

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Dyer (1998) in his book *STARS* explains that a celebrity is a commodity that is produced and consumed on the strength of their meaning. A celebrity is also a symbol of an era; cultural signs that can be classified into class identities, races, genders and sexualities that create their images as a person who represents a certain cultural value. On the other hand, celebrities can be viewed as products of cultural processes, commodities, social relations (Marshall, 1997: 52), a sign or a text (Dyer, 1998; Ellis, 1992), or an expression of 'audience-subjectivity' (Marshall, 1997: 52). With regard to the issue of the roots of star power, Marshall (1997) explained that star power involves the way in which stars or celebrities are constructed by the media industry and the audience. Marshall (1997) classified the construction of celebrities into the categories of film celebrities, television celebrities and music celebrities. Those categories of celebrities are called as the 'Traditional celebrity'. The traditional celebrities develop and increase their popularity through some media industries such as broadcast radio and television; cross media format such as newspapers, and print magazine (Abidin, 2018, p17). Media itself is a tool to create the image, including the image of a celebrity (Holmes, 2006, p.9).

However, with the rise of internet technology, the traditional celebrities who have been showing their fame through television, broadcast radio or cross media format to contemporary digital formats such as website and social media which ultimately resulted a new category of celebrities; Internet Celebrities (Abidin, 2018, p.17). Internet celebrity refers to all media formats (people, products, icons, figures, etc.) that attain prominence and popularity from the internet, although the spillover effect on the internet also impacts on the outside of the internet (Abidin, 2018, p. 16). Internet celebrity is classified into three categories; Exclusive Internet Celebrity, Exoticism Internet Celebrity, and Exceptional Internet Celebrity. For 'Exclusive Internet Celebrities', they create personal image by showing glamorous and exclusive lives as the main purpose to get people's attention and expand their fame. For 'Exotic Internet Celebrities', they do activities that are different from what many people usually do to get the interest of audiences. Then, for 'Exceptional Internet Celebrity', are those who have the unusual abilities, outstanding qualities, or expert skills (Abidin, 2018, p.20).

Moreover, Abidin also explained that there are traditional celebrities and public figures are adopting social media strategies originally generated by internet celebrities to reach a wider audience (Abidin, 2018, p. 17). This method is quite successful to increase their popularity as a celebrity. From social media, audience can easily get more information about celebrities' life instead of from television or other media formats. Audience can send messages directly to celebrities who have social media account

through messaging feature on social media platforms, so that the connection between celebrities and audience feels closer.

One of social media platforms used by the internet celebrities to expand their fame is Instagram. Instagram is one of the most popular and fastest growing social media platforms (Smart Insights, 2016), Instagram now has more than 1 billion monthly active users, just as experts estimated it would by then end of 2018 (Instagram, 2019). There are 4.2 billion Instagram likes per day, 400 million Instagram Stories every day with a third of the most viewed being created by businesses and every day Instagram users upload an average of 100+ million photos (business.instagram.com, 2019). Instagram often contain images of a variety of different comparison targets that vary in relational closeness to the user. The traditional celebrities who become internet celebrities use Instagram as a platform to share their daily activities throughout photos or videos. With lots of followers on their Instagram account, celebrities in Indonesia easily get people attention throughout their posts to expand their fame and profit.

One of celebrities in Indonesia who use Instagram as a platform to expand her fame and profit is Syahrini. Syahrini's instagram account @princessyahrini has more than 29 Million followers with around 4500 photos. Looking at the number of posts which are considerably many, Syahrini becomes one of famous internet celebrities. Her representation in Instagram portray a desirable upper-middle-class lifestyle by showing glamorization practices. This attracts viewers to vicariously experience her lives by subscribing to their Instagram feed (Abidin, 2014, p.126).

Syahrini can be seen as a product of popular culture, since the presence of her in Instagram influences people by presenting fashion styles, behavioral models and ways of life. As a famous celebrity in Indonesia, Syahrini always prioritizes her fashionable appearance, where in every occasion; she is always wrapped in high-end fashion brands. She always seen with her glamorous appearance which show her collection of high-end fashion brands such as Hermes, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Rolex, deLaCour, etc, with prices of hundreds million to billions rupiah. This practice is quite successful for Syahrini to get hundred-thousands of likes on every of her photos on Instagram. For an individual who wants to stand out from the crowd and appear special, looking fashionable is one of the tricks (Baldwin, 2004, p. 290). She also often posts her activities as an artist and singer where in every performance she is always wrapped in fancy dresses by famous designers to make her look outstanding and special. Famous designers used by Syahrini have value to describe her glamorous life, since only particular people who can afford to use fashion designers' services. Syahrini's fashion has become another social class identity; an exclusive internet celebrity. Fashion is exclusively a significant feature of societies with more or less open class system where the elite can mark itself off from neighboring classes by wearing costume and symbol that are not institutionalized signifiers of rank but which are seen as stylish and distinctive (Baldwin, 2004, p.291).

Besides the expensive outfits shown in Syahrini's Instagram account, she also often posts her photos when she travels abroad with a very fashionable style by using

exclusive facilities. Syahrini claims that she always chooses exclusive services for transportation while traveling for her own convenience. It can be seen from some photos on her Instagram account where she was sitting relaxed in a private jet, she also chose private suite class for a long trip to Los Angeles and use Hermes helicopter while spending holiday in Tokyo, Japan (Detik.com, 2016). Travelling on luxurious transportation is another supporting factor that escalates Syahrini's fame on the internet. The exclusive transportation has value to describe her prestige as an 'exclusive' internet celebrity indicates that she belongs to a certain class with those who have high economy capital to do an exclusive things like Syahrini does. As the result, the exclusive facilities, fancy transportations, expensive outfit, and also her holiday trips that shown by Syahrini function as possessive attributives which signify Syahrini herself as an exclusive internet celebrity (Kress & van Leuween, 1996, p.87).

Hereafter, Hall explains that representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between member of culture (1997, p.21). Language refers to signs, objects, and events in Syahrini's Instagram posts create the concept in viewer mind that she represents something. The situation where Syahrini utilizes herself through any kind of platform, usually through some photos on social media, to express the scenario-based ideal self and to control other's impress can be presume as her strategy to show her representation as an internet celebrity, who wants to expand her popularity and get special recognition from the viewers (Abidin, 2018, p.21).

Several researches about celebrity culture in literary works or media have been conducted by some researches all around the world. *Framing emerging behaviors influenced by internet celebrity* conducted by Suwan Juntiwarakij explores the impact of internet celebrity (Juntiwarakij, 2018, p.1). By analyzing the literature on celebrity conceptualization and related topics, this study aimed to explore theoretically the phenomenon and the underlying social cultural influence of this new kind of capital through social construction, mostly based upon Max Weber's fragmentary theory of the modern state, of contemporary celebritization in the modern social media era, including celebrity meaning, celebrity status, celebrity capital, and celebrity culture. The interactions between Internet celebrities and their audiences lead to emerging online behaviors. The difference between Juntiwarakij's study and this study lies on the topic. Juntiwarakij's study focuses on how internet celebrity successfully influences people, especially younger generations, whilst my study focuses to analyze Indonesian celebrity's Instagram posts which represent her stardom ness as an internet celebrity.

Studying Celebrity Practices on Twitter Using a Framework for Measuring Media Richness by Sikana Tanupabrungsun and Jeff Hemsley explains that social media enable the per formative actions needed for celebrity to build and maintain audience. This study attempts to analyze Twitter as one social media platforms that mediate identity construction and interaction with fans while enabling environments that are co-constructed by celebrities, fans, and the platform itself. They use the theoretical lens of media richness to study the ways that different types of celebrities

enact “micro-celebrity” by mapping three richness dimensions (contextual, interactional, and informational) into groupings of Twitter’s affordances. The differences with this study are lying on the data resource and the topic.

To investigate the relationship between motives, usage, self-presentation and number of followers on Instagram by applying the use and gratification theory as well as the impression management approach, Cheung Ting Ting (2014) conducted a study entitled “*A Study of Motives, Usage, Self-presentation and Number of Followers on Instagram*”. This study uses quantitative survey method. The author of this study found that motives were positively associated with both use and self-representation, while the number of followers was also clarified to have a positive correlation with Instagram use and self-representation.

Stardom from the perspective of media power: Reproducing media power in the reception of Li Yuchun’s stardom constructed by Li Cui (2016) examine the stardom of Li Yuchun, a star from Super Girls’ Voice (an American Idol-type show), from the perspective of media power, study by Li Cui focuses on the symbolic boundary between the media world and the ordinary world based on Couldry’s framework of media power. This study compares the stardom of Song Zuying, who represents party stars; the stardom of Jay Chou, who represents commercialized stars; and the stardom of Li Yuchun to explore the ways in which audiences construct the stardom of Li Yuchun. This study used a focus group approach to explore audience responses to Song

Zuying, Jay Chou and Li Yuchun's stardom and the general construction of stardom (Cui, 2016, p.1). The differences with this study are lying on the methodology and the data resource.

A Visual Social Semiotic Analysis of Target's Branding using Instagram, conducted by Chelsea Bevins (2014) will break down brand management, using David Aaker's framework, of the Target Corporation to see if they are using modern resource, Instagram effectively. This research will also look at how the theory of visual social semiotics, applied to communications, is used to decode intended meaning. A qualitative content analysis was used to look at themes and engagement to see if Target is managing their brand through their Instagram. The differences with this study are lying on the issue and the data collection.

However, this study discusses 10 Instagram posts with English Caption from Syahrini's Instagram account where Syahrini as the object of research. Social semiotic approach by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen is employed to analyze the picture of Instagram posts by using three metafunctions: representational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, compositional metafunction (Harrison, 2003, pp. 50-56). Social semiotics can be used to analyze every social practices within can be textual context (picture,text) or even people behavior (Leeuwen, 2005, p. 4). Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) by Halliday is used to analyze the caption of 10 photos from Syahrini's Instagram posts by using three metafunctions; Ideational metafunction, Interpersonal metafunction, and Textual metafunction.

1.2. Research Question

How do 10 Instagram posts of Syahrini represent herself as an internet celebrity?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to analyze 10 Syahrini's Instagram posts which represent Syahrini as an internet celebrity.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the Syahrini's Instagram posts from 2015 until 2018. The purposeful sampling is used in this study by choosing the Instagram posts which relate or represent Syahrini as an internet celebrity.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is used as reference related to celebrity culture and representation of internet celebrity. The result of this research is aimed to give an academic input in cultural studies and media discourse fields.