CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Advertisement is inseparable from human life. It appears in various forms in both traditional and modern media. Advertisement is useful as a medium of social and cultural communication, as well as a media-based tool that is used for commercial purposes, such as raising and maintaining consumer awareness, and distributing information (MacRury, 2009). In short, advertisement is one of the significant parts of marketing strategies (Soba & Aydin, 2011) as it can be used to attract potential and current audiences (Oparinde & Agbede, 2019).

Since advertisements often contain implied messages and meanings, people need the knowledge to digest information from an advertisement and interpret signs and text carried and aimed. People can use semiotics to draw ideas from texts and signs (McQuarrie & Mick, 2003). In general, it can be said that semiotic is "a broad discipline which deals with any type of signification and communication" (Baicchi, 2009, p. 208).

McDonald's advertisement, *Wujudkan Momen yang Terlewati jadi Lebih Spesial*, features a family story. The eldest son decides to return home after two years of working outside the city. As it turns out, he only has one day at home. The youngest daughter is sad to hear the news. She hides all the clocks at home so that her brother cannot rush back to work. Later, the advertisement shows the togetherness between the older son and the youngest daughter. At the end of the advertisement, the family is

1

shown eating together at a fast-food restaurant, McDonald's. It is obvious that the advertisement does not only intend to sell the product but also contains the cultural value of family togetherness in the Indonesian context. The images and the texts in the advertisement that have the implied messages of togetherness are interesting to be further analyzed and explained using Barthes' semiotic analysis.

Scholars have used semiotics to analyze advertising. One of them is Akpan et al. (2013), who once conducted a study on the communicative values of symbols entitled *A Semiotic Deconstruction of Symbols in Print Advertising Contents: Implications for Consumers Purchase Decisions in Nigeria*. They analyzed the relationship and interpretation of signified signifiers in icons, linguistics (referential, emotive and conative) and ideological values of the product elements they studied. They used Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance theory and Peirce's and Saussure's theories of signs to analyze ten copies of print advertisements selected. Their study reveals that there is a dominance in the signifier-signified values in each symbol found in advertisements. The results of the study indicate that visual input in advertising has relevance to contemporary promotional strategies and advertising effectiveness can be achieved by including semiotic judgments in the advertising component. Cultural values attached to the targeted community play important roles in advertising and consumer buying decision-making.

To summarize, the writer aims to show that an advertisement is not only about marketing, but it also contains messages related to cultural values of the country where

the advertisements are aired. The researcher used Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to study the advertisement chosen.

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of study is literature that focuses on Barthes' semiotics.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the meanings behind the images and texts found in McDonald's advertisement "*Wujudkan Momen yang Terlewati Jadi Lebih Spesial*".

1.4 Research Question

The research question is "What are the cultural values represented by the visual images and narrative of McDonald's *Wujudkan Momen yang Terlewati Jadi Lebih Spesial* advertisement?"

1.5 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is "to find out the cultural values represented by the visual images and narrative of McDonald's *Wujudkan Momen yang Terlewati Jadi Lebih Spesial* advertisement."

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that the result of this study can give the readers more understanding on the use of semiotics to draw the ideas behind the images and texts represented in an advertisement. In addition, this research can be a reference for those who want to do further research on using semiotics to understand the meanings of images and texts in an advertisement.

1.7 Definition of Term

1. Advertisement

"Advertisement is a media-based tool that is used for commercial purposes, such as raising and maintaining consumer awareness, as well as distributing information" (MacRury, 2009, p. 2).

2. Sign

A sign is "any entity representing another entity" (Baicchi, 2009, p. 206).