



# Reception analysis of childfree issue in Gita Savitri Devi's Youtube content "Childfree: all wrong in the eyes of netizens"

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

Audience Reception  
Childfree  
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This research is conducted to examine audience reception through a descriptive qualitative approach. This research aims to find out how the audience reception about the issue of childfree on Gita Savitri Devi's personal Instagram video reels regarding the comments of one of the netizens in the video and then clarifying it with her husband on YouTube with the title "Childfree: All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" segment Pagi-Pagi Eps. 32. There were 5 informants who were selected as the subjects of this research, gathered using purposive sampling technique. This research uses reception analysis as the research method and the data is collected using in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature study. This research will specifically investigate positions or ways of decoding of audiences in interpreting Gita Savitri Devi's childfree statement. The results obtained through in-depth interviews with 5 informants who have met the criteria indicate that there is 1 informant in the dominant position category, 3 informants in the negotiating position category and 1 informant in the opposition category.

## 1. Introduction

In the era of new media, the name Youtube is the main concern in the eyes of the public because the videos uploaded on Youtube are packaged with their own characteristics from the owner (Qorin Munandiyal & Fajar Junaedi, 2022). As on the Youtube account owned by an influencer and Youtuber named Gita Savitri Devi or commonly known as Gitasav who has long echoed her choice with her husband to be childfree (Oki & Ridwan, 2022). Supported by environmental and residential factors, Gitasav often shares his various activities on Youtube and Instagram, especially those related to marginal issues. Therefore, Gita is known as a feminist activist in the digital space and many of her posts are controversial and reap pros and cons, one of which is the issue of childfree.

On February 4, Gitasav was in the public spotlight because of her comments that reaped pros and cons on social media. This began when Gita posted a reels video on her Instagram containing a recap of a traveling video while living abroad, the video was captioned "POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids" on the cover. The post received a lot of responses, one netizen commented saying, "I, who is 24, lost to Ka Git who is 30 years old. You're so young," then Gita with her critical and frontal characteristics replied to the netizen's comment by writing, "Not having kids is indeed natural anti-aging. You can sleep for 8 hours every day, no stress hearing kids screaming. And when you finally got wrinkles, you have the money to pay for botox". Based on these comments, many netizens who disagree with Gita's expression even tend to blaspheme her. Not only on Instagram, Gitasav's statement became a trending topic on Twitter and several other social media,

so Gitasav and her husband made a clarification video on their Youtube account entitled "Childfree: All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" in the Pagi-Pagi Eps.32 segment.

Some previous studies include, "Review of Islamic Law on the Decision to Marry Without Children or Childfree (Case Study of Youtube Content Creator Gita Savitri Devi)" (Mumtazah, 2022), "Analysis of the Ethics of Netizen Comments on Instagram @Gitasav on Statement Childfree" (Wulandari and Purnama, 2023), and "Analysis of Millennial Women's Reception on the Childfree Phenomenon (Study on readers of Gita Savitri Devi's blog titled "Debatable Women")" (Janah, 2022). The similarities between previous research and the research to be carried out are seen in the issues studied, namely childfree and research methods, namely using descriptive qualitative methods. Meanwhile, the difference is seen from the side of the object and subject raised. This research takes the subject of the study, namely audiences who are followers and non-followers on @Gitasav Instagram account and viewers or not viewers of Youtube Gitasav. The object of this research is Gita Savitri Devi's Youtube content entitled "Childfree: All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" Pagi-Pagi Eps. 32.

## 2. Method

This study uses a type of descriptive qualitative research with a reception analysis approach. Qualitative research is research that aims to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, for example behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc (Maulida Balqis, 2022). holistically and described in the form of words and language. The approach used is reception analysis with the main concept that the meaning of media text is not attached to media text, but meaning is created by the audience after receiving media text. The reception analysis was conducted to determine the reception of messages by the audience to Gita Savitri Devi's Youtube show "Childfree: All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" Pagi-Pagi Eps. 32 in online mass media (Nurullita, 2021).

Data collection techniques in this study are in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature studies. Data analysis techniques use qualitative data analysis techniques, which are carried out interactively and take place continuously. The activities of this data analysis include: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions (Pratiwi, 2022).

Research informants were chosen based on several criteria, namely informants aged 20 years and over, male or female, had heard, knew, and were interested in the term "Childfree", had watched Gita Savitri Devi's Instagram reels entitled "POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids" and watched Gita Savitri Devi's Youtube show entitled "Childfree: All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" Pagi-Pagi Eps. 32, have read articles or other forms of information about childfree. Informants are obtained by matching existing criteria and then looking directly for who are the parties who fall into that category (Rinawiyanti & Kusumo, 2023). After the researcher finds who falls into the category of research informants, then the researcher contacts the informant the researcher chooses to ask about their availability to be interviewed regarding the information needed in the study.

## 3. Result and Discussion

The results of this study were obtained after conducting in-depth interviews with five informants who had met the criteria. Then data analysis was carried out from the results of the research obtained to be categorized into three dimensions of audience decoding based on the theory used, namely the encoding-decoding model according to Stuart Hall (Cunningham & Craig, 2016). There are three possible main positions of the audience in decoding media messages, namely the position of dominant hegemony, the position of negotiation, and the position of opposition.

This research focuses on how to analyze audience perception related to digital activism in childfree problems on Gitasav's controversial Instagram reels video and then make a clarification video on his personal Youtube account entitled "Childfree: All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" Early in the Morning Eps. 32.

Here are the results of the researcher's interview with five informants:

### 1. The opinion and views of the informant regarding childfree and the person who decided to be childfree

According to FS who was one of the informants on this study, said that childfree cannot be viewed completely wrong and completely right because childfree is a decision and a choice (Coker et al., 2021). This decision is certainly discussed by a husband and wife before marriage. Childfree is a decision that must be discussed before marriage or prenuptial agreement (M. Kim, 2022). As long as this is done not because of coercion, but the desire and consent of both parties, then there is nothing wrong. Moreover, as long as this decision does not harm others then there is nothing to be concerned about. According to FS, people who choose not to have children may be biologically or financially unprepared or unwilling. And according to FS, having children is also not an obligation that should be, regardless of any faith because it includes human rights (Kurniawati, 2021).

The second informant, HSNI, argued that his view of childfree was actually more of a normative answer, meaning that the decision was a life choice for each person. A decision that might be considered taboo for our social environment, especially Indonesia which is predominantly Muslim. The informant chooses to respect the decision as long as it does not undermine the decision of others as well (Sakinah, Alfiqri, 2020). A person who decides to be childfree in his view means that the person has the courage to make a decision that is certainly a lot of attention from the general public because the decision may be slightly different and of course there are many considerations that he has analyzed before deciding on it (Sohal & Kaur, 2018).

The third informant is SA, according to him childfree is not the right choice, even though it is a person's right. Children are gifts entrusted by the creator to married couples. The presence of a child will provide clear direction and purpose for a couple. In addition, children are also not a burden but an investment for parents later in old age (Hamzah, 2018). And the informant himself admitted that he did not agree with the person who chose and decided to be childfree. The informant has the view that if the childfree is not in accordance with religious teachings, there are more negative impacts in the choice, and has different meanings regarding the presence of children who are considered by the informant to be a nature and gift from God Almighty (Fajarani, 2021).

The fourth informant is AGP, in accordance with the educational background and of course the religious perspective of AGP thinks that, this childfree issue still has pros and cons. The informant explained from the pro side exemplifying from a religious perspective, namely one of the imams in Islam, namely Imam Nawawi as one of the great scholars of the Shafi'i School with a book written by Riyadhus Salihin which contains a collection of hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Mirela et al., 2021).

Where the informant explained that Imam Nawawi until his death chose not to marry because he was busy studying, wrote religious books and books, and deepened his religious knowledge so that it was unthinkable to get married. Indirectly, when Imam Nawawi decided not to marry, he certainly had no children. AGP said that marriage in a religious perspective is subjective law, where it can be said to be obligatory, sunnah, mubah, even haram depending on the intention (Amanova & Andryani, 2023).

The counter side is going back to the sahih hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which commands to choose a wife who is loved (al-wadud) and has the potential to give birth to many children (al-walud). Because the Prophet SAW was happy with many of his people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Marry the women you love and (these women) have the potential to have many children. For verily I (will be happy) because of the greater number of my people than the rest of the people." This hadith was narrated by Imam Abu Dawud, Imam an-Nasa'i, Imam Baihaqi, Imam at-Thabarani, and a number of other narrators of hadith who are known to be just and dhabit. Therefore, contextually according to AGP it is mandatory in Islam to multiply the followers of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

AGP admitted that he belongs to the type of person who does not care about the choices of others, because it is the personal right of each individual and he also does not try to influence others to have children or not to have children. The informant said it would be very happy when a person or couple explained or even told the reason why they decided to childfree. Because the informant himself is very fond of discussion which can add new information and points of view. Back again,

according to him, when someone has principles and choices not to have children, it doesn't matter as long as it doesn't harm and force it on others. AGP normalizes such choices for others but not for himself, according to which principles relating to religion and creed are sensitive. Therefore he wants to live peacefully without conflict with others and walk in accordance with his own life goals.

The last informant, TACA, explained his views on childfree itself are fine and according to him if at this time there are many choices that love there is nothing wrong too, plus childfree has now become a new thought among young people or young couples. In addition, he sees that people who choose to be childfree are legitimate because the intention of having or not having children is the consent of only the two people concerned, people outside the two people or the couple do not have a great right to coerce or dictate that the couple's life is in accordance with the wishes of third parties.

## **2. The informant's response regarding Gita Savitri Devi's reels and comments on Instagram and a clarification video on her personal Youtube entitled "Childfree: All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" Early in the Morning Eps.32**

FS's response to Gitasav's video reels and comments posted on Instagram is to accept and agree with the statement, because FS has the view that when we live as a wife and mother, of course we must be smart to divide our time between being a wife for her husband and as a mother for her children. According to him, when a mother listens to the whimpers and cries of children who actually want something but cannot be discussed and cannot immediately know what the mother wants can make some mothers become stressed and emotional. Of course, this can affect a person's physical changes.

In addition, FS also said that when a woman becomes a mother, she must also be able to save money, by having a husband and even children requires women to be able to divide the money for children's needs which are not cheap both in terms of education and daily activities. Conversely, when someone does not have children or decides to be childfree can make some people happy as Gitasav. Therefore, it is only natural that every human being lives according to his own purpose and happiness. Similarly, with people who choose to be childfree or not, it concerns the rights and authority over the body owned by women, and can be called support for human rights (May Adelia Pramesti & Eko Cahyo Prawoto, 2020).

Regarding the clarification video on Gitasav's Youtube which has received many positive comments, according to informants, it can be interpreted as natural because the majority of those who watched the video are Gitasav's followers for a long time and already know and even understand Gitasav's decision to choose the childfree way of life. Meanwhile, in Gitasav's Instagram reels video, many blasphemed the statement "POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids" because according to FS, many netizens are sensational, especially mothers who have children then baper like mothers who are still in their 20s and when they have children they look old and finally feel offended by the content.

HSNI as the second informant argued about Gitasav's reels video entitled "POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids" and showed Gitasav's happiness that being able to travel to any part of the world is actually legitimate even many people in their 30s who don't even have a family can still be happy. However, when Gitasav uses the word "don't have any kids" which if ordinary people interpret it might be like a campaign for "I'm happy you don't have children" it will be both pro and con.

In addition, HSNI said if we look at it from a different point of view, the expression can actually be a calming for a woman who wants to be blessed with a child but has not been given. Therefore, everything depends on the point of view of each person in viewing the content. Furthermore, regarding the statement "not having kids is indeed natural anti-aging" informants can relate to Gitasav's background why he can talk like that. The informant did not see anything wrong with just a statement because it was a fact that Gitasav felt and wanted to share that fact. But when the statement is used as a validation by Gitasav that requires everyone to have the same opinion and view, then it is wrong (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Regarding the clarification video on Gitasav's personal Youtube, HSNI argued that indirectly with the video, Gitasav was disturbed by all the comments. In addition, regarding the clarification video, the informant highlighted the description box. Where in the first paragraph Gitasav elaborates

on the facts about the low IQ of Indonesian citizens which is the reason Gitasav wants to become a content creator so that netizens can be open-minded or commonly known as "open minded", one of which is knowledge with the theme "childfree".

According to the informant, the clarification was more offensive related to the pros and cons of netizens than the content about childfree itself. In this content, Gitasav is more about venting about his content when it enters other platforms and is exposed to his non-audience. In the video, Gitasav and her husband respond more to allegations related to the childfree campaign. What is very unfortunate is how it seems that there are several statements that generalize that netizens who contradict him are colors who have children with the characteristics he mentioned. Even at the end of the video, Gitasav and her husband insist that they are increasingly determined and believe that parenthood is exhausting.

The third informant, SA, admitted that he did not follow Gitasav's viral content, because he was not interested in the theme of discussion which reaped many pros and cons even though it was clear that having children was one of the gifts given by God to humans.

Contrary to the opinion of previous informants, AGP said in the video reels Gitasav even said there was no relevance between the comments and the content of the video, namely about travel clips related to Gitasav's comments related to youth. And the informant did not agree with the title on the cover of the video because according to him each person has their own choices and happiness and should not influence others with the way of life he chooses, let alone to force and demean people's choice to have children.

According to AGP, regarding the difference in comments between the clarification video on Gitasav's personal Youtube account, which has many positive comments, and on Instagram, the majority of which have negative comments, occurred due to platform factors. Where according to informants Instagram is dominated by people who are too sensitive and rigid, unlike Youtube which seems relaxed. This is associated with the many viral cases originating from Instagram which proves netizens on Instagram are more sensitive and rigid in looking at everything (Wijaya & Firmanto, 2021).

The last informant, TACA, regarding the content of video reels on Gitasav's Instagram, the informant stated that he did not agree with Gitasav's comment reply to one of the netizens who said that not having children is one of the natural causes for youth. The reason is because in accordance with family background and life experience, TACA itself sees how his mother raised him as an only child living in a family that can be said to be well-off.

She as an only child sees the problem of youth as a reality that can be pursued, namely by treatment, for example to a beauty clinic. In addition, for sleep problems can also be attempted such as using a babysitter so that a mother can carry out her daily activities productively. And also traveling can not only be done when young or even if you don't have children, but can still be done when you have a family and even have children as long as you have more savings and funds for this. Furthermore, about the clarification video on Gitasav's personal Youtube, the informant admitted that he did not follow him because he felt that this childfree problem would have no end.

### **3. The informant's answer whether to normalize the decision to be childfree or not**

Before knowing the term childfree, FS had thought about not having children because he thought having children was a hard thing and had to be responsible spiritually, mentally and financially. Until finally the term childfree emerged and that's when FS got validation that thinking about not having children is a natural and normal thing because childfree is a choice. As time went by, many women began to speak up about this and as people who had agreed from the beginning to choose life by not having children, FS finally felt relieved about it (Ekeleme, 2023).

Apart from personal reasons, according to FS, currently in Indonesia there are still many women who are required to have children by the environment, family, couple, even neighbors' talk which is actually not important because it is supported by patriarchal culture. Therefore he chose not to live under the influence of others but to live according to his principles and beliefs (Faturokhmah, 2021). Plus today, many people who have children but cannot take care of and raise these children properly cannot even provide the best food intake and education as a result become a less critical and

backward generation. In addition, the issue of stanting is currently still very much in Indonesia, according to FS with the decision to childfree can reduce the number of stanting and can improve the quality of the younger generation in Indonesia (Y. Kim, 2021).

In conclusion, FS personally normalizes one's choice for childfree as well as someone who decides to have children, as long as one is responsible for one's own choice. Responsible here informant means being responsible for education, clothing and food needs, even the child's life is not up to 20-30 years but until death, and the most crucial is financial problems. And according to FS, having children is also not an obligation that should be done regardless of any faith because it is part of human rights. Plus, if someone decides to be childfree, it's also okay because everyone has their own goals and life choices, depending on how the person sees a child as to be.

The third informant, namely SA, explained firmly not to normalize the choice to be childfree because according to him, a child is a bearer of blessings and good fortune in a family. In contrast to SA's opinion, the HSNI informant explained that he fully respects people who choose to be childfree as long as they do not harm or demean other people's choices. However, the informant also firmly stated not to normalize the choice to be childfree because it was motivated by beliefs that the informant shared. In line with HSNI's opinion, the AGP informant also said that AGP normalizes this choice for other people but not for himself, according to him, principles related to religion and belief are sensitive matters. Because of that, he wants to live peacefully without conflict with other people and walk in accordance with his own life goals.

The final informant was TACA who said that a person's choice and decision to be childfree was natural and there was nothing wrong with that decision because quite a few of the informant's friends also chose not to have children. However, he himself did not choose to be childfree because as an only child he felt he had an obligation to continue his family tree .

From the research results that have been obtained, it shows that each informant has a different interpretation regarding the video reels broadcast on Gitasav's Instagram entitled " POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids" and the clarification video on the YouTube account his personal. Differences in meaning are based on the informant's own experience, knowledge, beliefs and culture. This proves that the meaning of the text is not fixed and single but can be interpreted differently by informants. In accordance with reception analysis studies which have the concept of an active audience, the informants in this research also actively produce meaning regarding the content of the message and are considered as producers of meaning .

Reception analysis is an audience study that looks at how the audience receives and interprets messages through the media in everyday life. There are three hypothetical decoding positions or methods proposed by Hall, from which mass communication decoding (involving the meaning of the text) by the audience or reader can be made or drawn. According to Hall's discourse (in Xie, 2022) about the three dimensions of audience decoding, there are three possible main positions for the audience in decoding media messages, namely the dominant hegemonic position, the negotiation position and the opposition position.

#### a. The Dominant Hegemonic Position

This position is also known as the dominant-hegemonic or preferential or isotropic interpretation. That is, the decoder decodes the text according to the way the encoder encodes it. In this position, the message or information will most likely be translated in a way that is perfectly aligned or symmetrical to the way the message is encoded, and there is no misunderstanding between the sender and receiver. In this case. The audience's reception or meaning is exactly the same as the message produced by the media, namely the depiction of video reels on Gitasav's Instagram entitled " POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids " and Gita Savitri Devi's YouTube show entitled " Childfree : All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" Pagi-Pagi Eps.32. In this research, the informant in the Dominant Hegemonic Position is FS.

This can be proven by the informant's statement, namely, " when a mother listens to a child's whining and crying when the child actually wants something but cannot yet talk about it and the mother cannot immediately know what she wants, it can make some mothers become stressed and emotional. Of course this can affect a person's physical changes." Indirectly, the informant agreed with Gitasav's statement which said that not having children is one of the natural causes of youth,

because women who have children will spend more time looking after and caring for their children and serving their husbands, which causes them not to have much time for themselves both physically and mentally. mental or physical.

Apart from that, based on interviews conducted, the informant also admitted that he chose not to have children for his future life. The reason is because according to FS having children is a difficult thing and must be accounted for spiritually, mentally and financially. Apart from that, the issue of stunting is currently still very widespread in Indonesia, according to FS, the decision to go childfree can reduce the number of stunting and can improve the quality of the young generation in Indonesia. Therefore, it can be concluded that FS is in a dominant hegemonic position because of him decode the message according to the way the encoder decodes it or simply the informant fully agrees with Gitasav's statement .

#### b. The Negotiated Position

The negotiated position (or compromise/reconciliation position) contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional factors. That is, the decoder understands the message partly based on the meaning provided by the media, and partly based on a person's social background. They maintain certain agreements based on the dominant ideology and position of their group. In other words , they neither completely agree nor completely deny it. On the one hand, they recognize the governing authority of ideology and accept some parts of ideological interpretation in principle. On the other hand , they also emphasize their own specific situations, and may express resistance to information in certain contexts or conditions. In this research, there were three informants who were in negotiating positions, namely HSNI, AGP, and TACA (Handyside, 2012).

Based on interviews conducted with HSNI, he was in a negotiating position because according to him he did not see anything wrong with just a statement because it was a fact felt by Gitasav and wanted to share that fact. However, when this statement is used as validation by Gitasav which requires everyone to have the same opinions and views then that is wrong. Apart from that, HSNI also said that it fully appreciates people who choose to be childfree, but it also firmly stated not to normalize this choice due to their cultural background and beliefs.

Likewise, AGP claims to appreciate and respect people who choose to be childfree as long as they do not demean or influence other people to do the same, because according to him, everyone's goals and happiness are different. The last informant who was in this position was TACA who tended to disagree with Gitasav's statement, because according to him, staying young is a reality that can be worked on, such as going to a beauty clinic and for sleep problems, it can also be worked on, such as using a babysitter so that a mother can carry out activities. productive every day. Therefore, according to him, staying young does not have to be about not having children but can be achieved through various things. However, regarding people who decide to be childfree, TACA admits that he really respects this decision because many of his friends choose not to have children and that is a normal thing. So, it can be concluded that in this negotiating position the informant does not agree or does not decode the message according to the way the encoder decodes the message as a whole, but rather has his own way of interpreting the message according to the background of each informant.

#### c. The Oppositional Position

In practice, the opposition position, along with the preferred position, can be considered as opposite ends of a continuum. This position is also known as the confrontational position. In this research, there was one informant, namely SA, who did not agree and rejected the content of the message conveyed by the media, namely regarding the video reels on Gitasav's Instagram entitled " POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids " and the YouTube show Gita Savitri Devi entitled " Childfree : All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" Pagi-Pagi Eps.32. SA makes it clear that it does not normalize and does not agree with people who choose to be childfree whatever the reason, because according to him a child is a bringer of blessings and good fortune in a family. Because of this, SA is in an opposition position, because the informant does not decode the message according to the way the encoder decodes the message.

The following is a table of audience reception regarding the issue of childfree based on Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding model :

**Table 1. Audience Reception about Content**

No	Name	The Dominant Hegemonic Position	The Negotiated Position	The Oppositional Position
1	S.A			✓
2	HSNI		✓	
3	F.S	✓		
4	AGP		✓	
5	TACA		✓	

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the statement in the video reels on Gitasav's Instagram entitled " POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids " and the YouTube show Gita Savitri Devi entitled " Childfree : All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens " Pagi-Pagi Eps. 32 is interpreted and defined by the public as a way to voice a person's choices and opinions in choosing their own path in life, what is each individual's perspective in defining the term " childfree ", what is each person's point of view in interpreting the presence of a child and how each person can respect each other's differences in perspectives and choices. Differences in the interpretations made by the public regarding video reels on Gitasav's Instagram entitled " POV: You are in your 30s and don't have any kids " and Gita Savitri Devi's YouTube broadcast entitled " Childfree : All Wrong in the Eyes of Netizens" Pagi-Pagi Eps.32 This happened because each informant had their own Frame of Reference and Field of Experience . Therefore, there are several reasons and considerations made by each informant in interpreting a message from the media so that there are often differences in the meaning of the message maker and the audience's interpretation. The results of this research are that of the five informants, there are 3 informants who are in the Negotiated Position category, followed by the Dominant-Hegemonic Position (Hegemonic Dominant Position) and The Oppositional Code Position (Opposition Position), each with 1 Informant with a different meaning. shows that audiences are active individuals and have awareness, power and freedom in interpreting the content of messages conveyed by the media. The audience does not interpret the message taken for granted, but the audience will reproduce the content of the message consumed from the media.

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