

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes background of research, statement of problem, research purpose, research significances. This chapter also consist of definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of Research

Semiotics, as the study of signs and meaning, has played an important role in helping us understand how humans interact and communicate in the context of social life. Since the early 20th century, semiotic thought has developed as a rich conceptual framework for exploring the complexity of symbols, language, and human communication. Thus, existing signs can be analyzed using a semiotic approach. one of them is using Charles Sanders Peirce's theory which represents signs based on objects which are divided into three signs, namely icon, index and symbol.

According to Siregar (2022), Semiotics is a scientific discipline and analytical method that can examine the signs contained in an object to find out the meaning contained in the object. Semiotic can be used in the analysis and understanding of advertising, semiotic discusses signs and meaning, and advertising is a form of visual and linguistic communication that is rich in signs. In the context of advertising, semiotic can help decipher and analyze the various elements used in advertising, such as images, words, symbols and colors. Semiotic helps understand how these signs work together to stimulate emotions and influence audience perception.

Icon, index, and symbol can be used together or separately to create complex and varied messages. This theory provides an effective way to convey information and meaning in various communication contexts, from verbal language to visual communication. Charles Sanders Peirce, who is recognized as the father of semiotics, introduced triadic theory as a central concept in his thinking about signs (semiotics). In this case, each sign involves a triadic relationship consisting of representamen, object,

and interpretant. The object or reference is a social context that becomes the reference for the sign or object it refers to. Based on the object, Pierce divides signs into three parts. These include icon, index and symbol.

An icon is a sign that has a similar physical or visual relationship to the object it represents. In other words, icon imitate or reproduce the shape or characteristics of the object they represent. According to Chandler, “a mode in which the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified (recognizably looking, sounding, feeling, tasting or smelling like it) – being similar in possessing some of its qualities” (Chandler, 2007). An icon is a sign that has a relationship to its object based on similarity or physical similarity. A common characteristic of icon is the physical or visual similarity between the representation and the object it inhabits. For example, images or symbols that visually resemble the object they wish to represent can be easily identified by observers as icon of that object. In other words, icon create representations because they are visually or characteristically similar to the object being represented, unlike index which establish a connection with their object through a causal or contextual relationship.

Index is a sign that has a cause-and-effect relationship or direct connection with the object represented. This means that the existence of an index is triggered by the existence of the object being indicated or implies a physical or contextual relationship between the sign and the object. according to Chandler, “a mode in which the signifier is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way (physically or causally) to the signified (regardless of intention) – this link can be observed or inferred” (Chandler, 2007). An index is a sign that has a causal or contextual relationship with the object being represented. An index is a type of sign that is used to convey information about the existence or causal relationship between the sign itself and the object it represents. In other words, index indicate associative or causal relationships between representations and their objects. Therefore, the interpretation of the index may vary

depending on the situation or conditions in which the sign is found, similar to symbols which also rely on conventions or social agreements for their meaning.

Symbols are signs that have a conventional or coincidental relationship to the objects or concepts they represent. This means that the relationship between a symbol and its object is not direct or physical like an index, but is understood based on agreements or conventions that exist in a particular culture or community. According to Chandler, “a mode in which the signifier does not resemble the signified but which is fundamentally arbitrary or purely conventional – so that this relationship must be agreed upon and learned” (Chandler, 2007). A symbol is a sign that has a conventional or agreed upon relationship with its object. The relationship between a symbol and its object is not based on physical similarity or causal relationship, but rather on social convention or agreement. In addition, symbols are often used in advertisements to represent ideas, concepts or brands that advertisers want to communicate to their audience.

Advertisement is the most phenomenal modern cultural product, so it is often considered as one of the important variables that reflects and constructs contemporary society (Williamson, 2007). Every element of the commercial is a semiotic representation of the advertisement, with signs appearing as words, sounds, movements, colors, images, or objects. Advertisement is the most widely used promotional tool, especially for consumer products. Even though advertisement does not directly influence purchases, advertisement is a means of helping effective marketing to establish communication between companies and consumers. By advertisement, the audience is expected to obtain as much information as possible about the product or service being advertised. Advertisement in the modern era can be done anywhere, one of which is on the YouTube website, in this day and age digital advertisement can be placed anywhere, for example on the YouTube site. Semiotics is also found in several advertisements for self-care products, one of which is the *Kahf* product.

Self-care products are products designed to help individuals maintain their physical, mental, and emotional health and improve overall well-being (Riegel et al., 2021). discussing self-care as an object of research has a strong connection because self-care is an important concept in maintaining individual health and well-being. in the context of self-grooming product advertisements, self-care is often used as a main theme that shows how the product can help consumers take care of themselves as a whole both physically and mentally. this research can reveal how messages about self-care are communicated through icons, indexes and symbols in advertisements. Use of these products is often related to efforts to care for oneself, reduce stress, and create enjoyable experiences. Self-care products can involve a variety of categories, including skincare, body products, beauty equipment, health products, and more. *Kahf* originates from Indonesia. According to (Bithour, 2023) *Kahf* is a loanword from "Al-*Kahf*" which is one of the surahs in the Qur'an that tells about youth. Therefore, *Kahf* is the first halal male self-care product in Indonesia. *Kahf* has been popular in Indonesia since 2020 until now. *Kahf* products are quite famous in Indonesia thanks to one of its products, *Kahf* Revered Oud, which is known as the first product with packaging that is identical to the color green. *Kahf* itself always appears and presents with Islamic values. This is evidenced by the *Kahf*forward campaign which not only adheres to lifestyle, science and health, but also faith and halal products. In terms of performance, reported from the official *Kahf* Tokopedia marketplace *Kahf* managed to sell more than 10 thousand of its products on Tokopedia during the month of December 2023. *Kahf* carries the tagline “#Perjalanan Ber*Kahf*” Indonesia has one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. Therefore, this is an attractive market opportunity for self-care product businesses that emphasize on halal products. And proven to be the center of attention of men in Indonesia to buy *Kahf* products.

The reason *Kahf* was chosen as the object of research is because this product has a unique appeal for men and is relevant to the theory as well as fulfilling the three representations, namely icon, index, and symbol. In the context of personal care

products, icon can be used to visually represent a product or its effects, such as using images of natural ingredients to signify the benefits of a product. Index can be used to show the desired effect of a product, such as using before and after photos to show the results of using a skin care product. Symbol, on the other hand, can be used in branding or marketing to convey values or concepts related to self-care, such as using a logo to represent a brand's commitment to natural ingredients or sustainability. Overall, Peirce's theory helps us understand how signs are used to communicate the benefits and quality of self-care products to consumers. the appearance of *Kahf* product advertisements can facilitate analysis. All types of *Kahf* products have distinctive characteristics that are easily recognizable. Therefore, researcher are interested in *Kahf* products as research objects. *Kahf* is famous for having natural and halal ingredients as the main ingredients of its products which make it safe to use both in terms of body and spirit. Therefore, researcher chose the object of research with good, reliable and safe products.

Based on the background of this research, the aim is to conduct a semiotic analysis of advertisements using a semiotic approach to find meaning and find out the meaning of advertisements for *Kahf* products. Therefore, with semiotic analysis, the meaning and message that an advertisement wants to convey will be more visible because semiotics is a science or analytical method that aims to study signs. Therefore, researcher are interested in examining semiotics of advertisement. The product that will be analyzed is a self-care product from Indonesia, namely the *Kahf* product. Therefore, the reason for conducting research on the semiotics of advertisements on *Kahf* products is because the nature of semiotics is able to convey messages in the meaning of the advertisement displayed and is able to find the meaning of Charles Sanders Peirce's three representations, namely icon, index and symbol.

Previous research is a collection of research findings discovered by researcher. Researcher discovered several similar studies that will be used as references throughout this research procedure. The first research from (Suryana, 2021). This journal article

was entitled “*A Semiotic Analysis of Lipstick Advertisements by Using Charles Sanders Peirce’s Theory*”. This research identifies and analyzes data that will focus on representamen, objects, and interpretants using the concept of the triadic semiosis process from Charles Sanders Peirce's theory. This research aims to find out the meaning of icons, indexes, and symbols in the lipstick advertisements and explains their semiosis process.

The second was conducted by (Maghfira et al., 2022) This journal article was entitled “*The Representation of Independent Women in Wardah Advertisement: A Study of Semiotic by Peirce*”. This article found several icon, index and symbol given by the advertisement. In addition, it describes the signs contained in the advertisement as well as the meaning of the signs between the signifier and the sign based on the object. Examining the meaning contained in a sign based on information that describes the message for consumers, creating recognizable products with the aim of attracting recognizable products with the aim of attracting consumers. And discuss the issue of independent women contained in the advertisement.

The third from (Nurhasanah Purba & Khairunnisa Tambunan, 2021) this journal article was entitled “*Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes on Wardah Advertisement Version “I Face of Indonesia”*”. This study aims to represent the meaning of the advertisement using Barthes' semiotic sign map and to describe the meaning contained in the Wardah advertisement using Roland Barthes theory. In the map of the sign, the building blocks of a meaning will be described, namely denotation signs, markers, markers, connotation signs, connotation markers, and connotation markers that play a full role in determining what kind of meaning the community will perceive.

The difference previous research lies in the object being analyzed and the theory used. In the first research from Lia which analyzes the semiotic process and the meaning of icons, indexes, and symbols in lipstick advertisements, what distinguishes is the type of advertisement analyzed and also the approach used and this research does

not discuss the semiosis process besides that Lia's research does not discuss many icons, index and symbol. Her research focuses on representations, objects and interpretants using the concept of the semiosis process. Then in the second study from Maghfira who analyzed the representation of independent women in cosmetic advertisements. What distinguishes it is the type of advertisement analyzed, and this study does not discuss the representation of independent women in advertisements analyzed using semiotic theory. Then in the third study from Nurhasanah. What makes the difference is the type of theory used, Nurhasanah uses a Roland Barthes theory and this research uses Charles Sanders Peirce theory that focus on the object. Nurhasanah uses advertisements for women's beauty products as objects while this study uses self-care advertisements specifically for men.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on background of problem, it can be formulated into this following question:

- a. What meaning of icon, index, and symbol of advertisements are found in the self-care products of *Kahf*?
- b. What functions of icon, index, and symbol of advertisements are found in the self-care products of *Kahf*?

1.3 Research Purpose

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the researcher is intended:

- a. To find out the meaning of icon, index, and symbol of advertisements in the self-care products of *Kahf*?
- b. To explore the functions of icon, index, and symbol of advertisements in the self-care products of *Kahf*?

1.4 Research Significances

This research has diverse significance and impact both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, Charles Sanders Peirce's idea was applied in this research. This idea was founded on Peirce's semiotics, which discussed three interrelated relationships and how to use icon, index, and symbol to generate meaning and values. The three relationships are an application of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics representation, as shown in the *Kahf* commercials for self-care product. This study broadens the researcher's perspective on semiotics as it relates to the signs found in commercials.

While from of practical point of view, this research is mostly intended for persons with an interest in a relevant area. This study is also meant for individuals who want to obtain a better understanding of the topic by examining indications and gaining new insights. This study will aid researcher in expanding their knowledge of advertising semiotics. This study will also be useful to other scholars who want to investigate advertising semiotics utilizing Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of icon, index, and symbol of advertisement in a commercial product. As a result, it can be utilized as reference material for students as well as research material for people undertaking research.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

In this study, some of the key terms used need to be explained in detail to clarify their use in the context of this study. The following are definitions of the key terms that will be used in this study:

1.5.1 Semiotic

Semiotics is the science that studies signs and symbols and how these signs are used to convey meaning. In semiotics, signs can be words, images, sounds, or other objects that represent something else.

1.5.2 Icon

An icon is a sign that bears a resemblance or similarity to its object. It represents its object by imitating or depicting its qualities or characteristics. In the context of symbols and signs, an icon is considered a “sign by resemblance”.

1.5.3 Index

An index is a sign that has a direct relationship or physical contingency with the object to which it refers. In an index context, a sign shows or indicates the existence or presence of traces, effects, or evidence of the object it represents.

1.5.4 Symbol

A symbol is a sign that has a conventional or socially established relationship with the object to which it refers. In symbols, the relationship between the sign and the object it represents is arbitrary or coincidental, having no direct relationship or physical similarity.

1.5.5 Advertisement

Advertisement is a message or communication delivered publicly with the aim of promoting, marketing or informing about a product, service or idea to a wider audience. Advertising is often used by companies, organizations, or individuals to influence the perceptions, attitudes, and behavior of target audiences in order to increase sales, brand awareness, or achieve other goals.