

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In all five continents in the world, there are more than one billion Catholics concentrating in Southern Europe, the United States of America, the Philippines, and the countries in Central and South America. Catholicism is the beliefs and traditions of the Catholic Church which contain their theology, liturgy, ethics, and spirituality (Catholicism, n.d.). There are significant practices which the Catholic Church observes, such as saint veneration, the use of the crucifix, and rosary beads in prayers. Catholic priests and nuns vow to celibate; they take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and devote themselves to a simple life which only focuses on worshipping God (Catholicism, 2016).

In Catholic Church, blasphemy is said to be a horrible sin—it is even worse than the seven deadly sins; pride, envy, lust, anger, gluttony, greed and sloth (Jackson, n.d.). Blasphemy is defined as ‘behaviour or language that insults or shows a lack of respect for God or religion’ (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.). There are several kinds of blasphemy, such as blasphemy against God, blasphemy against Christ, blasphemy against the Word, blasphemy against the

Church, and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Catholicism, 2016), which is considered to be an unforgivable sin (Graham, 2004).

Blasphemy can come by in different forms. A person may commit blasphemy in their speech or action; an illustration may be considered blasphemous. Even media advertisements contain blasphemy despite its being intentional or not. One instance is the advertisement of an ice-cream brand, *Antonio Federici Gelato*, whose advertisements mostly feature clergies.

Antonio Federici Gelato, which is also considered to be a luxurious ice cream brand (Antonio Federici, n.d.), is an ice-cream brand of an Italian family-run business named Fredericks Dairies. Fredericks Dairies was established in 1896, in Italian Riviera, Italy. However, it later moved and is currently located in Lancashire, United Kingdom. Fredericks Dairies not only sells *Antonio Federici Gelato*, but also has the licence to sell other brands such as Cadbury Del Monte, and Lyles.

To promote its *Antonio Federici Gelato*, Fredericks makes controversial advertisements. Six out of eight advertisements of *Antonio Federici Gelato* are promoted featuring clergies. I choose two out of them to be analysed in the thesis. The first one which I analyse is *Antonio Federici Gelato* 'Immaculately Conceived' advertisement. The advertisement shows a pregnant nun with a text 'Immaculately Conceived' on it. The second advertisement is *Antonio Federici Gelato* 'Submit to Temptation,' where a priest and a nun are sexually posed.

In order to prove the blasphemy in *Antonio Federici Gelato* advertisements, we can use semiotics—'a theory and study of signs and symbols, especially as elements of language or other systems of communication.'

(Nordquist, 2016). This world is full of signs and symbols; they can be found on the streets, and in media such as advertisements, magazines and televisions. Not only can signs be in the form of images and words, but they can also be in the form of flavours, body language, sounds, and objects (Candler, n.d.).

One of the theories which I would like to use is Ferdinand de Saussure's theory on semiotics. Saussure, the most recognised name in the field of semiotics, states that a sign is made up of two parts. They are a sound-image or signifier and a concept or meaning or signified (Lanir, 2012). One instance is the signifier 'pig'. The signifieds can be cute, dirty, and so on — depending on each person's point of view.

The reason why I choose 'Immaculately Conceived' and 'Submit to Temptation' advertisements of *Antonio Federici Gelato* is because they contain six signifiers which support the concept of blasphemy, while the other advertisements only contain five signifiers. As a consequence, the substance of the blasphemy will be more visible in the two advertisements compared to the others.

I am certain that using Saussure's theory on semiotics can help me analyse *Antonio Federici Gelato* advertisements. I aim to show these advertisements' signifiers and signifieds which lead us to the sign system. Finally, the hidden message which *Antonio Federici Gelato* tries to deliver will be revealed. The result will provide the reader with some knowledge and awareness on both Catholicism and blasphemy, and why the action of blasphemy should be avoided.

(704 words)

1.2. Statement of the Problem:

The study sought answer to the following questions:

1. What are the signifiers and the signifieds in two *Antonio Federici Gelato* advertisements?
2. How do the signifiers reveal the concept of blasphemy in two *Antonio Federici Gelato* advertisements?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are as follows:

1. To know the signifiers and the signifieds in two *Antonio Federici Gelato* advertisements.
2. To show how the signifiers reveal the concept of blasphemy in two *Antonio Federici Gelato* advertisements.

1.4. Methods of Research

I use four steps in writing the thesis. Firstly, I collect the data by choosing two out of eight *Antonio Federici Gelato* advertisements which are relevant to the concept of blasphemy. Secondly, I browse and read the theories related to the topic. Thirdly, I analyse the signifiers and the signified of two *Antonio Federici Gelato* advertisements. Finally, I write this research report.

1.5. Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One is Introduction which is concerned about Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of

the Study, Methods of Research, and Organisation of the Thesis. The second chapter is Theoretical Framework. Chapter Three is Analysis of the Advertisements. Chapter Four is Conclusion. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices.

