

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In today's globalized world, the society is constantly being surrounded by advertisements. The main purpose of why advertisement is used is to promote or sell a certain product or service (Stanton 1984). Advertisement is directed to be consumed by the masses, thus it is transmitted through various media (Bovee and Arens 1992). Advertisement, which can be in the form of still image and moving images or video, is present in traditional media such as newspaper and television, and in new media such as social media and websites. With the use of the internet keeps getting bigger with 4.1 billion people around the world using it (Brantner 2016), the new media becomes more valuable than the traditional media for corporates to promote their products through advertisements. In advertising their products in the new media, corporates make a verified account in a certain social media and post their advertisements there. While advertisement is mostly utilized to promote a certain product or service, it can be used by advertisers to promote ideas (Stanton 1984) regarding certain issues, with promoting social justice being one of them.

Advertisement can be more than merely to promote a product. It can help bring social justice issues into the limelight, since it is largely consumed by the masses. It is a common practice, nowadays, for corporates that want to take part in doing something for the society's future and planet's health (Kotler and Sarkar

2021) to voice out social justice issues by voicing their ideas on what they believe to fighting injustice. This type of practice is called as *brand activism*. Moreover, the stance which a corporate takes has a profound impact towards their products' sale. Gray (2019) stated that 64 percent of international consumers look at the brand's stance on social issues first before deciding whether to buy from the brand or to boycott the brand. The social issues being advertised are vary. Advertisers may advertise on a certain issue depending on what is happening and what issue is recently trending at the moment. In 2020, when racial issue was trending, a number of brands such as NIKE, Adidas, PG Tips, and Space NK. expressed their solidarity with *Black Lives Matter* movement by releasing advertisements containing anti-racism messages (Jones 2020). Another example is gender equality issue. Since the month of March is known as the Women History Month, many advertisers would make advertisement regarding messages of women empowerment. This certain type of advertisement is called as *femvertising*.

The term femvertising is also synonymous with *ad-her-tising*. Femvertising can be defined as a type of advertising which uses pro-female talent, messages, and imagery to empower women (Becker-Herby 2016). Becker-Herby notes that femvertising ensures women as the protagonists in the narrative of the advertisement (2016, 18). Women has often been represented as bound to gender stereotypes and gender roles in advertisements femvertising since long ago. Goffman (1979) used the term "gender display" to explain the depictions of masculinity and femininity in advertisements, giving ideas for men and women on what is appropriate regarding their respective presence, behaviors, and actions.

Femvertising is present to cast aside gender stereotypes (Becker-Herby 2016); that women can be whatever they want and are not bound to gender roles. Femvertising campaigns have developed recently, evident by numerous commercials containing such messages (Pérez and Gutiérrez 2017). Such advertising can be found in sports-wear brands, with Nike being one of the examples.

Nike is a famous American brand manufacturing sports-wears, who have sponsored several famous sports teams around the globe. With its big name, Nike has the power to reach out to the masses. In advertising its product, Nike is no stranger to promoting social justice issues in its advertisements. This advertising strategy used by Nike has not only gained positive responses, but also negative ones, creating two polarizing stances. One famous example is when Nike released *Dream Crazy* campaign back in 2018. While some people supported the campaign done by Nike to address racial injustice issue, some others deemed the advertisement to be anti-American and boycotted Nike (Parker and Nordyke 2019). Nike is also one of the major players when it comes to advertisements that promote women empowerment.

Released on the month of February 2021 as a part of *Stronger than One* campaign, one of Nike advertisements called *Lose Count* is aimed at empowering women Football athletes, thus it is logical to classify this advertisement as femvertising. *Stronger than One* campaign itself is made for the purpose of empowerment for next generation of women athletes, especially in American football (Codega 2020). The campaign debuted at 2020's Thanksgiving Day. *Lose Count* itself highlights on female athletes of American or flag football. It features

several National Football League's women figures. A 2020 advertisement by Nike entitled *One Day We Won't Need This Day* is another example of women empowerment advertisement. Like its successors that were mentioned earlier, this video shows women engaging in physical activities and messages saying that women, one day, would be acknowledged properly in sports. In these advertisements, Nike seems to make a counter-argument to how women are viewed in sports by the society according to McClung and Blinde's (2002) classification of women in sports; their status in sports is secondary to men.

Hanks (2019) stated that powerful images, resonant music, and well-worded texts are able to evoke the feelings of the audience to promote societal change. As the *Lose Count* advertisement is in the form of video, the advertisement deploys not only verbal modes, such as written and spoken language, but also non-verbal modes such as gesture, spatial, and semiotic modes, to construct the discourse it is trying to deliver to the audience. A mode is defined by Kress (2010) as a culturally and socially shaped resource to make meaning. The analysis of these modes in the advertisement is what is called as multimodal discourse analysis.

Kress (2012) stated that language, in a multimodal approach, is one means among many available to make meaning, as the meaning of a text as a whole is found through all of the modes in a given text. Kress (2012) went on that analyzing verbal modes – speech or writing – alone would provide only a portion of the meaning. Thus, for the sake of the current study which uses multimodal approach to analyzing discourse, Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday and Matthiesen 2004), which examines the importance rather than the structure of a produced

discourse by which it is composed, is deployed to analyze the verbal elements of the Lose Count advertisement. Additionally, the non-verbal elements are examined through the lens of the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* 2006). The current study aims at exploring the discourse of women empowerment constructed through the multimodal elements found in two Nike advertisements mentioned above.

A number of previous related studies regarding multimodal analysis of advertisements, especially concerning about women, have been conducted. Previous studies have researched on advertisement which concerns about the concept of beauty using multimodal analysis many times (Priyambodo 2020; Rahmanissa 2020; Faradilla 2020). One previous study has concerned with the portrayal of women in Adidas's advertisement which promotes breaking of gender stereotypes (Fitronia 2018). A study by Saz-Rubio (2018) explored on gender stereotypes, especially on women, that are shown in various British television advertisements. A recent study of Critical Multimodal Discourse Analysis by Xu and Tan (2020) explored on feminism discourse constructed on SK-II advertisement, and argued that the advertisement is merely to manipulate women into buying the products. The current study focuses on analyzing a sports brand advertisement and its multimodal elements which construct the discourse of women empowerment.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Based on the explanation that has been delivered in the background of the study, two research questions are formulated as:

1. What are the multimodal elements used in the advertisements?
2. How do the multimodal elements in the advertisements construct Nike's discourse of women empowerment?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

As the statement of the problems have been formulated, to answer the research questions, the objectives of the study are mapped out as:

1. To identify the multimodal elements used in the advertisements.
2. To explain how the multimodal elements in the advertisements construct the discourse of women empowerment.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to make contributions on both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, it is expected and hoped that this research may give a meaningful academic contribution to the field of discourse analysis, especially multimodal discourse analysis. As there were already many researches about advertisement relating to the concept of beauty using multimodal analysis, this study utilizes multimodal analysis to explore on a type of advertisement called femvertising. Furthermore, since this study applies multimodality approach upon femvertising, this study hopes to enlighten the notion femvertising as a type of advertising that is growing recently and is used to empower women, and how it is constructed using multiple modes of communication.

Practically, the study hopes to give contributions to corporates and advertisers to study further on how femvertising can be utilized not only to promote

their products, but also to help create a good image for their companies by promoting social justice.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Femvertising : A type of advertisement which employs pro-female talent, messages, and imagery to empower women, and to ensure women as the protagonists in the narrative of the advertisement (Becker-Herby 2016).

2. Metafunctions : Systemic clusters that convey meanings of a related kind mapped onto the structure of a clause through the three layers (Halliday and Matthiesen 2004).

3. Multimodality : An approach to study language alongside other resources such as images, gesture, sound, music, scientific symbolism, and action that are variously called as ‘semiotic resources’, ‘modalities’, and ‘modes’ (O'Halloran 2013).

4. Women's Empowerment : A process to empower women by having them the opportunity to redefine gender roles which may allow them freedom to pursue their desired goals (Kabeer 2005).