

Analysis of Female Audience Receptions towards Infidelity in the "Ipar adalah Maut" Movie

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DOI:<https://doi.org/10.21107/ilkom.v18i2.26708>

<p>Article History: Received July 23th 2024</p> <p>Revised August 18th 2024</p> <p>Accepted September 1st 2024</p>	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>Film is a medium of communication that is in great demand today, the impressions shown in movies have different meanings for each audience. Films depicting the issue of infidelity tend to highlight various negative impacts, the audience as an active audience certainly acts also as a producer of meaning. The purpose of the study was to analyze how the female audience's reception of infidelity that occurred in the film sister-in-law is death. The method used is Stuart Hall's reception analysis with a qualitative approach. Data collection was done by interviewing five informants. The results showed that four informants were in the dominant position, one informant was in the negotiation position and there were no informants in the opposition position. The implications of the research can reveal how women interpret and respond to representations packaged by film mass media, which in turn can increase self-awareness and strengthen advocacy regarding fairer and more empowering gender representations in the media.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>film; female audience; infidelity; reception</i></p> <p>ABSTRAK</p> <p>Film menjadi medium komunikasi sangat diminati sekarang ini, tayangan yang ditampilkan film memiliki makna yang berbeda-beda bagi tiap penontonnya. Film-film menggambarkan isu perselingkuhan cenderung menyoroti berbagai dampak negatif, penonton sebagai penonton aktif tentunya bertindak juga sebagai penghasil makna. Tujuan penelitian menganalisis bagaimana resepsi penonton perempuan terhadap perselingkuhan yang terjadi pada film ipar adalah maut. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis resepsi dari Stuart Hall dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara terhadap lima informan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa empat informan pada posisi dominan, satu informan pada posisi negosiasi dan tidak ada informan pada posisi oposisi. Implikasi dari penelitian dapat menyingkap bagaimana perempuan memaknai dan memberikan respons terhadap representasi yang dikemas oleh media massa film, yang pada gilirannya dapat meningkatkan kesadaran diri serta memperkuat advokasi perihal representasi gender yang lebih adil dan memberdayakan dalam media.</p> <p>Kata Kunci: <i>film; perselingkuhan; penonton perempuan; resepsi</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

Film is a channel for conveying messages and is part of a propaganda tool that is closely related to efforts to achieve national and societal goals. This is based on the assessment that films have a wide reach, a high level of realism, a strong emotional influence, and great popularity among the public (McQuail, 1989). One of the dominant propaganda issues that appears and is presented in Indonesian films is infidelity. Infidelity is a hot and interesting topic to discuss because infidelity itself is

Cite this as (APA Style):

Farina Islami^{1,a)}& Meok, Irene Aprilya. (2024). Analysis of Female Audience Receptions towards Infidelity in the "Ipar adalah Maut" Movie. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 18 (2), 136-147. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21107/ilkom.v18i2.26708>

currently being viewed as genderless that is, initially the act of cheating was dominated by men, but now women are also taking part in this act. In fact, ironically, infidelity that is currently widespread is carried out with relatives and one's own family (Hardiyanto & Rusdiana, 2023). Based on the results of a survey conducted by Just Dating, 40% of men and women in Indonesia admit that they have cheated on or betrayed their partners. This figure places Indonesia in second place as the country in Asia with the highest rate of infidelity cases, just below Thailand which has a percentage of 50%.

The media also capitalizes on infidelity as a commodity by creating new and compelling content to capture the public's attention. Dramas, films, and novels with themes of infidelity are increasingly popular, as this topic reflects familiar household issues in the everyday lives of Indonesians (CNN, 2022). These films provide strong and emotional portrayals of infidelity, captivating audiences with deep and engaging narratives (Dila, 2022). Films depicting the issue of infidelity tend to highlight various complex negative impacts, especially emotional ones that can affect trust in a partner. Film is a good medium for conveying messages because it can represent the reality of life. The household problems shown in the film cannot be separated from the domestic problems that exist in society, one example is *Ipar adalah Maut* movie.

Ipar adalah Maut is a drama film produced in 2024 and directed by Hanung Bramantyo based on a story by Elizasifaa. This film tells the story of the couple Aris and Nisa who have a harmonious domestic life, until Rani, Nisa's sister, comes to live with them. Aris and Rani gradually develop an illicit relationship behind Nisa's back. Nisa finally found out about this, which destroyed her household. This film adapts the true story of a viral affair on social media. The high interest in watching from the general public brings happiness and satisfaction to the director, producer, and the artists and actors involved in the film (Jurdjo & Mutma, 2020).

The audience as an active audience of course also acts as a producer of meaning. What happens when women receive the subtitles. Is this audience included? dominant hegemonic position, negotiated position, or oppositional position. First, the dominant-hegemonic position (dominant-hegemonic reading) is where the reader fully accepts and is in line with the program codes conveyed, including the values, attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions therein. Second, the negotiated position (Negotiated reading) is where the audience to a certain extent is still in line with the program codes, another term is the negotiation process between the filmmaker and the audience in interpreting the content. Third, Opposition position (oppositional "counter" hegemonic reading) namely where the audience will replace or change the message conveyed by the media with a message that is interpreted by themselves, although often the media persuasion messages received by the audience are so subtle that they do not realize that they have been influenced and become part of the dominant ideology (Hall, 2011).

Films convey messages in each of their screenings, and when the process of consuming and producing meaning from the messages presented in a film occurs, differences in educational, social, and cultural backgrounds, work experience, and

viewers' references have a significant impact (Sucipto & Sitepu, 2021). In this case, reception analysis is used to determine the meaning that female viewers get from the film *Ipar adalah Maut*. The representation of women in the issue of infidelity in the dominant mass media is placed as perpetrators and women as victims, in research conducted by Andrianto and Pudrianisa (2023), even though infidelity is carried out by men, women (third person) are still placed as perpetrators who are actively seducing. Female characters in films are often depicted as weak, submissive, and dependent (Elsha, 2020). By understanding the meaning of female audiences regarding the representation of infidelity depicted in the movie *Ipar adalah Maut*, this research is also expected to provide socio-cultural implications in the context of women's empowerment. It is hoped that this research can reveal how women interpret and respond to representations packaged in film mass media, which in turn can increase self-awareness and strengthen advocacy regarding fairer and more empowering gender representation in the media.

Film as a Media for Mass Communication

Film is one of the Big Five of Mass Media after newspapers, magazines, radio, and television (Romli, 2008). Film is part of modern mass communication media. As a medium of mass communication, film exists as part of popular culture which is consumed by a wide audience. Films can be seen as a reflection or representation of the reality of life in the society where the film was created. Film can be seen as a modern mass communication medium that reflects and influences social, and cultural realities and the dynamics of people's lives through narrative and cinematographic constructions which are packaged as commercial commodities for consumption by a wide audience (Alfathoni & Manesah Dani, 2020).

In relation to film as a mass communication medium, according to Bittner, mass communication refers to the process of delivering messages through mass media to a large audience. Film, as one form of mass media, plays a significant role in conveying messages widely to the public, influencing viewpoints, and shaping public opinion. As an effective, popular, and rational medium, film can reach a diverse audience, making it a powerful communication channel in influencing perceptions and attitudes on various issues and topics (Sakdiyah, 2018). Meanwhile, Cangara interprets media in the context of communication as a tool or means used to convey messages from the communicator to the audience. So, the mass media used in mass communication includes various communication tools such as newspapers, films, radio, and television (Cangara, 2010).

Film, as a form of mass communication media, plays an important role in delivering messages to a wide audience. It can serve as a means of addressing social issues (Larasati & Adiyanto, 2023); for instance, topics such as infidelity can be used to voice various social and cultural concerns related to society. Through its storyline, characters, and visualizations, films like these can shape perceptions, as film is a powerful tool capable of influencing societal attitudes (Gogoi, 2022).

Research conducted by Fatusyiddin, Abdullah, and Ulfah (2024) regarding reception analysis regarding the moral message in the film *Doraemon Stand By Me 2* shows that films are not only a form of mass communication, but films also act as a moral message. Films not only affect watching time, but also after watching, people who watch films tend to follow the scenes in the film. Morals according to Lustyantje (2012) are defined as teachings about the good and bad of behavior. The shows presented in the film certainly have characters who act as antagonists or protagonists, the audience as active viewers will judge whether it is good or bad, its impact, and the decision to follow or not to follow this behavior.

Concept of Infidelity

In this context, infidelity serves as a lens for analyzing marital conflicts, as depicted in the film *Ipar Adalah Maut*. Essentially, infidelity involves engaging in an intimate or romantic relationship with someone outside of one's primary partner. It is generally viewed as a breach within a marriage or other monogamous commitment, as it involves a betrayal of trust and feelings. According to Musaitir (2020), infidelity often stems from emotional or physical dissatisfaction within the primary relationship, prompting someone to seek fulfillment elsewhere. Studies indicate that infidelity can result from various factors, including poor communication, a need for appreciation, or an emotional and physical attraction to someone else (Allen et al., 2005).

The concept of infidelity varies across cultures, yet most regard it as wrong or taboo. In societies that highly value monogamy, infidelity is often seen as a relationship disruptor, potentially causing profound emotional and psychological impacts on the betrayed partner. Infidelity encompasses not only physical relationships but also deep emotional connections with a third party, which can be perceived as a form of unfaithfulness (Al Mansur et al., 2021).

The impact of infidelity is often deeply damaging, both emotionally and psychologically. Betrayed partners may experience anger, hurt, low self-esteem, and deep-seated mistrust, which can have lasting effects on their mental health (Leeker & Carlozzi, 2014). Meanwhile, those who engage in infidelity often feel guilt, shame, or even stress from keeping the affair secret. In some cases, infidelity can lead to an improvement in the primary relationship if both partners can address underlying issues through dialogue. However, in many cases, it results in the breakdown or dissolution of the relationship.

Three Positions of Audience in Reception Analysis

The main aim of reception analysis is to analyze how different audiences understand and interpret media content based on their respective points of view (Wahidar & Shafira Ardhana Reswari, 2022). In this study, there are three audience

positions in the reception analysis. Stuart Hall explains reception, namely how the audience coding process takes place. He saw that a viewer encodes a message through three points of view and positions.

First, the dominant-hegemonic position (dominant-hegemonic reading) is where the reader is fully aligned with the program codes conveyed, including the values, attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions therein. In this position, the reader fully accepts the meaning desired and offered by the program maker. There are no significant differences in interpretation between program makers and readers. There is no significant difference in interpretation between the program maker and the reader, nor is there any resistance from the audience to the message conveyed by the filmmaker. The factor that makes the audience tend to be passive/not provide resistance to the message made by the filmmaker is the lack of knowledge about how the filmmaker represents a message. The audience will only be passive and fully influenced by the message the filmmaker wants to convey.

Then, second, the negotiating position (negotiated reading) is where the audience, to some extent, is still in line with the program codes; another term is the existence of a negotiation process between the filmmaker and the audience in interpreting the content. In this position there are two factors, namely adaptive and oppositional factors, where the audience understands the message in two parts. First, the audience understands the message based on the meaning generated by the media. Second, the audience understands the message based on the dominant ideology among their group.

The audience can be in a position of completely agreeing or disagreeing/rejecting. In this position, the audience makes a negotiation between the meaning that the filmmaker wants to convey and the meaning that appears in his mind after watching the film. This means that in the negotiation position, the message conveyed by the filmmaker is not simply accepted by the audience. The audience also thinks about the message that is to be conveyed and what his belief is (Saktigamawijaya & Prathisara, 2023).

Third, Opposition position (oppositional “counter” hegemonic reading) namely where the audience will replace or change the message conveyed by the media with a message that is interpreted by themselves, although often the media persuasion messages received by the audience are so subtle that they do not realize that they have been influenced and become part of the dominant ideology (Hall, 2011). It is important to understand that oppositional position is not a distorted decoding. Audiences in an oppositional position are more likely to know what is being conveyed but choose to encode the message in a position of rejection. Oppositional position is usually assessed when the producer and audience have less compatibility. This usually happens because the socio-cultural or ideological position held by the producer is different from the audience (Xie et al., 2022).

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach by applying the reception analysis method. Qualitative methods were chosen to analyze various issues in the social sciences and humanities, such as democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and other societal problems (Ratna, 2010). Reception analysis is one method in qualitative research. This method focuses on how audiences or readers interpret and respond to a text, media, or cultural product. Reception theory asserts that media audiences actively produce meaning from media messages rather than passively receiving them (Savitri, 2017).

Lofland (Moleong, 2013) is of the opinion that the main data sources of qualitative research are words and actions, the rest are additional such as documents and others. The data sources in this study are divided into two categories. First, the primary data sources consist of interviews and textual documents. Interviews are conducted with female informants from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, education, occupation, and status. The textual document used in this research is the film *Ipar Adalah Maut*, which explores the theme of infidelity. Second, the secondary data sources are obtained through a review of relevant literature to support the study.

Data collection techniques involve interviews with selected informants, chosen through purposive random sampling based on specific criteria: first, having different backgrounds (age, status, education, and occupation), and second, having watched the film *Ipar Adalah Maut*. The interviews are unstructured, conducted in a relaxed, flexible, and adaptable manner to create a comfortable atmosphere, encouraging informants to share information openly and in-depth (Lexy, 2015).

After data collection, the information is analyzed in several stages, including content analysis, data gathering, processing, and in-depth analysis. During the encoding stage, the researcher first conducts a content analysis to understand the encoding related to the theme of infidelity in the film *Ipar Adalah Maut*. The interview results are then transcribed. In the final stage, the researcher analyzes the film's text and the data collected from the interviews, determining whether the informants' interpretations fall into the dominant (hegemonic), negotiated, or oppositional reading categories.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The audience's understanding of messages conveyed by media, such as films, is an adaptation of the reception analysis of encoding and decoding introduced by Stuart Hall. The meaning of a media message is obtained when the message is read or seen by the audience. In this case, the audience not only acts as consumers of media but can also become producers of the meaning of the message. As a result, one message conveyed by the media can give rise to various meanings among female informants.

Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory explains that the process of interpreting media messages is not only passive, where the audience accepts the message as it is. Instead, the audience plays an active role in interpreting the message based on their respective backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Thus, one media message can be interpreted differently by different audiences, including female informants. These differences in meaning can be influenced by social, cultural, and individual factors owned by each informant (Febrian, 2012).

According to Stuart Hall (2011) explains that reception is the process of interpreting a message through three points of view or positions. This process is called decoding. When we receive a message from another party, we decode the message based on perceptions, thoughts, and past experiences. Informants will use several categories to decode messages. Information often interprets messages conveyed by the media in ways that are not by the source of the message or media so that it can give rise to different meanings. The results obtained by researchers considering reception or meaning analysis theory are described as follows:

Dominant Hegemony Position (Dominant Hegemonic Position)

In Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory, the dominant hegemonic position refers to a situation where the media conveys a message and the audience receives it in full without any rejection. In the case of this research, the dominant hegemonic position is shown by the similarity of the concept of infidelity conveyed by the movie "Ipar adalah Maut" which is completely accepted by the audience.

The audience did not show any rejection or disagreement with the dominant ideology conveyed through the film. Instead, they explain and relate the concept of infidelity presented in the movie to their own lives, behavior, and social experiences. This indicates that the audience accepts and adopts the dominant ideology represented in the film without any critical effort to question or challenge it. In other words, there is a process of hegemony where the audience receives and interprets media messages according to the perspective desired by the dominant party, in this case, the filmmaker.

In Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory, the dominant hegemonic position refers to a situation where the audience interprets media messages following the prevailing dominant culture. In the case of this research, the dominant hegemonic position was demonstrated by four informants, namely Mona, Marina, Fifin, and Suci. The four informants showed the same understanding of the message conveyed in the movie "Ipar adalah Maut" regarding the factors that cause infidelity. They admitted that there was a correspondence between their own experiences and views regarding infidelity with what was shown in the film, such as previous experiences of cheating and the opportunity to carry out this act. In a dominant hegemonic position, no repetition of the message is necessary because the communicator and the communicant are already on the same understanding.

This indicates that the four informants received and interpreted media messages directly, without any critical efforts to question or challenge the dominant ideology represented in the film. They tend to adopt and adapt their understanding to the dominant culture presented, without considering different perspectives or experiences.

Marina and Fifin admit that the film clearly shows the consequences and impacts of infidelity, according to their understanding. Apart from that, Marina and Fifin stated that the film felt close to everyday life, especially regarding social norms which require maintaining distance between in-laws and their own husband/wife partners. This shows that there is harmony between their understanding and the dominant ideology displayed in the film, where they accept and interpret media messages directly without any effort to question or challenge the perspective represented.

By interpreting the film as a reflection of reality, Marina and Fifin feel that the messages about infidelity and social norms are conveyed strongly and relevantly. They view the relationships between characters and the consequences of infidelity as things that could realistically happen, making the film's moral message feel relatable and genuine. This perspective also reveals their tendency to accept the storyline and values presented without further questioning, as if what is portrayed represents an accurate and legitimate social norm. The alignment between Marina and Fifin's interpretation and the film's ideology demonstrates how media can reinforce certain viewpoints without provoking doubt or critical reflection from the audience.

Negotiation Position (Negotiated Position)

The Negotiated Position referred to by Stuart Hall in this theory is that the audience has the ability to understand the message contained in the media in general, but the audience is in a position not to fully accept the message. The position of the audience is between accepting the dominant ideology in general and rejecting its application in certain cases. This means that there is a negotiation between the meaning that the media wants to convey and the meaning created by the audience. In this position, the audience is willing to accept the dominant ideology contained in general media content, but in its application they will adjust it to their personal experiences and understanding.

Informants who are in a negotiating position do not fully accept or reject the screening of the film "ipar adalah maut," but rather accept some and reject others. They mix the interpretation of the broadcast with their own social experiences. Thus, the audience in this negotiating position is adaptive and oppositional to the messages conveyed by the media.

The interview results show that the informant who was in a negotiating position was the fifth informant, namely Intan. Even though Intan was in line with the main message of the film regarding the impact of infidelity, she also provided

additional arguments based on her own thoughts. Intan stated that infidelity can be caused by various factors that partners are not aware of, so that when an argument occurs, they will blame each other. Apart from that, Intan also emphasized that the lack of communication in the household is one of the core problems of infidelity. Thus, Intan's position is in the middle, where she does not completely accept or reject the film's message but rather negotiates by adding her personal understanding. This shows that Intan is in a negotiating position in responding to the media messages conveyed.

Intan's response to the film also highlights how she navigates between accepting the film's message and incorporating her own perspectives, showing a more critical engagement with media. While acknowledging the film's portrayal of infidelity and its consequences, she adds a layer of complexity by explaining that infidelity is often driven by unrecognized factors and poor communication within relationships. This nuanced view reveals her awareness of the complexity of real-life situations, where blame and misunderstandings can easily arise. Rather than fully aligning with or rejecting the film's message, Intan's response reflects a thoughtful negotiation of the film's themes, suggesting that her interpretation is shaped by personal experience and a deeper understanding of relational dynamics. This approach demonstrates a more active role in the consumption of media, where viewers do not passively accept messages but rather engage critically to form their own understanding.

Opposition Position (Oppositional Position)

Stuart Hall also developed the concept of the last audience position, which is the opposition position. According to him, the opposition position is a position where the audience is able to understand the message that the media wants to convey but interprets the message in a way that is opposite or contrasting to the actual message. As a result, the result of this interpretation is that there is a rejection of the message. This position is the last way that the audience uses to understand the decoding of media messages. Audiences in this position will be more critical of changing messages by the media and changing messages with other alternatives. This type has characteristics that are defined by frustration rather than comfort. In this study, the researcher did not find any opposition position. The informants explicitly expressed that they occupied the dominant and negotiation positions. There were no informants who interpreted the message in this film in a deviant way or not in accordance with the message the filmmaker wanted to convey.

The absence of an opposition position in this study may indicate that the informants tended to accept the film's message dominantly or interpret it through a perspective that is aligned with the majority of the audience. This could suggest that the film successfully conveyed its message in a way that was easy for the audience to understand and accept, resulting in no deviating or conflicting interpretations. However, on the other hand, the lack of opposition could also reflect a lack of critical

reflection or the audience's inability to question or challenge the message presented, which could limit the potential to view the message from different perspectives. It may also imply that the film aligns well with dominant social values, thus preventing differing opinions among the audience.

CONCLUSION

Based on data from research using the concept and theory of Stuart Hall's reception analysis by conducting interviews with 5 informants chosen by the researcher, where the researcher aims to find out the meaning of the informants chosen by the researcher towards the audience's meaning, namely the meaning of infidelity in the *Ipar adalah Maut* movie, and can Conclusions were drawn from the 3 categories in the reception analysis. The researcher succeeded in finding the 2 categories in this research, namely 4 informants who were in the Dominant category, and 1 informant who was in the Negotiation position.

There are 4 informants who fall into the Dominant category, namely Mona, Marina, Fifin, and Suci. The Dominant category shows that the audience accepts, acknowledges, and agrees with the meaning desired by the film, without any rejection, and produces the exact same message as that produced by the film. There is 1 informant who is in a negotiation position, namely Intan. The Negotiation category shows that the informant mixes his interpretation with certain social experiences, thereby acting between adaptive and oppositional toward the interpretation of the message conveyed by the film. In this research, no informants were found in the Opposition category. The Opposition category indicates that the audience opposes or is opposed to the representation offered in the show in a way that is different from what has been offered by the *Ipar adalah Maut* movie.

Furthermore, in the *Ipar adalah Maut* movie, researchers can conclude that the affair that occurs in the film is an act that is unethical, unfaithful, dishonest, and violates the partner's trust. Then the film also shows that there are external factors that trigger cheating, namely a supportive environment and opportunities. There are various types of cheating, such as physical or non-physical cheating and the impact that occurs if there is cheating in a relationship is that the victim is not confident, blames themselves, and triggers stress

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