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MORALITY BEFORE KNOWLEDGE

# Representation of feminine symbols in filter cigarette products

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Today, cigarettes are used as a consumer product by both men and women. In the past, smoking was often associated with its use by men. Over time, cigarette consumption has shifted culturally, with women becoming consumers of cigarettes with designs that emphasize elegance and a shift in consumer base. The tobacco industry adapted and began to release products aimed specifically at women, such as cigarettes with slimmer filters and more feminine packaging designs. This article discusses the changing role of filter cigarettes, which were originally associated as a symbol of femininity and are now increasingly used by men. **Methods:** The method used in this research is a literature study that collects, analyzes, and evaluates various relevant literature sources. **Findings:** This article illustrates how filter cigarettes have changed the representation of femininity and masculinity in tobacco consumption culture. Filter cigarettes were originally designed and promoted as a product that emphasized elegance, grace, and feminine imagery. However, filter cigarette consumption has shifted significantly over time, and more and more men are adopting filter cigarette products. **Conclusion:** Cigarette use is also influenced by the trend of e-cigarettes and the influence of social media on cigarette marketing which may lead to an increase in the number of female smokers. **Novelty/Originality of this Study:** This study investigates the symbolic representation of femininity in filter cigarettes, elucidating how the tobacco industry strategically employs gendered marketing to appeal to female consumers. By examining the evolution of these marketing strategies and their effects on gender norms and consumer behavior, the research offers a distinctive perspective on the intersection of gender and tobacco advertising.

**KEYWORDS**: filter cigarettes; feminine symbols; gender equality.

## 1. Introduction

The tobacco industry has long been a subject of controversy in terms of both health and social issues. One of the intriguing aspects of this study is how the tobacco industry employs marketing and advertising strategies to attract various consumer segments. Among the various marketing strategies, the symbolic representation of gender, particularly femininity, becomes a key element in attracting female consumers. The development of tobacco as a global commodity began in the 16th century when it was introduced to Europe by Spanish and Portuguese colonizers from the Americas. Over time, tobacco became one of the world's most important and controversial products, with various forms of consumption such as cigars, pipes, and eventually cigarettes. The industrial revolution in the 19th century brought significant changes in mass production

and wider distribution. One of the key innovations in this industry was the introduction of filter cigarettes in the mid-20th century.

The development of tobacco initially involved production and use with pipes. Cigars later became popular in the early 1800s in the United States after the Civil War, spreading "bright" tobacco or uniquely cured yellow leaves grown in Virginia and North Carolina (CNN, n.d.). Cigarettes reached the peak of their popularity during World War I and II. Tobacco companies sent millions of cigarette packs to soldiers on the front lines, creating hundreds of thousands of loyal and addicted consumers. Cigarettes were even included in C-rations for soldiers, which mostly contained food and supplements along with cigarettes (Life, 2016).

Cigarettes began gaining popularity in various parts of the world, including Asia. Indonesia was one of the countries influenced by the introduction of cigarettes. According to writings by Thomas Stamford Raffles, around 1600, cigarettes had become an essential need for the indigenous population of Indonesia, particularly in Java, although tobacco was not native to the island. The Javanese manuscript known as Babad Ing Sangkala (1601-1602) records that tobacco first arrived on the island of Java at the same time as the death of Panembahan Senapati, the founder of the Mataram Dynasty. This manuscript implies that when Panembahan died in Kajenar, the tobacco emerged simultaneously. In other words, the death of Panembahan Senapati in Gedung Kuning marked the first spread of tobacco and became the starting point for Javanese society to adopt the habit of smoking (Azizah, 2023).

The relationship between women and cigar smoking has existed since ancient civilizations. In Native American societies like the Maya and Aztec, both men and women participated in tobacco consumption. This included smoking fine tobacco, very similar to what is now called cigars. Women at the time often smoked them in rituals and special ceremonies. Regardless of gender, cigars have long been considered luxury items, and the same goes for women. However, the practice of cigar consumption by women underwent significant changes in the 19th century, along with societal changes in Europe and North America due to the industrial revolution. The Victorian era, a period marked by social conservatism, witnessed an increased stigma against women smoking. This was in stark contrast to earlier times when women enjoyed smoking alongside their male counterparts. During this time, women who smoked were generally seen as a sign of moral decay and social defiance. As a result, cigar smoking became a male-dominated hobby. However, women were not entirely excluded from the tobacco market. Instead of the larger and thicker cigars enjoyed by men, smaller and thinner variations of cigarettes were marketed to women. Despite social barriers, this did not dampen the enthusiasm of many women at the time for the enjoyment of tobacco, proving that the hobby was more than just a trend (Lee, 2023).

Cigarettes, which were not only a popular consumer product used for rituals and ceremonies, became more consumed by men. Women who smoked were viewed by many as taboo. One case involving Mrs. William, reported by the Washington Post, revealed that more than 100 years ago, she was detained by the police for smoking while cycling on Fifth Avenue in New York. In 1904, a woman in New York was sentenced to 30 days in jail for smoking in front of her children. Four years later, another woman in New York was arrested for smoking in public (Bendix, 2020). Smoking by women in North America and Europe has long been associated with questionable morality and sexual behavior. Since the 17th century, Dutch painters have used tobacco and smoking to symbolize human folly. The only women depicted smoking in these paintings were prostitutes. In the 19th century, women smoking was symbolized as prostitution. Cigarettes became a common prop used in Victorian erotic photography. In 1921, a bill was introduced in the United States Congress to prohibit women from smoking in the District of Columbia (Waldron, 1991).

Filter cigarettes were initially introduced in response to growing health concerns related to smoking. Filters were believed to reduce the amount of tar and nicotine inhaled by smokers. Besides the health aspect, filter cigarettes were also marketed with various

strategies targeting different market segments, including women. According to research by Susanna et al. (2003), the nicotine content in clove cigarettes is higher than in filter cigarettes. Filter cigarettes have filters designed to partially filter out nicotine and tar before being inhaled. These filters can reduce the amount of nicotine entering the body.

Several years later, trends in cigarette consumption underwent drastic changes. In the 1960s, Philip Morris launched a new cigarette product with a traditional feminine image. The company launched ads for Virginia Slims, depicting 100 mm cigarettes with the slogan "you've come a long way, baby." In a world dominated by male smokers, filter cigarettes were initially designed and promoted as products that depicted a characteristic image of femininity. Slimmer filters, attractive packaging designs, and advertising messages emphasizing elegance and luxury all contributed to building the image that smoking filter cigarettes was an act in line with feminine identity (Gulati and Wenger, 2018).

Cigarette advertisements are interesting to study in which the figure of a woman becomes one of the icons that is very important in the process of marketing cigarette products. Starting from exposing women's bodies, to cigarette brands that are taken from women's names. The photos or images contained therein have meanings and signs in the sheet, so that this becomes the main object seen by a reader in interpreting the photo, all women in the advertisement are formed as alluring women. Images on various cigarettes with such poses or styles are made by image makers, as well as clothing and supporting accessories worn by women in advertising images to make them even more alluring. Of course, the reason for such a creation is none other than so that cigarette sellers can market their products with a wide range. That is, not only focusing on men but also on women can also be reached by cigarette sellers. In addition, there are many messages contained in these cigarette advertisements (Muhaimin and Shammania, 2018).

Information on the dangers of smoking has also been done in various ways, by making public service announcements about the dangers of smoking on TV and radio, providing information on the dangers of smoking in cigarette packaging, and even making Government Regulation Number 109 of 2012, concerning the safety of materials containing addictive substances in the form of tobacco products for health. The government regulation contains cigarette materials, cigarette packaging, health warnings, smoke-free areas, advertising control, and others.

According to Article 27, cigarette advertisements must include health warnings and the marking/inscription "18+". In addition, cigarette advertisements are also prohibited from demonstrating, using, and/or displaying the form of cigarettes. Cigarette advertisements must not include the name of the product in question, depict or suggest that cigarettes provide health benefits, advise people to smoke, use cartoon characters as advertising models, contradict prevailing norms in society, and be aimed at or feature children, adolescents, and/or pregnant women (Arjanto, 2022). This aims to commemorate the dangers of smoking, so that those who do not smoke will discourage smoking and smokers can stop smoking, including female smokers.

However, they are becoming increasingly popular around the world, especially among young people, and Indonesia is no exception. Within a decade, the use of cigarettes, especially electronic cigarettes, often called vape, has skyrocketed in Indonesia. According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey Indonesia 2021, the number of e-cigarette users increased from 516,377 people (0.3% of the population) in 2011 to more than 6 million people (3% of the population) in 2021, signaling the urgent need for regulatory action. This article discusses the representation of femininity in filter cigarettes and explains how the concepts of femininity and masculinity related to filter cigarette consumption have changed along with shifting gender values in modern society (WHO, 2021). This article discusses the representation of femininity in filter cigarettes and explains how the concepts of femininity and masculinity related to the consumption of filter cigarettes have changed with the changing gender values in modern society.

## 2. Methods

This research uses a literature study approach by analyzing literature that includes scientific journals, articles, web documentation, and others. In the literature study, researchers use various sources and evidence from research results, books, and expert opinions. Traditionally, literature study aims to present knowledge concepts. This concept is written in a descriptive narrative form and cited from various sources (Barbara, 2020). The data obtained through literature sources related to feminine symbols in cigarettes will then be analyzed in depth and described descriptively.

The results of this literature study will be analyzed in depth to uncover the meanings and implications of feminine symbols present in cigarette advertisements and products. The analysis is conducted using a descriptive approach to illustrate how these symbols are constructed and how they influence public perception. In this way, the researcher not only explains the representation of femininity in the context of cigarette products but also understands its impact in social and cultural contexts. This descriptive narrative writing will provide comprehensive insights into the relationship between feminine symbols and society's perception of cigarettes.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 The history of filter cigarettes

The origins of cigarettes have a long and complex history that began on the American continent. Tobacco plants were first cultivated by indigenous peoples who used them for various purposes, including medical and spiritual needs. The use of tobacco by these communities dates back to around 1400 BC, with tobacco considered a sacred plant capable of connecting humans with the spiritual world (Boyle, 2004). After European explorers interacted with Native American communities, they were introduced to tobacco and its various uses. The Spanish were the first to import tobacco to Europe, where it was initially used primarily for medicinal purposes. Later, the Portuguese introduced the habit of smoking tobacco in Europe, which quickly became popular among the social elite (Quitsure Team, 2023).

By the 17th century, tobacco had become one of the most important global commodities, with large plantations established in America to meet the growing demand. Tobacco use spread across various social classes along with the development of the tobacco industry and the implementation of various marketing strategies to promote their products. In the 19th century, there was a significant surge in cigarette production and consumption thanks to the development of cigarette-making machines. The invention of the Bonsack machine in 1881 drastically changed the tobacco industry by enabling the automatic production of cigarettes, thereby reducing production costs and making cigarettes more affordable to the general public. Cigarettes became symbols of modernity and youth culture, often associated with rebellion and independence among young people (Goodman, 1994).

World War I and II played important roles in the increased consumption of cigarettes. During these conflicts, tobacco companies sent millions of cigarette packs to soldiers fighting on the front lines, resulting in many loyal consumers who later became addicted. In the 1920s, tobacco companies began marketing cigarettes more aggressively, including to women. This marketing strategy led to an increase in the number of cigarettes smoked by women by up to five percent. To increase their profits, cigarette companies targeted women as a new lucrative market, but the first thing they did was change societal attitudes toward women smoking. To this end, Dr. Brill, a psychoanalyst, was hired. He reported that seeing women as symbols of freedom indicated that they were their own individuals and had surpassed the narrow roles set by society. Thus, freedom and independence became central themes in advertisements aimed at women. The freedom campaign in

cigarette advertising was successful and allowed cigarette companies to capture the teenage market (Jenson, 1994).

## 3.2 Cigarettes, kretek, and cigars

Cigarettes are tobacco products typically consisting of tobacco leaves rolled in cigarette paper. This tobacco can come from various varieties and regions. Cigarettes have different flavors and aromas depending on the type of tobacco used and usually do not contain cloves. In contrast, kretek is a type of cigarette unique to Indonesia, made with a blend of tobacco and cloves, giving it a spicy taste and distinctive aroma. Kretek is known for its spicy taste and strong clove aroma, offering a flavor profile different from regular cigarettes. Cigars, on the other hand, have a different tobacco composition, resulting in a unique taste and aroma. Cigars are larger than regular cigarettes and are commonly enjoyed by cigar enthusiasts in formal settings. The main differences between cigarettes, kretek, and cigars lie in their composition, manufacturing process, taste, and popularity. Regular cigarettes are common products often consumed daily by many people, while cigars are more exclusive tobacco products with distinct characteristics and consumption rituals.

Cigarettes or kretek are used by lighting one end so that the smoke can be inhaled through the other end. Smoking is a habit that has existed for centuries and has played various roles in cultural, social, and economic contexts. According to Thomas Sunaryo (Sunaryo, 2013), kretek cigarettes are not only used as a tool for smoking and facilitating social interaction but also as part of ceremonial traditions that continue in various rural communities, particularly on the island of Java.

Kretek cigarettes are divided into two types: Hand-Rolled Kretek Cigarettes (Sigaret Kretek Tangan, SKT) and Machine-Made Kretek Cigarettes (Sigaret Kretek Mesin, SKM). SKT is a type of kretek produced through a manual grinding or selection process, either by hand or with simple tools. Some well-known SKT brands in the market include Djarum Coklat, Aroma Kretek, and Dji Sam Soe. In contrast, SKM is made through a production process using machines and usually has a cotton filter on the end. Some popular SKM kretek brands consumed by the public are Djarum Super, LA, Gudang Garam Filter, and Class Mild. In other words, the difference between SKT and SKM lies in the production method, with SKT being produced manually or with simple tools, while SKM uses machines in its production process (Hikami, 2020).

In Indonesia, there are several well-known cigar brands recognized nationally and internationally. Cigarillos produced by PT Djarum is one of the cigar variants from Indonesia. Cigarillos are smaller and thinner than regular cigars. Kenner Bolero cigars, with larger sizes, are produced by the Arizona cigar factory in Temanggung. Another type is the Adipati Half Corona, which is shorter than the standard Corona cigar, measuring about 3 to 4 inches in length (Windiaz, 2021).

## 3.3 Stereotypes and gender construction in filter cigarettes

The term "stereotype" originates from the Greek words "stereos" and "typos," meaning a cognitive representation within a group that can influence perceptions of a particular group, either positively or negatively. Thus, stereotypes are interpretations from a cultural perspective and background (Saguni, 2014). Gender stereotypes are closely linked to the representation of women in their roles as the main pillars of the family. The image of the "pillar" positions women, especially wives or mothers, as responsible for household and domestic affairs. This image ultimately creates gender stereotypes that are often found in both public and domestic spheres. These stereotypes have developed and hindered their progress in social life. The reinforcement of these stereotypes about women is often a focal point in media, both mainstream media and media specifically targeting women. These stereotypes frequently become an interesting theme in various types of media (Bungin, 2008).

Stereotypes are general images or perceptions commonly accepted by society about the characteristics, behaviors, or attributes deemed typical of a particular group. Stereotypes are often generalized, simplistic, and inaccurate, and can be based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or other factors. Stereotypes can be problematic because they often do not reflect individual complexities, leading to discrimination, prejudice, or unfair treatment of individuals or groups based on these stereotypes.

Gender stereotypes can be shaped through advertising, influencing individual perceptions of gender. Advertising can be used to promote a product to the public. Advertising is defined as a form of message about a product conveyed through media to persuade the public or society to buy or use the product. Anindya and Defhany (2019) explain that advertising represents a real depiction of society because it is represented in the form of images, descriptions, or words. Thus, advertising always has a purpose and expects feedback from the public.

Some advertisements portray women as sexual objects and emphasize physical appearance as the main attraction. This influences public perceptions of women's value, often associated with their appearance. Advertisements often use stereotypical characters, such as macho men or materialistic women, to market products or services. Gender construction in cigarette advertisements is a process of shaping perceptions and images using stereotypes and gender norms regarding how men and women should engage with cigarettes. Cigarette advertisements typically form representations of masculinity and femininity. Masculinity and femininity are closely related to gender roles that emerge from social definitions between men and women. This is a social representation given to an individual's sex. The term "gender" is often used to differentiate from "sex." Sex refers to a person's physical characteristics as male or female, while gender refers to the social and cultural roles assigned to individuals as male or female. When discussing gender development, it refers to the concepts of masculinity and femininity (Syaifullah, 2017). Gender construction is shaped by social and cultural factors and can change over time due to its dynamic nature. The concepts of masculinity and femininity in advertising development depict men and women according to traditional gender stereotypes. Men are often portrayed as strong, macho, and confident, while women are depicted as beautiful, graceful, gentle, and attractive.

Masculine construction in the media is categorized into various types along a continuum. First, the retro gladiator man refers to a sexually active man who tends to control situations. Second, the protector type portrays men as guardians and protectors. Third, the clown or buffoon type refers to men who promote equality in relationships, respect women, and behave politely. Fourth, the gay man refers to men with a homosexual orientation. Fifth, the wimp type depicts men perceived as different due to their weak and passive behavior (Kurnia, 2004). Masculine construction in cigarette advertisements often uses masculinity stereotypes to attract male consumers. This involves representations or messages associating cigarettes with attributes considered masculine.

Many advertisements feature various types of products, with the main characters in these ads dominated by one gender. Women often play roles in the domestic sector, such as household appliances, household needs, and others, as seen in Molto advertisements as a fabric freshener. In contrast, men play roles in advertisements requiring strength, sunlight exposure, carrying heavy loads, and so on, as seen in products like Extra Joss. Indirectly, this also influences product sales, where consumers of these products are dominated by either women or men. The gender identity attached to the product will naturally emerge in the eyes of society. This is because the representation shown in advertisements seems to align with the characteristics of the product's users (Khotimah et al., 2022). Masculine representation can be countered by femininity by shifting dominant views of what is considered masculine to feminine or vice versa.

Advertising is one of the most influential social agents in society today. Gender stereotypes are conveyed through symbolic messages in advertisements. These stereotypes become more entrenched in society because they are reinforced by

supporting social structures. Additionally, the simplistic image of men's and women's roles is passed from generation to generation through existing social agents. As revealed in the study by Lutfiyah and Kinanti (2020), gender stereotypes in advertising can change the image of women and men. For instance, in the ABC Soy Sauce advertisement, the image of women in the past was depicted as second-class individuals considered inferior to men. However, cultural development and shifts in mindset have tended to change this image. In the ABC Soy Sauce advertisement, women are portrayed as superheroes because they can handle dual tasks, working outside the home and managing household chores like cooking. Women's ability to work outside the home and still have the strength to perform household tasks like cooking reflects extraordinary flexibility and resilience.

Cigarette advertisements have significant potential to change stereotypes about women by presenting unconventional and progressive images. By highlighting women in strong, independent, and empowered roles, cigarette advertisements can help shift traditional perceptions that often associate women with weakness or dependency. Cigarette advertisements circulating in society contain many myths. According to Chandler in Shofa and Utami (2017), myths are metaphors that are widespread in a culture and grow among the people. According to Chapman and Egger (1983), in ancient societies, these myths were heroic stories that developed to inspire. In modern society, these myths have become something that promises solutions to modern societal problems.

Amidst the weak control of conventional cigarettes, Indonesia is now facing a new challenge: e-cigarettes. These smokeless cigarettes are popular with young people in many cities and there are many communities of them in cities and towns. Manufacturers and distributors advertise and promote massively through social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Recent research reviewed on the conversation website through an online survey in five major cities (Bandung, Jakarta, Semarang, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta) in September-October 2020, shows that exposure to e-cigarette advertising and promotion on social media is strongly associated with e-cigarette use. The survey was based on 1,239 respondents aged 15 years and above. The majority of respondents (84%) reported having seen e-cigarette advertisements or promotions on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Those who had seen e-cigarette ads and promotions on social media were 2.91 times more likely to have ever used e-cigarettes and 2.82 times more likely to currently use e-cigarettes, compared to respondents who had never seen e-cigarette ads (Kusuma et al., 2022).

New nicotine and tobacco products such as e-cigarettes, heated solid tobacco and nicotine pouches are not free from health risks and have become increasingly popular, especially among teenagers. To lure users, the industry launches products with various flavors and attractive designs and aggressively promotes these products on social media. Without strict regulation, young people are at greater risk of becoming addicted to both conventional and electronic cigarettes (Kania, 2024).

*3.4 Cigarettes and the female market target*

The history of cigarettes specifically marketed to women reflects intriguing cultural and social changes over the last century. In the early 20th century, smoking was primarily an activity for men. However, between 1900 and 1920, women began to challenge the social norms established by figures like Karl Marx. Women who smoked were often stigmatized and viewed as rebellious or immoral. Thus, cigarettes became a symbol of resistance against social norms. Although women in the United States had been smoking since the mid-19th century, strong social pressure against female smokers severely limited this practice for several decades. Even at the turn of the century, smoking among women was rare and restricted, especially to prostitutes and women in free social and intellectual circles. Additionally, cigarettes were not popular among American men, who considered them unmasculine, preferring cigars, pipes, roll-your-own tobacco, or chewing tobacco (Craig, 1999).

In the 1920s, tobacco companies began to see women as a potential market. Edward Bernays, a pioneer in public relations, created a campaign for the American Tobacco Company, where women marched while smoking "torches of freedom." This parade helped normalize smoking among women. The concepts of masculinity and femininity have been symbolically constructed by the media. From the outset, the media associated masculinity with athletic, strong, and brave men. In contrast, femininity is always portrayed as gentle, graceful, and maternal. In Indonesia, many cigarette advertisements emphasize masculine meanings. The masculine concept presented aligns with the stereotypes commonly associated with men in Indonesian society. This stereotype has solidified into a myth of masculinity within Indonesian society (Achmad and Saputro 2017).

Over the 50 years since the invention of mass-produced cigarettes, smoking among women in North America and Northern Europe has become socially acceptable and even desirable. This change is not only due to the dramatic shifts in the social and economic status of women during this period but also because the tobacco industry capitalized on changing social attitudes toward women by promoting cigarettes as a symbol of emancipation, or "torches of freedom." This message continues to be promoted worldwide by the tobacco industry, especially in countries that have recently undergone or are experiencing rapid social changes (Amos and Haglund, 2000).

In the 1960s, some cigarette advertisements began targeting women by leveraging the spirit of the burgeoning feminist movement. These ads often used messages emphasizing freedom, independence, and gender equality. For example, the "you've come a long way, baby" campaign by Virginia Slims is a famous example (Figure 1). This campaign portrayed women who smoked as symbols of freedom and social progress, linking cigarette products to women's achievements in fighting for their rights (Everyday, 2021). Such advertisements aimed to change traditional stereotypes about women by depicting them as independent and empowered individuals. Thus, cigarette ads during this era not only promoted products but also sought to respond to and exploit the popular feminist narrative to attract female consumers.
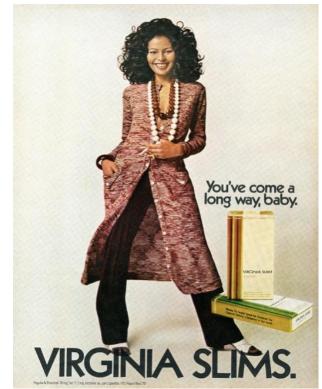


Fig. 1 Cigarette advertisements in the 1960s with women in the background
(Vintage Everyday, 2021)

Currently, data shows that cigarettes are still often associated with men and masculinity. Women who smoke are often seen as rebels and thus face stigma. This stigma results from the strong influence of patriarchy in society and the inherited conformity of women to local practices. However, in some areas of Indonesia, the urban younger generation is more open and increasingly accustomed to the presence of female smokers (Nangoi and Daeli, 2023).

In the modern era, e-cigarettes have emerged, used by both men and women. Female e-cigarette users often perceive them as healthier than nicotine-containing cigarettes (Tedjasukmono and Susanto, 2019). There are various reasons women use e-cigarettes, including social and economic factors. People need to adapt to the times, and using e-cigarettes is a sign of a modern lifestyle. Individual reasons for smoking vary, including peer influence, personal desire, and family factors. Many studies have shown that although the number of female e-cigarette users is lower than males, they still represent a significant user group (Oktavia et al., 2023).

Tobacco use has been shaped by gender and other important social status indicators, such as class, over decades across Europe and worldwide. Throughout the 20th century, cigarettes have been imbued with different symbolic meanings, especially related to the construction of femininity (Elliot, 2001).

Tobacco consumption has a fluctuating history regarding two of the most fundamental markers of social position. In the early 19th century, tobacco's image was masculine, and anti-tobacco literature assumed smokers were men. Smoking was particularly popular in the military, especially the navy. By the end of the Victorian era, smoking among women was seen as something done by those "on the fringes of respectable society," including "fashionable new women who sought to assert their independence" (Hilton, 1995).

Amos and Haglund highlight how the tobacco industry exploited changes in women's social and economic status and shifted social attitudes toward women by promoting cigarettes as a symbol of emancipation, "A Torch of Freedom" (Amos and Haglund, 2000). Greaves argues that the masculinity implicit in smoking was a crucial part of the cultural symbolism challenged by female smokers during the 1920s in industrial countries. He comments on the tobacco industry's efforts to reposition female smokers as respectable, sociable, fashionable, stylish, and feminine. He also notes that a more sophisticated definition of sexual equality since the 1930s has allowed for six decades of flexible cultural definitions of women smoking. Nonetheless, the association between smoking and masculine representation persists in some tobacco advertisements and popular culture (Hunt et al., 2004). Thus, smoking was largely considered a male issue until the late 1970s, when there was increased attention to gender in understanding smoking patterns. This includes the orientation of gender roles and cigarettes or comparing relationships between men and women. Previous studies found no difference in smoking prevalence rates among men and women working full-time.

In Indonesia, the focus of tobacco control interventions has been on male smokers. Indonesia does have the highest prevalence rate of male smokers globally. The number of Indonesian male smokers reaches approximately 70% of the productive population. This large number has the potential to become a burden on the country, especially in the health aspect, so it needs to be controlled. However, the increasing trend of smoking behavior also occurs in women, especially e-cigarettes. Indonesia is even ranked third in the prevalence of female smokers in the ASEAN region after Myanmar and Laos. However, in fact, women are often ignored in tobacco control programs in Indonesia. Instead of being empowered, women are often placed in a trapping stigma. This further alienates women from tobacco control efforts. Women in public service advertisements are generally portrayed as passive smokers who are victims of smokers' behavior. Their smoking behavior tends to be disapproved of and is prone to stigmatization, even among female smokers. This social stigma, which is thought to reduce smoking consumption among women, instead encourages them to become hidden smokers and rebellious smokers.

These two types of smokers are hard to reach by smoking cessation intervention campaigns and health quality interventions (Rosemary, 2024).

## 4. Conclusion

The symbolic representation of femininity in filter cigarettes reflects how the tobacco industry employs strategic marketing to target female consumers. The symbols on filter cigarettes are designed to attract women and reinforce existing gender norms in society. The tobacco industry has successfully leveraged social constructs of gender by positioning filter cigarettes as a product that is more refined and elegant, aligning with the feminine image they wish to project. This approach creates a narrative where smoking is not merely a consumption act but also an expression of identity and lifestyle. However, this representation also has significant implications for consumer perceptions and social norms, reinforcing gender stereotypes and influencing consumption behavior. Filter cigarette products are often designed with visually appealing packaging and depict aesthetics associated with femininity. The use of colors, shapes and graphics are often targeted to appeal to female consumers. There is a shift from a marketing approach that previously emphasized masculinity towards one that is more inclusive and diverse, incorporating more subtle and elegant elements to appeal to the female market. Social media allows direct interaction with consumers, so companies can more easily understand the preferences and needs of the female market. There is a shift in social norms that are more accepting of women smoking, although there is still a stigma in some cultures. These shifts are often influenced by representations in the media and changes in gender perceptions.

## Ethical Review Board Statement
Not available.

## Informed Consent Statement
Not available.

## Data Availability Statement
Not available.

## Conflicts of Interest
The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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