in

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everyday interactions.

This gap is critical because collective memory provides a unique lens for understanding cultural shifts. It emphasises how shared narratives evolve through group discourse and symbolic practices rather than individual choices alone (Erlil, 2011; Halbwachs, 1992). Although research on culture and gender has examined male appearance, it typically focuses on fixed rules or personal identities, yet rarely explores how communities reconsider those standards over time. By contrast, collective memory helps explain beauty routines as shared ways of recalling the past, showing how old ideas are reused, challenged, or changed in everyday discourse. Rather than viewing masculinity as rigid, this view shows young people reshaping traditions through memories formed by group discussions or online content.

Against this background, the present study examines how Indonesian university students, through standard campus practices, jointly recall and reshape the idea of the "beautiful man." Using shared memory rather than personal taste as a lens, it shows how established ideas about beauty are raised, challenged, or changed in daily talk. The study focuses on two issues: first, how learners collectively construct and sustain the notion of the attractive male in conversation; second, how factors such as gender identity and local culture shape the discussion and revision of this ideal.

METHOD

This qualitative, corpus-based study employs Maurice Halbwachs's theory of collective memory to investigate how students construct and negotiate gendered beauty norms through shared artifacts. The methodology is cross-sectional and artifact-driven: student-created infographics are analyzed as memory practices within their context and subsequently transformed into text for comparative analysis across various subcorpora.

The dataset comprises 66 infographics created by first-year English Literature students at a university in Surabaya, developed as part of a guided class project. Even though only one cohort was studied, the university's position in Surabaya - one of Indonesia's big cities - brings together people from many parts of East Java and neighboring areas. Because students' backgrounds differ widely, results remain meaningful even when data are collected in a single location. Each infographic intertwines the students' interpretations of assigned texts with their personal reflections. To ensure privacy, all personal identifiers were removed during the data processing, and the analysis emphasizes overarching patterns rather than individual cases.

Materials included (a) a short stimulus packet with two case texts on male beauty; and (b) guided prompts directing students to produce content in four components: similarity, difference, real-life experience, and slogan. Infographics were exported as plain text and split into four files. Voyant Tools served as the primary analytical tool (modules used: Summary/Terms, Contexts (KWIC: Key Word in *Context*), *Collocates*, *Trends*, and *Corpus*

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Comparison). For RQ2-focused runs, a targeted stopword extension (e.g., temporarily excluding *makeup*, *man*, *woman*) was applied to foreground cultural and identity-related terms.

Pre-processing involved cleaning, tokenization, and the construction of four subcorpora (similarity, difference, real-life, slogan). To address how students collectively construct and sustain the image of the “beautiful man”, the difference and similarity corpora were analyzed separately and comparatively using term frequencies, collocates, contexts, and corpus comparison to surface dominant themes, narrative frames, and markers of differentiation/identification. To explore the second research question—how gender identity and cultural context shape collective memory—the focus was on the real-life corpus.

Selective stopwording highlighted contextual factors like family, school, peers, religion, and norms. The slogan corpus provided a comparison, revealing how students express their aspirations and norms through terms such as embrace, uniqueness, and diversity. Interpretation at all stages was guided by Halbwachs’s principles (memory as socially framed, dynamic, space–time anchored, and identity-relevant), linking quantitative text patterns (e.g., frequent terms, salient verbs like “wear” or “make”) to qualitative readings of how students recall, contest, and reframe shared meanings.

To illustrate how concepts of shared memory influence our interpretation of the texts, we will transform key ideas into visible indicators across four data segments, utilizing Voyant tools such as word lists, nearby words, line views, patterns over time, and comparisons between datasets. Frequently recurring terms—such as “makeup” or “beauty”—serve as cognitive anchors; references to groups like friends, school, family, or broader society indicate social contexts; mentions of specific locations or time periods—such as high school years, college campuses, or significant events—underscore situational relevance.

Moreover, the use of emotionally charged or imperative language—terms such as “embrace”, “redefine”, “must”, or “do not”—illuminates shifts in attitude, whether toward agreement, opposition, or the redefinition of meaning. Labels concerning gender roles reflect the establishment or transcendence of boundaries. Our approach begins by identifying common words and their associated terms, then examines their contextual application to examine how young individuals remember, contest, or redefine societal perceptions of male attractiveness. This analytical process progresses from identifying cognitive anchors to exploring structural elements, locations, attitudes, and ultimately identity considerations, effectively illustrating how numerical data translates into narrative insights.

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modern perspectives to discover genuine meaning in contemporary society.

The second set of observations highlights traditional concepts such as types, norms, and roles, which remain anchored in familiar territories. Discussions of beauty delineate clear boundaries, specifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and expectations regarding gender-specific actions. The language used often associates gender labels, such as “men” and “women”, with judgmental undertones and rigid expressions, thereby influencing conversations that regulate perceptions of masculinity and femininity. This dynamic reflects a group actively exploring and testing societal boundaries as it navigates changes, while maintaining established power structures and attitudes regarding male appearance. Simultaneously, individuals are seeking to understand their place among their peers in an evolving context.

People who reject gender-based limitations on beauty understand that societal influences affect everyone, enabling both men and women to practice self-care and beauty routines. Students demonstrate that they actively challenge conventional male beauty standards by creating new definitions that include multiple perspectives. They typically examine previous cultural standards to question their validity. By recalling past times, they develop new understandings of contemporary standards of male beauty.

The term “society” appears consistently across both narratives because it plays a crucial role in the discussion. Across contexts, “society” often functions as a judicial authority, establishing criteria that delineate notions of masculinity and femininity. In contrast, the similarity corpus portrays “society” as a forum for dialogue, in which individuals share their experiences and identify common ground. In both instances, it is evident that broader social forces significantly influence how students perceive, remember, and reassess concepts of beauty and gender. This aligns with Halbwachs’s assertion that collective memory is constructed and maintained within social frameworks. (Halbwachs, 1992). For these students, their conception of the “beautiful man” is deeply rooted in societal norms. However, it extends beyond that—they continually reinterpret and renegotiate these influences through their group discussions.

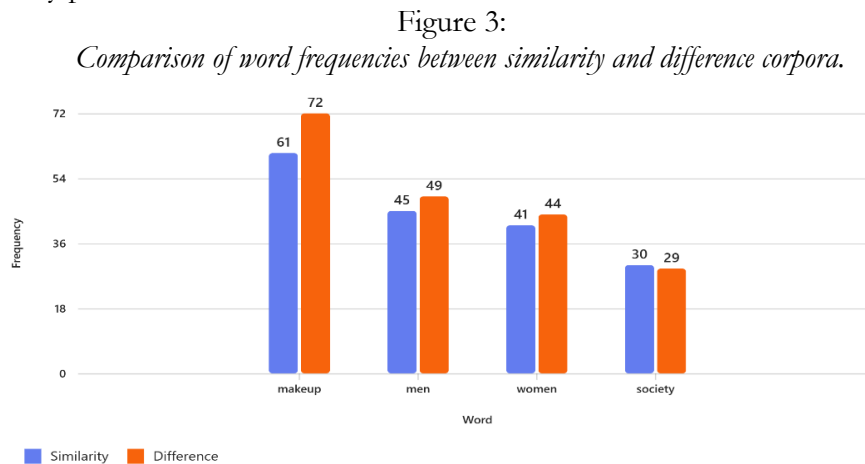
When students incorporate action words such as “wear,” “make,” and “wearing” in their narratives, it indicates that beauty is not merely a topic of discussion; it is woven into their daily lives. These practices transcend abstract concepts; they are deeply ingrained in students' choices, self-perceptions, and interactions with others. Routine practices frequently establish clear distinctions between masculine and feminine roles while upholding social classification systems. The identical procedures enable students to create shared experiences that transcend traditional gender-based boundaries. Collective memory maintains its dynamic character through this tension, evolving in constant negotiation among different perspectives. According to Halbwachs, memory undergoes perpetual transformation because people create new meanings through their social interactions within groups

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(Halbwachs, 1980).

While the word cloud provides a visual overview of dominant terms, a comparative bar chart offers a clearer picture of how these key words vary across the similarity and difference corpora. Figure 3 below illustrates this distribution, highlighting nuanced connections between shared and divergent beauty practices.



As shown in Figure 3, “make up” dominates both corpora but appears more frequently in the difference corpus, reinforcing its role as a contested marker of masculinity. The near-equal frequencies of “men” and “women” suggest that gender remains a central lens in both contexts. At the same time, “society” is invoked slightly more frequently in discussions of similarity, signalling collective norms in the framing of shared practices. These patterns indicate that students negotiate beauty standards within a tension between inclusivity and traditional gender norms.

Students recognise collective identity through the similar corpus words “people,” “gender,” and “beauty,” which reveal the powerful influence of group identity in shaping perceptions of a “beautiful man.” The group develops a shared definition of beauty through common language and shared experiences, which evolve to adapt to changing identities and cultural forces. Group identity is founded on collective memory, which both preserves and manifests it (Halbwachs, 1980). The students demonstrate this process through their discussions on identity negotiation. Their image of male attractiveness combines traditional cultural norms with contemporary modifications, illustrating how past values and emerging standards coalesce within their shared history.

Students demonstrate a dynamic and diverse collective memory, as analyzed in both difference and similarity corpora. The difference corpus shows that students reinforce traditional norms, but the similarity corpus demonstrates students moving toward inclusive standards of beauty and gender. Students' perspectives on male beauty evolve continuously, balancing traditional standards with progressive values. Collective memory adapts to

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the present needs of the group, as Halbwachs describes in his theory, which explains this fluidity (Halbwachs, 1980).

Rooted in Halbwachs' idea of collective memory, makeup's role as a marker of separation reflects group dynamics rather than personal choice. From Erll's angle on cultural memory, such ideas spread via media - student work and school talk reshape outside influences like ads, K-pop, or online trends while shaping how males are seen later. So, the change noticed - from setting limits to everyday habits - is an example of shared memories picked up again in students' everyday life (Erll, 2011). The student community demonstrates how social memory balances traditional values and social progress through the concept of the "beautiful man".

The analysis of word patterns reveals that identical words appear differently across various text sets—not merely reflecting differing opinions, but demonstrating nuanced shifts in expression. As Olick suggests, students are not simply referring to a fixed script; they actively reshape their discourse in relation to context, which can range from classroom discussions to informal conversations with peers to public debates on campus. This dynamic process facilitates gradual change, progressing from initial resistance to a more tentative agreement. (Olick, 1999; 2007). Seen through Halbwachs' lens, what people need now - to fit in, stand out, stick together - pushes those shifts forward; seen through Olick's view, the way speech plays out moment by moment, shaped by context and form, shows why welcoming habits might live alongside quiet ways of keeping others out - even inside one group.

These results align with Khai and Wahab's (2017) study of Korean dramas, in which gentle male images reflect modern ideals yet still adhere to traditional power structures. Likewise, Ho (2023) shows how blended gender styles in Japan spread through media and shopping trends; however, they're shaped by commercial rules and organizational constraints. In our dataset, early signs of "wearing makeup" observed across datasets align with Rangkaputi's (2017) observations from Thailand, where personal care practices are seen as tools for social climbing. Overall, such research highlights that appearance-related behaviors may question fixed gender roles - but also continue alongside deep-rooted inequalities, just like what appears in conversations among Indonesian youth.

Negotiating Norms: Real-Life Narratives and Aspirational Slogans

This part investigates the influence of gender identity alongside cultural background on how people remember the "beautiful man". Researchers began their study by examining actual cases before using slogans to provide supportive, aspirational references. Using Voyant tools, the team identified words related to identity and cultural aspects. The researchers removed "makeup", "man," and "woman" from their word count to highlight these essential factors. The real-life corpus foregrounds relational and institutional frames (friends, school) alongside everyday-practice verbs

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Figure 5:
Contextual results for the “high” term in Voyant Tools.

Document	Left	Term ↓	Right
2Real Life	and skin care or makeup can support them. ...	high	school, I had a guy friend who liked to use
2Real Life	I don't want to. 60 When I was in senior	high	school, I was in the middle of a conversatio...
2Real Life	to their opinions about boys who use make ...	high	school, the opinions between boys and girls...
2Real Life	wear makeup on his face. But when he grad...	high	school and entered the world of lectures he ...
2Real Life	My male friend has been behaving like a wo...	high	school. The way he walks, his curves, his la...
2Real Life	inclusive and accepting society. 48 When I ...	high	school, I had a junior who liked to use make...

High schools serve as the primary stage for exploring ideas surrounding the concept of the “ideal man,” both in structured environments and through casual interactions. Peer dynamics, along with the influence of older students, significantly impact how male beauty practices are perceived, adopted, or resisted. Many students recall pivotal moments with peers or during school events that either affirmed or challenged their perspectives on self-expression and appearance. These school experiences function as powerful social anchors. In Halbwachs's words, they represent “the support of a group delimited in space and time” (Halbwachs, 1980), providing a framework for collective memory. The ways students experience events lead them to develop different interpretations of beauty standards, which they maintain as part of their collective identity throughout their lives.

The corpus demonstrates a high occurrence of three specific words: “friend” (34), “friends” (19), and “people” (18). The importance of peer groups is evident in their essential role in creating shared memories of the “beautiful man.” Friends have greater influence on students' views than family or society, as they provide immediate responses that shape what students consider acceptable or attractive. Friends function as “judges” and “teammates” because they provide immediate feedback and define what counts as trendy or fashionable. Students are strongly influenced by their peers in terms of how they perceive themselves. The research supports Halbwachs' theory about collective memory development through group membership (Halbwachs, 1992) which occurs in peer communities that maintain shared stories about masculinity and beauty standards.

The frequent use of action words such as “make” (47), “wear” (43), “use” (16), “used” (13), and “wearing” (12) underscores the pivotal role that everyday practices play in shaping collective perceptions of male beauty. The accompanying numbers indicate that numerous students draw upon personal or observed experiences with makeup and skincare, often articulating how these practices are navigated differently across cultural and gender contexts. As illustrated in the Voyant context screenshot (Figure 5), the term “wear” is frequently associated with makeup or skincare routines, as well as specific scenarios—such as boys applying lip tint or lip balm (Figure 6). These instances reveal both the negotiations and occasional tensions inherent in

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male beauty practices.

Figure 6:
Context feature in Voyant Tools on the “wear” term.

Document	Left	Term ↓	Right
2Real Life	in a campus environment where some stud...	wear	makeup to improve or perfect their appeara...
2Real Life	male friends said "For real ? Why do boys li...	wear	skin care? We just use body soap to wash our
2Real Life	Event like that happened to me where I told to	wear	make up even though I don't want to. 60 W...
2Real Life	traditional gender roles and deem it inappro...	wear	make up may face stigmatization and discri...
2Real Life	of reactions if they see a man who likes to	wear	makeup. Some may be accepting and find it...
2Real Life	their right. I also have a female friend who d...	wear	make up and she looks so naturally beautif...

Figure 7:
Context feature in Voyant Tools on the “lip” term

Document	Left	Term ↓	Right
2Real Life	think he's not just handsome but also beauti...	lipstick	, wears earrings, and looks like he's wearin...
2Real Life	EXAMPLE, WHEN A MAN USING LIP BAL...	lips	DRYING OUT, SOME PEOPLE MAY GIVIN...
2Real Life	my male classmate used a lip balm that ma...	lips	look like he was using lip tint, so he got
2Real Life	I had a guy friend who liked to use colored	lip	balm, and some of my other guy friends ma...
2Real Life	KNOWLEDGE THAT OCCUR TODAY. IN E...	lip	BALM TO PREVENT HIS LIPS DRYING O...
2Real Life	had a junior who liked to use makeup such as	lip	tint, mascara, and eyebrow pencils. To be h...

These concrete routines are not merely superficial details; they are crucial intersections where cultural values, gender expectations, and collective memory converge. This perspective aligns with Halbwachs’s assertion that “the collective memory endures and draws strength from its foundation within a coherent group of people” and is continually reshaped by the habits, practices, and rituals of everyday life (Halbwachs, 1992).

Extending this point, Landsberg’s idea of prosthetic memory shows how regular media moments - like videos shared by friends, branded guides, or skin care routines - turn into personal yet collective recollections shaping daily behavior (Landsberg, 2004). Looking at real-life examples, recurring action words and specific objects (e.g., apply, use, wear; lip balm/lip tint) suggest that teens adopt these media-driven patterns as physical routines, despite never having experienced the source firsthand. Erl’s perspective on cultural memory emphasizes the significant role that media play in shaping our habits and perceptions. He notes that drawings created during lessons or informal conversations serve as symbols that gradually integrate mainstream ideas about men’s appearances into the school environment (Erl, 2011).

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in which diverse identities and authentic self-expression are valued and celebrated.

Figure 10:
Context Map

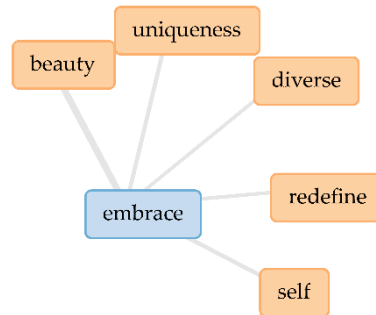


Figure 8's context map for "embrace" illustrates how students associate it with key concepts like "beauty," "uniqueness," "diversity," "redefine," and "self." These connections reveal a transformative view of beauty, in which "embrace" invites the acceptance of all forms, transcending traditional boundaries. By linking to "uniqueness" and "diversity," students stress the importance of celebrating individuality. The mentions of "redefine" and "self" indicate a concerted effort to move beyond those outdated norms. Students seek to redefine traditional notions of beauty and identity, transforming them into a framework that encompasses a broader range of people.

Looking at actual stories from life, you find that day-to-day spots like schools and friend circles play a huge part in figuring out what a beautiful man even means. Gender issues also weigh in heavily, especially when it comes to guys wearing makeup or engaging in self-care routines, as their stories often evoke cheers from some and pushback from others, coming from friends, teachers, and the broader community. This phenomenon aligns with Halbwachs's perspective that collective memory is inherently situated within specific social contexts, as he states, "every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time" (Halbwachs, 1992). In this context, peers and school communities serve as the primary frameworks through which the shared memory of the "beautiful man" is constructed, reinforced, and reinterpreted over time.

Furthermore, the real-life corpus illustrates how school norms, family traditions, and popular culture (such as K-pop or social media) interact to shape new standards of male beauty. Some students explicitly link changes in perceptions of beauty to greater access to global cultural influences, thereby enabling men to express themselves more freely. This dynamic reflects Halbwachs's view that collective memory is always shaped by the interplay between existing cultural frameworks and the present-day experiences of the group: "the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a

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coherent body of people” (Halbwachs, 1992). In this way, both local and global cultural contexts become the vessels through which collective memory is continually revised and renegotiated.

The slogan collection embodies students' collective aspirations to redefine male beauty in ways that are more inclusive, individualized, and liberated from traditional constraints. Terms such as “embrace,” “uniqueness,” and “diversity” are prominent, signaling a shared commitment to transcending rigid gender binaries and upholding authenticity and difference as fundamental values. Those slogans are not merely catchy; they are also effective. They serve as symbols that help keep and spread the group's shared memories. Halbwachs points out that rituals and symbolic objects help groups maintain shared meanings (Halbwachs, 1980). The students' slogans work in a pretty similar way. They reflect changing ideas about the beautiful man. However, they also disseminate those ideas and shape how the community perceives it all.

Looking at these two sets of texts side by side, you see how the shared memory around the “beautiful man” is not some fixed thing. It is more like it is constantly shifting, full of push and pull. Traditional values are evident in the real-life stories people share. However, modern slogans advocate something different. They discuss the inclusion of more people and the redefinition of beauty. Gender and cultural issues keep coming up as things to address. That affects daily habits and the symbols we use as well. This back-and-forth aligns with Halbwachs' concept of collective memory. It is a mix of holding onto old ways while adapting to current conditions (Halbwachs, 1992). Thus, students are not merely absorbing outdated notions of beauty. They are remixing them, making the memory fit who they are and what they stand for these days.

Slogans function as cognitive shortcuts, encapsulating widely held beliefs in concise phrases that individuals within the campus community can easily communicate (Erll, 2011). Rather than engaging in lengthy discussions, succinct terms—such as “embrace,” “uniqueness,” and “diversity”—convey significant concepts during conversations, academic pursuits, or informal exchanges. These expressions not only capture attention but also help recall the group's essential values while remaining adaptable to evolving interpretations over time. Olick's perspective provides valuable insights into the process by which ideas become entrenched over time. The transition from personal narratives to memorable phrases signifies a shift in storytelling—one that is influenced by collective beliefs and aspirations (Olick, 1999; 2007).

From Halbwachs' standpoint, the process of fixing meaning is contingent upon the prevailing perspectives of the group; conversely, Olick emphasizes the importance of form—the manner in which memory is expressed varies according to its format, influencing what individuals feel empowered to endorse or question within a campus environment. To better situate these results within Indonesia's media landscape, attention should

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shift to portrayals of non-traditional forms of male attractiveness in advertisements. While Rahmadani and Purwaningtyas (2025) show such representations spark debate - some embrace them, others push back - our data aligns closely with their conclusions. Beauty standards, therefore, are not fixed; instead, they're shaped through overlapping forces like kinship values, faith, global pop trends, including K-pop - elements also echoed in student statements and campaign phrases.

These patterns rarely appear in isolation; comparable trends are evident across various cultural and media environments. Peer influence, along with school environments, shapes ideas about attractiveness, supporting Rangkaputi's (2017) finding that social circles matter more than celebrity ads when it comes to men's use of cosmetics. Instead of stars, everyday interactions play a bigger role. Meanwhile, advertising messages promoting inclusion and authenticity align with Ho's (2023) view: non-traditional forms of masculinity take shape through daily actions and shared symbols. Rather than grand transformations, small repeated behaviors make a difference. On a broader scale, changes in how people talk mirror what Meitzler et al. (2024) call the "digital afterlife" of memory: online spaces help reshape collective recall and self-definition. As such, students' memory practices are not discrete events but are tied to broader flows of digital culture and communication tools.

Comparative Synthesis: Phases of Collective Remembering

Looking at cultural memory ideas, steady objects plus ongoing habits pass down rules way past casual chats; thanks to Assmann's split between shared recollection and deep-rooted remembering, you see how class-made visuals or daily school patterns might keep dominant stories alive - or build more welcoming values instead (Assmann, 2011). Within the data researched, this shows why regular spots (like classrooms, friend circles), along with catchphrases, work less like talk alone - but more like mental anchors shaping who we are across years

The analysis of both data sets reveals noteworthy similarities and differences in how groups recall experiences associated with paired concepts, such as makeup and beauty, and with gender classifications, such as male and female. In contrast, in the different corpus, memories are often shaped by established norms, including stereotypes and societal expectations, which can dictate what counts as masculine or feminine. Conversely, the similarity corpus illustrates how individuals reference those anchors as shared, everyday practices, suggesting that it is increasingly commonplace for both men and women to engage in similar care and styling activities.

Findings from the different sets fit the idea of tough-guy norms, where rules shape what is seen as proper for men's looks - makeup or grooming gets treated like breaking ranks, keeping power imbalances alive. On the flip side, similar cases show everyday caregiving across genders that

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quietly blur boundaries but do not overturn control, hinting at small shifts within rigid male ideals (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

It is important to note that various influences and belief systems significantly shape the dynamic between reinforcing power and ideology. Factors such as online exposure, commercial incentives, influencers, branded narratives, and algorithms that promote specific content can contribute to the commercialization of concepts like “inclusive masculinity”. While this may enhance acceptance, it does not necessarily challenge deeply rooted disparities (Douglas & Share, 2007).

The integration of real-life and slogans corpora effectively demonstrates how these concepts apply to overarching objectives. Personal narratives from daily experiences, such as interactions with friends, participation in school activities, and family engagements, are interconnected with significant settings, including classrooms and community events. This connection illustrates how our surroundings influence responses of acceptance, rejection, or hesitation.

Slogans effectively use language that conveys positions and perspectives—terms such as “embrace”, “uniqueness”, and “diversity” articulate a vision of belonging oriented toward the future. However, when analyzed through the lenses of power dynamics and belief systems, these optimistic messages may present potential challenges. The calls to “accept” or “diversity” may be perceived as akin to marketing strategies or social media trends. Furthermore, the influence of peer groups and formal regulations ultimately shapes the experience of fitting in, which may be perceived as liberating or merely a conformity to trends. In brand culture, diversity and inclusion are framed as “real” values that build emotional ties to products, yet they barely touch deeper power structures. Seen this way, upbeat slogans might function as company-approved scripts unless challenged by media literacy or by peer and institutional support (Banet-Weiser, 2012).

When viewed via a media-memory perspective, normalization in these texts emerges as shaped by mediation; Erlil explains that media formats help spread and fix collective memories - what groups eventually see as everyday routines - by way of mediating practices and mobile remembrance (Erlil, 2011). Within ad environments familiar to students, Kreichbergs observes that Gen-Z-targeted brand masculinities promote variety, personal acceptance, and openness about feelings, rather than relying on rigid clichés, thereby turning inclusiveness into a market-style look (Kreichbergs, 2023). Crucially, such normalized patterns depend on influence structures and belief systems: digital platforms and branding initiatives link standards of attractiveness to commercial rules, absorbing ideas such as 'inclusive masculinity' into saleable identity models without challenging deep-rooted inequalities.

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CONCLUSION

This research examines how college students in Indonesia shape and reshape the meaning of being a “beautiful man”. When comparing similar or different views, grooming and personal care act like shifting markers - they sometimes separate male from female traits, other times blur them through everyday habits. Looking at real-life stories, classrooms, and friend circles, these spaces become regular stages for approval, doubt, or pushback. At the same time, phrases (such as “embrace”, “uniqueness”, and “diversity” express hopes and ideals. From Halbwachs’ angle, these trends show a here-and-now effort tied to groups, where social spaces (buddies, schools, campus vibes) keep updating shared memories based on today’s priorities - meaning the “attractive man” is not set in stone, but rebuilt constantly through community talk and setting-specific influences.

The study comes with drawbacks – it is based on just one group (freshmen English Literature students) from a single location, uses student-made infographics within a snapshot-style setup, while focusing more on word visibility than deeper social dynamics; decisions like aggressive filtering of common words shape what trends show up, meanwhile missing interviews, group talks, background contrasts, or detailed image analysis makes conclusions harder to back. In practice, results suggest weaving media awareness and gender insight into early college courses, building outreach efforts that welcome diversity, and using open-ended tasks that treat varied male self-care as the norm without ranking styles. Work made by learners can act as shared tools - to revisit and reshape accepted ideas - also serving low-pressure check-ins that spark conversation, offering teachers, advisors, and campus leaders clear moves to cut shame and support fairer, broader ways of being masculine.

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Uci Elly Kholidah: Conceptualization; Methodology; Formal analysis; Writing – Original Draft; Supervision; Project administration. **Pratiwi Retnaningdyah:** Investigation; Data curation; Writing – Review & Editing. **Ayu Saraswati:** Software; Validation; Funding acquisition. **Sabrina Wardatul Jannah Husain:** Visualization; Resources.

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