

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Advertisement is a common thing to be found everywhere in our daily lives. According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), advertisement is a “picture, sign, etcetera which are used to make a product or service known and persuade people to buy it”. Tracy (2019) also states that a product or a service sold by its company are recognized through its brand logo, and consumers can learn about the brand logo through their advertisement.

In promoting a product, a brand needs to have a selling point. Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries (n.d.) states that a selling point is “a feature of a product for sale that makes it attractive to customers”. Therefore, each brand and product must have something unique as the selling point of their advertisements so as to draw the consumers’ attention and encourage them to use their imagination to create their own interpretation of the ads (Clark, 2013).

Bashin (2020) suggests that there are a lot of types of advertisements such as online, printed, magazine, television, radio advertisements and so forth. For my thesis, I choose a printed advertisement which is often used by a number of brands to sell their product(s).

According to Dyer (1993), an advertisement consists of two elements, namely verbal sign and visual sign. A verbal sign is concerned with the words or sounds used in the ads, while a visual sign one makes use of visuals represented in the ads such as colors, shape, gesture, facial expressions and posture, all of which function is to convey a message or messages from the ads. One of the brands which maximizes visuals to promote its products is *Four Loko*. *Four Loko* is a popular alcoholic beverage brand runs by Phusion Projects in Chicago, United States. Both of the the business and Phusion Projects were founded by Chris Hunter, who started the business as a small business together with his friends named Jaisen Freeman and Jeff Wright in 2005. This brand has become a global brand and the drink has been consumed by a great number of people. Furthermore, this product has been available on the market in as many as 35 different countries.

In its advertising, *Four Loko* is often using women as a model in their advertisement (see figures 1 and 2). Particularly, in one of its advertisements, *Four Loko* released its advertisement for the new *Four Loko* berry flavored energy drink with a 6% of alcohol and portrays the objectification towards the woman in the poster.



Figure 1. *Four Loko* Ad



Figure 2. *Four Loko* Ad

Objectification according to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) is “treating people like tools or toys, as if they had no feelings, opinion, or rights of their own”. Nussbaum (as cited in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2010) state that an objectification happens when someone is treated as something that is owned by another which can be sold or bought. To add the information, objection according to Langton (as cited in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2010) is “the treatment of a person as identified with their body, or body parts”. In order to know how the objectification is adopted in the advertisement, this thesis focuses on the linguistic area called semiotics. Semiotics is a study which discusses the signs in people’s lives (Hoed, 2011). A sign can be presented in the form of sounds, words, images, colors, acts or objects (Chandler, 2000). This thesis specifically uses Saussure’s theory (1959) concerning signs. Saussure divides linguistic signs into two elements, namely signifier and signified. Signifier is a form of sign that can be heard, touched, and seen while the signified is the meaning that is being represented by the signifier (Chandler, 2007). Using Saussure’s linguistic signs to analyze *Four Loko* is appropriate because it can specifically reveal the objectification of

women within the advertisement.

Each element of the advertisement can be specifically discussed through the visual images and texts to show how the advertiser is treating the woman as an object.

Thus, the significance of my thesis is to make people aware that an advertisement does not only try to sell its product within its advertisement(s) but can also degrade a certain gender to make it saleable, which in my thesis is achieved by exposing women's body parts shamelessly for monetary gains. It is also hoped that the particular thesis will be of contribution to the study of semiotics, particularly as far as women objectification is concerned.

(TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS: 730)

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The research is done to answer two of the following questions:

1. What are the signifiers and the signifieds in *Four Loko* advertisement?
2. How do the signifieds reveal the objectification of women in *Four Loko* advertisement?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

1. To find out the signifiers and the signifieds in the *Four Loko* advertisement.
2. To find out how the signifieds reveal the objectification of women in *Four Loko* advertisement.

#### 1.4 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is Introduction, comprising Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter presents Literature Review, which deals with Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory and the theory of objectification of women as well as the previous study. Chapter Three presents Methods of Research, consisting of Research Design, Data Collection Technique, Framework for Analysis, and one sample of data analysis. In Chapter Four, there is Analysis of the Objectification of Women in *Four Loko* advertisement. Chapter Five presents the conclusion of the analysis followed by References and Appendices.

