

# Body Appearance Disciplinary Mechanisms and Procedures in Order to Build Beauty-Based Compliance for Sales Promotion Girls (SPG) at HP Cellular Sales Centers in Samarinda

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## Abstract

*Beauty does not always represent a woman's intelligence and skills, but in many studies beauty has become a serious issue that hinders women's progress in the public sphere. Naomi Wolf's study shows how women's struggles for beauty consume a lot of time and energy of working women, making it difficult to compete with men. In many fields of work, women are placed in fields that are expected to maximize appearance to achieve product sales targets. This study analyzes how a well-known HP shop in Samarinda builds a performance discipline system for Sales Promotion Girl (SPG)G so that they can always look perfect to persuade more buyers. The analysis was carried out using the perspective of 'the Discipline Body' by Michel Foucault. This study found that the shop created a selection mechanism, standardization, position control, and periodic reprimands to ensure that SPGs always look perfect based on beauty based on global beauty norms. This disciplinary system results in continuous compliance at the SPG level, even though the supervision is discontinuous*

## Keywords

woman; worker; beauty; discipline; control



## I. Introduction

Throughout the history of human life, beauty is power. With beauty, one gets more convenience to win the competition of life. In the stories of old culture, not a few legends of beautiful women became a bone of contention for the princes. In the old stories, beauty is also intertwined with other typologies of power such as political power. Where the peak of plenary beauty is always described as coming from the pockets of women of royal descent/palace. With their power, the women of the palace have more privileges in creating the image of beauty and various techniques that are obtained from the discipline of breastfeeding through the very strict mechanisms and procedures typical of the palace and are then discoursed as the natural advantages of the princesses of the palace (Murlianti, 2021).

In the modern world, the creation of an image of beauty and the accompanying discipline technology is no longer the monopoly of the palace (Wolf, 2002). Modern industry commodifies knowledge, materials and old body care rituals, combined with knowledge of biology, health and clinical disciplines at once; into various kinds of beauty care commodities (Dewi et al., 2020), (Murlianti, 2014). Universal beauty image is deliberately created from cultural industry centers that discourse as if universal beauty exists, and its achievement can be achieved by consuming various beauty commodities (Murlianti, 2013), (Wolf, 2002). Morgan explains clearly how from the mid-1970s, the image of beauty created through girls' toys in the form of Barbie dolls, has driven the billion-dollar beauty business in America and spread to all corners of the world (Pearson & Mullins, 1999).

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Barbie has become a new beauty icon that was originally racist centered on the Caucasian Centris Race (Beautiful: white, tall, tall, slim, thick hair, slanted eyes), as criticism spreads against her, gradually absorbing any racial and skin color categories (Sandhy & Dr. Hapsari Dwiningtyas, 2016) (Murlianti, 2021). So perfect is the image of Barbie's beauty that many celebrities and ordinary people have fallen victim to the struggle to replicate her beauty in various ways. Starting from plastic surgery, medical cosmetics to decorative cosmetic sweep tricks. The life of Barbie's image in the real world is marked by the proliferation of industries that promise the complete beauty of Barbie's face and body, regardless of skin color.

More than 3 decades after the Barbie boom, women are increasingly being trapped in a universal beauty myth that is being bombarded from the pockets of the culture industry. The Myth of Beauty reveals how the beauty prison shackles women in the domestic and public spheres. In the public sphere, beauty is the main career selection tool to get the desired career positions. In the courtroom, women who are younger and more attractive in the patriarchal view have a greater chance of leniency.

Women's bodies are subject to patriarchal objectification in modern industry in the form of beauty standards (Goddard, 2005) (Anindya, 2016). This beauty standard is a reference for employers to select workers both at the time of recruitment and selection of career paths (Wolf, 2002)(Sandhy & Dr. Hapsari Dwiningtyas, 2016). Women are also faced with appearance selection, so that they can still exist (Rottenberg, 2017), (Wagner et al., 2021), (Odillia, 2020), (Odillia, 2020). There are many job positions that require excellent appearance as a prerequisite beyond the main skill requirements in recruitment and remain part of the career selection throughout the career.

Bank tellers, receptionists, flight attendants, shop assistants, etc. are people who are required to have a charming appearance, beyond the main skills required by their profession. There is no definite relationship between appearance and main skills, but excellent appearance is an important part that must be maintained to the utmost in order to be maintained in a job. This study highlights how the ideal of beauty repression works against female workers in a mobile phone shop in Samarinda. The analysis includes the mechanisms and procedures that are used in the Store to ensure the appearance of the female employees is in line with the shop owner's standards.

## **II. Review of Literature**

This research was conducted at TCC, a large HP shop in Samarinda. TCC has 10 branches in Samarinda. The head office is on Jl KH Ahmad Dahlan, several branches are pounding on the main streets of Samarnda such as Jl. Jakarta, Jl. D.I Panjaitan, Jl AW. Syahrani, Jl. M Yamin and several other places. TCC sells various brands of HP, accessories and other devices that are still related to HP. Some of the HP brands being sold include Samsung, Oppo, Realme, Iphone, Xiaomi, Advan and Infinix. The number of employees is 107. Administrative employees are 35 consisting of 20 males, 15 females). The number of HP sales promotion employees is 74, 47 women who are commonly referred to as SPG (Sales Promotion Girl) and 27 men. The average employee at TCC has a high school education, some people are final year students who just need to prepare thesis assignments. The salaries of the employees range from 2-3 million rupiah.

Marketing is a process of planning and execution, starting from the conception stage, pricing, promotion, to the distribution of goods, ideas and services, to make exchanges that satisfy the individual and his institutions (Dianto in Asmuni et al, 2020). According to Tjiptono in Marlizar (2020) marketing performance is a function that has the greatest

contact with the external environment, even though the company only has limited control over the company's environment. In the world of marketing, consumers are assets that must be maintained and maintained their existence in order to remain consistent with the products we produce (Romdonny and Rosmadi, 2019). Promotion strategy is a concept that is close to communication science. In the promotion, there are various forms of communication learned in communication science such as advertising, publicity, communication from mouth to mouth, personal sales, and direct marketing (Amin, 2019). Sales Promotion Girl (SPG) and Sales Promotion Boy (SBB) are professions within a company that are in charge of product promotion and sales. Although this work can be done by both male and female employees, most of these professions are in demand by women. The domination of women in this type of work makes these SPG/SPB workers more commonly referred to as SPGs. Both men and women are commonly referred to as SPGs.

There are 4 main tasks for SPGs at TCC, including promotion, sales, Product Display (merchandising) and stock rotation. Product promotion tasks can be carried out directly when consumers come to the store, it can also use SPG social media or the store's social media. In the store, SPG must be able to introduce HP products that are sold, feature variants, product advantages, prices to the specific benefits of using certain products. In addition to competition between brands, competition between HP stores is no less fierce. One of them is through competition for giving discounts and bonuses for HP accessories. SPGs who are at the forefront of product sales are required to win this competition and achieve sales targets in order to keep working

Salary standards are different for each HP brand, but all of them are below the UMK in Samarinda. The salary standards of each brand are different and all of them are calculated based on the achievement of the sales target set by each brand per month. If the number of sales does not meet the specified target number, then an SPG can only get a sales fee which is determined by the amount per unit.

### **III. Research Methods**

This study investigates how body discipline in the name of beauty is applied in a well-known HP shop in Samarinda. The purpose of this study is to explain how the disciplinary mechanisms, procedures, control systems, rewards and punishments applied by employers force female employees to dress according to the desired standard.

The unit of analysis for this research is the SPGs at the Central TCC on Jl KH Ahmad Dahlan. A total of 16 informants were interviewed consisting of 2 husband and wife owners of TCC, 2 trainers (male and female), 3 Sales Promotion Boy (SPB) and 6 Sales Promotion Girl (SPG).

During the observation period, most of the interviews were conducted in the store while recognizing the atmosphere, the design of the store room and how the SPGs were arranged in order of the quality of the SPG's appearance. The data on the standards of appearance and beauty applied in the store were collected from interviews with shop owners but were triangulated with information from SPGs and trainers. An in-depth interview about the experience of SPG's struggle in trying to meet the appearance standards set by the shop owner.

## IV. Results and Discussion

Michel Foucault's theoretical perspective on The Discipline Body is used to analyze how SPGs are led to look oriented towards ideal beauty standards (Bowdridge & Blenkinsop, 2011), (Luxon, 2019), (Sargiacomo, 2009). The term 'discipline' is used by Foucault to explain how Western society became famous for its discipline as it is today through a number of long and discontinuous mechanisms, procedures, selection, censorship and behavioral control.

According to Foucault, the Western disciplinary system underwent a total change from a mechanism of physical repression in the form of a terrible punishment system to a disciplinary mechanism through discourse control (Faucault, 1980), (Umanailo, 2019). A partial truth is discoursed as if it is a universal truth that must be embraced by the whole society (Foucault, 1980), (Book, 2019), (Deacon, 2002). Knowledge, according to Foucault, then becomes a type of power that mutually determines a truth. With discourse, a truth is used to lead society as desired by the truth that is built. Discourse becomes an effective behavior control system (Murlianti & Nanang, 2021), (Bowdridge & Blenkinsop, 2011).

A discourse is constantly bombarded, while at the same time other discourses are being marginalized by being cornered or not being mentioned at all; make this discourse appear as if it is the most correct (Basumatary, 2020), (Basumatary, 2020). In terms of beauty, there are actually many meanings of beauty, both external beauty and the concept of inner/inner beauty. But the pockets of the culture industry lead to the meaning of beauty as merely appearance which can be obtained by consuming the commodities of the culture industry.

Beauty commodities are discoursed in knowledge formations, transforming into knowledge models about body care to achieve ideal beauty. Today, today's ideal beauty has turned to natural beauty, as if this ideal beauty is no longer racist and not difficult to realize. Tall posture, fair skin and blonde hair no longer dominate the global beauty discourse, but the natural skin in question is a smooth, clean, glowing face without blemishes, with no less complicated demands for care and cosmetics.

Natural beauty which is now the mecca of Asian women is the Korean-style concept of natural beauty, where the achievement is no less complicated than the racist decorative beauty concept that comes from the Western beauty industry. The appearance of glowing skin, symmetrical eyebrows, natural fresh lips can be achieved by consuming various commodities ranging from cosmetics, medical cosmetics (skin care), beauty salons, to beauty clinics. The concept of beauty as above has now become a common sense of ideal appearance.

Using Foucault's disciplinary technology, the disciplinary analysis of SPG's performance at TCC includes:

- 1) Selection mechanism and beauty sensor for SPGs from recruitment and after work
- 2) Procedures followed by SPGs to be able to pass each stage of appearance selection in the workplace
- 3) Control system implemented by TCC to make SPG pasa inevitably follow the established procedures to ensure their appearance so that their position/status remains at TCC

#### 4.1 Sales Target Appearance and Achievement

There is no definite relationship between the beauty and excellent appearance of the SPGs with the achievement of the specified sales targets. All SPG interviewed stated that they experienced the same ups and downs in their efforts to maximize sales. Both SPG which are classified as beautiful or not beautiful, both have their own challenges in persuading so that visitors not only question the advantages or disadvantages of the product, but also actually buy it.

**Table 1.** Comparison of SPG Sales Target Achievements by Change.

No	Name (disguise)	Brand	Achievement
<i>Beautiful SPG</i>			
1	MCR	Oppo	138 unit
2	RSF	Vivo	126 unit
3	AI	Realme	117 unit
4	AB	Realme	103 unit
5	LA	Samsung	95 unit
6	MA	Samsung	87 unit
7	FAP	Vivo	82 unit
<i>Smart Talk SPG</i>			
1	MR	Vivo	124 unit
2	WW	Oppo	119 unit
3	D	Vivo	102 unit
4	NR	Samsung	97 unit
5	RMI	Oppo	80 unit
6	WE	Oppo	74 unit

Identify the number of sales to SPGs that outwardly look 'prettier' than the usual ones; indeed show different estimates of the number of sales, as shown in Table 2. Table. 2 shows that apart from beautiful appearance, SPGs who are good at speaking and have good persuasion techniques are also possible to achieve the specified sales target.

Sales data per December 2021, there is not a single SPG that cannot reach the minimum sales target set in all TCC branches. However, according to informants, there are two SPG criteria that have the fastest possibility of achieving sales targets. The first is the SPGs who are considered beautiful, have a perfect appearance or are considered more good looking in the eyes of their superiors or trainers. They will be installed at the front counter so they can greet prospective buyers who come first. The second is the SPGs who are good at talking and good at persuading potential buyers. SPGs with these criteria usually have customers, when they come to the store they will immediately look for the SPG in question wherever they are positioned by their superiors.

#### 4.2 SPG Appearance and Beauty Disciplinary Mechanisms and Procedures

SPG's appearance is not the only factor that determines sales, but the beautiful and attractive appearance of SPGs is a very important part of TCC's marketing strategy and image building. TCC carries out various disciplinary strategies to ensure that each SPG maintains appearance according to TCC standards. The SPG beauty standards applied at TCC are not much different from the current global beauty trend standards. Indeed, the shop does not explicitly state the specific physical criteria that must be met by SPGs, but each SPG undergoes a gradual process of appearance discipline to ensure that after working at TCC, the SPGs are in the process of polishing their appearance closer to the ideal beauty standards set by TCC.



1) Selection and Censorship of First Appearances in Recruitment

The step to get an SPG that has an above average appearance is through a selection system. Already in the recruitment process, this appearance selection has been implemented. Indeed, there are no clear physical criteria as prerequisites for SPG recruitment. In various SPG recruitment leaflets, the SPG requirements are listed as female/male, maximum age 25 years old, good looking, understands smartphones and has experience in marketing. There doesn't seem to be anything excessive with that criteria, but whoever applies will maximize their appearance so that they appear to be able to meet TCC's tastes.

2) Beauty Standards and Beauty Care 'Education'

Once someone is accepted as an SPG or SPB, a series of trainings will be passed guided by trainers. The training includes the introduction of knowledge about mobile, applications, accessories, marketing strategies, attitudes. The SPGs are burdened with far more complicated outward appearance standards than the SPBs. The SPBs are only burdened with looking neat and smelling good. However, SPG women, with the same task, are burdened with more complicated standards of appearance and beauty than SPB. The SPGs participated in mobile knowledge skills training and marketing techniques. They are also required to take 'beauty education' which teaches them how to dress and look according to TCC standards

**Table 2.** SPG Appearance Standard According to

Appearance Criteria	Length of work	
Lip	It doesn't have to be bright, you can still use Lip Balm	Must wear red lipstick
Cheek	Still can not use Blush On	Must use Blush On
Eyebrow	You can still have natural eyebrows and eyes	Mandatory Eyeliner, eyebrow engraving and eyeshadow
Footwear	Still free	High heels are required to be at least 5 cm, Saturday/Sunday you can wear plain black/white sports shoes
Hair	Cannot be painted	Cannot be painted
The one who wears hijab	Free of hijab colors and shapes	Black hijab is mandatory
Tops size	There are no special conditions, neat	Mandatory Press body, Friday batik

Source: TCC

The SPG's performance criteria were never explicitly stated in the new SPG recruitment requirements, nor were they mentioned during job interviews. However, SPGs have been accepted for work, these performance criteria are taught and become the 'performance norm' that applies to all SPGs. TCC is collaborating with a cosmetic brand called You to train SPGs to dress according to trending global beauty criteria. The informants who have worked for more than two years, have experienced at least 2-3 times facial make-up training. Initial training is experienced in the early days of entering the workforce. If 'You' cosmetics hold beauty events in Samarinda, these SPGs are also invited to update the latest make-up method. This mechanism is continuously repeated to ensure the SPGs dress up and look in accordance with the latest daily make-up trends.

### 3) Appearance Control System

The appearance control system is enforced through a structuring and reprimand mechanism. The positioning of the SPG is arranged according to the standard of the ideal appearance that has been taught. SPG which is considered the most attractive, both facial make-up, gesture and proportional posture, will be placed at the front of the shop. This position is very advantageous because it makes it easier for SPG to greet incoming buyers, persuading them by introducing products and persuading them to buy. Being in a front position increases the chances of achieving the minimum sales target more easily. This position is the dream position of all SPGs. On the other hand, positioning at the back becomes a kind of 'punishment' for those who do not comply with their appearance. Inherent control over appearance runs every day through the eyes of the trainers and shop owners. If they are deemed unattractive or careless in maintaining their appearance, SPG will receive a warning from the trainer. Being placed in the back position and getting a warning from the trainer is an unpleasant punishment and makes the chances of achieving the minimum sales target getting smaller. Getting a warning from the trainer about appearance is also a kind of disgrace that SPG avoids, because if this position is continuously obtained and the sales target is not achieved, then he will get a summons from the TCC. The mechanism for structuring positions, supervision, warnings and summons is a control tool used to ensure that SPGs dress according to TCC standards.

### 4) Compliance Effect

There is no explicit written rule that says not to allow SPGs to dress not according to the 'appearance norms' set by the TCC. A warning was only given to one or two SPGs; however, the mechanism for structuring positions, reprimands and warning letters is effective in producing an attitude of obedience to the SPGs. This control system which is actually carried out on a regular basis produces a continuous compliance effect at the level of the SPGs. They inevitably make various efforts so that their appearance is always in accordance with the standards of 'TCC appearance norms' so that at least they don't get a reprimand from the trainer. Some of the effects of SPG's compliance are reflected in several forms of attitude that appear to be voluntary and natural, but in fact the effects of the running of the mechanisms and procedures that have been implemented very neatly by the TCC. Some of the compliance effects that arise from SPGs include:

- Informants inevitably set aside their salaries to buy the necessary cosmetics. The informants stated that they could not help but set aside their salaries to buy skin care and cosmetic products in order to maintain this appearance. Some of the products that are routinely purchased are whitening body lotion, cosmetic packages, face masks, diet drugs, to salon treatments if finances allow. The need for cosmetics, skin care and diet drugs cut approximately 30% of their salaries.

Sharing tips on appearance problems. Beauty problems, especially obesity, makeup techniques, overcoming acne, dull skin, making eyebrows symmetrical, and so on; become a serious chat fellow SPG. The SPGs share concerns over appearance issues as a common serious problem, beyond knowledge of peddled cell phones. Mutual solidarity in matters of appearance appears naturally as an effect of adherence to appearance norms that are taught in a structured way through mechanisms and procedures that are actually discontinuous.

## V. Conclusion

The appearance of the SPGs is a dominant factor to achieve success in maintaining their position and status as workers. The TCC creates standard criteria that are used as 'beauty-appearance norms' that SPGs must adhere to. Discipline of appearance norms is carried out by selection/censorship mechanisms, teaching, supervision and reprimand. The disciplinary mechanism operates according to the principle of 'discontinuous supervision to establish continuous compliance'. Appearance and beauty education only takes place once or twice, but the effect of obedience lasts forever through the operation of the positioning control system and reprimands for those who are considered non-compliant. This non-repressive disciplinary system produces a continuous compliance effect at the level of the SPGs. The SPGs seem to be voluntarily doing everything they can to ensure they can always comply with the standards of appearance-beauty norms set by the TCC.

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