CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Technology, particularly gadgets, has been growing rapidly from time to time. With the advancement of today's technology, it becomes easier and faster to communicate without regard for distance, location, and time constraints. Moreover, it is also easier and faster to access new information. The advancement in technology also affects the use of social media. Social media is generally defined as a form of web-based data communication which allows users to have conversations, share information, make connections and create online content. Social media removes human boundaries for socializing, such as space and time. With social media, people are allowed to communicate with each other wherever they are at any time, no matter how far apart they are, and no matter day or night. There are many forms of social networks, including blogs, social networking sites, photo sharing sites, instant messages, video sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and so on (Akram & Kumar, 2017).

Instagram and Twitter are two of the most popular social media platforms. Based on data from Statista, Instagram is in 4th place with 93 million active users in Indonesia, followed by Twitter in 6th place with more than 15.7 million active users in Indonesia (Statista, 2021). Instagram is

known as a photo-sharing mobile application for smartphones which is available for free in the Apple Store and Google Play store that allows the users to create a profile, make connections, take pictures, share stories, apply the various filter, and share photos (Bergstrom & Backman, 2013). While Twitter is known as a micro-blogging service that allows users to post and communicate using short messages called tweets. Initially, Twitter limited each tweet to 140 characters to reflect the length of SMS messages, which was how tweets were distributed before the development of the mobile app. In 2017 Twitter finally doubled its character rule to as many as 280 characters and the users also can upload photos or short videos which provided a slight advantage for its users to use the application. The users can use Twitter to update current status, initiate conversations, promote products and even spam something (Benevenuto, Magno, Rodrigues, & Almeida, 2010). The users of Instagram mostly come from young adults (18-29 years old) while Twitter users mostly come from young adults to adults (around 25-34 years old) with various backgrounds, thus making them the largest group of both users (Statista, 2021).

Instagram and Twitter are social media tools that have the same function as a media of communication. They also have similar features and are increasingly diverse over time such as posting tweets or captions, uploading photos or videos, making a story in real-time, making a gif, and hashtag. Although both of them have similar features, what sets them apart is the way users socialize with one another. On Instagram, the user has to upload a photo

and add captions as an explanation or photo complement. Moreover, Instagram also has other features such as IGTV, Instagram Explore, Instagram Shop, Face Filters, Photos Layout, Multi-Capture, and Boomerang. While on Twitter, they emphasized the fast and short messages that can be a connection of events around the world. The users interact more through short messages uploaded to this platform. In Twitter, there are more features such as quote a tweet, native gif search, pin a tweet, create a Twitter moment, create Twitter lists, and use Twitter promote mode. Those features aim to attract more users to use Twitter.

As mentioned before, the users of Instagram and Twitter mostly come from young adults to adults with various backgrounds, including celebrities, fans, or the general public. The use of social media is not only a medium of communication of the users but also as a marketing tool to display products with visual descriptions, promote something or give information (Ting, Ming, Cyril de Run & Choo, 2021). Celebrities from all over the world use social media as a platform to interact with their fans. As well as celebrities from South Korea, they do not only want to share their activity. But also wants to promote their culture, which is known as Korean Wave or Hallyu Wave. The development of digital technology as well as social media, such as Instagram, Twitter or any other social network sites, make it easy for people to access the latest information, which has a significant impact on Korean Wave global deployment (Jin & Yoon, 2017). Since the mid of 1990s, the impact of the Korean Wave has become a global sensation (Jin, 2012). A few Korean

dramas become popular in East and Southeast Asia in the late 1990s. Since then, Korean Wave has started to flourish with the appearance of dramas "Autumn in My Heart", "My Sassy Girl", and "Winter Sonata" in Japan, Hongkong, Thailand, and Singapore in the early 2000s. At that time, TV dramas were not the only reason that made Korean Wave more popular, but there are also artists or boy bands and girl bands who were gaining popularity in Asian countries, such as BoA, TVXQ, Super Junior, and Big Bang (Jin & Yoon, 2016).

The spreading of the Korean Wave or Hallyu Wave began in East Asia in the mid of 1990s (Jin & Yoon, 2016). Since then, Korean Wave has become increasingly recognized by the world, many people start to notice K-Pop and the number of K-Pop fans has increased bit by bit over time. The spread of Korean culture does not only happen in the music and TV dramas itself but also their films, reality shows, foods, fashions, etc. The Korean Wave has made a big impact in South Korea, as the host country, especially in their tourism sector and economic income. The Korean Wave has triggered a new phenomenon of "East Culture" in a personal lifestyle that also occurs in Indonesia (Mariani, 2008). In the beginning, the spreading of the Korean Wave in Indonesia was only concentrated on TV dramas, while music or movies were not popular yet. But nowadays, most Indonesian people, both men and women, have started liking Korean culture. People have started liking their fashion style, food, tourism attraction, TV dramas, movies, songs,

the boy band and girl band, etc. These things happened due to the influence of the Korean Wave or Hallyu Wave through dramas and songs (Mariani, 2008).

The spreading of the Korean Wave also affected social culture in South Korea. In the past, Korean culture very strongly upheld the patriarchal system. Patriarchy is defined as a social structure and system of customs where the male has superior in the hierarchy, dominates, oppresses, and exploits the female (Park, 2001). Korean males are molded to be tough, frigid, and unyielding. They expect to be served and treated with an almost unbelievable amount of respect at home. The elder Korean males dictate a greater level of power over the family (Carlos, 2019). As in the Joseon dynasty era, only men that have more privileges than women. The men are allowed to have educations while women are strictly prohibited. Women are considered weak and prohibited to get an education, they can only do the household chores. In South Korea, this patriarchal system can be called the traditional masculinity system which is influenced by traditional gender roles and patriarchy that caused men to have more power than women. Traditional masculinity defines men to be aggressive, independent, unemotional, dominant, active, logical, and objective. (Franklin II, 2012). Men have the authority to control their family members and have to work as a breadwinner while women should stay at home and do the household chores.

In 1948, the patriarchal system began to loosen so that women in South Korea can get the right to get an education, pursue their careers, and free their opinions. In 2005, the South Korean government finally abolished this

patriarchal system from its laws and regulations (Korea: Dulu & Sekarang, 2012). But this patriarchal system is not fully erased because the patriarchal system is very influential in South Korea until now there are still many families who uphold this system. There are still many pros and cons to this system that ultimately affect the characteristics of masculinity in South Korea. In Indonesia, the patriarchal system is also existed, although it has varying levels of thickness. In general, Indonesian people adhere to a bilateral kinship system where both men and women are equally important in continuing their progeny and can inherit equally either from the mother's or father's line. This patriarchal system still exists today, particularly in domestic, economic, political, and cultural activities. As a result of these practices, various social issues in Indonesia have arisen for example, according to Soetomo's book about the definition of social issues, which is an unwanted condition by most of the community, namely Domestic Violence (KDRT), sexual harassment, early marriage rates, and stigma regarding divorce. Seen through the approach to the problem, the impact of patriarchal culture in Indonesia is included in the system blame approach, namely problems caused by the system that is not running according to wishes or expectations (Sakina & A., 2017). The influence of masculinity itself depends on society standards. Also, masculinity is dynamic and always changes. (Pratiwi, 2020).

Masculinity is the concept that consists of those behaviors, languages, and practices which exist in specific cultural and organizational locations. Masculinity is generally associated with males and thus culturally defined as

not feminine (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). However, years of research in sociology, media studies, psychology, and other fields have shown that the definition of masculinity is not as simple as that. Just like Baker and Levon (2016) said, the concept of masculinity cannot be explained by just one definition, because there are still various definitions of "male" in historical and social contexts. Masculinity is also an ideology which describes as a series of beliefs of a group of people who later influence society because culture and society play fundamental roles in discussing masculinity (Reeser, 2011).

In the 1980s, the concept of the new man began to emerge which refers to the characteristics of men who are more sensitive, considerate, anti-sexist, and are more concerned with physical appearance and voluntarily share domestic activities that are usually attached to women (Baker & Levon, 2016). This concept appears to challenge the stereotypes of men which are commonly associated with aggressive behavior, selfishness, and indifference (Veissiere, 2018).

At first, men in Korean pop culture were primarily represented as fierce and rebellious young men in several TV dramas from the 1980s to the early 1990s (Jung, 2010). However, when the economic crisis occurred in 1997, South Korea began to display the image of men who are gentle, concerned with their appearance, more fashionable, and willing to do the work that women usually do (Maliangkay, 2013). This male icon is known as *kkonminam*, which means flower and beautiful boy. It can be concluded as a

man who looks attractive as a flower. In addition, Jung (2010) also argues that *kkonminam* has masculine characteristics (tall body) as well as feminine (white and smooth skin, silky soft hair, soft and romantic behavior) that can satisfy the complexity of human desires. This *kkonminam* is related to the soft masculinity character, where men have a soft yet manly character at the same time.

According to Korean Masculinities and Transcultural Consumption: Yonsama, Rain, Oldboy, K-pop idols, masculinity in South Korea is different from other countries which are known as "Soft Masculinity" (Pratiwi, 2020). The concept of soft masculinity is culturally constructed by society through the performances of acting, dressing, and speaking. This concept of soft masculinity is a hybrid product that can be accepted in several countries. It is constructed through the transcultural amalgamation of South Korea's traditional 'seonbi' masculinity (which is heavily influenced by Chinese Confucian 'wen' masculinity), Japan's 'bishonen' (pretty boy), and global metrosexual masculinity (Jung, 2010). The characteristic of 'seonbi' masculinity emphasizes mental qualities above physical ones, such as have intellectual, politeness and tenderness (Jung, 2010). "Bishonen" is a Japanese term for a guy with characteristics similar to a pretty boy, such as long legs and hair, a slim body, a feminine face, and a charming smile (Buckley, 2002). Global metrosexual masculinity is a Western concept that refers to metro-sexuality. Metrosexual is identical to a man who cares about his appearance (Fribadi, 2012). Jung (2010) expresses the idea of soft masculinity through the

figure of Bae Yong Joon, a Korean actor who became the originator of the pretty boy fever in the Asian Region in the early 2000s. There are three prominent characteristics of soft masculinity, namely Tender Charisma, Politeness, and Purity. The characteristic of tender charisma is a combination of a firm character of a male and a soft character of a female. Politeness is character that describes as a good man, polite, and gentle manners towards everyone. This is in stark contrast to the portrait of men in the past, where men were depicted as rude and authoritarian individuals. Purity is a character in the form of sincerity and innocence as a pure and innocent first love (Jung, 2010).

One of the most prominent Korean artists on social media platforms Instagram and Twitter is Siwon Choi with the username @siwonchoi which has more than 8 million followers on Instagram and more than 7 million followers on Twitter. He is well-known as a member of Super Junior, one of the famous boybands from South Korea. He gained a huge number of followers because of his reputation as a member of Super Junior, an actor of various Korean dramas, and a model from South Korea. As time passed, he gained popularity in Indonesia because Super Junior was quite often held concerts in Indonesia. Super Junior has visited Indonesia on several occasions, whether as individual activities, sub-units or as a group, for fan meetings, concerts, or business events. After gaining fame in Indonesia as a member of Super Junior, Siwon began to receive job offers from Indonesia, one of which was becoming a commercial star for an Indonesian noodle product.

Both on Instagram and Twitter, Siwon used to upload his activities such as daily life, job activities, fashion style, and promote the humanitarian activities of UNICEF. He uses several languages, including Korean, English, Japanese, and even Indonesian, when interacting with his fans. It can be seen that Siwon is familiar with his Indonesian fans, he used to upload tweets using Indonesian language and introduces himself with Indonesian name as Agung. He shows an interest in learning Indonesian culture and language so that he can communicate with his Indonesian fans using the Indonesian language. He often promotes his humanitarian activities with UNICEF to make people are motivated to help each other. He wants to be useful for children, to help people in need and set a good role model for the next generations.

According to Sun Jung, the concept of soft masculinity is defined as a hybrid product constructed through the trans-cultural amalgamation of South Korean tradition, "seonbi" masculinity which is influenced by Chinese Confucian masculinity, Japan's "bishonen" masculinity, and global metro-sexual masculinity. As mentioned before, the influence of the Korean Wave has produced a new culture called soft masculinity. There are three prominent characteristics of soft masculinity, namely Tender Charisma, Politeness, and Purity. The characteristic of tender charisma is a combination of a firm character of a male and a soft character of a female. Politeness is a character that describes a good man, polite, and gentle manners towards everyone. This is in stark contrast to the portrait of men in the past, where men were depicted as rude and authoritarian individuals. Purity is a character in the form of

sincerity and innocence as a pure and innocent first love (Jung, 2010). The term soft masculinity appears in tandem with the development of Korean pop, which is increasingly popular around the world, particularly in Indonesia, which was later redefined by Siwon in his social media post. Therefore, the existence of this concept and the attitude shown by Siwon in his Instagram and Twitter post was the main points in conducting this research.

There are some studies related to this topic that discuss either soft masculinity or traditional masculinity. The first one is *"The Construction of Fathers New Masculinity in South Korea Variety Show Superman is Back"* by Iryanti et al., (2017) from the Cultural Studies Department, Faculty of Cultural Science, Universitas Padjajaran. They want to explore the construction of new masculinity in South Korean parenting and fatherhood at the variety show "Superman is Back". They use qualitative methods to collect the data from some selected scenes and use their interpretation to give the result. From their analysis and interpretation, they found out the reality show "Superman is Back" tries to display the different masculinity that is being constructed and different from the traditional one, which only focuses on the strength and power of patriarchal culture. This new masculinity is less oppressed than women as embedded in the context of patriarchal culture. The portrayal of new masculinity can be seen from the fathers when they nurture, cook, chore, change baby's diaper, or play with their children.

The second one is *"The Representation of Masculinity in South Korean Reality Show the Return of Superman"* by Praptika and Putra (2016) from the

English Department, Universitas Airlangga. They discuss the representation of masculinity in Korea that is being represented by the celebrity fathers in the reality show "The Return Superman". They use textual analysis with the theory of television culture by John Fiske and the messages of masculinity by Ian M. Harris. They use the data from the selected scenes of the reality show. Their analysis tries to reveal how those celebrity fathers represent South Korean masculinity, which is not about strength and power but also how they love and take care of their children and family.

The third one is *"The Portrayal of Masculinity in Bangtan Boys clip video DOPE"* by Dwi Ayun Pratiwi (2019) from Universitas Airlangga. She discusses the representation of masculinity in BTS's clip video using a qualitative approach to collect the data. To analyze the data, she uses television culture theory by John Fiske and soft masculinity by Sun Jung as the framework. The discussion focuses on costumes, make-up, accessories, gesture, and expression of the members. From this discussion, the writer found out the masculinity portrayed in the clip video was a combination of new masculinity and traditional masculinity. Not only about their appearances that use makeup, accessories, costume, etc. but also still embrace the concept of traditional masculinity that is associated with logic, aggressive, protective, smartness, etc.

The next one is *"Maskulinitas Dalam Akun Instagram Influencer Laki-Laki"* by Maribeth (2019) from UPN Veteran Jawa Timur, in her study. She discussed the development of fashion about the values of masculinity shown

in the photo object displayed on the Instagram account of a fashion influencer in Indonesia and also examined the gender identity of the three objects and examined the values of masculinity that are shown based on that identity. The symbols displayed in the photos represent self-identity constructed through fashion photos on Instagram. She uses a descriptive qualitative approach with Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis method to analyze the code/symbols/markers in fashion photographs in full and in detail and also relate them to the type of masculine values inherent in the photo of the fashion influencer. From this discussion, the writer found out that the development of fashion in Indonesia is becoming increasingly open and not rigid in the gender rules that surround it. The fashion styles from Jovi, Andy and Alvin show that fashion has no gender and new masculinity has begun to develop and is acceptable among the urban community seen from the many followers on their Instagram social media.

The last one is *"Maskulinitas di Majalah Pria: Studi Semiotika Terhadap Rubrik Rupa di Majalah Men's Health Indonesia"* by Sondakh and Priska Cinthia (2004) from Universitas Kristen Petra Surabaya, in their study. They discussed the emergence of men's magazines became one of the pioneers which signaled a shift in the myth of masculinity. Men's magazines circulating now not only offer the appearance of a man who is tough, strong, rude, aggressive and doesn't care about physical appearance. They use the study of semiotics developed by Roland Barthes to examine more deeply the representation of masculinity in Men's Health Indonesia Magazine. From this

discussion, the writer found out that the man in this magazine reproduced dismantles the old myth about masculinity which is synonymous with a man who is strong, rude, loud, aggressive and does not care about appearance. This magazine features a man with a white physical appearance, a mulatto face that is clean without blemishes, a sharp nose, tall, broad-chested, proportionate in the sense that there is not a lot of loose fat and a dandy appearance as reflected in his neat and clean clothes. This study also finds that Men's Health Indonesia Magazine also reproduces the ideological idea of a capitalist society, where men in the 21st century are potential consumers to buy fashion products with international labels that are explicitly displayed in this franchise magazine.

From the previous studies above, there are similarities and differences with this study. Most of the previous studies have the same focus which discusses soft masculinity or new masculinity, the representation of new masculinity on the Instagram account, and how the magazine represented a shift in the myth of masculinity. Unlike those previous studies, this study will be more specific to analyze the character of soft masculinity as represented through Siwon Choi's Instagram and Twitter posts using social semiotic theory by Kress and Van Leeuwen.

In this study, the writer will analyze one photo from Siwon Choi's Instagram account and five photos from Siwon Choi's Twitter account to find how does Siwon Choi represent the character of soft masculinity through his Instagram and Twitter posts. The writer will use the theory of social semiotic

by Kress and Van Leeuwen and Systematic Functional Linguistic (SFL) by Halliday to analyze the photos and captions.

1.2 Research Questions

How does Siwon Choi's photos represent the character of soft masculinity through his Instagram and Twitter posts?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to analyze six photos and captions on Siwon Choi's Instagram and Twitter posts, to find how Siwon represent the character of soft masculinity through his Instagram and Twitter post. Also, to give more knowledge about soft masculinity.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing six photos and captions of Siwon Choi's Instagram and Twitter posts which he posted during 2018-2020.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be useful as a source for the next research that is related to soft masculinity. Also, it can give more knowledge and a better understanding of soft masculinity to the readers.