

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, limitation of the study, significance of the study and previous related study.

1.1 Background of the study

Nowadays, people need the media in their lives to get various information such as lifestyle, fashion, healthy life, relationship tips and many more. Such information provided in many mass media like newspapers, magazines, or television. As one of the popular form of mass media, magazine have their target readers based on the theme chosen on the specific readership; for instance women's magazine which targets the female readers, and men's magazine which targets the male readers. The language in the cover of the magazine can also construct certain ideas to control the society, and by using the images , slogans, signs in the magazines it can deliver meaning of concept based on what is represented , which is described as 'representation' (Hall,1997). Furthermore, men's magazine that mentioned before provided a figure of men by what is represented.

Media power is generally symbolic and persuasive, in the sense that the media primarily have the potential to control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers, but not directly their actions. In this case, media plays their role to influence people's mind about the 'what kind of aspects to become a men'. Therefore, in this study men's magazines are chosen to be the objects for the reason that the men on the cover of the magazine acts as a figure of the ideal men and a role model for the others.

The writer chose 5 editions of *Men's Health* magazine (August-December 2017) U.S editions and those magazines are selected because *Men's Health* is able to represent men's magazine since it have the best selling products all over the world. *Men's Health* (MH), published by Rodale Inc. In Emmaus, Pennsylvania, United States. It is the world's largest men's magazine brand with 35 editions in 59 countries and become the best-selling men's magazine on U.S., with a target market consisting of affluent, educated, middle-class males, aged 25-45 years (*Hearst Magazines*, 2016), it currently covers various men's lifestyle topics such as fitness, nutrition, fashion, lifestyle and sex tips. *Men's Health* is the go-to source for the latest information and expert advice for a healthy and active lifestyle.

The writer is interested in representation of the ideal men that built in the front cover for the reason that cover of magazine is one of the prominent point to display what is the magazine wants to construct (ideas, concept, etc.) which will be connected with semiotic theory of Charles Sander Peirce. By what is represented, the writer also interested in masculinity theory for the reason it gave us a better understanding of men and masculinity is influenced by a number of intervening factors, such as race, ethnicity, class, nationality, age, and religion. The image of masculinity constructed purposely to sell a brand-name product also shapes the way men see themselves and others. (Alexander,2003). Advertising imagery constitutes an influence to the readers in public space and it is strongly related to what is represented by the media. In a recent article, Maurice Patterson and Richard Elliott discuss male representation in advertising, and argue that some contemporary images "invert" the male gaze. Men are increasingly encouraged to view their own bodies as sites of identity management: "consumers" bodies are the products of labor (body work) that necessitates consumption and the use of consumer goods, and simultaneously, through visualization, their bodies act as advertisements for such labor" (Patterson and Elliott 2002,234). Men is identic

with several indications to be define as a ‘real men’ such as big muscles, sixpack body and charming gaze that directly looks to the readers that may cause some responses. Patterson and Elliott conclude that hegemonic masculinity adopted to recent societal changes with “the increasing feminization of masculinities, as men are encouraged to partake in the carnival of consumption, to become concerned about their appearance, to get in touch with their emotions, and as male bodies become objects of display subject to the male gaze” (Patterson and Elliott 2002, 241).

Aside from the masculinity on the *Men’s Health* magazine front cover, there is a concept of hegemonic masculinity by Connell to support the masculinity theory since it is related conceptual discussion and the experience of men’s bodies (Connell 1983).

1.2 Research Question :

According to the background of the study , the writer purposes the following question : How is the ideal body of men represented in Men’s Health Magazine cover?

1.3 Purposes of the study :

The aim of this paper is to investigate how the ideal body of men represented based on the *Men’s Health* Magazine cover. Moreover, this study is intended to investigate to what extent the Men’s Health magazine front covers represent hegemonic masculinity.

1.4 Limitation of the study :

In this study the writer focuses on analyzing Men’s Health magazine front cover as one of the best selling product in many countries, the front cover that looks attractive is one of the important thing to influence people to buy the magazine or even follow the newest update of this magazine by become the subscribers. Thus, the objects of the analysis are 5 editions of Men’s Health magazine from August until December 2017 (US edition). The

theories used in this study are semiotics by Charles Sander Peirce, representation and identity as part of circuit of culture by Hall to analyze the relation between facial expression, body position of the social actor agent as a part of selling product's strategy. Followed by Masculinity and Hegemonic Masculinity theory by Connell to explain how big muscle and six pack body can be a sign of masculine and the importance of Visual appearance is able to explicitly influence the readers to have fit, attractive, eye-catching body. Furthermore, the author will analyze the text around the model in the cover and the relation between them.

1.5 Significance of the study :

Throughout this study, the writer hopes to contribute for a better understanding of how a model in the cover of the magazine represented as the strategy of marketing and build people's mind especially for a men to have such ideal body. Since in our society what defined as "ideal body" and "perfect men" are already constructed.

1.6 Previous Related Study :

Kelly Miller (2014), who conducted a study entitled "Can Women's and Men's Health Magazines be Judged by Their Covers? Differences in Magazine Models and Headline Frames" , analyzed the headline and images on covers of women's and men's health magazines. It also concern about media exposure of ideal body that caused eating disorder (ED) by the readers (males and females) in America. 20 million women and 10 million men suffer from an ED because of the desire to achieve 'the ideal body'. In analyzing the data, Miller used cultivation theory, framing theory as one of the influence of the readers thought and actions. The study included a total of 41 health magazine covers: 29 for women and 12 for men which were taken by coding procedure in order to measure the comparison of body areas show and revealed without clothing between men and women and the comparison of headline frames between women's and men's health magazine. The result showed headlines on men's health magazine covers contain more body competence frames and fewer appearance/weight loss/maintenance frames than headlines on women's health magazine covers.

Stefan Lawrence (2016), who conducted a study entitled “Racialising the “great man”: A Critical Race study of idealised male athletic bodies in *Men’s Health* magazine”, argued that white male athletic bodies are represented as idealised masculine types, possessing both the virtues of body and mind, while their black male counterparts, to varying degrees, are depicted as spectacular, violent and hyper-masculine. In analyzing the data, Lawrence used a year’s worth of the title (11 issues), from January/February 2010 to January/February 2011, the theory included Semiotic theory, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and intersectionality which able to illustrate that male athletic bodies are differently racialised through representation and that racialised aspects of idealised masculinities are invested relationally in discourses of power. The result showed that white male bodies remain very much at the ideological centre of embodied discourses of idealised masculinities and/or imaginations of “great men”. In turn, representations of black men in sport media have been criticised for perpetuating an essentialist and stereotypical discourse of black manhood as inherently angry, violent, physical, stupid, sexually aggressive and animal-like (Orbe, 1998).

Therefore, by using the Representation theory of Stuart Hall and Peirce theory of semiotic, the author would like to analyze the interpretation of the images, titles, slogans and cover lines that provided in the cover magazine based on what is the signifier and the signified. And by using Connell approach of Hegemonic Masculinity the author would like to investigate do the front cover of *Men’s Health* magazine represent hegemonic masculinity.

