

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of increasing electronic cigarette use among Generation Z women has become a significant focus in communication studies, particularly regarding the role of social construction in shaping its meaning. This research aims to understand how social construction contributes to the meaning-making of electronic cigarettes within symbolic interaction among Generation Z women in Bandung City. Employing a phenomenological approach with an interpretive paradigm and qualitative methods, data were collected through in-depth interviews with Generation Z female informants who actively use electronic cigarettes. The findings reveal that peer groups, social media, and interpersonal relationships have a significant influence in shaping the social meaning of vaping behavior. The study also shows that electronic cigarette use is perceived not merely as a means of nicotine consumption but as a symbol of identity, self-expression, and social acceptance. Verbal and non-verbal constructions within friendship circles reinforce norms and provide justification for vaping practices. This research concludes that the symbolic meaning of vaping among Generation Z women in Bandung City is formed through the processes of individual awareness (Mind), identity seeking (Self), and environmental social construction (Society), wherein vaping is interpreted as a symbol of freedom, existence, and resistance against stigma, despite an awareness of its potential negative risks.

Keywords: *Social construction, Generation Z women, electronic cigarettes, identity construction, interpersonal communication.*