



## The Meaning of Beauty in Phenomonological Perspective Among Students of Universitas Negeri Makassar

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### ABSTRACT

*This article reviews how students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Makassar State University, class of 2021 interpret the concept of beauty. This study arises because the author wants to understand how the meaning of beauty among students, considering that the author's findings from initial observations indicate variations in perception in understanding the concept of beauty. This difference tends to be related to appearance, so students try to look attractive by using makeup when going to campus. This shows that the concept of beauty has become a necessity that seeks social recognition, appreciation, and self-achievement among students. This research uses Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological theory in a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological type of study. The results showed that each student has a different perception of beauty in their appearance when on campus. They tend to focus more on objective aspects of understanding beauty, such as white skin, attractive appearance, face, attitude, and behavior, rather than subjective aspects related to the heart, soul, and positive thinking. Students who want to look beautiful tend to assume that by putting on makeup and following beauty trends, they will be more accepted in their social environment.*

**Keywords:** Beautiful Meaning, Phenomonology, Student

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Appearance is the main focus for various groups, especially women. Every woman always hopes to have an ideal appearance because beauty is considered as one of the very significant aspects, not only in terms of dress, but also in skin, face, and body care that has become a top priority in efforts to beautify the appearance (Ulva et al., 2021).

The meaning of beauty has now undergone a transformation into a social construction that no longer traditionally defines beauty, but has become a need that seeks social recognition, appreciation, and self-achievement. (Djaya, 2020). This understanding is influenced by the strong influence of the media in shaping views on beauty. In addition, there is also a global view that portrays beauty as white skin, tall, and straight hair. These views can influence people's behavior, including how a person values themselves and others.

This understanding has a significant impact on students who are pursuing higher education. Many female students feel compelled to improve their appearance, especially those who focus too strongly on the beauty aspect, until in the end they become too obsessed with attractive appearance and forget that beauty is not only about external

appearance, but also includes inner beauty or beauty from within (Zahid, 2018).

Beauty from within is reflected through healthy physical condition and good behavior (Anshori, 2018). While beauty from the outside can be enhanced by physical appearance and the use of appropriate cosmetic products. Individuals can adapt to their environment and always try to adapt to changing times (Nindito, 2013). This also applies to female students who want to be appreciated and feel recognized if they keep up with the times and follow trends, such as applying thicker makeup, such as powder, under-eye blush, eyeliner, mascara, eyebrow styling, and lipstick when going to campus.

In this context, the study focused more on students who used makeup when going to campus. A student basically has the responsibility to pursue as much knowledge as possible, develop emotional independence, hone self-concept, improve intellectual skills, as well as be able to participate in social responsibility and establish good relationships with group mates (Casmini, 2016). These students are influenced by emotional motives such as things of a personal or subjective nature, such as status, self-esteem, feelings of love, and similar factors.

Students who are influenced by emotional motives are less likely to consider whether the items they buy fit their personal character, meet their needs, match their financial capabilities, or meet the quality standards they expect (Nurani & Novianti, 2021; Nurudin, 2007). This highlights the tendency of students to view beauty from an objective perspective or from the outside as a top priority, without considering the importance of beauty from a subjective perspective or from within (Ds, 2018).

The problems described earlier are analyzed using the Phenomenological Theory developed by Alfred Schutz. Schutz explains that meaning is related to the way actors, in this context students, determine what is considered important in their social life. Meaning arises as a result of previous experiences and also through interaction with other individuals in the social environment (Sari et al., 2017).

In other words, human actions always have meaning. The meaning is divided into two components, namely subjective meaning and objective meaning. This indicates that the current concept of beauty has been built by the influence of society and the surrounding environment, so beauty tends to be more measured from an objective perspective.

## **2. METHOD**

This research applies a qualitative approach with a phenomenological type of study. The process of selecting research informants is carried out deliberately, during which the researcher carefully determines the sample based on certain relevant characteristics. In this purposive sampling method, researchers take samples that meet specific criteria that have been set, involving 20 people as research informants. Data collection is carried out through observation techniques, interviews, and document research. To ensure the reliability of the data obtained, this study applies the process of data triangulation. Data triangulation is done by asking the same questions to different informants. Similar answers from various informants are considered valid if they correspond to the results of observations, study documents found by researchers, as well as using other relevant methods. Once data collection is complete, it is analyzed using data analysis techniques developed by Milles and Huberman. The data analysis steps include data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification stages. During the entire process of data analysis, these activities are carried out continuously at each stage of the research until the research is completed.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Beauty and women are two things that are always together, like two sides of an inseparable coin. Therefore, it is not surprising that most women always try to look attractive. Although every woman naturally has an innate beauty, many of them go to great lengths to achieve that beauty, and this is often done by various methods, similar to college students who also try to look attractive using cosmetics.

Research findings reveal that there are various perceptions about the concept of beauty among students when they appear on campus. College students tend to base their understanding of beauty on objective elements rather than subjective views. This concept of beauty can be categorized into two groups, namely the Objective Concept of Beauty and the Subjective Concept of Beauty, as described below:

#### 3.1 Objective Concept

##### 1. White-Skinned

A strong desire to achieve a good appearance can influence the behavior and actions of female students who seek to lighten their skin tone through the use of whitening products, as many others do. It aims to increase self-confidence and comfort when interacting with the social environment, especially in the context of the campus environment.

When viewed from the perspective of the theory introduced by Alfred Schutz, he emphasized that phenomenology focuses on the study of society based on the meaning given by the members of society (O. Pratiwi, 2020). This meaning becomes a source of knowledge that allows individuals to understand the significance of the words and actions of others, as if they were realities lived by the individual and shape and guide their behavior in interacting with others in their environment. This can be found through the testimony of informants who are uniform in their views, namely that the concept of beauty is not an individual judgment, but rather determined by society or those around it (Nurhadi et al., 2023). There is an understanding in society that beauty is related to fair skin, which then becomes the standard for these individuals.

##### 2. Good Looking

Appearance plays an important role in determining whether a person is considered beautiful or not. It involves the choice of clothes used, fashionable accessories, and other elements that support an attractive appearance. In their view, appearance becomes the main indicator in judging whether a person is considered beautiful (Wijaya & Iman, 2023). Each element used in an individual's appearance becomes an important factor to enhance their beauty appeal. In addition, the reactions and views of others also have a significant impact on an individual's perception of their beauty.

In the context of Alfred Schutz's theory, which emphasizes a phenomenological approach that focuses on the meanings given by members of society, appearances become part of the knowledge that individuals acquire to understand the meaning of the words and actions of others (Yanti & Bajari, 2020). In this study, it was seen that college students also referred to their peers' reactions and views to what they wore while on campus.

##### 3. Face

Judgments of a person's beauty by others are often based on facial appearance. When a woman feels there is a flaw in her face, they use makeup to improve the look. The use of makeup makes women look more attractive and beautiful in the eyes of society, also increases their self-confidence.

In the context of Alfred Schutz's theory, this concept of "knowledge stock" creates an assumption that is taken for granted without question (Purwandari & Nugroho,

2021). In this study, students used trends that were prevailing at the time without delving further, the most important thing for them was to keep up with the latest fashion developments. For example, when the trend in the use of blush that is usually placed on the cheeks suddenly shifts under the eyes by using lipstick, college students dutifully follow this trend, the most important thing for them is to stay current and be considered beautiful.

#### 4. Attitudes and Behaviors

Beauty is not only judged based on attractive physical appearance, but also judged through one's behavior and attitude when interacting with people around him. In their view, college students who appear simple without makeup usually show a good level of speech and are gentle, which is reflected in the way they interact.

### 3.2 Subjective Concept

#### 1. Soul and heart

In everyday life, which includes individual experiences, social interactions, and relationships with others, ethics or moral behavior plays an important role. A woman's beauty, in their view, can not only be identified through their physical appearance (outer beauty), but also through their character and morality (inner beauty).

According to the Phenomenological theoretical framework of Alfred Schutz, individuals have knowledge consisting of all the information, beliefs, and rules that they learn from personal experience and available knowledge (Ulva et al., 2021). This is similar to the view of college students who understand that beauty depends not only on physical appearance, but also on their nature and conscience. They believe that this inner quality will be reflected in the way they interact with the outside world, thus creating an aura of beauty that is deeper and radiates through their outer beauty.

#### 2. Positive thinking

Always maintaining a positive mind also affects the way a person presents himself in a social environment. Individuals who often perceive positive thoughts will radiate confidence and acceptance of themselves as they are. For them, the concept of beauty is not only related to physical appearance alone, but also depends heavily on mental aspects, such as having a positive mindset, thinking well, and positioning themselves with positive ideas (R. Z. B. Pratiwi, 2018). This is able to create a natural aura of beauty, without having to rely on thick makeup while on campus.

In the context of Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological theory, each individual carries a number of prejudices that affect the way they perceive the world around them. This is in line with the views of students who illustrate the importance of having positive thoughts about themselves and their lives. Thus, it has an impact on how they perceive themselves, namely by believing that they are attractive and beautiful.

Talking about a woman means talking about her beauty aspect. Therefore, the urge to remain attractive will always accompany women, no matter where they are, in any situation, or at any age. Beauty is considered a commodity that never runs out to be explored (Nurani & Novianti, 2021). Many people realize that there are great advantages in continuing to explore the potential of beauty, as outlined below:

##### a. Attracting Men

In addition to attracting men, the results of the study revealed that in certain environments, especially among men, women who are considered beautiful are more valued. This view suggests that women who are able to attract men will feel more appreciated in social circles compared to women who are not considered beautiful. It is undeniable that appreciation from society and the environment is one of the sources of happiness desired by many women, because this recognition gives the feeling that their

existence is recognized and valued.

b. More Confidence

Most women who feel less confident about themselves tend to exhibit passive social behavior. They often feel dissatisfied with appearance and feel deprived.

c. Received Praise

Based on the results of careful interviews in the field, researchers found that in addition to receiving praise, the student also attracted attention.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Appearance is a major concern for various circles, especially women. Every woman has the drive to achieve the ideal appearance, because beauty becomes a very significant factor. Beauty is not only related to how to dress, but also with the condition of the skin of the face and body which is a top priority in appearance. Today, the meaning of beauty is the result of a social construct that not only examines beauty simply, but also demands for social recognition, appreciation, and self-achievement.

The views of some people who consider beauty related to white skin color are strongly influenced by the role of the media in shaping the concept of beauty. In addition, there is a global view that portrays beauty as white skin, height, and straight hair. This view of the concept of beauty can influence people's behavior, including the way individuals value themselves and value others.

Based on the findings of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that there are diverse views on beauty among students when they look on campus. Students are more likely to interpret beauty objectively, especially in terms of white skin, attractive appearance, and attractive face. On the other hand, subjective views of beauty, which are related to the soul, heart, and positive thinking, receive less attention. Students who strive to look beautiful argue that by putting on makeup and following trends, they will be more accepted in social circles.

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