

## A SOCIAL CAMPAIGN STRATEGY TO OPPOSE BODY SHAMING

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**ABSTRACT.** Attacking persons based on their physique is often called body shaming. Body shaming occurs not only in the real world, but also in cyberspace, especially as the development of the media can have a negative impact on one's thinking. On the other hand there are efforts made to counter body shaming, through the campaign on loving oneself, or often called *self love*. This study aims to find out how the *Self Love Warrior* (SLW) organization conducts a campaign through Instagram @selflovewarrior.id so that it can encourage the community, especially Indonesian women, to stand up against body shaming, and help Indonesian women to love themselves more (self love). This study used a qualitative approach and case study research method. The theory used in this study was the social construction theory. Primary data were sourced from interviews, where researcher conducted interviews with three main informants, namely the proprietor, the head of design, and head of content of SLW. Based on interview results, the researcher found that self love and body shaming are indeed related, and wise use of social media can benefit every user. The SLW organization has been successful in carrying out each of its campaigns, as can be seen from the audience 's response to each SLW post.

**KEYWORDS:** Social campaign, body shaming

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, appearance is an important assessment factor of human beings, whereas one of the standards for assessing appearance is an ideal body shape. The ideal body shape refers to characteristics such as a flat tummy, large size of certain body parts, and long legs (Putri, 2015). Appearance has an influence on Indonesian women's beauty standards. Between July and September 2019, ZAP (Zulu Alpha Papa) Beauty Clinic conducted a beauty survey of 356,420 women, whose results showed that 45.4% of Indonesian women had used skin care products before the age of 19 (Febriyani, 2020).

In order to become close to the ideal, many women choose the shortcut, namely by doing plastic surgery. For some women in Indonesia, plastic surgery is no longer considered a taboo, but it has become a common procedure in order to achieve beauty standards according to each individual. Moreover, in Indonesia plastic surgery has become increasingly common since the case of Ratna Sarumpaet, an Indonesian stage artist who has gone under the knife four times since the age of 64 (Putri, 2019). This is one evidence of the importance of paying attention to appearance.

However, plastic surgery is not universally accepted among Indonesians. Even influencers such as Dara Arafah receive much flak (Anggraini, 2020). For Dara, plastic surgery is the right decision to make her beautiful; an opinion that is not shared by netizens, who think that plastic surgery is an unnatural effort to make oneself beautiful.

Internet users use social media intensely in assessing the good and bad of other people. In 2020, based on data from HootSuite, there were 160 million active social media users in Indonesia, whereas one of the social media platforms with the highest use was Instagram (Hootsuite, 2020).

Social media, especially Instagram, is often used to do business, or commonly referred to as online business, by social media celebrities or commonly referred to as *influencers*. As an influencer, one must have many followers and often do promotions on their Instagram account, to affect their followers (Ma'ruf, 2020).

One of the negative impacts of using social media is having one's appearance attacked. The act of attacking someone based on body shape is called *body shaming* (Handayani, 2020). In 2018 the National Police Headquarters revealed that there were 966 cases of body shaming in Indonesia, of which 374 cases were resolved (Santoso, 2018). In 2020, based on the ZAP Beauty Index, 62.2% of Indonesian women claimed to have experienced body shaming (Mutiah, 2020). Based on these figures, it can be seen that there is much body shaming in Indonesia.

Body shaming, if continued, can damage a person's self-image, especially women. Indonesia has succeeded in enacting a law related to body shaming: body shaming in the realm of social media falls under Law Number 11 of 2008 regarding Information and Electronic Transactions or known as the ITE Law, which was amended through Law Number 19 of 2016 (Santoso, 2018). The existence of this law informs the public that body shaming behavior is a violation of the rules.

Another effort made to counter body shaming is by conducting a campaign to love oneself or commonly called *self love*. Meira Anastasia, the author of *Imperfect*, said that “a person can be comfortable with her environment starting from herself. No matter how much support from people around her, she will not be able if she doesn't start it herself” (Anastasia, 2018, p. 45). The existence of the self-love movement can provide benefits to oneself such as being easy to live a healthy lifestyle, less risk of stress, and others (Halodoc, 2019). The self love movement is mostly done through social media, and one of the most widely used media is Instagram.

This study tries to describe and analyze @selflovewarrior.id's strategy in conducting the self love campaign as an effort to counter body shaming views on Indonesian women.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Body shaming is an act of commenting on any aspect of a person's body, due to not conforming to the idealized form of the body. Body shaming is often experienced by women, whereas the ideal body is defined differently depending on the place and culture. Several survivors of body shaming dared to take action directly or through social media. Michael and Azeharie (2020) found that the forms of resistance of body shaming survivors through Instagram take two forms, namely open resistance and closed resistance, which are adapted to the characteristics of body shaming survivors. Open resistance is characterized by open interaction between one group and another, while closed resistance is characterized by closed or indirect interactions between groups.

Through their discussion of the meaning of body shaming behavior in social media, Febrianti and Fitria (2020) found that Instagram is the social media that was most often used by perpetrators of body shaming to carry out their actions. This is done by giving negative comments about someone's physical appearance. Through disclosing the meaning and attitudes of victims of body shaming on social media, Febrianti and Fitria (2020) outlined three aspects, namely: a) awareness and experience of victims; b) attitude of victims; and c) victims' two-way interaction with her followers. The victim's interpretation of body shaming reflects body positivity and self love in the content uploaded to her personal Instagram.

Communication is a most important part in human life, and in communicating, a strategy is needed so that the message to be conveyed can be easily understood. According to Effendy,

communication strategy is an effective message design so that it is easily understood by the communicant, and could influence attitude or a person's behavior (Effendy, 2011). Thus, a communication strategy leads to the goals to be achieved by the communicator.

Fundamentally the activities carried out by Self Love Warrior through their Instagram @selflovestruggle.id is part of a social campaign. According to Rogers and Storey, a campaign is “a preplanned set of communication activities designed by change agents to achieve certain changes in receiver behavior in a specified time period” (Rogers and Storey, 1973, p. 819). This shows that a campaign could cause effects to the public at a certain time.

Campaigns can be carried out for a variety of purposes. This study focuses on the social campaign related to activities carried out by Self Love Warrior. Basically, the purpose of conducting a social campaign is to raise public awareness of the social problems that are currently happening (Ramlan, 2016, p. 19). It can be thus concluded that social campaigns can be done by knowing the existing problems first, and must be designed properly.

Internet users (netizens) can have an influence on other netizens. The influence of using social media often “increases trust to others, changes one's attitude, adds world insight or worldview, emerges social organizations, increases self-perception to the perceptions of others, and so on” (Damastuti, 2011, p. 218).

Instagram is a social media platform that is widely used in Indonesia. According to Napoleon Cat, in the January to May 2020 period, Instagram has 69.2 million users in Indonesia, which means that almost 50% of social media users use Instagram (Iman, 2020). Based on this percentage, it shows that Instagram is one of the social media platforms that is most widely used in Indonesia.

Instagram can be used by multiple age groups, both children and adults. It can be even used as a medium of learning and business (Sendari, 2019). This is because Instagram has various features, the first of which is to post photos or videos, either only for close friends, or to the general public. Other interesting features that Instagram offers are filters, IGTV, and Instagram Stories (Sendari, 2019). The many interesting features that Instagram has makes it dear to the hearts of Instagram users.

Each Instagram user can have a different impact. For example, Instagram posts can have an impact on individuals. As sharing photos and videos is the main feature of Instagram, other Instagram users can view, like, and comment on every posted upload on Instagram (Sendari, 2019). Another impact of using Instagram is that each individual can widen their insight and be influenced by posts, including the standard of physical appearance, especially for women.

Instagram is a social media where users can compare themselves with their followers through posted photos. Sakinah (2018) found that body image was related to body proportions, skin color, facial skin condition, tooth shape and hair, so that when a person's body does not meet social standards, people will tend to experience body shaming through name calling (such as calling one ‘fat like Mrs. Puff’, ‘skinny as a washboard’ etc.), and actions (i.e. cynicism, breaking up, finding work difficult, etc.). Body shaming has an impact on a person's self-confidence and insecurities, so they will try to do anything to meet social expectations, including gaining/losing weight, self acceptance, thinking positively, and staying away from people who body shames. A person's physical appearance can be controlled socially depending on one's self-acceptance (Sakinah, 2018).

Attacking someone based on physical characteristics is often called body shaming. Basically, body shaming includes verbal bullying (Kumparan, 2019). It means an action using negative words without involving physical contact, but if done continuously can result in psychological pressure (Kumparan, 2019). Of course the same is true with body shaming, which attacks someone based on physical form without using physical action.

Attacking someone, even without resorting to physical action, can have dire consequences. Victims who experience body shaming often lack confidence, become angry with themselves and even attempt suicide because of the pressure experienced by the victim (Kompas, 2020). It is also known that there are still many acts of body shaming in Indonesia.

Body shaming does not only occur in the real world but also in cyberspace. Moreover the development of the media can have a negative impact on one's thinking. A Chief of Operations of the Markplus Institute in Jakarta said that social media can influence body shaming, because in social media there are beauty influencers who can shape a person's psychological condition, especially among the young people (Mutiah, 2020). It can be thus concluded that the existence of social media can expand the act of body shaming.

Loving oneself, or what is called self love, is one of the efforts to counter body shaming. According to Monica, a psychologist from Personal Growth, self love is a condition where one can accept oneself as she is (Fatmawati, 2019). By understanding self love, someone will learn to judge that she is valuable.

Loving oneself is one of the most important things for every individual to do. By loving oneself, a person will open her eyes and have a positive mindset (Audreylla, 2010). 2019). However, it is not easy to love oneself, particularly in an era where the media is especially influential to one's thoughts. However, the use of media does not only affects one's thoughts in a negative direction, but also positively.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to investigate how @selflovewarrior.id can provide an overview and encouragement through a self love campaign to the public, especially Indonesian women, against body shaming behavior through Instagram media. Qualitative research, according to Strauss and Corbin, is a study whose results are not obtained through calculation or statistical procedures (Strauss and Corbin, 2017). It can be stated that qualitative research does not get the results through measurement, but describes a certain phenomenon.

The data collection process was carried out by in-depth interviews to obtain primary data, and collecting secondary data. Then the data collected will undergo a coding process to classify the data and categorized to result in research findings.\

### **4. RESEARCH RESULTS**

The results of this study are presented in the form of a coding table, where the data are obtained from the results of interviews of informants. The informants of this research include Michelle Teh as the founder of Self Love Warrior (SLW), Putri Ardhia as the head of content of SLW, and Rika Yuri as the head of design of SLW. To confirm the findings, the researcher also interviewed an additional informant, Terendienta Pinem, a psychologist at Eklesia Psychologist (@psikolog.eklesia)

It was found that SLW most often distributed content on their Instagram account. Instagram is selected as the main media by SLW as it is one media that is used by many in the community, especially teenagers, so it leads SLW to the target audience. In addition, Instagram has various features that can help SLW to interact with followers or other Instagram users (netizens).

Research findings showed that SLW has a procedure for posting a video or photo on its Instagram account, @selflovewarrior.id. Usually SLW holds a meeting, which is led by Putri as the head of content, to determine what content to be discussed, leading to one theme, and then divided into several posts, all of which refers to the main issue. After determining the theme to be discussed,

the content division will create the content, usually in the form of Google Docs. After the content is created, it is submitted to the design division. Of course, after the design is finished, a meeting between the heads of divisions is held to provide input before posting the photo or video. When everything is finished and there are no revisions, the next step is to determine what caption will be written on the post. After the caption is set, the social media division posts the content on SLW's Instagram.

The researcher found that in the process of determining content, SLW usually looks for ideas from popular topics that are currently being discussed in Indonesia. The content creation is led by Putri as the head of content, but content ideas or themes do not have to begin from the content division alone. Each SLW member can also express ideas for content. After the theme is determined, the content division will hold a meeting with other members, where each member can provide input on the topics discussed.

The content will be well-crafted and valuable that helps the audience/followers better understand the topic being discussed. An example is based on an image that discusses the Korean drama “It's okay to not be okay” (figure 1) in SLW's Instagram post.



Figure 1 “it's okay to not be okay”  
Source: Instagram @selflovewarrior.id, 2020

The process of making the captions for Instagram posts for SLW is usually determined by Michelle as the founder of SLW, or can also be assisted by other divisions, including the content division, but the main responsibility is borne by the social media division. Of course, every SLW post caption is adjusted to what content is being discussed.

Based on the researcher's observation of SLW's Instagram posts, it was found that SLW strives to follow major global events, for example Halloween and other holidays. The posts can attract netizens because the content provided is not flat, but has color variations.

Another finding of the researcher is that Instagram features make it easier for SLW to interact with followers; starting from the caption box, DM stories, commenting on SLW's Instagram posts, and others. SLW manages to build a relationship with the audience, because viewers often comment on posts and give likes on Instagram @selflovewarrior.id. In addition to posts, SLW interacts with its audience with the Story feature on Instagram.

The Self Love Warrior (SLW) organization has conducted several campaigns, of which the most recent one had the theme “Glow as We Grow”. In the “Glow as We Grow” campaign, each participant is invited to remember embarrassing memories, and at the same time participants tell about the progress that the participants have made. According to SLW in its interview, it has never conducted a specific campaign against body shaming, however it was found to have posted photos, stories, and webinars related to body shaming. The last campaign carried out by SLW contains elements that discussed body shaming, where contestants told of problems about their physique.

Body shaming leads to negative behavior, because body shaming is an action that can harm others. Harming others means someone demeaning others based on a person's physical form, either

skin color or others. In an interview conducted by the researcher with Ms. Terendienta, she said that the presence of the media makes body shaming worse, because it makes easier to comment on other people. In fact, the ideal beauty standard does not exist because every human being has a different appearance.

Self love or loving oneself has a relationship with body shaming. Self love is a condition of a person being able to accept herself as she is, while body shaming is the existence of a standard of beauty in a person. Therefore, the relationship between self love and body shaming is if someone has self love, body shaming will not disturb the person, because she can accept herself as she is, and when one strengthens self love, the chain of body shaming can be broken.

## **1. Communication Strategies of Self Love Warrior Organization**

Self Love Warrior (SLW) is an organization that focuses on increasing public awareness to love oneself, or *self love*. SLW was initially established by Michelle Teh, and has grown into a fairly large team, all of which are volunteers from various backgrounds. These volunteers, or often referred to as members, are grouped into several divisions, so that each has her part in SLW. Although each member is a member of a particular division, they can still take part in the work of other divisions. The divisions in SLW are Content, Design, Social Media, Projects, and Partnership. With the different divisions, SLW tries to spread self love with various activities, so that it can attract the attention of the audience or followers.

The activities carried out by SLW can interest the audience, if they are well communicated through SLW's Instagram. Harold Lasswell (1948) suggested that the best way to define communication is to answer the question "*Who says What, in Which channel, to Whom, with What effect?*" (Mulyana, 2016, p. 69). This means that in communicating, SLW must know who its audience is, what they want to convey to the audience, through what channel to talk with the audience, and what effects are expected. Arifin provided several techniques that can be used to develop communication strategies (1984, pp. 72-78), namely:

1. *Getting to know the audience.* SLW must know the audience first, so that later communication can run smoothly. SLW has a target audience of young people aged 18 to 24 years, so SLW uses Instagram as a medium to disseminate its content.
2. *Composing the message.* SLW always prepares the content carefully, whereas all members hold meetings before a content is distributed, even though there is a specific Content division. Messages are always delivered via Instagram stories, Instagram posts, IGTV, or webinars.
3. *Determining the method.* SLW often uses the redundancy method, in which one post is divided into three parts, so that it can attract the attention of the audience and the audience can understand the message conveyed by SLW. The method of communication can also be seen based on the content, usually SLW uses several educative, informant and persuasive methods for the form of content.

## **2. Self Love Warrior Social Media Use**

Self Love Warrior uses Instagram as a medium for disseminating content. It also has a YouTube channel to post videos from webinars, which SLW often does. As currently social media is the media format that is consumed the most by the public, the influence of using social media often "adds trust to others, changes one's attitude, adds world insight or worldview, emerges social organizations, adds self-perception to the perception of others, and others" (Darmastuti, 2011, p. 218). Therefore, SLW uses Instagram to add insight related to self love, increase audience trust to the organization, influence the audience so that the audience loves themselves and others.

Loving oneself is not an easy thing to do, especially now that social media can also become a medium through which to attack someone. Terendienta Pinem, a psychologist at Eklesia (@psikolog.eklesia) said that "using social media requires an *attention diet*, which means choosing

what media one wants to consume and what media one doesn't want to consume". Therefore, SLW was created as an organization that can help people love themselves as they are.

SLW uses a variety of interesting methods to spread self love to the audience. Instagram has a variety of interesting features such as filters, IGTV, Instagram Stories, and others (Sendari, 2019), which SLW uses in managing the @selflovewarrior.id account. Filters on Instagram are usually used by SLW in creating stories on Instagram so that stories have attractive colors and not just writing. IGTV on Instagram is usually used by SLW to share stories in the form of videos with a duration of more than one minute, so that the audience can see the speaker in conveying a message to the audience.

Instagram stories are often used by SLW in establishing relationships with the audience, because in stories, users can use comment boxes, question boxes, and others so that there is a two-way interaction between SLW and the audience. Posts on SLW's Instagram can be in the form of photos or videos, usually with beautiful shapes and attractive colors so that the photos don't look flat. Apart from that, usually SLW's Instagram posts can also take the form of invitations to take part in webinars held by SLW, or collaborations between SLW and other organizations, so that the audience can meet face to face with SLW through the media. The delivery of such interesting content with various methods can attract the attention of the audience and does not bore them easily. Thanks to excellent teamwork, @selflovewarrior.id now has 35,100 followers.

### **3. Self Love Warrior Social Campaigns**

Activities carried out by Self Love Warrior through Instagram can be called social campaigns. Social campaigns are basically intended to raise public awareness of the social problems that are happening (Ramlan, 2016). SLW is trying to increase public awareness of the importance of self love so that it can reduce social problems that are currently happening, such as the act of body shaming which is the topic of this research.

A good social campaign has the appropriate strategy so that the message conveyed to the public can be delivered. Several important elements in a campaign communication (Venus, 2004, p. 22) implemented by SLW are as follows:

1. *The intended effect*, namely SLW hopes that the public becomes more aware of the importance of self love.
2. *Competing communication*, namely SLW tries to attract the attention of the audience so that the audience still pays attention and believes in SLW. Therefore, SLW tries to carry out two-way communication with the audience, including listening to or receiving stories from the audience, as well as receiving suggestions from the audience.
3. *The communication objective*, SLW sets goals for a fairly long period of time. Therefore, SLW often holds meetings with members to discuss what activities will be carried out in the future and decide what themes to discuss, referring to the current topics in Indonesia.
4. *Target population and the receiving group*, the target population of SLW is all Indonesians. The recipient group refers to young Indonesians aged 18 to 20 years.
5. *The channel*, the channel that will be used to convey SLW messages mostly uses Instagram, besides using YouTube or webinar activities.
6. *The message*, the messages conveyed by SLW are varied, because they depend to the topic being discussed. Basically, SLW always directs people to love themselves (self love), other than that it discusses topics related to self love such as opposing body shaming, reducing anxiety, and others.

After understanding the elements in the campaign, the right steps are needed to carry out campaign planning systematically. As stated by Gregory, there are ten stages in planning a campaign (Venus, 2004, p. 22), namely:

1. Situation analysis, nowadays appearance becomes important so that often someone feels less confident. Michelle said that self-love is not an easy thing, to love oneself requires a struggle until one finally loves oneself like a warrior.
2. Setting goals, SLW hopes that with the organization's presence on Instagram, people can realize how important it is to love themselves. It was seen by the researcher that SLW was successful in setting its goals, because many people gave positive responses on SLW's Instagram both through comments on SLW's posts and SLW's Instagram stories.
3. Recognizing the public, which is divided into four types, namely; the group that is not interested in the topics of "self love" and "body shaming"; the group that does not realize that they lack self-love (insecure) and experience body shaming; the group that realizes that they lack self-love (insecure) and experience body shaming; and the group that realizes that they lack self-love (insecure) and experience body shaming, and take action to learn to love themselves.
4. Determining the message, SLW sets the main message in each of its campaigns on Instagram, namely learning to love oneself, even though it is not an easy thing but every audience can learn gradually. Self love is a broad thing, because of that SLW often discuss topics around self love which are then linked to related topics, such as body shaming and anxiety.
5. The strategy, one way that SLW does to achieve its goals on Instagram @selflovewarrior.id is to post photos or videos, interact with the audience through Instagram stories, conduct webinars, conduct events and campaigns on Instagram.
6. Tactics, the method used by SLW to carry out the strategy by looking for topics that are currently being discussed in Indonesia so that they attract the attention of the audience.
7. Time scale, SLW does not set a definite time period each time it conducts a campaign. Generally SLW posts photos or videos in the afternoon into the evening.
8. Resources, all SLW members are volunteers which means all members are not given monetary compensation, but are voluntary members who cooperate with one another.
9. Evaluation, SLW often conduct campaigns with various methods. Until now, the campaigns carried out by SLW are increasing and having greater impact, this can be seen from the increase in insight from SLW and followers of the Instagram account @selflovewarrior.id.
10. Review, after conducting a campaign, all SLW members always evaluate to find things that need to be improved next.

#### **4. Social Construction Theory**

The social construction theory is used as the basis for this research. The relationship between this research topic and the social construction theory is in the focus of the theory, namely "to the meaning and interpretation that is contributed in the community network, which is then implied in the construction of organizational life such as norms and rules" (Karman, 2015, p. 17). Currently, many people feel insecure or not confident, this is due to a lack of sense of self love. Moreover, the current use of media is growing so rapidly that various kinds of advertisements appear that can attract public attention, including body shaming. Dr. Verury stated that the act of attacking someone based on body shape is called body shaming (Handayani, 2020). Body shaming is a behavior that has existed for a long time in Indonesia until the ITE Law finally appeared, but this does not close or eliminate the body shaming behavior.

Until now, body shaming is still often found, including in social media, in which it is often seen, based on groups of people who started with beauty standards that were implied or applied in the current environment. Nowadays, a woman can be said to be beautiful if she has white skin and a slim body. In fact, someone can be said to be "beautiful" not only based on appearance.



The view of "beauty" comes from the meaning created by society. This meaning arises because of the social process of each individual, namely humans, are seen as creators of social reality who are usually independent in their social world (Peter, 2018). Therefore, Self Love Warrior (SLW) through its Instagram wants to increase the sense of self love to the community and wants to provide knowledge to the public about the importance of self love. From self love, all standards or judgments of beauty can be abolished and there will be no more body shaming.

Body shaming is something that is not easy to get rid of, but this behavior can be reduced if a person learns to love herself. If the assumptions of social construction theory are related to the topics discussed, the researcher found that reality can exist based on the results of people's thinking, meaning that people's thoughts regarding self-love and body shaming behavior are created because of the reality which is then developed with a social context so that it can work in a long time. Therefore, body shaming behavior needs to be stopped, and the value of self love developed instead.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Self Love Warrior (SLW) is an organization with a goal to increase self-love. The organization disseminates its content through Instagram, because Instagram is one of the most widely used media today, especially the target audience, particularly young people aged 18 to 24 years. Besides discussing self love, SLW also discusses current cases or topics in Indonesia, which are then linked to self love. One of the topics discussed by SLW is body shaming. Although SLW has never carried out a special body shaming campaign, there are other activities carried out SLW related body shaming, like Instagram stories, posts, and webinars. In addition to utilizing the Instagram features, SLW also prepares a good communication strategy to be conveyed to the audience so that the audience can easily understand what SLW conveys. It can be concluded that the good use of Instagram can affect a person's mindset, and this is utilized by SLW for spreading self love, so that society, especially Indonesian women, can feel confident and body shaming can be stopped.

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