

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Sport is a healthy activity because of its intense physical demands and male dominance. Discourse on gender equality is always warm to talk about. It also appears in the sports universe, because sports are now regarded as inextricably linked to masculine tradition. The conceptual model of gender towards the feminine and masculine influences various biases and problems within a societal structure. Those same aspects lead to a wide range of assumptions about males and females who are supposed to be masculine in society. As a result, femininity and masculinity affect the task allocation that separates women's and men's roles: the household role for women, and the public role for men (Eagly, 1987). Sport is generally recognized as a macho sphere and is one of the initial points for the sociological phenomenon of manliness in modern Western society (Drummond 2002). The development of coordinated sport since the nineteenth century has supported a vacillating philosophy of male predominance despite balancing social advancements, for example, rising female workforce investment (Messner 1995). Gender pay disparities exist in all occupations, including sports. Male athletes earned over 15% to 100% further than woman players in basketball, golf, soccer, baseball, and tennis (Actionnews5 2021). According to Forbes.com, a young LGBTQ person stated that he/she/they never hated sport, but instead hated how he/she/they was/were treated by another sports player (Ennis 2021).

LGBT is an acronym representing a specific social identity that focuses on the intersection of sexual minorities. The extension of the abbreviation mirrors an endeavor to create some distance from antiquated conceptualizations of (frequently certainly, male) homosexuality and pathology to more extensive and more comprehensive conceptualizations that incorporate lesbian, sexually

unbiased, transsexual, and other sexual minority populaces (Herek 2010). Gender pay disparities exist in all occupations, including sports. Male athletes earned over 15% to 100% further than woman players in basketball, golf, soccer, baseball, and tennis (Actionnews5 2021). According to Forbes.com, a young LGBTQ person is stating that he/she/they never hated sport instead of how he/she/they was treated by another sports player (Ennis 2021). A survey was done by The Trevor Project spread over 35,000 samples of LGBTQ youth aged over 13-24 across the United States who are facing the challenge. Some of the survey's key findings include: In the previous year, 42 percent of LGBTQ youth seriously considered suicide, including more than half of transgender and non-binary youth, and 48 percent of LGBTQ youth said they wanted counseling from a mental health professional but couldn't get it in the previous year (Project, 2021). Due to the current situation, some sports brands launched queer-themed sportswear. The basis of this product is to share and spread awareness about the LGBTQ, especially during pride month. Pride Month is a time of celebration and a time to continue to march toward justice and equality (Stanley and Vance 2020). Pride month is commemorated every June. During this month, there are a lot of parades, demonstrations, workshops, and events, both local and international, that support the LGBTQ.

Queer is a character classification unto itself. This covers people who needed to mark themselves with a non-labeled, who needed to be liquid or comprehensive in their own expressed cravings, or who needed to challenge domineering suspicions of sexuality (Jagose 1996). LGBTQ people are discovered to face frequent enormous difficulties and challenges growing up in a place where heterosexuality is often presented as the only acceptable orientation in society through all of these labeled and unlabeled identities and recognition, particularly the unlabeled ones as queer (Subhrajit 2014). In 2012, a review was directed concerning the perspectives of queers towards manliness. The outcomes showed that most of the members of that overview believed it to be significant for themselves to be introduced in a manly way, yet in addition for their accomplices

to present themselves in a customarily manly manner (Arana 2019). Generally, manly characteristics are regularly liked and utilized as a deciding variable of allure in eccentric men; "straight-acting" or eccentric men who introduce themselves in a generally manly way and convey customarily manly attributes - like a solid body, a soft tone, or a facial hair growth - are frequently seen to be more appealing inside the eccentric local area, truth be told, the cliché of being a feminine-looking man is regularly seen as a reason behind the discrimination. A high voice, energy, a thin yet non-solid body, or in any event, interspersing instant messages with interjection imprints can be related to the cliché womanly eccentric man. In this manner, some strange men would effectively try not to have these characteristics and, on second thought, take on more generally manly qualities, for example, having a deep voice and a strong body as well as enjoying manly side interests like American football and climbing.

However, according to the current situation, LGBTQ has a proportionate right toward others. In a study about acceptance of LGBTQ spread over 174 countries, 75% of the countries showed acceptance, 9% of the countries showed a decline, and the rest, over 15% showed no change (Flores 2019). This is one of the pieces of evidence that LGTBQ is on the rise in acceptance. The broader technology helps to share anything, including the minorities such as LGBTQ, indigenous tribes, tourism, and so on. There are kinds of social media that are used by people nowadays such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Tiktok, and Telegram. Recently in social media, people are expected to build their identities (Bojmel, Moran. and Shahr 2016). Instagram is known as a platform for self-representation. In this application, Instagram users have the freedom to share and post anything. There are no rules about our appearance, identity, or life. The self-representation may be used to generate an impression on others to create an impression that matches one's ideal, which is generally motivated by the objective (Herring and Kapidzic 2015). Basically, people who used some product of social media mentioned above would like to present their representation or personal branding.

Generally, there are two recognized genders in the world of sports: men and women. As can be seen, hegemonic masculinity is unavoidable. In sports, women also experience discrimination and so do minorities, namely LGBTQ. Now, people have started to be aware of human rights. This is not only happening on the international scale but also in Indonesia. At the 2015 SEA GAMES, Indonesia was rumored to be smuggling male volleyball players into the women's team. This figure is named Aprilia Manganang who has a bulky and strong body like a man. Aprilia has a condition known as hypospadias, which is a reproductive system abnormality. In the unusual disorder known as hypospadias, the phallus' urine opening is found at the bottom rather than the tip. This disorder also received the attention of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), so comprehensive handling efforts were taken. Aprilia also underwent corrective surgery to overcome the disorder. Now Aprilia has become a man and changed his name to Aprilio Perkasa Manganang. This story is proof that queer in sports is real.

In June 2021, *Nike* brought a new idea to sports. It supports the minorities: the LGBTQ sphere. According to the official websites, *Nike* released a collection called *Be True* collection that consists of six products. The tagline of this year's product is "Proudly in Motion". They also stated on the website that "Behind every flag is a story of self-discovery waiting to be told. This Pride Month, we're celebrating all the stories, identities, and orientations that find freedom in movement as we work towards creating a more inclusive future". Another unique thing in *Nike Be True 2021 Collection* is the chosen ambassador. There are three ambassadors in the advertisement. The first one is Gia Parr, a transwoman and an activist in the Human Rights Community (HRC). The second one is Bretman Rock, a gay beauty guru and a digital superstar. The other one is Shiho Shimoyamada, a Japanese lesbian soccer player. This collection allows buyers to customize what labels they are. There are nine velcro pride flags that could be attached to the back of shoes, and those flags are lesbian, transgender, intersex,

bisexual, pansexual, asexual, genderqueer, agender, and progress. Hence, it is such a clear yet interesting phenomenon to study.

The phenomena of LGBTQ in the whole world are still facing the polemic of acceptance even in the United States of America (USA) as a liberal state. In Worthen's (2012) study *Attitudes Toward LGBT People Scales and data from four college student samples in Oklahoma, Texas, Italy, and Spain (N = 1311)*, she investigated how politics, feminism, and religion affect attitudes towards LGBT Individuals. Worthen's study investigated how politics, feminism and religion affect attitudes towards LGBT Individuals. Three trends emerged from the findings: (1) negative attitudes toward LGBT people are more prevalent in Oklahoma than in any other university sample, and they are most positive among Spanish students; (2) negative attitudes toward LGBT people are related to the individual and multiplicative effects of political beliefs, feminism, and religiosity across all four samples; and (3) constructs related to attitudes toward gays/lesbians differ from those related to attitudes toward bisexual and transgender people (Worthen, Lingiardi and Caristo 2017). Even though LGBTQ is legal in the United States of America, the hatred is extremely obvious and undeniable. As Nike posted a video of the Nike Be True 2021 collection on its official Instagram account to support the LGBTQ, most of its comment section is a jibe or insult at Nike for supporting the LGBTQ.

On the other hand, Japan as one Asian country showed an improvement in LGBTQ acceptance in society. A study that was done by Atsushi Fujita (2018) reported that three Japanese TV shows bring up LGBTQ as their main theme. The first TV show is *Tonarino Kazokuwa Aoku Mieru* (2018), which tells about the struggle of gay couples in society with different reactions to acceptance. This show was groundbreaking because it depicted gay men as loving couples alongside heterosexual couples. Although they are not the main characters, they are fully portrayed as real people with their joys and sorrows. The second TV show, *Joshiteki Seikatsu* (2018), depicts a life of a Japanese lesbian transwoman. The heroine works as a woman for a fashion company, and her coworkers are

aware that she is transgender. The program depicts not only her struggles with gender identity but also her lesbian sexuality. In one episode, she returns to her hometown and runs into her brother and father, whom she had fled from when she was a child. In another episode, she attends a party with her female coworkers and meets a woman. The show aired on NHK, a national broadcasting network known for its conservative viewpoints. Its target audience is also older and more conservative. While the last TV show is *Ototo no Otto's* (2018). This three-episode show follows the main character, Yaichi, who has lost contact with his estranged twin brother, who has moved to Canada and married another man. The show begins when the Canadian husband visits his husband's brother and daughter in Japan. Yaichi gradually comes to understand his late gay brother by getting to know his brother-in-law. Thus, it can be concluded that Japan's LGBT visibility lags far behind that of the United States. Fortunately, it is rapidly increasing in recent years. Although Japan still has a long way to go before same-sex marriage is legalized, it is moving forward, in part due to pressure from foreign sources. The history of LGBT advancement in the United States continues to positively impact Japan. At the same time, it serves as a warning that the Japanese LGBT movement may face setbacks at any time (Fujita 2018). Although there have been developments on how Japan began to accept LGBTQ, it cannot be denied that the principles of the eastern world including Asia still cannot accept this situation. This is influenced by socio-cultural conditions and beliefs that have existed for a long time.

Hence, some similar international sportswears launched a series of products representing the similar characteristics about queer or LGBTQ themed. Adidas offers a Pride assortment of four sets of footwear beginning at \$70, with its top shoe selling for \$180 (Adidas 2021). Reebok has four accessible now on its site, with two more coming soon, going from \$40 to \$170, alongside other Pride-themed clothing (Rebook 2021). Puma has two major names backing the brand this year: Out entertainer and model Cara Delevingne co-planned its 2021 Pride assortment, highlighting three sorts of footwear going from \$30 to \$100 (Puma

2021). As a representative, Puma marked Breanna Stewart, the WNBA star and one of Sports Illustrated's Sportspersons of the Year. As ESPN revealed last month, the long-term shoe bargain ensures the out gay Seattle Tempest forward and lobbyist her unmistakable shoe (DePaula 2021). Tragically, it's not yet accessible for 2021's Pride month.

Some related studies have been conducted about masculinity, queer, and sport. The first is a study done by Murray J.N. Drummond (2020). This study is about how masculinity is portrayed in sports. The second one is a study that was done by Lauryn Stewart, Jennifer Oates, and Paul O'Halloran. This research investigates transwomen's experience and how their voice is heard in sports. Third, a study done by Alison Carney and Megan Chawansky about most of 'Sport in Development' research gives a heteronormativity construction. Fourth, a study by Colomer, Quintana, Garcia, Canada, Samaniego, and Devis (2020) reveals the barrier of LGBTQ toward physical activities or sports. Lastly, a qualitative study by Tews, Menzel and Braumuller (2021) reveals various intersections of sexual orientation and gender identities within the LGBT+ auspice.

By compiling the journals, articles, and studies mentioned above, some related studies have been conducted, which talk about masculinity, queer, and sport. It provides a perspective through which to evaluate the challenges surrounding the social construction of manliness for men in contemporary Western culture because it is associated with hegemonic masculinity. This study is enriched by related investigations that have been conducted using other approaches and theories.

Thus, this study is about the portrayal of queer in the sports advertisement Nike's Be True (2021) towards the chosen brand ambassadors. To analyze the chosen object, the author utilized one of the hypotheses from queer theory, which is gender performativity by Judith P. Butler. Thus, the semiotic interpretative approach will be used in this study to reveal the signifier behind the signified and the messages behind the video advertisement found throughout Nike's *Be True*

ads (2021). John Fiske's theory, which is known as Codes of Television, is used to bridge down the signs and symbols occurring in the advertisement. In terms of methods, the writer uses the descriptive qualitative method, which means that this analysis is based on the results of collected data, such as images and texts, which are gathered from the general concept (Creswell, 2009).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As previously stated, the issue statement is designed to be as follows:

How is queer portrayed in the sports advertisement of Nike's Be True advertisement?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to answer two questions that drive it:

To explore how is queer portrayed in the sports advertisement of Nike's Be True advertisement.

1.4 Significance of the Study

By conducting this research, the writer hopes that this study will be able to provide both practical and theoretical insight into the case of queer in sports. With the rapid advancement of technology, more and more people will use social media in their daily lives. Hopefully, this study will assist new social media users in recognizing the diversity of gender that exists today, allowing them to be more open-minded towards gender-related issues and queer individuals in daily life and on many media platforms.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

- Advertisement: Paid, non-personal communication forms with persuasive intent used by identified sources through various media (Dijk, 1985)
- Gender Performativity: the intervention of repeating, referencing, and impersonating practice to become a specific gender (Butler, 1993)
- Nike: American multinational corporation that involves in the footwear, apparel, and sporting goods industries.
- Queer: Queer is a character classification unto itself (Jagose 1996)
- Sport: A type of physical activity and exercise (Caspersen, Powell, & Christenson, 1985)