AUDIENCE RECEPTION ANALYSIS OF ELSA'S LEADERSHIP
IN DISNEY'S FROZEN 2

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ABSTRACK

This study explores Elsa's character that portrays women's leadership from the audience's perspectives by using an audience reception theory by Stuart Hall to analyze the data collected. There are three positions by using Stuart Hall's Encoding – Decoding concepts, such as dominant, negotiated, and oppositional positions. This study shows that almost all respondents are in dominant positions, which agree with Frozen 2's ideology of Elsa's character regarding women's leadership. This study can explore the study that focuses on women's leadership. The main part of the research includes audience reception since the audience reception approach could gain new insight from many different views.

Keywords: audience reception, women's leadership, Disney

ABSTRAK

Studi ini mengeksplorasi karakter Elsa yang menggambarkan kepemimpinan wanita dari perspektif penonton dengan menggunakan teori resepsi penonton oleh Stuart Hall untuk menganalisa data yang dikumpulkan. Ada tiga posisi dengan menggunakan Konsep Encoding – Decoding Stuart Hall, seperti posisi dominan, dinegosiasikan, dan berlawanan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas dari semua responden berada pada posisi dominan, yang sesuai dengan ideologi Frozen 2 mengenai karakter Elsa tentang kepemimpinan perempuan. Studi ini dapat digunakan untuk menggali lebih dalam studi yang berfokus pada kepemimpinan perempuan. Bagian utama dari penelitian tersebut mencakup resepsi penonton karena pendekatan resepsi penonton dapat memperoleh wawasan baru dari berbagai sudut pandang yang berbeda.

Kata kunci: resepsi penonton, kepemimpinan wanita, Disney

INTRODUCTION

Women and men see gender inequality in their homes and communities every day. In some cultures, it is common for women to stay at home, clean, and take care of the household while males are studied and employed. However, in other cultures, women can do both studies and work while taking care of the household. In the end, gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Gender role characteristics are strongly dependent on a stereotyped man or a woman within a social class, known as a set behavioral norm. Children will be split into a blue or pink blanket from birth, depending upon their biological gender. Children will then play with toys aligned with their gender, for example, boys with cars and girls with dolls and created, as young boys imagine firefighters and girls with princesses. Their gender often associates them.

Nowadays, media comes in different ways, such as TV, radio, magazines, books, newspapers, et cetera. From birth to the elderly ages, these mediums have become part of the everyday life of humans. The media improved so much and hit many target audiences. More people are consuming the media every day, and it never stops developing and growing. Media presents its listeners with a bit of what they are interested in, and parents are more open with their children using a media output for the past few years. For example, parents let their kids have their tablets to keep them occupied as they carry out their duties. In the emerging generations, children are gradually being recognized as modern indigenous peoples who already have the latest technology and apps from a very young age. They are introduced and

understand how to use a technologically implemented world and culture from a young age.

Focusing only on one media output, it becomes evident that children can access several movies that differ according to age groups and genders. Children's movies, especially Disney movies, are entertainment since they are cartooned or animated. Parents or teenagers find this genre of movies because they deliver a range of hidden messages related to or interpreted by older audience members. However, these movies give children the ability to enter the world differently because it is filled with action, magical being, fascinating personalities, and lots of singing and dancing, making it easy for the children to catch their attention. Disney, which produces top-rated children's entertainment, is one of the biggest media conglomerate companies. It has been around Disney Corporation for 97 years. Each medium platform uses many methods to influence different target audiences, influencing different target audiences, especially young children. Nevertheless, teenagers and adults are also Disney network's target audiences as they provide entertainment to a vast audience.

One of the successful Disney movies, Frozen (2013), earned $1.28 billion, which exceeds Frozen 2 (€1,45 billion). Both films surpassed their production budgets by well over $150 million. Disney had ample time to grow Elsa's lead character between the two Frozen films and its ubiquitous reach and worldwide impact in the six years.

The research examines Disney's movie entitled Frozen 2. In general, a movie is made to reach various reception from the audience, a personal point of view most likely different. This study explores Elsa's character that portrays women's leadership from the audience's perspectives by using an audience reception theory by Stuart Hall to identify the data collected. There are three positions by using Stuart Hall's Encoding – Decoding concepts, such as dominant, negotiated, and oppositional positions.

There have been studies regarding women's leadership from many researchers worldwide and its impact on people's perspectives. The following studies discuss the role and representatives of women's leadership. Reflianto and Joni Indra Wandi's analysis of women's leadership in career and family (Reflianto & Wandi, 2019); the study's approach is dual-career marriage women in Surabaya. Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017) discussed gender-related findings from a broad survey of the last three decades through the framework of selection development, leadership style, and performance. Yuliana Dewi & Riani Rachmati (Dewi & Rachmawati, 2014) explore these studies reveal the low ratio number of women. However, there is an excitement that the numbers would increase.

The following studies use audience reception as the approach of the study. Amzaourou's Audience Reception research (Oubaha & Amzaourou, 2017) investigates how Moroccan TV viewers interpret both public service television news networks, such as 2M and Al Oula, and investigate immediately after watching it and how they reconstruct television news meaning, identical or in another way. The audience reception research conducted by Haryanti and Ratnasari (Haryanti & Ratna Sari, 2018) focuses on pursuing a different view from a cyberbullying victim. They should also positively change themselves to contribute and socialize in society. The study conducted by Utami and Lestari (Utami & Lestari, 2017) aims to understand the audience reception of political messages conveyed by the Jokowi Youtube channel and the factors that affect the audience reception.

Unlike those previous studies, this study aims to analyze the character of Elsa, which tells the viewer how Elsa portrays women's leadership from a different viewpoint. Also, analyze people's perspectives due to Elsa's leadership from various masses with different attitudes, backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and values to determine their perception using the audience reception theory. None of the mentioned studies above reflects analyzing women's leadership depiction, which involves audience reception in the study since it was released last year (2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Studies researcher Stuart Hall developed the Encoding – Decoding model of communication paradigm for the first time in 1973. Hall's essay entitled 'Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse' (Hall, 1973) offers a theoretical approach to creating, disseminating, and

interpreting media messages. His theory claims that TV and other media audiences are presented with decoded or interpreted messages in different ways depending on an individual's cultural background, economic standing, and personal experiences. Audiences are active participants in constructing and interpreting the meaning of what they read, hear and see. Media content can be understood as part of a process where common sense is built through readings obtained from images and text in a language.

In the realm of pragmatics, the key concepts of Stuart Hall are encoding and decoding. He described encoding and decoding as differentiated moments within the whole communicative process. This theory states that the encoded meaning by the sender can be interpreted (decoded) into different things by the receiver. The sender will send the meaning according to their own perception and purpose, while the receiver translates the message or meaning accordingly with their perceptions. As (McQuail, 2004) said, this theory refers to how the audience decodes the content conveyed by the media to interpret the meaning of the message meant.

In this theory, the code used (encode) and the one that is encoded back (decode) is not always the same. The degree of similarity in this theory is defined as the understanding and misunderstanding when exchanging messages in the communication process, depends on whether the balanced reaction is formed between the encoder (creator) and the decoder (receiver) messages.

Based on his study, Hall divided audience responses into three different positions. They are the dominant position, the negotiated position, and the oppositional position.

The dominant position is where the audience takes the actual meaning directly and decodes it precisely the way it was encoded. The audience operates within the dominant perspective, fully shares the text's codes, and accepts and reproduces its intended meaning. In conclusion, the audience agrees with the media's ideology.

The negotiated position is when the audience compromises with the media. It is a mixture of accepting and rejecting elements. They may agree with certain aspects of a representation or a story to a degree but reject other points.

The oppositional position is where the audience understands the literal meaning. However,

due to different attitudes, backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and values, they have their way of decoding messages while creating their interpretation, resulting in precisely the opposite of the intended meaning. In conclusion, the audience disagrees with the media's ideology.

METHOD

The concept of this study used the Encoding - Decoding model of communication by Stuart Hall. Furthermore, this study also attempts to analyze the representation of women's leadership and the construction from the audience regarding the issue. This study applies audience reception theory by Stuart Hall and movie observation to analyze Elsa's character by observing her character using the female leadership approach.

The data source of this study was taken from Disney's movie entitled Frozen 2. The first movie was published in 2013, while the second movie in 2019. With six years distance, several considerations are applied during the determination process.

As data collection techniques, the research is obtained from the data sources, an observation from the movie itself, Disney's Frozen 2, and distributing an online questionnaire filled by the audiences to gain their reception. The audiences are asked to watch a clip of Elsa's leadership in Disney, Frozen 2 movie that lasts for 2 minutes; then, the writer will let them verbalize their thoughts in the questionnaire under the clip. The questionnaire questions contain audiences' opinions, viewpoints, and perspectives towards Elsa as a leader. The respondents needed to fill the online questionnaire were approximately 50 people, all genders with an age range of 19 - 23, who have already watched Disney's Frozen 2. The verbalization of thoughts in the data collection process and the analysis phase is demanding and time-consuming. To get a sample of individuals with remarkable differences in background knowledge and motivations behind each movie story helps to examine similarities and differences between the viewer's interpretations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis of Elsa's character in Disney's Frozen 2 movie is discussed based on how the character portrayed women as leaders.

Questionnaires have been distributed on April 14th, 2021, to the college student in Indonesia with an age range between 19 - 23 years old who have seen Disney's Frozen 2 and filled by 61 respondents.

Disney's Frozen 2 is an animated movie that depicts the leadership of Elsa, as the main character, to save Arendelle from anything that tries to destroy her father's kingdom. It opens with King Agnarr telling a story to his two young children, namely Elsa and Anna. He said that their grandfather, King Runeard, dealt with the neighboring Northuldra tribe by building a dam in their homeland, the Magical Forest. However, a fight occurs because King Runeard wanted to kill the tribal chief, silent-still from behind, resulting in Runeard's death. The battle angered the Earth, Fire, Water, and Air elemental spirits of the forest. At first, the Magic Forest is beautiful. However, it becomes barren and covered by a powerful mist because of the gods' fury over the war, making the forest locking everyone out and protected by the most powerful spirits. On the other side, Queen Iduna (Mother of Elsa and Anna) sings a song in the mysterious river that keeps all the past secrets about the Athohallan River. Athohallan River is a place Elsa can find the truth of the past. However, it is challenging to reach that river because, to reach that, Elsa must cross the dark sea, which is very dangerous for her life.

Three years after Princess Elsa's coronation as Queen, she celebrates autumn in the kingdom with Anna, Olaf the Snowman, Kristoff the Ice Harvester, and Kristoff's reindeer, Sven. When Elsa was sleeping, she heard a mysterious voice that makes her curious about what it means to call her. She followed it and subconsciously awakened the elemental spirits bothering Arendelle, forcing everyone in the kingdom to flee to the hills or higher plains. Grand Pabbie and the Troll colony arrive at Arendelle, and Pabbie predicts they must make things right by discovering the truth about the kingdom's past.

Finally, she reveals the past mistakes that her grandfather, King Runeard, who betrayed the Northldras, caused the spirits mad and covered the Enchanted Forest with fog that no one can penetrate. Also, she can find the origin sound and reasons why that mysterious voice can only hear by her. As a leader of her kingdom, she has many obstacles, especially when she fights with four supernatural spirits to protect Arendelle from anything that messes with it.

The questionnaire given to the respondents regarding Elsa's leadership in Frozen 2 movie shows that she genuinely depicted women as a leader through her character. 93% of the respondents agree that her character portrays women's leadership, especially when she tries to save Arandelle from the spirits.

Specific patterns are created due to the respondents' answers after examining the key terms and points from the online questionnaire. The patterns will be divided into three points below, which differentiate the idea or point of view from the audience regarding how the respondents perceive Elsa's leadership in Frozen 2 movie and how Elsa's leadership influences people's perspectives:

1. Elsa's Leadership in General
2. Representation of Elsa's Leadership that Influences People's Perspectives
3. Women as a Leader in This Era

Elsa's Leadership in General

A simple question like "Do you think Elsa has a leadership soul?" was given in the questionnaire, and most of the respondents answered yes. As a minor character, Elsa's action is categorized as a brave and responsible hero willing to sacrifice her safety for her people's sake.

According to some respondents, Elsa gives the viewers a great impression of good leadership and prioritizes others over herself. As respondent 38 Arni Eka stated, "I think Elsa being a leader is a character requirement. Because she is the first child of King and Queen, also she is the only one who has strength compared to other characters. So, if it's not her, who else will save Arandelle?"

Nevertheless, an opposing statement was stated by respondent 62, Panji, that said, "Elsa got too carried away to put her and her friends in danger." Yes, she is a wise character, but she was too careless and reckless to make decisions.

Representation of Elsa's Leadership That Influences People's Perspectives

Women's leadership in any organization leads to a positive environment all around. Women may not always realize how composed they are in leadership roles for accomplishment, but their talent and ability are irrefutable. In this movie,

Elsa's innate traits make her more in sync with their teams, such as empathy, open-mindedness, pressure-handling, multi-tasking, and open communication. Aris Firmansyah, one of the respondents, declared that by looking from the scene, Elsa spurting her territory depicts a woman who works hard in protecting and managing her kingdom.

Elsa's character in the movie can be said that described the leadership of women in this era, which is depicted in some acts. One of them is when other characters and the trolls entrust their destiny to the one and only Queen Elsa. From that scene, we know that Elsa doubted her ability and leadership traits. However, she rises up and boldly advances for the sake of saving her kingdom and people. From that scene, we can correlate with women's role as a leader in our daily lives. Back then, it is a difficult thing for women to have a role as leaders. Nevertheless, nowadays, women also have that destiny as leaders and making a critical decision to reach some goals and benefiting many people.

Women as a Leader in This Era

Women have always had leadership ability and willingness, but they could not advance in leadership positions because of political, economic, and social restrictions. Back then, women always have difficulties pursuing higher education or becoming leaders in the future. However, women can only do the household 24/7. As time goes by, women were allowed to enter into leadership roles, which is a good thing for a better future. As respondent 11, Aufa Aptana, proclaims that "A woman leader may still be considered something unfair in this era. But in my opinion women leaders are fair and humane. Women is an intelligent and independent human being, in addition to their feminine sides."

A great leader's qualities were never sex-related. An individual strength and personality traits make up the leadership attributes of an individual, whether a man or woman. However, it is generally seen that when women are taking power as a leader, they are usually less encouraged and are not perceived as powerful compared to their male counterparts. A similar concern is also stated by respondent 41, Dannisa Fathiya Rachma, "In my opinion, this illustrates that women are living creatures that equal to men in terms of

leadership. Because basically, every human being has the potential to become a leader regardless of their gender. As long as they able and have those competencies to lead, it does not matter to their gender."

Most of the respondents declare that it is a good thing when women become leaders in this era. It because there is equality between women and men and also no more gender discrimination. Men nowadays tend to appreciate women's voice and act because there is much actual evidence when women become leaders and succeed.

Maghfiroh Ramadhani, as respondent 21, stated that "In my opinion, women as a leader is a good thing because people's perspective about women will be different. Not only stay at home taking care of the households and other items, but women can also be better leaders than men. Furthermore, when women become leaders, some places are way better than before—for example, the Mayor of Surabaya, Tri Rismaharini, becomes Minister of Social Affairs."

On the other side, some respondents claim that women lack confidence in what they have and tend to be bossier. Also, women are sensitive human beings and quickly get carried away compared to boys, which makes them sentiment with their feelings, affecting their performances and making decisions in solving problems.

As the statement stated by respondent 36, Marwa Majidah, "Although many women are placed as leaders, it doesn't mean that a point of view towards women ends. Women who have the power and ability as leaders are mostly getting pressure from their colleagues because they are considered incompetent just because of gender. It means a point of view about women become leaders on the surface does seem to have much support. However, when we dive deeper, there are still many differences and discriminations towards women with the capability of being leaders among other types who still look down on women and inadequate."

Overall, it is acceptable when most women become leaders in their daily lives, although one or two-person disagree with it. Some of the respondents consider that women leaders are better than men leaders. One of the reasons asserted by respondents 50, Ida Maulidiyah, "I think they are great women because being a leader is not an easy thing, while the duty as a woman itself is quite

heavy." Respondent 1, Dani also proclaims that "Nowadays, women leaders are very firm and no less firm than men, the plus value is that women are such multitasking creatures in doing things."

The Dominant Positions of Audiences

Based on the research data from the questionnaire, out of 61 answers, 30 people are in dominant positions. They agree with the movie's ideology regarding Elsa's leadership in movie which genuinely depicts women as leaders through her character. As respondents 61, Ersadya, claim that she like the character of Elsa since their first movie because she is courageous in making decisions even though it is hazardous for her. She is not only strong but also such a nurturing character as an older sister for Anna. Moreover, it inspires children who are born as first children.

Other respondents, Arinta Cahyadewi, said that Elsa in Frozen 2 seems to be making peace with herself because she can accept her unique ability and control it. She also added that Disney Frozen 2 shows the strength of women because in the current era,which intensifying gender equality, where women have the same opportunity to lead as men.

According to Anggie, one of the respondents, the movie portrayed better than the first one, especially the character development of Elsa. She has that unique personality and ability that make her no doubt become a leader. Her dedication to her kingdom, people, and family makes her willing to sacrifice her safety. She also added that Elsa's unique ability, among other characters, can make her have a practical solution but dangerous to save her kingdom.

The Negotiated Positions of Audiences

Twenty respondents, fourteen women and six men, are categorized in negotiated positions. They get the clear message of what the movie intended to the audience, but that does not mean they agree with the movie's ideology. Respondents 21, Mohamad Ramdhan, is in negotiated positions because he thinks that Disney's Frozen 2 does not describe a whole women's leadership in the movie. He thinks that as a leader, he must compromise with employees to reach their goals. Furthermore, in this movie, Elsa does it alone.

Respondents 44, Miftaachur Rohmah, claims that Elsa tends to be selfish in the first part, but she is responsible for what she needs to do for an extended period. She added that she thinks Elsa does not have a leadership soul at first, but she could control her power and lead her kingdom well because of the critical situation and conditions.

According to Rizky Liliani, she changes her mind at the end of the movie. At first, she claims that Elsa does not have a strong leadership soul. However, as time goes by, the challenges and problems that have been doubting her so far and make her a queen who can lead her kingdom and act as a leader could protect and save her kingdom from the disasters that haunt her far. She also can get problem-solving skills.

The Oppositional Positions of Audiences

Unlike other respondents who are in negotiated positions, eleven respondents in this section opposed the movie's ideology.

Women are believed to be more interpersonally sensitive than men. Women report themselves as experiencing more intense emotions than men report; they are more willing to self-disclose about emotions. They see themselves, and others see them, as expressing emotions more often and more intensely than men. As Arinta said, women who become leaders nowadays are not entirely good because women tend to be more sensitive and easily get carried away.

Aufi Izzadine stated that in this era, the responsibility of a person is not as heavy as in the movie. Moreover, someone also does not have the power like Elsa. Also, women as a leader violate nature. He claims that men should be the leaders. Because when women become leaders, where is the form of men's authority in women's eyes? So, he does not support women as a leader unless in that environment is all women.

Overall, Marwah, one of the respondents, thinks that Frozen 2 is a movie that defines self-acceptance rather than the leadership of Elsa. Elsa is constantly confronted with her past and always asking herself why she is different and has that unique ability to control ice.

CONCLUSION

The study results above about an audience reception analysis of Disney's Frozen 2 movies receive many various statements and views. Overall, the writer can conclude that by looking at the elements, the analysis on how the movie's

depiction influenced how the viewers are decoding the message of women's being a leader in Elsa's character.

The concept of this study used the Encoding - Decoding model of communication by Stuart Hall which the respondents represent dominant, negotiated, and oppositional positions. The majority of respondents are in dominant positions. They agree with the movie's ideology regarding Elsa's leadership in movie, which genuinely depicts women as leaders through her character.

Another point of view of some respondents in negotiated positions stated that, at first, she thinks that Elsa does not have a strong leadership soul. However, she changes her mind at the end of the movie because the challenges and problems that she faces make her a queen for her kingdom as time goes by. However, some of the respondents reject the message that was decoded in the movie. They think that the responsibility of a person is not as heavy as in the movie in this era. Moreover, when women become leaders, it is against nature and makes men's authority in women's eyes is gone.

Disney, which produces top-rated children's entertainment, is one of the biggest media conglomerate companies that influence different target audiences, especially young children. Nevertheless, teenagers and adults are also Disney network's target audiences as they provide entertainment to a vast audience. Princesses are always portrayed as women who stay at home and take care of the household while princes or males are studied and employed. However, Elsa proves wrong. Unlike those typical princesses, Elsa is one of Disney's women who depicted women as leaders.

The study found that most viewers decode the messages and process them with their meaning within the movie differently through its scenes and parts from the movie depending on themselves. The findings of this study can be used to explore more on the study that focuses on women's leadership, or the main part of the research includes audience reception since the audience reception approach

could gain new insight from many different points of view.

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