

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Since ancient times, human being has always made communication to each other. Starting from the primordial era, they communicated by drawing something on the stone wall of a cave. Then, it continued with using clay tablets and animal skins then using parchment (Iteconnect, 2011, p.1, ¶.1). In the next era, communication became easier with the discovery of printing press by Johannes Gutenberg (Campbell, 2000, p. 6). From that day onward, people could read books, magazines, and newspapers which could be produced easily as a form of communication. Then, in 1840 the telegraph was founded. The users of the telegraph were able to create pulses of electricity that the receiver could decode using long and short clicks. This was the first example of instant long distance communication. This was continued with the telephone, radio and television (Iteconnect, 2011, p.1, ¶.2).

Communication will always be a culture to everyone because communication is related with language and language is one aspect of culture. So, to communicate to each other, people need media to help them deliver information or data. According to R. Campbell in his book *Media and Culture* (2000), communication is the process of creating symbol systems that convey information and meaning, for example, language systems, Morse code, film, or computer

codes and media such as newspapers, telephone, and mobile phone. Beth Edginton and Martin Montgomery have a similar opinion when they say:

Television, radio, and newspapers or magazines are regarded as a group. The media entertain or spread news and information to a large number of people (Edginton and Montgomery, 1996, p. 10).

The statement above tells about the importance of media in delivering information to everyone. So, communication media or mass communication is the "process of designing and delivering cultural message and stories to a large and diverse audiences through media channels which can be as old as a book and as new as the internet" (Campbell, 2000, p. 6).

Nowadays, the communication media that are most widely used is the electronic gadget, called the mobile phone. In *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008, p. 916), the mobile phone is "a telephone which is connected to the telephone system by radio instead of by a wire, and can, therefore, be used anywhere where its signals can be received."

Historically, the mobile phone was introduced to the public around the beginning of 1980s which spread rapidly within ten years to penetrate the consumer market (Fidler, 2003, p.19). Before the mobile phone, there had been some communication media such as the telegraph and telephone. R. Fidler explains further that the telegraph was founded in 1840 by Samuel Morse in the form of an electromagnetic telegraph. Telegraph is a communication system in which information is transmitted over a wire through a series of electrical current pulses, usually in the form of Morse code. It is the first device to send messages by electricity. Then, about 40 years later, most inventors and

developers concentrated on wire line telegraphy, suspending wires between poles, which eventually became what we know as telephone poles. According to G. Marples, this is how people knew that electromagnetic messages could travel through the air (2008, p.1, ¶. 7).

The mobile phone was launched by Martin Cooper who was known by many as the father of the cellular phone on 1983. He created Motorola Dyna Tech as the first generation (1G) of mobile phones (Marples, 2008, p.1, ¶.8). Then in 1990, 1G was developed to become the Second Generation (2G) which was able to work on mobile phone systems such as GSM, IS-136 (TDMA) and IS-95 (CDMA) and until now to the third generation (3G) mobile phones which is commonly used today. 3G mobile phones usually include innovations that receive much more than phone calls, for instance, SMS text is available and some 3G phones also offer email and Internet access (Tech-faq, 2011, p.1, ¶.9).

U. Pringgodigdo, the Business Development Manager of Nokia Mobile Phone Indonesia said that

*Peralatan-peralatan elektronik (digital) memang fungsinya akan digantikan oleh ponsel. Selain handycam yang secara perlahan mulai bisa diaplikasikan ke ponsel, juga peralatan audio. Saat ini ponsel seolah-olah akan merangkum discman, walkman, radio FM stereo, juga stereo set lainnya. Bahkan pengguna dapat mengatur kualitas suara lewat graphic equalizer. Selain imaging (gambar) dan musik, pengguna juga akan dikejutkan oleh sebuah ponsel dengan fasilitas games yang cukup banyak, sehingga akhirnya masyarakat disadarkan bahwa teknologi sangat cepat berkembang. Tak salah jika ada ungkapan, teknologi berubah setiap detik, artinya, perubahan teknologi itu sangat cepat, sampai seakan hanya dalam hitungan detik. (Kompas, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003)*

[The function of electronic gadgets (digital) will be replaced by mobile phone. Besides handycam that is slowly beginning to be applied to mobile phones, there is also audio equipment. In this time, mobile

phone will wrap up the Discman, walkman, stereo FM Radio; and also other stereo sets. Even the user can arrange the sound quality through a graphic equalizer. In addition to imaging (image) and music, the users will also be surprised by a phone with a lot of game facilities, so that eventually the public realized that the technology is rapidly developing. No wonder there is a saying that technology is changing every second, it means that the changes of technology are very fast, it seems like just a second's count.]

Thus, the development of mobile phone can create a culture in people's daily life. Because that culture can change at any time, the mobile phone is within the study of Popular Culture. Popular Culture is what is booming for now but for the next era will not necessarily be booming. One example of the mobile phone which has become popular in Indonesia is the Blackberry which is made by Canada Company Research In Motion (RIM). The Blackberry is predicted to be commonly used by almost all people in Semarang especially at the Faculty of Letters of Soegijapranata Catholic University. Not only can Blackberry be used for sending SMS but also for introducing a newer, simpler, and faster system than SMS. The Blackberry Messenger or BBM is also designed specifically for Internet. Besides having a good design, the Blackberry which can make people easier to use, also has some impacts. This is an area which may be interesting to research on.

In Soegijapranata Catholic University a number of undergraduate theses have been made about the Blackberry. First is from the Faculty of Psychology, Charlie Rahmat Putra, who wrote in 2011 about "Motivasi Membeli Blackberry Pada Mahasiswa Ditinjau dari Citra Diri" (The motivation to buy Blackberry based on students' self-image). Charlie Rahmat Putra, a Psychology student, made his thesis aimed at knowing the students' self image in buying the Blackberry. He

conducted an interview with Soegijapranata Catholic University students who had Blackberry. He says the students have a high motivation to buy a Blackberry because there is a better self-image in order to fulfill students' need as the center of attention.

Another research was made by Aprilia Monica Putri Handjojo, an Economic Student. She wrote her thesis in 2011 about "Persepsi Mahasiswa terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Blackberry" (The university student's perception in deciding to buy the Blackberry). She discussed about how the Blackberry was able to fulfill the needs of university students, which not only fulfill the needs of communication but also the needs of social networking. The price, brand, type, color, view, feature, function have become the reasons for the students' decisions in choosing the Blackberry.

The current writer is from the Faculty of Letters. So far, in the Faculty of Letters there has been no student which writes a thesis about the Blackberry. Therefore, she considers this as a phenomenon not to be missed since the Blackberry is getting ever more popular these days. Where Putra talks about the motivation to buy Blackberry and Handjojo talks about the perception to buy the Blackberry, the thesis understudy will be focused on the popularity of Blackberry which is related with culture because Blackberry is a medium that can be discussed just like any particular movie, film, or other Pop Culture products. In other words, the thesis writer discusses the Blackberry through a Popular Culture perspective and how owning the smartphone can give a number of impacts. So it

is believed that her research can be a valuable addition to many other previous and future researches on the Blackberry smartphone.

## **1.2 FIELD OF THE STUDY**

The field of this study is on Pop Culture.

## **1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The paper will focus on the popularity of Blackberry thus resulting in some bad impacts in the Faculty of Letters'2008 students in Soegijapranata Catholic University. In this study, the Blackberry users will be analyzed by using Pop Culture approach because Pop Culture is what is becoming popular and becoming a lifestyle for now because almost all people who know about it.

## **1.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION**

Based on the background, the problem formulations of this study are:

1. Why is the BlackBerry popular in the Faculty of Letters 2008 students in Soegijapranata Catholic University?
2. What are the impacts of using the Blackberry?

## **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the reasons of the BlackBerry users so that make it becomes popular in the Faculty of Letters' 2008 students in Soegijapranata Catholic University.
2. To answer what are the impacts of using the BlackBerry.

### 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is intended to prove a cultural phenomenon, which is happening within a society which results some bad impacts in using the BlackBerry for the Faculty of Letters' 2008 students. The study can be useful for students and scholars to further study the BlackBerry phenomena as well as to study about pop culture in general.

### 1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

There are some particular terms used in the research:

- Blackberry** = the wireless handheld device which support the ability of push-mail service, short message, internet browsing, Yahoo Messenger access, BlackBerry Messenger, and various other wireless capabilities (Handjojo, 2011, p.22).
- = to send an email or text message using a BlackBerry (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2008, p.138)

- Blackberry Messenger** = Instant Messenger program which provided for the user's Blackberry device (Chyza, 2010, p1, ¶1)
- Popular** = "Of the people," while we often associate culture with refinement and intellectual superiority, "the best which has been thought and said in the world" (Petracca and Sorapure, 1998, p.2)
- Culture** = the distinct practices, artifacts, institutions, customs, and values of a particular social group (Petracca and Sorapure, 1998, p.2)
- Internet** = the origins of computer networking and its application to everyday problems (Comer, 1995, p.3)

