

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

One of the most popular and widely used social media for young people today is Instagram (Smart Insight, 2016, as cited in (Fardouly, et al, 2017). More than 1 billion active monthly users in the world (Instagram Statistics, 2019). As is generally known Instagram social media is a photo and video-based social network that shares an average of 95 million photos and videos per day (Pew Research Center, 2018; Fardouly et al, 2017). Because the existence of Instagram is increasingly popular, Instagram adds several new features that are characteristic of the application, these features are IGTV and Instagram Stories. Instagram features are features that are suitable for content creators and marketers on Instagram.

As mentioned before, Instagram users are diverse from every class of young people including celebrities. In addition to communicating and posting their activities with their fans, these celebrities also use Instagram as a platform to promote something of their own, can be in the form of goods, or even their works. Thus, Instagram is an important social media platform because many celebrities prefer to use Instagram to communicate with their fans compared to other social media platforms.

Many celebrities from all over the world use Instagram, as well as South Korean celebrities who also choose to use Instagram. In addition to communicating with their fans, South Korean celebrities also use Instagram as a place to spread Korean pop culture throughout the world or can be called as the "Korean Wave". It was stated that the spread of the Korean Wave had begun around the 1990s outside South Korea, and began to become increasingly known around the 2000s. Also known as Hallyu or massive cultural phenomena (Davies & Gil Soo Han, 2011, p.146). Films, TV, and music were first promoted alongside cosmetic surgery in the exchange or export of South Korean products and culture (Gloria Davies & Gil Soo Han, 2011, p.146). The development of other South Korean cultural products that are starting to become a trend among young people around the world is Korean pop or K-Pop, this is due to the rapid development of the Korean Wave.

The history of the development of social media, especially the Korean Wave led to the formation of a standard of beauty made by Instagram users who come from celebrities in South Korea. This often happens to people, mostly women, who use social media, one of them is Instagram (Fardouly et al, 2017). Where these women follow the Instagram accounts of Korean celebrities who upload their photos and videos. In every culture that is spread all over the world, it certainly has a different standard of beauty, this happens because of the assessment of local indigenous people in each country (Isa & Kramer, 2003, p.41), this also applies to the community or residents in South Korea who have their own beauty standards.

Besides those mentioned above, the Korean Wave which is spread through social media also makes the hip-hop culture in South Korea begin to be known to the wider community. Even though at first rap lyrics contained in K-Pop music were not considered part of hip-hop music, because it was only considered as part of commercializing hip-hop itself, but when hip-hop music began to be glimpsed by people in the world, the more many idol rap singers began to explore the world of hip-hop. For this reason, Korean hip-hop musicians (K-Hip Hop) are considered part of Korean Idol because they are also celebrities who work in the same field of spreading Korean culture.

Apart from being a place to communicate with their fans through photos uploaded on Instagram, photos uploaded also often contain sexual elements that can be used as sexual objectification by their followers on social media. This can be associated with the theory of body and sexuality by Foucault. In the 18th and 19th centuries in Western according to Foucault (1978) people were increasingly interested in the element relating to sexuality, while in the 19th century, sexuality was ready to be explored through scientific inquiry and recognition. In the 19th century sex became crucial for the power organized around life management, as explained in his book, Foucault (1978) explains that a person or a certain group has dominance in using the disciplinary power for them to regulate someone weaker bodies and a body that can be used. Associated with the concept of sexuality by Foucault, because women currently do not understand the importance of their

bodies and sexuality, they are encouraged by the power of social media to upload photos that look sexy. According to Ward (2003), argued that women are more often used as an object of sexual and targets of evaluation from their appearance through social media to daily interactions.

Because of the issue, this led to the emergence of the objectification process. This issue can be analyzed with the objectification theory written by Fredrickson & Roberts as a result of the existence of body and sexuality in the community. Making someone as an object is the definition of objectification, where someone can be manipulated, controlled, used, and known through their physical nature or characteristics (Thomas F. Cash, 2012, p.574). According to Thomas F. Cash (2012, p.574), this theory tries to clarify the tendency to equate women with their bodies, which can have negative consequences for their bodies. Besides, Thomas F. Cash (2012, p.574) argued that if a person is made as an object it can increase self-objectification in them, because that person has been objectified from the perspective of a third person, and makes them as sexual objects for their followers. Foucault (1978, p.12), sexuality is built through power and knowledge relations, this is because sexuality is not a fixed part of human nature. Because there is power from social media, making women from all walks of life such as celebrities, influencers, even women society get the power from social media to post their photos that highlight certain body parts. Women are more often the target of sexual

objectification in everyday life when compared to men according to research from a large body of research (Thomas F. Cash, 2012, p.574).

As mentioned previously, the formation of self-objectification occurs when someone feels less attractive when compared to others. Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) also identified Self-objectification is used as the first psychological consequence that arises among girls and women. This was also revealed by the research that showed negative results when someone had a greater tendency to compare their appearance with others (regardless of the direction of comparison) (Fardouly et al, 2015). Edit photos and add filters before uploading them to their Instagram accounts, this is because they feel dissatisfied with their bodies and self-objectification (Myers and Crowther, 2009; Vandebosch and Eggermont, 2012; Fardouly et al, 2015)). Self-objectification can also occur in men, but indeed the percentage is not as large as the percentage that occurs in women. This statement is supported by data stating that the Instagram site is more popular among young women aged 18 to 29 years (Pew Research Center, 2018 as cited in (Fardouly et al, 2017)). Women who are used as sexual objects are only women who upload their photos on Instagram that show certain parts of their body, or that contain sexual objective phrases or poses (Boepple et al, 2016; Fardouly et al, 2015).

One of the South Korean musicians or celebrities who have the hip-hop genre in their music is Jessi. Jessica Hyun-Ju Ho (born December 17, 1988), better known by her stage name Jessi, is a Korean-American rapper, singer, and songwriter based

in South Korea. Jessi successfully auditioned for her debut as a South Korean hip-hop singer at her old agency, Doremi Media at her 15, which is still relatively young, in 2003. In 2014, after a 5-year hiatus, Jessi returned as a member of hip-hop trio Lucky J with rapper J'Kyun and vocalist J-Yo under YMC Entertainment in July of that year. From January to March 2015, Jessi was part of the first season of *Unpretty Rapstar*, a spin-off of the program *Show Me The Money*, *Unpretty Rapstar* is a female rapper survival program. Her contract with YMC Entertainment ended in October 2018, and in January 2019 she signed under PSY's record label P Nation.

Jessi is a hip-hop musician with a sexy image, this can also be seen in her Instagram posts (@jessicah_o), with a total of 967 photos shared with 2.6 million followers. In each photo, it can be seen if she often uploads a photo of herself in tight and revealing clothing that emphasizes certain parts of her body. Based on the uploads, these photos can be categorized into sexual objectification, because women are often seen as objects (Thomas F. Cash, 2012, p.574), and their self-esteem is assessed based on the images uploaded in the photos on their Instagram accounts. As it mentioned, Jessi debuted as a female rapper in South Korea since 2003, Jessi became one of the female rapper that still exists today. Jessi's popularity loomed over in 2015 when she joined the *Unpretty Rapstar* survival show, and was famous for her tagline "We're not a team, this is competition." Then, she became one of the South Korean female rapper who is famous throughout the world.

Several studies have examined related issues experienced by women in social media especially on Instagram, one of them is Sabilla Chaerunnisa which is a scholarly article entitled “Normalization of the Body and Sexuality in Kim Kardashian and Kylie Jenner’s Instagram Posts” (2019). In the article, Salsabilla examines two internet celebrities from America Kim Kardashian and Kylie Jenner by a method of visual text analysis and written text analysis. The data is taken from social media Instagram between 2018 to 2019 to dismantling and seeing how far Kim and Kylie’s photos and captions reveal the process of normalization of the body and sexuality by using social semiotics by Gunther Kress’ & Theo Van Leeuwen and Systemic-Functional Linguistic by Halliday. In dismantling the process of normalization, the researcher uses Foucauldian *panopticism* and Baudrillardian *hyperreality*. The result of the study revealed Kim and Kylie were under constant surveillance and were monitored by a capitalist system during the process of normalization, there are requests from followers and themselves to their body and sexuality to be exposed it publicly on their Instagram account.

The other study is by RM Calogero, which is an article entitled “Objectification Theory, Self-Objectification, and Body Image. It is published in *Encyclopedia of Body Image and Human Appearance* (2012). In the article, Calogero argues that objectification theory, highlighting the unique impact of self-objectification on women’s self-body relation. Objectification according to the researchers cited by the author is self-objectification and self-surveillance that serves as an explanatory

factor for understanding women's body image. The result of the study explains how objectification theory as a sexual way in which women's bodies are valued in the context of a Westernized culture that has political and personal implications.

Another study is an article entitled “Instagram Use and Young Women’s Body Image Concerns and Self-Objectification: Testing Mediation Pathways” (2017), which was written by Jasmine Fardouly, Brydie K. Willburger, and Lenny R. Vartanian. The article examines how the relationship between Instagram use with women's body image problems and self-objectification in women in the United States aged 18 and 25 years. Furthermore, the research in this article examines the ideal internalization of beauty in society, a tendency to compare appearance in general or compare appearance with a certain group of people on Instagram. These results suggest that Instagram usage may negatively influence women’s.

Nevertheless, this study is taken from South Korean’s rapper by a method of visual text and body and sexuality objectification. Descriptive analytical method and text-based qualitative research design were used to analyze the visual text. The data are Jessi’s 6 Instagram posts by using Gunther Kress’ and Theo Van Leeuwen’s social semiotics based on the three metafunctions, including representational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and compositional metafunction (visual text). For further, it will be conducted by using Michel Foucault’s body and sexuality concept, alongside with Objectification theory by Fredrickson and Roberts. Therefore, the result in this study suggests that

objectification of body and sexuality are represented through the facial expressions, poses, and gestures, as each post displays a new unattainable standard of body image, sexuality, and beauty of a woman.



1.2 Research Question

How Jessi, as a South Korean women rapper, being objectified on her social media platform Instagram?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study purpose is to examine how the process of body and sexual objectification occurs on Jessi's Instagram posts.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the process of body and sexual objectification on Instagram posts of Jessi (@jessicah_o). The coverage of the study comes from 6 Instagram of Jessi (2019-2020). The data of the study occupied through the stratified purposeful sampling reveal the body and sexual objectification issue.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to find out more about body and sexual objectification in social media which has become stick to the society for a long time. This research is also expected to be useful for readers in addressing the issue more critically.