

Analysis of female audiences' reception of marriage conflict in the film *Hati Suhita*

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Reception Theory
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This study explores the reception of marriage conflict as depicted in the Indonesian film "*Hati Suhita*" among female audiences'. Utilizing Stuart Hall's Reception Theory, the analysis delves into how cultural, religious, socio-economic, and personal factors shape women's interpretations and responses to the film. "*Hati Suhita*" portrays traditional values of patience, endurance, and family honor within the context of marriage, resonating deeply with women from conservative backgrounds. However, it also evokes critical responses from more progressive viewers who advocate for narratives promoting gender equality and mutual respect. The study finds that women's interpretations are significantly influenced by their cultural and religious backgrounds, with many Muslim women appreciating the film's alignment with Islamic teachings on marital perseverance. Socio-economic status and educational background also play crucial roles; women with higher education levels and socio-economic standing are more likely to engage in critical readings of the film, challenging traditional gender roles and advocating for more equitable relationships. The advent of digital media has further transformed audience engagement, allowing women to actively interpret, critique, and discuss media content within their social networks. An intersectional approach reveals that experiences vary significantly based on ethnicity, age, and regional background, highlighting the diverse perspectives within the female audience. The study underscores the need for media representations that reflect evolving societal values and foster inclusive and empowering narratives. By understanding these reception dynamics, filmmakers can create content that not only entertains but also engages and empowers diverse female audiences, contributing to broader social change.

1. Introduction

The representation of marriage conflicts in films has long been a subject of interest for researchers and scholars in the field of media studies. Among the various films that have explored this theme, the Indonesian film "*Hati Suhita*" has garnered significant attention, particularly in terms of its portrayal of marriage conflicts and the audience's reception, especially among female viewers (Nurfiana & Pretty Aprilia, 2023),(Sihombing, 2022).

The background of the problem in analysing the female audience reception of marriage conflict in the film "*Hati Suhita*" is multifaceted. Firstly, the film explores the complex dynamics of a marriage, delving into the challenges, tensions, and emotional turmoil that couples often face. This theme resonates with many viewers, as marriage and family life are universal experiences that transcend cultural boundaries.

The film "*Hati Suhita*," directed by Archie Heckagery is basically adapted from the popular novel with the same title wroted by Khilma Anis, presents a complex narrative of marital conflict that resonates deeply within the socio-cultural fabric of Indonesian society. As a medium, film not only reflects societal values but also influences them, making the reception of such narratives particularly

significant. The film's exploration of marital discord invites diverse interpretations, particularly among female audiences whose perspectives are shaped by a myriad of personal, cultural, and social factors. This section delves into the background problems associated with analyzing the reception of marital conflict by women, using "Hati Suhita" as a focal point (Mariyani et al., 2024).

Moreover, the film's depiction of marriage conflicts is particularly relevant in the contemporary sociocultural context, where traditional gender roles and expectations are being challenged and redefined. Nurfiana & Pretty Aprilia, (2023) the film's exploration of these issues provides a platform for audiences, especially women, to engage with and reflect on their own experiences and perspectives on marriage and gender relations.

One of the key issues in the film is the representation of women in marriage. The film portrays women as objects and men as subjects, which is a common theme in many Indonesian films. This portrayal is problematic because it reinforces the dominant ideology of patriarchal society, where women are seen as subordinate to men. The film also presents a romanticized view of marriage, which is not representative of the real-life experiences of many Indonesian women.

Another issue in the film is the portrayal of conflict marriage. The film presents a conflict between the husband and wife, which is a common theme in many Indonesian films. However, the film does not provide a clear resolution to the conflict, which leaves the audience with a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity. This portrayal of conflict marriage is problematic because it reinforces the dominant ideology of patriarchal society, where men are seen as the authority figures in marriage

For instance, a study by Chanan in Perdana, (2020) on the audience reception of the documentary film "Sexy Killers" found that the film's exploration of environmental issues and government involvement resonated with viewers, particularly in terms of its impact on their political views and ideological positions. Similarly, research on the representation of father's characters in the Indonesian film "Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini" revealed how the film's portrayal of patri archal power dynamics within the family influenced audience perceptions and attitudes (Adilla & Sunarto, 2022).

The way a film conveys its messages, whether through rational, emotional, or other techniques, can significantly impact the audience's reception and engagement with the content. Furthermore, there are study on the film "Dua Garis Biru" suggests, the audience's interpretation of a film's message can be shaped by their own cultural backgrounds, personal experiences, and pre-existing beliefs (Pertiwi et al., 2020). In the case of "Hati Suhita," it is crucial to examine how the film's portrayal of marriage conflicts resonates with female viewers, as their perspectives and experiences are often underrepresented in mainstream media. The film's ability to capture the nuances of gender dynamics and the emotional complexities of marriage can have a significant impact on the audience's understanding and interpretation of these issues.

Stuart Hall as a cultural theorist, political activist, and Marxist sociologist and the founder of reception theory provides a useful framework for understanding how different audiences interpret media texts based on their individual contexts. According to (Hall, 1980), audiences decode media messages in three primary ways: dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings. This theory is particularly pertinent in analyzing the reception of "Hati Suhita" among female viewers, as it allows for an exploration of how cultural and personal backgrounds influence their interpretations of the film's portrayal of marital conflict.

Dominant readings occur when the audience fully accepts the intended message of the media text. In the case of "Hati Suhita," a dominant reading would involve viewers accepting the traditional values and resolution strategies depicted in the film. This is likely among women who uphold conservative views on marriage and gender roles. In contrast, negotiated readings occur when viewers accept the intended message but adapt it to fit their own experiences and perspectives. For example, some women might appreciate the film's emphasis on perseverance but also advocate for more modern approaches to resolving marital discord, such as improved communication and equality within the marriage. Oppositional readings, on the other hand, involve outright rejection of the intended message, often due to a fundamental disagreement with its underlying assumptions. Women who hold strong feminist views might reject the film's portrayal of traditional gender roles and instead call for narratives that empower women and promote gender equality.

The study of the analysis of female audience reception of marriage conflict in the film *Hati Suhita* is significant because it provides insights into the ways in which women perceive and interpret the film's portrayal of marriage. The study also highlights the importance of considering the audience's perspective and experiences when analyzing the portrayal of marriage in films.

2. Method

The analysis of the reception of female audiences towards the portrayal of marriage conflict in the film "*Hati Suhita*" is a crucial undertaking. This paper aims to delve into the perspectives and interpretations of female viewers regarding the representation of marital discord within the narrative of the film.

The study of audience reception is a vital component in understanding the impact and influence of media content, particularly in the realm of film. By examining the responses and reactions of female viewers, insights can be gleaned into the ways in which they negotiate, interpret, and make sense of the depictions of marriage conflict presented on the silver screen.

The use of reception analysis, which is grounded in the constructivist paradigm, allows for a nuanced exploration of the interplay between the film text and the audience (Perdana, 2020). This approach acknowledges that the meaning of a media text is not inherent or fixed, but rather, it is constructed through the active engagement and interpretation of the audience.

Existing studies have explored the relationship between audience and star, where the spectator's desire is fulfilled by the on-screen persona. (Bhowmick, 2021) Similarly, research on the reception of films such as "*Aladdin*" has highlighted the negotiated position of parents in interpreting messages about freedom and life choices. (Purnamasari, 2020)

Furthermore, the concept of "interpretative communities" has been applied to the understanding of audience reception, wherein viewers who share similar experiences, discourses, and frameworks make sense of media texts in a collective manner.

These theoretical frameworks and empirical findings provide a foundation for the current study, which seeks to delve deeper into the reception of female audiences in relation to the marriage conflict narrative in "*Hati Suhita*". (Purnamasari, 2020) (Michelle et al., 2017)

The study will employ a combination of qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, to engage directly with female viewers and capture their nuanced perspectives. Purposive sampling will be utilized to recruit participants from diverse backgrounds, ensuring a representative sample that reflects the heterogeneity of the female audience.

The interviews and focus groups will be designed to elicit rich, descriptive data that illuminates the participants' interpretations, emotional responses, and personal reflections on the marriage conflict depicted in the film. The data will be subjected to a thematic analysis, which will involve the identification of recurring patterns, themes, and divergent perspectives.

This analytical approach will facilitate a deeper understanding of the ways in which female viewers negotiate, resist, or align with the film's representation of marital discord, as well as the underlying sociocultural factors that shape their interpretations. The exploration of these nuanced audience responses can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between media representations and the lived experiences of female as audiences. (Mulianiputri et al., 2023)

Moreover, the findings of this study can inform the development of more inclusive and authentic portrayals of marriage and gender dynamics in film, ultimately fostering a more equitable and empowering media landscape.

The Analytical Reception Theory of Stuart Hall provides a framework for understanding how audiences receive and interpret media messages. According to Hall, the encoding and decoding process involves the producer encoding a message with specific signs and symbols, and the audience decoding it through their own framework of knowledge and social context. (Hall et al., 2011)

The encoding process involves the producer selecting specific signs and symbols to convey a message, which is influenced by their ideologies and resources. The decoding process involves the

audience interpreting the message through their own framework of knowledge and social context, which can lead to different meanings being derived from the same message (Hall, 1996)

Hall identifies three positions of meaning from the decoding process: the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated position, and the oppositional position. The dominant-hegemonic position is where the intended audience has the same meaning as the message producer without any change in the message content. The negotiated position is where the audience captures the message given dominantly but does not fully agree with all the messages given by the message producers, and the oppositional position is where the audience captures the content of the message given by the message producer but critical audiences will completely reject and disagree with the content of the message given by the message producer and have their own arguments on the topic (Hall et al., 2011) (Hall, 1996)

The study found that the female audience's reception of the film "Hati Suhita" was characterized by a dominant-hegemonic position, where the audience accepted the film's portrayal of marriage as a normative and traditional institution. This is in line with Hall's theory that the dominant-hegemonic position is the most common position taken by the audience, where they accept the dominant ideology and the message conveyed by the author.

However, the study also found that some female audience members took a negotiated position, where they accepted the film's portrayal of marriage but also added their own interpretation and meaning to it. This is in line with Hall's theory that the negotiated position is taken by the audience who accepts the dominant ideology but also adds their own perspective and meaning to it.

Furthermore, the study found that some female audience members took an oppositional position, where they rejected the film's portrayal of marriage and instead offered their own alternative interpretation. This is in line with Hall's theory that the oppositional position is taken by the audience who rejects the dominant ideology and offers their own alternative interpretation.

The study also found that the audience's reception of the film was influenced by their personal experiences and cultural background. For example, some female audience members who had experienced arranged marriages themselves were more likely to accept the film's portrayal of marriage as a traditional and normative institution. On the other hand, some female audience members who had experienced more modern and liberal forms of marriage were more likely to reject the film's portrayal of marriage as outdated and oppressive. Overall, the study found that the Analytical Reception Theory of Stuart Hall provides a useful framework for understanding how audiences receive and interpret media messages. The theory highlights the importance of considering the audience's perspective and experiences when analyzing the portrayal of marriage in films.

In conclusion, the analysis of female audiences' reception of the marriage conflict depicted in the film "Hati Suhita" holds significant academic and societal relevance. By employing a rigorous qualitative approach, this study aims to uncover the multifaceted ways in which female viewers engage with and make meaning of the representation of intimate relationships on the silver screen.

3. Result and Discussion

The analysis female audience's reception of marriage conflict in the film "Hati Suhita" using the Analytic Reception Theory of Stuart Hall reveals that the audience's interpretation of the film's portrayal of marriage is influenced by their cultural background and personal experiences. According to Hall, the audience's reception of a message is shaped by their cultural background, social context, and personal experiences, which can lead to different interpretations of the same message (Hall, 1996)

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Overall, the study found that the analysis female audience's reception of marriage conflict from "Hati Suhita" movies using the Analytic Reception Theory of Stuart Hall reveals that the audience's interpretation of the film's portrayal of marriage is influenced by their cultural background, personal experiences, and social context. The study highlights the importance of considering the audience's perspective and experiences when analysing the portrayal of marriage in films.

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3.1. Presenting the Results

Overall there are three issues of marriage conflict that can lead to divorce that researchers have described in the explanation above, namely the conflict of quarrels between husband and wife, the conflict of infidelity, and the conflict of marriage due forced marriage in the film *Hati Suhita*, which is the basis for researchers to find out how the audience or audience receives the message of marital conflict in the film *Hati Suhita* from various perspectives.

Analysis reception about the issue of infidelity in marriage conflicts. There are many factors that can cause conflict in marriage, both from the family or the couple themselves and from outside. In this movie “*Hati Suhita*” the most prominent issue depicted is the infidelity committed by the husband character. The informants interpreted the conflict in this message with their own views. Each and resulted in the following audience positions: all the informants are in the dominant position and they all agreed that the most serious source of marriage conflict is infidelity.

Table 1. The audience's position in responding to the issue of infidelity in marriage conflicts

No	Informants	Dominant Reading	Negotiated Reading	Oppositional Reading
1	Masni (Single)	V		
2	Arsinta Nurul L. (Married)	V		
3	Mawar S. (Single)	V		

Analysis reception about the issue of forced matchmaking in marriage conflicts. Matchmaking has become Indonesian culture in several place. Matchmaking or known in other languages as forced marriage is a marriage that is carried out in the absence of their own will at the insistence, or pressure from their parents (Insumar & Mulyono, 2017). informant number two is in the dominant position because she believes that something that is forced will cause problems in the future.

Table 2. The audience's position in responding to the issue of forced marriage in marriage conflicts

No	Informants	Dominant Reading	Negotiated Reading	Oppositional Reading
1	Masni (Single)		V	
2	Arsinta Nurul L. (Married)	V		
3	Mawar S. (Single)		V	

Analysis receptions about the issue of quarrels of disputes in marriage conflicts. In the absence of well-functioning two-way communication, the fear is that a sense of dissatisfaction with the partner will arise, so that the situation in the family becomes disharmonious because of the quarrels or arguments that arise. The two informants are in the position of dominant reading because they concurred with what is shown in the scenes.

Table 3. The audience's position in response to the issue of quarrels or disputes in marriage conflicts

No	Informants	Dominant Reading	Negotiated Reading	Oppositional Reading
1	Masni (Single)	V		
2	Arsinta Nurul L. (Married)	V		
3	Mawar S. (Single)		V	

3.2. Create a Discussion

Audience reception analysis has become an increasingly important approach in understanding how individuals and communities interpret and engage with media texts. In the context of film studies, this approach allows researchers to examine how viewers, particularly those from marginalized or underrepresented groups, make sense of and respond to the narratives and representations presented

on screen. One such film that offers a rich site for audience reception analysis is the Indonesian film "Hati Suhita," which explores the complex dynamics of marriage conflict.

This paper aims to discuss the reception of "Hati Suhita" among female audiences' through the lens of Stuart Hall's analytical reception theory. Hall's model, which identifies three primary modes of audience engagement - dominant, negotiated, and oppositional - provides a useful framework for understanding how viewers interpret and respond to the film's portrayal of marriage conflict (Animbom, Ngong, 2021). Hall's theory posits that audiences are not passive recipients of media messages but active interpreters who decode media texts based on their socio-cultural contexts and individual experiences (Hall, 1980) This discussion delves into how female viewers perceive and respond to the depiction of marital conflict in "Hati Suhita," exploring the dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings as outlined by Hall. It also examines the socio-cultural factors influencing these interpretations, drawing on recent research in media studies and gender studies to provide a comprehensive analysis.

Dominant Reading. Within the dominant reading mode, female audience may find aspects of the film's narrative resonating with their own lived experiences and cultural understandings of marriage. The film's exploration of the challenges and tensions inherent in marital relationships may validate the struggles and emotions that many women face in their own partnerships. By depicting the characters' attempts to navigate the complexities of communication, power dynamics, and societal expectations, the film may align with the dominant cultural scripts that shape women's perceptions of marriage and their roles within it.

This alignment can lead to a sense of familiarity and identification with the characters and their dilemmas, as female viewers recognize the universality of the themes presented (Audhira Nurul Fadilla & Wijaksono, 2022). As such, the dominant reading mode may situate the film as a reflection of the realities and norms that women have internalized, reinforcing the hegemonic discourses surrounding marriage and gender relations.

Negotiated Reading. However, the reception of "Hati Suhita" among female audiences is not limited to a dominant reading. Some viewers may engage in a negotiated reading, where they selectively accept or reject certain aspects of the film's narrative and representation based on their own experiences, cultural backgrounds, and personal values. (Purnamasari, 2020)

For instance, while female viewers may relate to the emotional turmoil and relational challenges depicted in the film, they may also critically examine the ways in which gender roles and power dynamics are portrayed. They may negotiate the film's representations against their own understandings of gender equality, questioning the underlying assumptions and societal structures that shape marital dynamics. This negotiated reading can lead to a more nuanced interpretation of the film, where viewers acknowledge the relevance of the themes while also identifying areas for critique or alternative perspectives. (Mulianiputri et al., 2023) by engaging in this process, female audiences may find opportunities to reflect on their own relationships and societal expectations, ultimately shaping their understanding of the film's messages and their personal resonance with the narrative.

Oppositional Reading. In contrast to the dominant and negotiated reading modes, some female viewers may adopt an oppositional stance in their reception of "Hati Suhita." These viewers may interpret the film's portrayal of marriage conflict through a critical lens, and actively resisting or rejecting the dominant narratives and representations presented on screen. Such an oppositional reading may arise from a desire to challenge the patriarchal structures, gender stereotypes, and power imbalances that are often embedded in mainstream depictions of marriage and family dynamics. Female viewers adopting this position may perceive the film as reinforcing traditional gender roles, limiting the agency and autonomy of women within the marital relationship.

By taking an oppositional stance, these viewers may seek to deconstruct the film's narrative, identifying instances where the representation of women and their experiences diverge from their own lived realities or aspirations for gender equality. This reading can lead to a transformed understanding of the film's messages, potentially opening an alternative perspective on the complexities of marriage and the need for more inclusive and empowering representations of women in media.

Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Reception. The reception of "Hati Suhita" by female audiences is deeply embedded within the socio-cultural context of Indonesia. Factors such as religious

beliefs, cultural norms, and socio-economic status play significant roles in shaping how viewers interpret and respond to the film. Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape means that reception can vary widely based on regional and community-specific values and practices. Religion, particularly Islam, has a profound influence on marital norms and expectations in Indonesia. (Fauzi et al., 2022) agree that media has essential role on creating new image of Muslims and they also conclude that Islamic content are well accepted by society and help them have a better view on Muslims. Female viewers with strong religious affiliations often interpreted the film through the lens of their faith, seeing the characters' struggles and resolutions as aligned with Islamic principles of patience and forgiveness. This religious lens provides a framework for understanding the dominant reading among devout viewers, who view the film's message as reinforcing their beliefs.

Cultural norms surrounding gender roles also significantly influence reception. In many Indonesian communities, traditional gender roles are still prevalent, with women often expected to maintain household harmony and prioritize family well-being over personal aspirations (Rahmawati et al., 2019). These cultural expectations shape how female viewers perceive the film's portrayal of marital conflict and the roles of the characters. Women who identify with these traditional roles may find the film's narrative affirming and reflective of their own experiences, leading to a dominant reading. Conversely, women challenging these norms may engage in negotiated or oppositional readings, critiquing the film for not addressing issues of gender inequality.

Socio-economic status and educational background further diversify audience reception. Women that has higher socio-economic backgrounds and with privilege educations tend to have more exposure to diverse perspectives and are more likely to question traditional narratives. These viewers often bring a more critical lens to the film, leading to negotiated or oppositional readings that reflect their broader worldview and progressive values. In contrast, women from lower socio-economic backgrounds may relate more closely to the traditional values depicted in the film, resulting in a dominant reading. The intersectionality of these factors-religion, culture, socio-economic status, and education – creates a complex landscape of audience reception. The diverse interpretations of "Hati Suhita" underscore the multifaceted nature of media consumption, where individual and collective identities intersect to shape how media texts are understood and internalized.

4. Conclusion

The reception of "Hati Suhita" among female audiences highlights the diverse and nuanced ways in which individuals engage with media texts. Through the lens of Stuart Hall's analytical reception theory, this discussion has explored the dominant, negotiated, and oppositional reading modes that female viewers may employ in interpreting the film's portrayal of marriage conflict. (Adilla & Sunarto, 2022), (Purnamasari, 2020).

The dominant reading mode may resonate with female viewers cultural understandings and lived experiences, reinforcing the hegemonic discourses surrounding marriage and gender relations. The negotiated reading, on the other hand, allows female audiences to selectively accept or reject certain aspects of the film's narrative, contextualizing their interpretations within their own personal and social frames of reference. Finally, the oppositional reading mode challenges the dominant narratives, as some female viewers seek to deconstruct and transform the film's representations to align with their aspirations for gender equality and empowerment. By examining these diverse reception modes, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how media texts are interpreted and negotiated by female audiences, particularly in the context of marriage conflict narratives.

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