

AUDIENCE RECEPTION OF THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE FILM "LAURA"

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes audience reception of the controversy surrounding the "Laura" movie, which is based on the true story of influencer Laura Anna. The film portrays Laura's struggle against injustice after experiencing a tragic accident that changed her life. Laura had a free intimate lifestyle with her boyfriend and posted her night parties' life. However, one night she had an accident when she was coming home with her boyfriend and both of them were drunk. The film sparked various public opinions, both supportive and critical, particularly regarding Laura's life before the accident. This research uses a descriptive qualitative research approach and Stuart Hall's reception theory. This study examines how audiences interpret the messages in Laura through three positions: hegemonic dominant, negotiated, and oppositional. Reception analysis is used as a method to describe how the audience receives and interprets media texts. The findings reveal that one audience member falls into the hegemonic dominant position, stating that Laura is an inspirational story and disregarding the controversy. Three participants are in the negotiated position, acknowledging that the film's message remains clear despite the surrounding controversy. One participant takes an oppositional stance, holding views that contradict the film's intended message. The audience believes that the film Laura was brought to the big screen merely as an exploitation of tragedy rather than a work conveying the struggle of Laura. The audience thinks that the film is too dramatic and does not provide a clear solution to the issues raised.

Keywords: Audience Reception, Stuart Hall, Indonesian Film, "Laura", Controversy

1. INTRODUCTION

According to FI (Film Indonesia) data, year after year, drama films remain the favorite genre to watch (Mediarta, 2023). This is also reflected in the success of the film Laura, which carries the drama genre based on the true story of an influencer named Edelenyi Laura Anna, played by Amanda Rawles. This film successfully touched the audience's emotions with its strong storyline and relatable characters. This has made it one of the drama genre films that successfully captured the attention of many people, reaching almost 150 thousand viewers on its first day of screening.



Source: Instagram account @mdmusic_id
Figure 1.1 Poster of the Film Laura

MD Pictures successfully produced the film *Laura*, which will be released on September 12, 2024, in theaters across Indonesia. This film is produced by Manoj Punjabi and directed by Hanung Bramantyo. *Laura's* story was adapted into a film thanks to her struggle in facing the very heavy trials after experiencing a tragic car accident with her boyfriend named Jojo after leaving a nightclub while intoxicated. The accident drastically changed *Laura Anna's* life; *Laura* became completely paralyzed. Meanwhile, her boyfriend Jojo (in the real life story named Gaga Muhammad) only suffered minor injuries. *Laura's* story also caught the public's attention after she suffered permanent disabilities, and her boyfriend Jojo was not responsible for the incident and even took advantage of the situation. *Laura* not only struggled with her physical condition but also with injustice. Although her life was short, *Laura's* struggle to rise from the tragedy that befell her and her fight for justice has inspired many people (Nurmalia, 2024). This film showcases how *Laura* goes about her daily life as an influencer who often shares her stories and activities on social media. The main focus of this film is her struggle to face difficulties and her determination to seek justice. However, behind its main focus, there are many pros and cons that arise among the public. Film is a part of mass media, and in mass media, there is always framing in the content presented (Siahaan, Mikho Fridolin; Vera, 2024). The framing created by the film "*Laura*" indeed portrays *Laura* as a victim neglected by her boyfriend. Many people commented on their respective social media accounts that *Laura's* story should not be brought to the big screen because some believe that the accident *Laura* experienced was caused by her own actions.



Source: TikTok account @gandhifernando
Figure 1.2 Laura Movie Review

As reviewed based on the story aspect of the film by a TikToker with the account name @gandhifernando (Fernando, 2024). In his video review, he appeared to be critical, causing the comment section of that account to be dominated by people who agreed with the criticism of the film Laura. In addition to the negative responses that seem to fill the comment section on the film review made by the TikTok account named @gandhifernando, positive responses from the public can also still be seen in the comment section. Some netizens opined that there are life lessons to be learned from the film Laura. Based on various comments about the film, it has led to differing audience perceptions regarding the reception of its meaning. Therefore, there is a need for a reception analysis regarding the audience's opinions on the content conveyed by the film or the audience's reception of the message's content. Therefore, this research needs to be conducted. Reception analysis has the advantage of being able to interpret the making meaning process that the audience engages in while watching a show (Sari, Mira Kumala ; Abdullah, 2022). In reception analysis, the audience plays an important role because they can actively receive and interpret messages or symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, so that they can be understood. Milatisofa (Claretta, Dyva ;Fauziah, Alfinatul ; Hikmah, Amalia Nurul; Aziizah, 2022).The researchers will conduct a more comprehensive study on the pros and cons of this film. This study will be analyzed using the reception analysis method or audience reception. Through this reception analysis, it helps researchers understand how the audience interprets and reacts to the messages conveyed in the film, thus providing a deeper insight into the differences in audience perceptions and reactions to the responses in the film. In this study, the researchers observed that there are audiences who can be categorized into dominant hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional groups. For this reason, this research uses Stuart Hall's Encoding-Decoding theory, which considers text, production, and audience within a single context, and each of its

elements can be analyzed (Claretta, Dyva ;Fauziah, Alfinatul ; Hikmah, Amalia Nurul; Aziizah, 2022). Based on the context explained in the background of the problem, the author formulates the problem that will focus this research on how the audience receives the pros and cons in the film Laura.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Reception Theory

Reception theory, also known as active reception theory, was developed by Stuart Hall in 1973. Reception analysis is used as a method to describe how audiences receive and interpret media texts. Media texts can take various forms, both visual and audiovisual, such as print advertisements, posters, television shows, and films. This theory emphasizes that every media has a message that the creator wants to convey, but the interpretation of that message can vary depending on the audience's interpretation (Gunarso, S., Ramadhanita, F. F., Fuadi, H. M., Mauliansyah, F., Fathiyah, Setiyoko, N., Gunawan, K. M., 2024). The statement highlights several important ideas from Stuart Hall that form the basis of reception analysis theory, particularly the concepts of "encoding" and "decoding." These two concepts serve as the main foundation in research that uses the reception analysis method to understand how media messages are constructed and interpreted by the audience. His essay titled 'Encoding and Decoding Television Discourse' focuses on encoding and decoding the content/message of mass media given to the audience, regardless of the medium, such as magazines/newspapers, television/radio, video games, online media, and others (Nawiroh, 2024).

The concept of reception theory shows that a film, book, or game (play). Although it does not have an inherent meaning, the audience who watches or experiences it will give it meaning; the audience creates an understanding of the events within the text or screen. The audience receives mass media messages and understands their content in the same or different ways. The meaning of the message can change according to how the audience individuals perceive it and according to their respective social contexts. In reception analysis, there is the encoding-decoding model proposed by Stuart Hall (Tan, Sely; Aladdin, 2018)). Hall describes the television encoding process as a series of interrelated yet distinct moments of production, circulation, distribution, and reproduction. Specifically, the production of meaning does not guarantee that the meaning will be consumed according to the encoder's intention, because television messages are constructed as a system of signs with various components of emphasis

that are polysomic in nature. In other words, television messages carry multiple meanings and can be interpreted in various ways (Nawiroh, 2024). According to Nawiroh, the reception theory proposed by Stuart Hall describes how producers use various signs to encode the meaning of a program, according to their ideology and resources, which is then translated by the audience, who must interpret the message through their framework of knowledge. This reception analysis approach emphasizes the importance of the social and cultural context behind the flow of "meaningful" discourse. According to Hall (Nawiroh, 2024), reception analysis is an approach that focuses on how the audience receives, understands, and gives meaning to media messages. The characteristics of reception analysis according to Stuart Hall are:

1. The focus of the study is on mass media messages.
2. The text is polysemous.
3. The audience is active in receiving mass media messages and in forming meaning.
4. In the process of interpretation, the audience refers to their respective personal, social, and cultural contexts (Nawiroh, 2024).

In simple terms, Hall (Pujarama, Widya ; Yustisia, 2020) attempts to explain in more detail about the communication circuit—a concept often used in mass media research, which considers the communication process as a circuit or flow of messages from the source to the recipient (Pujarama, Widya ; Yustisia, 2020). According to the audience reception theory, the meaning of media messages is not fixed, but rather constructed by the audience through their engagement with the media text in a routine interpretation process. In other words, the audience is considered an active party in interpreting media texts by assigning meaning based on their understanding, according to what they see and feel (Andung, 2021).

Communication occurs when the information conveyed has the same meaning and is understood by both the sender and the receiver of the message. In the process of communication, there is a mutual understanding of the message's meaning between both parties. The 'meaning' in a message is conveyed through a set of codes or symbols used in the language system as communication signals. Therefore, language as a communication tool contains various types of codes conveyed through the encoding process, as well as concepts that are then translated back through the decoding process (Pujarama, Widya ; Yustisia, 2020).

Reception analysis refers to a comparison of the textual analysis of media discourse and audience discourse, where the results of the interpretation clearly refer to the context, whether it is cultural context or the context of other media content (Nawiroh, 2024). The essence of

reception analysis is to examine the relationship between the construction of audience interpretation and media interpretation. Media messages are open and polysemous, meaning they carry various meanings, while the audience is depicted as "Interpretative Communities" that are always active in perceiving and interpreting mass media messages, rather than being passive individuals who merely receive the meanings produced by mass media (Nawiroh, 2024). In the development of Hall's perspective, interpretation and the audience are also considered important elements in the process of meaning formation (Pujarama, Widya ; Yustisia, 2020). In the context of mass media, the process of meaning formation does not only originate from the media text itself, but is also determined by the relationship between the text and the text's readers (audience). The audience does not only play the role of a recipient of the message sent by the media (sender-message-receiver), but can also act as a source of the message (source) that can reproduce the message conveyed by the media (production-circulation-distribution or consumption-reproduction) (Pujarama, Widya ; Yustisia, 2020). In simple terms, Ott & Mack (Pujarama, Widya ; Yustisia, 2020) offer the basic assumptions of reception theory, which include:

1. Meaning is fluid and communication becomes imperfect without examining and analyzing the meaning of the message.
2. Audience interpretation is viewed as an important element in the process of defining meaning (meaning-making).
3. The continuous negotiation between producers and consumers of messages (media and audience) can reveal the true meaning of media texts. Reception researchers assume that media owners have the power to produce texts by inserting certain elements. However, in the end, it is the audience who determines how they interpret the meaning of the text and how the media text functions and plays a role in their lives, especially in understanding social reality (Pujarama, Widya ; Yustisia, 2020)

Film is a product of culture and a means of artistic expression (Ayu, Mescha BLT; Kusumastuti, 2022). In order for a film to be successful and meaningful communication to occur, according to Hall, the text producer and the audience must have the same understanding of the signs used in the construction of the broadcast. Everyone will have their own interpretation of a film because the audience translates its meaning through their own framework of knowledge. The audience's understanding of media texts is shaped by age, social

class, ethnicity, geography, and various other factors. Of course, the broader social and political context will also influence the audience's reaction. Decoding will only be successful if the message sent by the encoder is fully understood in accordance with its content as intended by the sender (Nawiroh, 2024).

Encoding refers to the process of producing media texts, where the media creates specific communication messages through the use of language codes. Meanwhile, decoding refers to the process by which the audience translates those codes to find meaning in the text. Furthermore, the process of message reception (decoding) can be understood as the activity of interpreting or translating physical messages into forms that have meaning for the message recipient. The concept of the audience according to the encoding-decoding model is divided into three categories, among others (Nawiroh, 2024) (Tan, Sely; Aladdin, 2018):

1. Dominant Hegemonic Position

A situation where the audience receives the message conveyed by the media. This is a situation where the media conveys its message using the dominant cultural codes in society. In other words, both the media and the audience use the perspective of the prevailing dominant culture. The media must ensure that the messages it produces align with the dominant culture present in society. If the audience interprets the message in the media in the ways intended by the media as the message creators, then both the media and the audience are using the dominant ideology. In this case, a perfect communication exchange occurs because the audience fully receives the message from the media. In this case, a perfect exchange of communication occurs because the audience fully receives the message from the media.

2. Negotiation Position

This position shows that the audience generally accepts the dominant ideology but rejects its application in certain situations. The audience can make exceptions tailored to the local culture or the frame of reference they possess. Thus, the audience understands what is conveyed by the media, but does not always interpret it identically.

3. Opposition Position

This situation occurs when the audience critically alters the message or code conveyed by the media by replacing it with an alternative message or code. The audience has their own way of thinking about the topics presented by the media. On one hand, the media has the ability to frame messages with certain implicit meanings. However, under the assumption

of reception theory, the audience possesses a certain sensitivity that allows them to reject the dominant ideology constructed by the media. Thus, in this oppositional position, the audience rejects the media message because it may contradict the knowledge or values they adhere to (Pujarama, Widya ; Yustisia, 2020)

2.2. Research Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm is an effort to seek explanations for social or cultural events based on the perspectives and experiences of the individuals being studied, referred to as the interpretive approach. In general, the interpretive paradigm is a social system that deeply interprets behavior by direct observation (Muslim, 2016). In this study, the interpretive paradigm is applied because the researcher aims to understand how the audience of the film *Laura* receives the messages contained within it. In addition, this research also aims to explore how the audience reconstructs the messages conveyed in the film, as well as the meanings that emerge. Various aspects that influence the audience's reception of the message will be the focus of this research. Next, the audience can be categorized into three positions described by Stuart Hall, based on the results of the interviews that will be conducted. Referring to this study, the researcher uses a descriptive qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a systematic approach to exploring and understanding social and cultural phenomena in depth (Widuhung, 2022). Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on the measurement and analysis of statistical data, qualitative research is more focused on understanding the meanings behind the phenomena being studied (Suprayitno, D.; Ahmad; Tartila; Sa'dianoor; Aladdin, 2024). Qualitative research methods are studies that produce descriptive data in the form of written texts, speech, or the behavior of individuals observed in a specific context, which are then comprehensively, holistically, and thoroughly analyzed from a research perspective. The purpose of this qualitative approach is to reveal the meaning of phenomena expressed through data collection techniques (Pahleviannur, M. R., Grave, A. De, Saputra, D. N., Mardianto, D., Sinthania, N. D., Hafrida, L., Bano, V. O., Susanto, E. E., Mahardhani, A. J., Amruddin & M. D., Lisya, M., & Ahyar, 2022).

2.3. Determination of Informants

1. Five males and females aged 18 – 25 years. Chosen because the group within this age range is the main target of the film *Laura* and tends to have a critical reflective ability towards the

themes and messages in the film, making the data obtained more meaningful. Involving both men and women to avoid gender bias, as their experiences and ways of understanding the film can differ, thus the collected perspectives are richer and more representative. The informants were chosen as five people because this research uses a qualitative approach that emphasizes the depth of data rather than the number of respondents.

2. The informants have watched the movie *Laura* at least once. The requirement of having watched at least once also ensures that the informant has direct experience and sufficient understanding to provide a valid perspective, not just an unfounded opinion.

3. Selected using purposive sampling technique. Although it may seem quite broad, these criteria remain focused because the sample will be taken purposively, ensuring that only those who are truly relevant to the research focus will be involved. This is done because it is important to obtain in-depth data that can effectively address the issues present in the research. In this research, the data collection techniques used are documentation and interviews. In this study, the data collection techniques used are documentation and interviews. The details are as follows:

Documentation

Documentation is a method used by researchers to investigate written materials such as books, magazines, official documents, regulations, diaries, meeting minutes, and the like. In this research, documentation is used as a method to collect information regarding the audience's reception of the controversies present in the film *Laura*.

Interviews

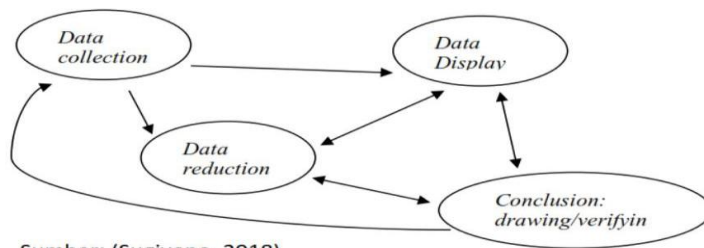
In this research, the type of interview used is an in-depth interview because this study requires an in-depth exploration of the audience's interpretation, experience, and reception related to the complex issues raised in the film. In-depth interviews are a data collection method used by interviewers to ask respondents with the aim of obtaining information related to the phenomenon being studied. In-depth interviews are generally structured semi-structured by the researcher. The process of in-depth interviews is a collaboration between the interviewer and the informant, where the topics the informant wants to discuss hold equal importance to the topics the interviewer wants to address. Researchers who choose the in-depth interview method are interested in the direction of the conversation determined by the informant during the interview. They do not focus on hypothesis testing, but rather on exploring the experiences of

informants (West, R., & Turner, 2008). In-depth interviews usually last between one to three hours. In this method, researchers focus more on obtaining in-depth data and understanding rather than just collecting information from hundreds of respondents. Generally, in-depth interviews are conducted directly by the researchers themselves. However, currently, in-depth interviews can also be conducted via the internet. However, this method is still relatively new, and direct contact remains the primary choice in its implementation. Qualitative research has specific characteristics in terms of interviews, as stated by Sarantakos (Manzilati, 2017), namely:

- a. Using open-ended questions
- b. The interview is conducted individually, meaning one person is interviewed at a time.
- c. The structure of the questions is flexible, allowing for the addition or reduction of questions if necessary.
- d. Allows researchers to ask questions in various ways and expressions while ensuring that the intended objectives are achieved.

2.4. Data Processing and Analysis Techniques

According to Bogdan (Pahleviannur, M. R., Grave, A. De, Saputra, D. N., Mardianto, D., Sinthania, N. D., Hafrida, L., Bano, V. O., Susanto, E. E., Mahardhani, A. J., Amruddin & M. D., Lisy, M., & Ahyar, 2022), data analysis is necessary as a form of the process of searching and systematically organizing research data. The data were obtained through research activities that included interview results, document searches, as well as field notes or news from various media. All this data is compiled comprehensively and understandably, so it can be conveyed to others correctly (Pahleviannur, M. R., Grave, A. De, Saputra, D. N., Mardianto, D., Sinthania, N. D., Hafrida, L., Bano, V. O., Susanto, E. E., Mahardhani, A. J., Amruddin & M. D., Lisy, M., & Ahyar, 2022). The analysis technique used in this study refers to the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The data analysis process will continue until data saturation is reached, which is marked by the absence of new data or information. Figure Components in Data Analysis (Pahleviannur, M. R., Grave, A. De, Saputra, D. N., Mardianto, D., Sinthania, N. D., Hafrida, L., Bano, V. O., Susanto, E. E., Mahardhani, A. J., Amruddin & M. D., Lisy, M., & Ahyar, 2022)



Sumber: (Sugiyono, 2018)

Miles and Huberman stated that qualitative data processing techniques can be carried out through the following stages:

a. Data Collection

Data is obtained and centered on the audience through in-depth interview techniques with selected informants.

b. Data Reduction

After in-depth interviews are conducted, the data is summarized with a focus on the audience's responses to the controversial aspects of the film Laura using coding. Key findings such as reasons for rejection, acceptance, or message negotiation will be the focus.

c. Data Display (data presentation)

After being reduced, the next step is to display or present the data to have clearer visibility. The presentation of the data can take the form of tables with neat formatting, graphs, charts, pictograms, and so on. The presentation of this data is based on the problem formulation that has been established as the research question. Therefore, the narrative presented aims to provide an in-depth description of the existing conditions, in order to address and explain each emerging issue.

d. Conclusion Drawing/Verification (drawing conclusions)

Conclusions are drawn based on audience interpretation patterns regarding the controversy in the film Laura. However, because reception analysis is interpretative in nature, the researcher verifies the conclusions by returning to the field data to ensure validity.

However, because reception analysis is interpretative in nature, researchers verify conclusions by returning to field data to ensure validity.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Overview of the Film Laura

The film *Laura* is the latest work by the renowned director Hanung Bramantyo, produced by MD Pictures and produced by Manoj Punjabi. MD Pictures was established in 2007 under the auspices of MD Entertainment. MD creates films, television programs, and OTT programs, music, and animation, and is synonymous with consistently setting industry benchmarks. Currently, MD has over 14,000 hours of content across various platforms, including award-winning films and series. The film *Laura* is based on the true story of an influencer named Laura Anna, who suffered a tragic accident and then fought for justice over the fate that befell her. This film was released in Indonesian theaters on September 12, 2024, with a duration of 1 hour and 44 minutes, and stars the popular actress Amanda Rawles as Laura Anna. The film *Laura* not only tells the story of how Laura struggles to face a great tragedy in her life, but also conveys her message of courage against injustice. This film visualizes Laura's daily life as an influencer who often shares her activities and stories on social media. The main focus of this film is Laura's struggle to face difficulties and her perseverance in seeking justice. In this film, it is told that Laura is a beautiful and cheerful girl who is loved by her friends and family. Laura is dating a man named Jojo (in the real life story, his name is Gaga Muhammad). However, her life changed after experiencing an accident caused by her boyfriend. The accident caused Laura to suffer a spinal injury, resulting in paralysis. While her boyfriend only suffered minor injuries. The situation caused Laura to be bedridden and unable to live her life as she did before. Laura and Jojo's relationship is on the brink because Jojo refuses to take responsibility for the accident he caused. In facing that situation, Laura always receives support from her family and close friends who always strengthen her. Laura continues to fight for justice through legal channels so that Jojo can be held accountable for the accident he caused.

As previously explained, the purpose of this research is to understand how the audience receives the controversy in the film *Laura*. The audience referred to in this study are men and women aged 18-25 who have watched the film *Laura*. Informant profiles:

- 1) Kirei Almira Fidurati, a fresh graduate from Politeknik Media Kreatif Jakarta, who is 21 years old, residing in Bogor, West Java, was interviewed by the researcher on January 5, 2025.
- 2) Artika Dea Kurniati, a 21-year-old private employee residing in Depok, West Java, was interviewed by the researcher on January 5, 2025.

3) Muhammad Awalurijal Apriza, a 24-year-old fresh graduate from Universitas Indraprasta 4) Nurul Aulia Putri, a 22-year-old private employee residing in Karawang, West Java, was interviewed by the researcher on January 9, 2025.

5) Karimah Maulidya, an active 5th-semester student at Universitas Pekalongan who is 21 years old, residing in Pekalongan, Central Java, was interviewed by the researcher on January 16, 2025.

When a true story is adapted for the big screen, the decision often elicits various responses from the public, ranging from enthusiasm to controversy. Not to mention the film *Laura*, a movie that brings to life a story full of emotion and social complexity. The adaptation of this story to the big screen has become a hot topic of conversation because it carries a theme that is not only touching but also challenges certain norms. This adaptation process has raised high expectations from the audience, both those who are already familiar with the story and those who are hearing it for the first time. Here are the results of the interviews with the five informants who shared their opinions on the reception of the decision to adapt *Laura's* story into a feature film, having watched the film *Laura*.

Kirei Almira Fidurati stated that:

"In my opinion, it's appropriate because the film Laura can serve as an example for people out there who might also be struggling to achieve justice for themselves or clear their own name. Many people out there feel afraid and hesitant to do that, but the movie Laura shows that people like us must be brave to seek our own justice." (Interview with Kirei Almira Fidurati, January 5, 2025).

Kirei Almira Fidurati has a positive view on the decision to adapt *Laura's* story into a feature film. According to her, this film is not just entertainment, but also has inspirational value that can serve as an example for many people who are struggling to obtain justice or clear their name. Kirei highlights that many individuals who experience injustice often feel afraid and reluctant to fight back due to various social or emotional pressures. In her view, the film *Laura* provides a moral boost for those in similar situations, by showing that every individual has the right and must dare to fight for justice for themselves.

Artika Dea Kurniati opines that:

"Agreed, agreed, agreed, it creates motivation, it creates inspiration. Bringing Laura's story to the big screen is just perfect." Because it's not just a personal story, but also touches on important issues that relate to many people, it could be a cool way to spread the message and make people more aware of the struggle for justice, the heaviness of being an untrusted victim, and the difficulty of fighting against a system that often doesn't care, that's all I think." (Interview with Artika Dea Kurniati, January 5, 2025).

Artika Dea Kurniati supports the decision to bring Laura's story to the big screen. The informant sees this film as more than just a personal story, but also as a means to raise social issues that are relevant to many people. Laura's film has strong inspirational and motivational value, especially in depicting someone's struggle to seek justice. According to him, this film can raise public awareness about the difficulty of being an untrusted victim and facing a system that often does not side with those who seek justice.

Bringing Laura's story to the big screen is considered the right step because it can reach more people and serve as an effective medium for conveying social messages. Thus, Artika sees this film not only as a form of entertainment but also as a tool for education and reflection for society about the realities of the law and the struggles of victims in obtaining their rights.

Muhammad Awalurijal Apriza opined that:

"Yes, the film Laura can raise awareness, it can serve as a platform to increase public awareness about traffic accident cases that result in disabilities and the importance of social support for people with disabilities." And also, besides that, the story is very inspiring, his struggle is full of spirit for those who are facing similar life challenges." (Interview with Muhammad Awalurijal Apriza, January 8, 2025).

Muhammad Awalurijal Apriza sees the film Laura as a medium capable of raising public awareness about various social issues, especially those related to traffic accidents that result in disabilities. The informant highlighted that this film can serve as an educational platform for the community to understand the impact of accidents and the importance of providing social support for people with disabilities. In addition to its educational aspect, the informant also considers that this film has a high inspirational value. The informants see Laura's struggle as a source of motivation for those facing similar life challenges. This film is considered successful in depicting a person's spirit and perseverance in facing injustice and various difficulties that arise due to unfavorable conditions.

Nurul Aulia Putri opined that:

"Actually, it doesn't really need to be made into a feature film, because this is just a personal story, and what they did was also due to both of their negligence, right? There are still many stories that seem better than this one." (Interview with Nurul Aulia Putri, January 9, 2025).

Nurul Aulia Putri believes that Laura's story does not need to be adapted into a feature film because it is considered merely a personal story that does not have a high urgency to be filmed, especially since the events in the film are the result of negligence from both parties. The informant also feels that there are many other stories that are more deserving of being adapted into a feature film compared to Laura's story. This shows that the informants see this film as

not providing significant added value in the film industry or as an educational medium for the wider community.

Karimah Maulidya opines that:

"In my opinion, it's not suitable, a personal story like this seems more appropriate for social media consumption or to be made into an article. Especially since most people already knew Laura's story in real life, because before she passed away, she had shared her story and appeared on podcasts. So it feels like there's no new idea for the film, it seems forced because a lot of attention is focused on Laura, so maybe the company that made the film is exploiting that to force it into a movie." (Interview with Karimah Maulidya, January 16, 2025).

Karimah Maulidya has a viewpoint against the decision to adapt Laura's story into a feature film. According to her, this story is more suitable to be packaged in the form of social media content or articles rather than being made into a film. The informant believes that Laura's story was already well-known to the public before the film was made, especially since Laura herself had shared her life story through various platforms such as podcasts and social media. Thus, the informant feels that this film does not offer anything new to the audience. Moreover, Karimah also believes that the making of this film seems forced and is more based on the popularity and public attention towards Laura's story, rather than an urgent need to bring it to the big screen. She suspects that the production team is more interested in capitalizing on the public's interest than genuinely striving to present a work with strong educational or inspirational value.

The film *Laura* not only garnered widespread attention due to her struggle but also because of the accompanying controversy. One of the main issues that has become a topic of debate is the narrative that has developed in society regarding the cause of the tragic accident experienced by the main character, Laura. Many societal views link the accident to Laura and her boyfriend's negative behavior, such as going to nightclubs and drinking, leading to the stigma that "the fault lies with her". This controversy opens up a broader space for discussion on how society understands morality, gender, and individual responsibility in situations like the one Laura experienced. Through in-depth interviews, the audience's views on this issue became the main focus to delve deeper into how social narratives are formed and accepted. Here are the interview results from the five informants who expressed their opinions regarding the reception of the controversy that emerged in society related to the film *Laura*.

Kirei Almira Fidurati opined that:

"Actually, in my opinion, I lean more towards Laura, because the car was driven by her boyfriend, Gaga Muhammad, so it was actually his fault too. And if I'm not mistaken, as far as I know, Laura had already advised that if someone is unconscious or under the influence of alcohol, it's better not to drive alone, which means it's not her fault either." (Interview with Kirei Almira Fidurati, January 5, 2025).

Reception from Kirei Almira Fidurati, the informant sided with Laura in the controversy that arose regarding the accident that is the core of the film Laura. According to her, the main responsibility for the accident lies with Laura's boyfriend as the driver of the car. The informant emphasized that Laura had actually warned against driving under the influence of alcohol. Therefore, he sees that the fault does not entirely lie with Laura, but rather with Gaga's decision to continue driving in an unconscious state. This shows that the Informant sees Laura as a victim in the incident.

Artika Dea Kurniati opined that:

"In my opinion, that's really unfair to Laura. "Because we can't judge just based on what we see on the outside. Like this movie shows, situations like this are not just as simple as Laura's mistake, you know. Because if we dissect it further, the partner's mistakes are also numerous, extraordinary." (Interview with Artika Dea Kurniati, January 5, 2025).

Artika Dea Kurniati sees the controversy surrounding the accident in the film Laura as something more complex and cannot be solely blamed on one party, especially Laura. The informant highlighted that the public often judges too quickly based on what is visible on the surface without understanding the situation in depth. The informant argues that the fault in this incident does not lie entirely with Laura, but also with her partner, who is considered to have made many significant mistakes in the event. Thus, the informant believes that the film Laura successfully demonstrates how the complexity of an event cannot be simplified into merely right or wrong. This film is considered to help the audience understand that in every case like this, a deeper analysis is needed before passing judgment. Muhammad Awalurijal Apriza opined that:

"Well, in my opinion, that's totally fine, because I know everyone is free to express their opinions" (Interview with Muhammad Awalurijal Apriza, January 8, 2025).

Muhammad Awalurijal Apriza considers the controversy that has arisen in society regarding Laura's story to be natural, especially in the case of a film that highlights a true story and sparks public debate. The informant does not take sides with either camp, whether those who support or oppose the film. The informant acknowledges that every individual has the freedom to express their opinion about this film. The informant does not see the controversy as something that needs to be overly problematic.

Nurul Aulia Putri opined that:

"Yeah, that's true, because in that incident she was in a drunken state, and she herself agreed to Jojo's invitation to go home together, and when Jojo offered to drive, she also agreed." (Interview with Nurul Aulia Putri, January 9, 2025).

Nurul Aulia Putri believes that Laura is also responsible for the incident because she was drunk, agreed to go home with Jojo, and allowed Jojo to drive.

Karimah Maulidya opined that:

"I agree with the public's view, because no matter what, the accident happened after Laura and her boyfriend returned from the nightclub, in an intoxicated state, which is a negative thing, something they shouldn't have done. Actually, they knew that it shouldn't be done, but they still got into the car, you know, they already knew the risks. But still, when you act, you have to be brave enough to take responsibility. Maybe like the saying goes, you reap what you sow, so they have to face the consequences." (Interview with Karimah Maulidya, January 16, 2025).

Karimah Maulidya agrees with the public's view that Laura's accident was a consequence of the decisions made by Laura and her boyfriend. The informant emphasized that this tragic event occurred after they returned from the nightclub in an intoxicated state, which is considered a negative action and should be avoided. According to him, Laura and her partner were already aware of the risks of such actions, but they still chose to do it. Therefore, the informant believes that Laura and her partner should be responsible for the consequences that occur. By using the term "you reap what you sow," the informant underscores that every action has consequences, and in this case, the accident is the result of decisions made by themselves. His view reflects a stricter perspective on the concept of individual responsibility, where one must be prepared to accept the consequences of their choices.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Dominant Hegemony Position

The dominant hegemonic position is a position where there is no difference in interpretation between the sender and the receiver of the message; the audience accepts the conveyed meaning (Nawiroh, 2024). The dominant hegemonic position in the context of the film *Laura* depicts informants who agree and have views that align with the message intended to be conveyed in the film. Here is a quote from one of the interviewees:

*"I agree with the making of the film *Laura*, because with *Laura*'s bravery, even though she initially felt defeated and hopeless, I think in the end she succeeded in overcoming her fears and all those anxieties to defend herself in front of the law. The meaning conveyed by this film is mostly positive, in my opinion."* (Interview with Kirei Almira Fidurati, January 5, 2025).

Kirei Almira Fidurati believes that the film *Laura* successfully touches the heart through its emotional portrayal, especially in certain scenes that depict *Laura*'s struggles. *Laura*'s struggles are depicted as a source of inspiration to bravely face difficulties and understand the importance

of responsibility and the consequences of actions. Laura's story is considered relevant to the lifestyle and challenges of today's youth, especially related to risky habits such as drinking and a lack of awareness of responsibilities. This film is considered quite effective in changing mindsets, especially in raising young people's awareness of the consequences of their actions. Although based on a personal story, the film Laura was received as a medium that provides collective lessons without overly exposing aspects of privacy.

3.2.2. Negotiation Position

Negotiation position refers to a situation where the code conveyed by the text creator is accepted and interpreted by the audience, but this acceptance is influenced by the audience's framework of beliefs or experiences. In this position, the audience adjusts or negotiates the meaning of the message with the codes provided by the text creator, resulting in an interpretation that may differ from the intended meaning. Informants in a negotiating position show that they are able to understand and accept the messages conveyed through the film Laura. On the other hand, the informants also acknowledge that the film Laura has sparked various controversies within society, reflecting differences in reception, interpretation, and responses to the issues raised in the film.

"Inspiration and controversy. In my opinion, it's both. We can't just say it's inspiration, we also can't just say it's controversy. Like inspiration for those who understand its meaning, but there will definitely be controversy too. Because this topic is really sensitive, you know, really, really sensitive. Like we can't judge from just a little bit. We really have to pay attention, we have to know that" (Interview with Artika Dea Kurniati, January 5, 2025).

Artika Dea Kurniati argues that Laura's struggle topic sparks debate because it touches on sensitive issues. The combination of inspirational messages and controversy creates a strong emotional impact and relevance to contemporary life. However, important lessons about responsibility, consequences, and the strength to face life's challenges are still conveyed in the film. Muhammad Awalurijal Apriza argues that there is controversy in the film Laura; the film is considered a tool for self-reflection and criticism of risky lifestyles, as well as the importance of understanding various perspectives. However, the informant feels that this film still provides a deep portrayal of the injustices in Laura's life, as well as her struggle to face reality and seek justice. The film is considered relevant to the lives of young people, having a significant impact on the audience to be more cautious in making decisions, both in social interactions and life choices. Nurul Aulia Putri understands that the main theme of the film is the struggle to heal and the effort to achieve justice, as well as acknowledging the inspiration from Laura's struggle.

However, the informant feels that the message of responsibility and moral lessons is not clearly conveyed due to the film's presentation, such as the lengthy narration, focus on the controversial side, and overly biased depiction. This shows that the informants do not fully accept or reject the film's message, but negotiate with it.

3.2.3. Opposition Position

The opposition position occurs when the audience interprets the message, text, or code conveyed by the text creator in a way that is contrary or different, based on their own conceptual framework. In this position, the audience actively rejects or opposes the meaning offered by the text creator and constructs an interpretation that contradicts the intended message. Informants in the opposition position have an understanding that contrasts with what is conveyed by the film *Laura*. The informants understand the meaning that the film *Laura* wants to convey but oppose it based on their conflicting views. This happens when the informant has a completely different framework of thinking compared to the making of the film *Laura*. "In my opinion, it didn't quite succeed in conveying an inspirational message about Laura's struggle, because the focus was more on the dramas in the story.

"Instead of providing motivation or lessons that can be taken away, this film actually makes people more busy discussing the conflicts and who is to blame. In the end, instead of being inspirational, this film seems to exploit Laura's story purely for entertainment, and that's probably because many viewers or the public are focused on Laura, which makes the film think it will be successful, so it was made more dramatic." (Interview with Karimah Maulidya, January 16, 2025).

Karimah Maulidya argues that the first impression viewers have of a film is greatly influenced by the effectiveness of the story's resolution presented. If the solution provided feels narrow or limited, it can reduce the film's appeal and leave the audience feeling less satisfied with the storyline. Additionally, a theme that overly emphasizes sadness and emotional conflict can hinder the delivery of a deeper moral message. As a result, the main message that the film intends to convey becomes unclear, thus eliminating the message that should be received by the audience.

IV. CONCLUSION

Decoding the audience's response to the controversy surrounding the film *Laura* indicates that one person occupies a dominant hegemonic position, holding the opinion that the controversy arising within society regarding the film *Laura* does not affect their reception of the message conveyed in the film. The audience finds Laura's struggle in facing the difficulties

she experienced and in fighting for justice to be very inspiring. Next, the research results show that there are three audience members in the negotiation position. The audience accepts the struggle message conveyed in the film Laura, but despite accepting this struggle message, these three informants also realize that the film contains elements that can provoke debate or different reactions among the public, such as Laura's perceived free lifestyle, including drinking. In other words, the three informants accept the message but remain critical of certain aspects. Then, the research results show that there is one person in the opposing position, who rejects the message conveyed in the film and has their own interpretation. The audience believes that the film Laura was brought to the big screen merely as an exploitation of tragedy rather than a work conveying the struggle of Laura. The audience argues that the film is too dramatic and does not provide a clear solution to the issues raised. There are several suggestions, such as the hope for further research that can enrich the understanding of how a film based on a true story can be received by the audience with diverse perspectives, in order to gain a broader perspective. Future research could also compare audience reception of the film Laura with other films that depict true stories and generate controversy. This can help understand the audience's reception patterns towards similar themes.

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