

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1. Background of The Study

The photo and video-sharing social networking service called Instagram exclusively launched on October 2010. With more than 1 billion monthly active users around the world (Instagram Statistics, 2019), Instagram become the 6th most popular social network worldwide (Statista, 2019). Instagram is like any other social networking site (SNS), which allows users to create a personal profile and connect with others to share information, own thoughts, and different media types (Tsiotsou, 2015). Formerly, Instagram grows fast by added new features to the users to make it more exciting and different from any types of social media, like InstaStory, IGTV, Direct, Filters, Hashtag, etc. With the new features, Instagram is like all social media app mixed. With a lot of those services offered by Instagram, no wonder many people from many different backgrounds using this application.

Celebrities from around the world are included in Instagram's 1 billion monthly active users around the world, they are using this platform as a way to communicate with their fans. Different from any other social media platform, Instagram takes a step further for the fans. It is more than just a status update from

their favourite celebrity, but it is an actual look into what that person is doing. Therefore, Instagram is a perfect choice for celebrities and fans for interacting with each other, especially for those fans who live in a different country.

South Korea's celebrities use Instagram to promote the Korean Wave. Compared to the earlier Korean wave, this new phase of Hallyu, which began in the late 2000s, spreads via social media known as the Latest Korean Wave or Hallyu 2.0 (Jin, 2016; S. Lee & Nornes, 2015 as cited in (Jin & Yoon, 2016) — appears to be more intensive in its popularity. The new Korean wave refers to the diffusion of Korean popular culture via social media — including TV programs, films, K-pop, digital games, and animation — started in 2008. (S. Lee & Nornes, 2015; I. Oh & Park, 2012; J. Song & Jang, 2013 Dal Yong Jin, et al. 2018 as cited in Jin & Yoon, 2016). In particular, Hallyu 2.0, or the new Korean wave, relies primarily on the rapid growth of social media, since global fans – not just Asian fans but Western fans in Europe and North America – can once again enjoy Korean popular culture through social media (Jin & Yoon, 2016).

K-Pop or Korean Pop has been counted among Asian pop music as the most successful cases among Asian pop music and become one of the main components of the Korean Wave (Shin, 2017). These Korean Popstars labelled as "idols," are scouted, educated, and assigned under the tutelage of K-pop's major entertainment companies to a group with carefully designed pictures, which explained that K-pop is actually a manufactured commodity (Saeji, 2013). These idols are the ones who will spread the Korean wave and Korean culture to the world by performing their group's songs on the stage.

Besides performing on the stage or doing official schedule from the agency, the Korean celebrity often use their social media to update their daily activities, shares their hobbies to promote their group or themselves, these celebrities also give some chances to the fans, especially for those fans who live outside Korea, to make them feel closer to their idols.

The images that they share, often containing sexually objectifying poses that can lead to be sexually objectifying photos (Boepple et al., 2016 as cited in Fardouly et al., 2018), the photos could containing specific body parts; like abs or legs (Tiggemann and Zaccardo, 2016 as cited in Fardouly et al., 2018). Social media research has shown that the propensity to compare appearances plays a role in the relationship between Facebook use and women's appearance issues and self-objectivation (Fardouly et al., 2015a, 2015b; Fardouly and Vartanian, 2015; Kim and Chock, 2015 as cited in Fardouly et al., 2018). The fact that Instagram is a social media platform based on images, with over 80 million images uploaded to Instagram daily (Instagram, 2016), providing users to self-objectified each other, including these Korean celebrities. This objectification could happen because such platform like Instagram is natural and familiar for people to follow and view images of celebrities, especially for those fans to their favourite celebrities, models or idols (The Telegraph, 2016).

Sexual objectification occurs when a person viewed as a mere body that exists for the pleasure and use of others (Bartky, 1990 as cited in Saguy et al., 2017). It also increases self-objectification, in which women see themselves from a third-person perspective, mainly admire their bodies for how they appear and

view themselves as objects to be used in a sexualised manner (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). This treatment targets women often than men and occurs both through media portrayals that routinely focus on women's bodies (Archer, Iritani, Kimes, & Barrios, 1983; Thompson, 2000; Ward, 2003 as cited in Saguy et al., 2017). However, it does not mean men cannot be objectified too, both women and men engage in sexual objectification (Amon, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2015; Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011 as cited in Saguy et al., 2017). With a lot of photos and videos uploaded by these celebrities on their personal Instagram, providing the fans to self-objectified their favourite idol.

Kim Hyun-ah is a South Korean singer, songwriter, rapper and model, or better known as Hyuna. Her first music industry appearance in 2007 was as a member of the Wonder Girls girl group under the agency called JYP Entertainment. She left the group and agency however and joined the girl group named 4Minute under Cube Entertainment in 2009. The group is known for its girl crush image and edgy dance-pop style that attracted a large fan base and became one of the most popular girl groups in South Korea and received several significant awards. Later in 2010, Hyuna debuted as a solo artist and earned full public recognition. Hyuna was the first female K-pop solo artist to get 100 million views on a single Youtube music video (Soompi, Hyuna's "Bubble Pop" MV Reaches 100 Million Views on Youtube, 2015). Her music video titled 'Bubble Pop!' released in 2011 and gained popularity after four years, after Hyuna featured on PSY's worldwide hit 'Gangnam Style.' In 2011, Hyuna formed a duo named 'Trouble Maker,' and the song becomes a huge hit known for its sexy music video

and the image of the duo (Billboard, Sex Sells: Trouble Maker's 'Now' Tops the K-Pop Hot 100, 2013). 4Minute disbanded in 2016 after the majority of the group's members decided not to renew the contract. However, Hyuna, who still under the contract with Cube Entertainment, performed as a solo artist and formed a trio named 'Triple H' in 2017. Hyuna ended her contract with Cube Entertainment in 2018 and signed a new contract under Psy's P-Nation in the same year. Hyuna's image in 4Minute is different from her image as a solo artist. While in 4Minute, she is a swag and edgy, as a solo artist she is known for her sexy and sensual image. Her image stands out in the K-Pop industry at that time and getting into a lot of controversial events. From her 19+ music video titled 'Change' known for its pelvic thrusting dance moves (InterviewMagazine, Hey, Sexy Lady: Hyuna, Kpop's Gangnam Girl, 2012), and her latest controversy for lifting her skirt during her live performance at the University Festival (AllKpop, P Nation comments on Hyuna's skirt-lifting controversy). Hyuna becomes the most successful female solo artist in South Korea and often appear on the line up of the famous festival event in South Korea or worldwide.

Her sexy image also can be seen from her Instagram account (@hyunah_aa), with a total of 5,527 posts that she has shared with her 14.1M followers. She has the most followers among female solo artists in South Korea and considered active in shares her daily activities there. She often shares her OOTD (Outfit of the Day) photos with tight revealing clothes and exposes much of her skin. Her picture could occur sexual objectification as a result of the revealing clothing that makes an overall negative and sexist impression on women

(Johnson et al., 2014). Sexualised images on social media may be especially likely to receive positive social reviews due to our culture of women's objectification, in which women often viewed as objects, and their self-worth is expressed by their appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Moradi & Huang, 2008).

Similar with Hyuna, Jackson Wang or well known as Jackson from a boy group named GOT7, is a famous rapper, singer, and dancer in South Korea. Besides South Korea, he is also active in China as a soloist and TV host; this might be because he was born in Hong Kong. His Instagram's username is @jacksonwang852g7, and he is active in his account, with 787 posts shared with his 18.4M followers on Instagram. He often shared his daily activities, his photoshoot with a lot of magazines, and his activities at the gym. A lot of his photos revealed his muscular and fit body. Jackson is known for his toned and muscular body since his debut year, and he works hard to achieve and maintain his body until now. In his interview for GQ (formerly Gentlemen's Quarterly), an international men's magazine based in New York, he said, "I used to cut out carbs because I would diet, but then I realised, why can't I eat carbs? I started eating rice, Cup Noodles, whatever I want. Of course, I still need to be in shape ... Every day, I was calculating this and that—I cannot eat that, I have to work out this area. It was like math to me ... (Jackson, GQ, 2019).

Study has found that men's body modifications are more related to the growth of muscularity than to the quest for a thin body, with particular emphasis on the growth of the upper chest area and the biceps (Cafri et al., 2005; Thompson

& Cafri et al., 2007 as cited in Johnson et al., 2014). The means to accomplish this alteration of the body may include risky behaviours such as excessive exercise and weight training, intense diet and starvation to improve musculature and the use of substances that enhance appearance or efficiency (Hildebrandt et al. 2010 as cited in Johnson, et al. 2014) just like what Jackson do. Perhaps one possible explanation for the drive of men toward muscularity is objectification. While the theory of objectification initially proposed for discussing the objectification of women, it also applied for men (Hebl et al. 2004; Martins et al. 2007 as cited in Johnson et al., 2014), which means that just like women, men can be objectified too.

Previous research specifically investigating the body objectification on media is limited. However, several relevant studies are found. Jasmine, Brydie and Lenny (2018) investigated women between the ages 18-25 that are often using Instagram. Overall, they found out that Instagram usage was certainly associated with self-objectification among young women, and this relationship was influenced by the societal beauty ideal and appearance comparisons to celebrities on Instagram. Furthermore, young women that often viewed fitspiration images on Instagram resulted in body image concerns, among women, and appearance comparison tendency in general. Jasmine et al., also found that Instagram usage may negatively influence women's appearance tendency, particularly if the users make appearance comparisons to other Instagram's users.

In tune with Jasmine et al., Cedarbough T.Saeji (2013), investigated the sexual objectification of Korean idol on Korean music television broadcasts.

T.Saeji found that two Korean music television broadcast; SBS's Inkigayo and MBC's Music Core shows do sexualise objectified the performer (Kpop idol) stage from their emcee's script that talks more about the visual appearance rather than their music to the camera angle and movement.

Differ from the previous related studies, this study will analyzes 3 Instagram posts of Hyuna and 3 Instagram posts of Jackson using Kress and Van Leeuwen Social Semiotics and Fredrickson & Roberts' Objectification Theory to dismantle the process of objectification of the objectification of women and men that occurs within female and male Korean idols Instagram's posts and what the difference between female and male objectification on Korean idols' Instagram posts. Descriptive analytical method and text-based qualitative research design were used to analyse the visual text.

1.2. Research Question

The research tries to answer the following questions, based on the context of the study and the reason for choosing the topic:

1. How are female and male Korean Idols objectified in their Instagram posts?
2. What is the difference between female and male objectification in Korean Idols' Instagram posts?

1.3. Purpose of The Study

The purposes of this study are to investigate how female and male Korean Idols are being objectified from in their Instagram posts and to reveal what the difference between female and male objectification in Korean Idols' Instagram posts between female and male objectification in Korean Idols' Instagram posts is.

1.4. Scope of The Study

This research focuses on three Instagram posts of Hyuna (@hyunah_aa) and three Instagram posts of Jackson (@jacksonwang852g7) from 2016-2010. These two Korean idols are chosen because they often show themselves in revealing clothes that likely to be objectified. Moreover, the photos chosen are likely to have the most engagement (likes and comments) on their account.

1.5. Significance of The Study

The study of body objectification towards males or females can be a learning paradigm for college students to enhance their knowledge about the topic. The study's goal is to help students aware of body objectification in the Internet and social media, so the readers could be more critical about the issue and intended purposes of other's Instagram posts, especially influential person on social media.