

Media Persona and Parasocial Relations of K-Drama Viewers on Instagram

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Abstract

This research is a qualitative descriptive study that aims to provide an overview of the interactions and parasocial relationships of k-drama audiences with the characters in *The World of The Married* drama as the impact of mass communication. And to find out the characteristics, factors that influence parasocial relationships and at what level these parasocial relationships are intertwined with the S.O.R (Stimulus, Organism, Response) theory as a framework of thought. Primary data collection was carried out through online interviews with a number of informants from the k-drama audience of *The World of The Married* who were taken randomly from Instagram accounts. The results of this study indicate that the interaction between the audience and k-drama. *The World of The Married* gives rise to parasocial relationships with the following three characteristics, empathy toward the performer, seeking companionship, and imagined friendship. Parasocial relationships that exist are influenced by factors of motivation, identification and similarity. Thus, in the concept of interaction and parasocial relationships, Korean drama audiences can be grouped at the level of entertainment social-value and intense-personal feeling.

Keywords: *K-Drama, Audience, Communication, Parasocial Relations.*



A. INTRODUCTION

Human behavior is an inseparable part of knowledge, usually what arises from individual humans in the form of imitating or exemplifying one's style or expressions of disappointment, anger and so on arising from an event is nothing but part of what has been known previously, through this knowledge. A decision in the form of "action" can be taken by the subject as a form of responding to what is happening around him based on his experience, whether the response is positive or negative (Raharjo, 2011), humans behave or act based on what they already know. Thus, it can be said that an individual's emotions and behavior are influenced by external stimuli. One of the external stimuli (stimuli) can come from what is witnessed in the mass media. In the *Bullet Theory*, it is explained that the mass media has the power to anesthetize its audience, so that what is seen in the media can affect their feelings, emotions, beliefs, thoughts, and behavior.

This phenomenon can be found in the behavior of viewers of the k-drama *The World of Married Couple* which can be found on social media such as Instagram where their behavior is in the spotlight of the Korean media because the Instagram account of one of the drama players (media persona) is bombarded with curses and words. Rough. This behavior arose because the audience was annoyed with the play's role as an antagonist.

Another phenomenon regarding the influence of mass media, in this case the content that hits teenagers, can also be seen from the results of Prasanti and Dewi's research, (2020) on "Korean Drama (Korean Wave) on Youth Education", saying k-drama has a positive impact and the negative impact on youth education. The positive impact of their penchant for watching k-drama is that it gives them motivation to learn, gain new knowledge, get to know South Korean educational culture, their enthusiasm to participate in scholarship programs to South Korea, and learn new languages. While the negative impacts are lazy to study, delaying work, reduced study time and rest, not focusing on learning, reduced health in supporting activities as students.

Korean dramas or K-Dramas have anesthetized the public and not a few fans. The craze for K-Drama has given rise to the so-called Korean Wave or Hallyu and has become a separate phenomenon where Korean popular culture flows in the form of drama, film, and music starting from allied countries (China, Taiwan, Japan) and Vietnam. eventually spread to Indonesia and other Asian countries until the first lung of the 2000s. Until then, Hallyu spread to South American countries, the Middle East, and parts of Africa until the second half of the 2000s. Popular culture or what is often referred to as pop culture has now spread widely to various parts of the world. The presence of popular culture has been able to attract people's attention with various types. Popular culture is considered an industrial culture that has a major impact on developing countries, most of which still do not have a strong and solid industrial base (Clark, 2007).

In its development, k-drama has succeeded in winning the hearts of the Indonesian people, this is proven by the high interest of the audience. K-drama comes with a light show with the theme of family and various conflicts in it, which are wrapped in such a way that it is interesting to watch. Of course, this k-drama was immediately loved by people who really wanted something new, in fact, people were very enthusiastic about watching it. K-dramas are the cause of the start of Hallyu in many countries. Korean television companies spend a lot of money on dramas and some of them are successful and are exported overseas. This phenomenon also promotes the Korean language to various countries. The strong storyline, varied genres and the acting of the cast who can easily cry naturally caused many Asians who watched k-drama to be touched. In addition, the story that is displayed is in accordance with the culture of Asian society in general, the concept of true love, sacrifice, and other concepts of life depicted in k-drama do not conflict too much with the concept of life that exists in Asian society in general. These factors make k-dramas more relevant to Asian people than dramas from other countries.

The emergence of K-Drama in Indonesia began with the drama series Endless Love which was aired in almost all television stations in the world in 2002. The Korean drama Endless Love which was broadcast by TV station RCTI was able to become the public's favorite program. A few moments later followed by the Korean drama Winter Sonata which aired on SCTV. K-drama is not always a hobby, after the broadcast of Winter Sonata, the popularity of k-drama had dimmed.

In 2005 k-drama returned to life after the appearance of the Jewel in The Palace series. Then in the following years followed by the drama Princess Hours and Full House. After the drama Full House, K-Drama shows began to dim again. But not long ago K-Drama began to reappear starting with the drama Boys Over Flowers (BBF) which aired on the Indosiar television station in 2010 (www.kompasiana.com).

In addition, there are also many legal and illegal sites or blogs that provide k-drama to be downloaded, making it easier for k-drama lovers themselves, as for several sites or blogs that provide k-drama such as kshowsubindo.net, ramafever.com, kdramaindo.com, drakorindo.com, and there are many other sites and not a few K-Drama viewers also express their love by uploading photos, making special captions, and creating hashtags on social media, some even stalking the actors/drama players and follow him (follow) usually through Instagram media.

Instagram is the most widely used social media by K-Drama fans as a source of information regarding the activities of idols/actors of K-Drama players. Their (audience) likes in the form of photos, videos, and other information to imitate the style or appearance of their idol is unstoppable. When watching a drama, the audience often gets carried away by the atmosphere, whether it's a happy, sad, or upset atmosphere as if they are getting to know the characters of the drama they are watching. The illusion of experiencing face-to-face interaction with the characters in this spectacle then gives rise to a phenomenon called Parasocial relationships. Although it sounds strange, it turns out that Parasocial relationships are common and can be seen as an extension of social relationships in real everyday life. Parasocial interaction is a one-way relationship "one-way relationship", which occurs between television viewers and media figures, (Rubin & McHugh, 1987) and Hoffner, (2008) say in general, parasocial relationships can meet several emotional needs in social relationships as well. such as face-to-face interactions. Other studies have also found that women experience stronger parasocial relationships than men (Cohen, in Adam & Sizemore, 2013). The female audience can immediately feel all the atmosphere in the drama and if they cry, get angry, or happy this is what is indicated by the existence of parasocial communication or a friendship or intimate relationship with media characters based on one's feelings of effective bonding with the character, in other words the audience feel really know the characters in the film such as the film *The World of the Married* drakor which began airing on March 27, 2020 where the drama that carries stories around the world of marriage and infidelity is quite successful with the achievement of increasing ratings. In the broadcast of the 8th episode, this drama managed to penetrate the audience rating of 20% on a national scale and 22.2% in the Seoul metropolitan area (Kapanlagi.com).

The drama "The World of the Married" tells the story of a doctor named Ji Sun Woo with his perfect life with his handsome husband, Lee Tae Oh. In addition, the two of them are also blessed with a child named Lee Joon Young. They live in the quiet small town of Gosan. The conflict begins when Sun Woo's perfect and harmonious life is ruined by the presence of a third person, Yeo Da Kyung (Han So He) who is secretly in a relationship with Tae Oh. and the rise of scandals, sacrifices,

betrayals, and disappointments. After going through the storm that hit their household, Sun Woo and Tae Oh finally ended their relationship with a divorce. Sun Woo, who is miserable because of love and has to endure the pain of losing and being betrayed, he puts forth all his efforts to protect his own world.

Through social media, CNNIndonesia.com polled the ending of *The World of The Married* as many as 30.3% of the 1,390 respondents were dissatisfied with the ending of the Korean drama. Meanwhile, 29.1% said they were satisfied with the resolution of the conflict between the former married couple. Then as many as 31.9% or superior to the other two answer choices answered that they were not affected by the ending of *The World of The Married* (haibunda.com).

How this K-Drama anesthetizes the audience and affects their behavior can be explained by Parasocial Interaction Theory (PIT) or can be translated into Parasocial Interaction Theory proposed by Horton and Wohl, (1956) and later developed by Steve in the journal *Parasocial and Social Interaction with celebrities* (Infante, Rancer and Womack, 1993). Parasocial interaction refers to a kind of psychological relationship experienced by audiences in their mediated encounters with players in the mass media, especially on television and on online platforms. Viewers or listeners regard media figures (media personas) as friends, even though there is no or limited interaction with them. PIT is described as an illusory experience, so that media audiences interact with personas as if they were involved in a reciprocal relationship with them. Parasocial interactions will occur if individuals are exposed to media personas with high intensity. This high exposure will trigger the individual to pay attention. If this attention is given continuously, then a relationship is formed which can be categorized as an imaginary relationship. This relationship is known as a parasocial relationship. Thus, parasocial relationships are the impact of media exposure that occurs with high intensity so that it affects individual behavior. This is where the focus of this research on "Interaction and Parasocial Relations of Korean Drama Audiences" is carried out.

This study aims to get a picture related to the interactions and parasocial relationships of K-Drama viewers so as to get a picture of how the audience's interactions with the drama and the characters in the drama affect their emotions and behavior, so that these viewers can react positively or negatively. towards the characters in the drama (media persona). This personal situation of the K-Drama audience will be the focus of this research with the aim of unraveling the reality of their behavior after being drugged by the media persona in the K-Drama *The World of The Married*.

B. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews. To obtain the necessary data, interviews were conducted with several respondents from viewers/K-drama fans. Qualitative research method as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. examines objects that reveal phenomena that exist contextually

through the collection of data obtained, by looking at the elements as units of interrelated study objects and then describing them.

The research location is in Ambon City, Maluku and the determination of informants through the Purposive Sampling technique, the technique of retrieval or determination of data sources relies on self-assessment by considering first and not randomized, according to relevant criteria, according to the research problem raised, (Bungin, 2007). Informants consist of Lecturers, Students in the scope of the Communication Studies Program, FISIP Pattimura University and a total of 10 (ten) Instagram users with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation.

While the data analysis techniques used in this study were all facts and data from interviews, observations, and other supporting data through library research and documentation, then the data obtained were processed using a qualitative descriptive approach, to obtain conclusions as answers to research questions. .

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data from the results of observations and in-depth interviews with informants who have been deemed representative, the data are then categorized based on the characteristics of the questions posed to existing informants (lecturers, students, and Instagram owners) so that they can find out the Parasocial relationship built by K-Drama viewers in Indonesia. Social Media "Instagram" and the results are arranged in the form of a table below:

Table 1 Parasocial Relationships Built by K-Drama Viewers on Instagram Social Media

Question	Mean	Characteristics	Informant
Realistic story theme, unpredictable plot	Interesting work	Identification	All informants
The character of the cast has its own charm and interesting visual personality.	Attractive personality and characteristics	Identification	All informants
Actor/actress who really animates the character	Professionalism or good acting	Identification	All informants
Interested in visuals Cool, handsome, beautiful, sexy, manly, good looking and fashionista.	Attractive physical appearance	Identification	All informants
A character who can make emotions and is labeled a male seductress or husband	Character behavior	Identification	All informants

who is selfish and a wife who is full of struggle, works hard for her family.			
If you have watched the first episode then you will wait to watch the next episode	Curious about the continuation of this drama	Motivation	All informants
Watch until the end of this drama	Want to finish watching drama	Motivation	All informants
Waiting for season 2 of this drama to air	Want to watch the continuation of this drama	Motivation	All informants
I prefer to see the boy because he is still young	Likes characters of the same age	Similarity	One informant
Getting a good relationship lesson is like how, don't let there be a third person in our relationship	Learn from the story in the drama because it has something in common with him	Similarity	All informants

The results of the study show that social media supports fan activities with fellow fans and with their idols (media persona). Fans also often ask for information related to their idols on Instagram social media. They usually look for information through private accounts of actors/actresses who play dramas or I am a fan of the drama itself or on fan accounts of Korean drama collections. This is what makes parasocial relationships build easily from the emotions that occur from the process of parasocial interaction itself, both from fans/viewers with their idols and with fellow fans/audiences.

Fans / viewers feel that Instagram is the easiest medium to use, and contains the latest information about the latest Korean dramas. As stated by the informant in the interview results below: "Yes, that's for sure. Because Instagram is usually the most up-to-date for new dramas. So often you know there's a new drakor from Instagram." (Interview with IG account @wahyuni3197).

Through social media, it is easier for fans/viewers to interact with their idols in dramas. One of them is the convenience for fans who always want to be closer to their idols. They can see their idols talk directly like face to face through the fan/viewer's device screen by watching their idols live through Instagram. The closeness that is built usually wants to meet in person and can chat with their idol face to face. Sometimes they can also stalk the accounts of the drama players they are watching and just want to know or want to see information to get to know and be closer to the drama players. As stated in the interview below: "can see the latest

dramas and can install the accounts of the players they like." (Interview with IG account @frscharikncna).

Another thing that was revealed by the informant was that Instagram made it easier for them to find out the schedule for the Korean dramas they were going to watch, both those that had already aired, and those that would air later. The following is a statement from the results of the interview with the informant below: "It plays a very important role, because you can know the broadcast schedule on Instagram accounts." (Interview with IG account @nadiasampe).

The spectacle consumed by fans/viewers feels like the idol is speaking directly to fans. This creates a feeling of closeness to the idol in the drama they like, where fans then want to continue to feel closer to their idol. Even though this sense of closeness is only felt by the fans, because the communication style of the idol directs communication as if the fans are partners in the communication. This is expressed by Nabi and Oliver (2009:224) that the media persona (communicator) as the center and core point, the interactions that exist highlight the relational aspects of communication. Media persona is seen as a partner in establishing a relationship with the audience, and this perspective focuses on the relational aspect (Nabi & Oliver, 2009:224).

Parasocial Relationships Built by K-Drama Viewers on Instagram Social Media.

At the level of parasocial interaction, informants are at the level of entertainment social-value and intense-personal feeling. Informants in this study were still at a normal level because the idolizing behavior of the respondents had not led to a more severe or pathological level. This is indicated by several responses that emerged. For example, at the entertainment social-value level, the responses that arise are often following the latest news about their favorite drama, finding out about the personal lives of the actors and knowing the activities of the actors in the drama. These responses show the motivation that underlies the fans' active search for information or things related to their idols (Maltby, Giles, Barber & McCutcheon, 2005).

The intensity of searching for information, the latest news to postings about the personal lives of actors in their favorite dramas that are increasing can cause viewers to perceive or see actors as people who are considered close. For example, some responses that emerged from informants stated that the audience considered the actor as a friend because they felt what the actor felt when playing the character in the drama.

At this stage, the audience as fans is at the level of intense-personal feeling. This can happen because of the intense and compulsive feelings that the audience has and feels for their favorite drama, thus making the audience have the need and drive to be curious and want to know more about everything related to this drama. so that the audience will develop a closer feeling with the actors in the drama.

In this study, it can be seen that at first the audience liked this drama because the visuals displayed by the actors in the drama were also very soulful acting talents

and storylines that made the audience emotionally drain and curious in each episode. From this interest, viewers will have the urge to search, follow, and watch various information, posts and shows or all things about this drama. From the habit of the audience following and waiting for the drama *The World of the Married*, the audience begins to feel that they know the actors in the drama they watch and develop empathy for their favorite actor.

Another factor in the emergence of empathy from the audience for this drama is the strong storyline, varied genres and also the acting of the actors who can easily cry naturally, causing many viewers who see this drama to be touched. In addition, the story that is shown is in accordance with the culture of Asian society in general, the concept of true love, sacrifice, and other concepts of life depicted in Korean dramas do not conflict too much with the concept of life that exists in Asian society in general. These factors make Korean dramas more relevant to Asian people than dramas from other countries.

The audience's fondness for this drama is realized by waiting every day for episodes of this drama according to the specified broadcast time. Whether through television media, streaming on social media or special applications to watch and this is where the emergence of social interactions and relationships occurs. So from the S-O-R theory that will be used by researchers as a basis for mapping this parasocial phenomenon. The researcher assumes that the audience's exposure to watching the Korean drama *The World of The Married* through online media is a factor that influences the occurrence of this parasocial interaction. So, the exposure to watching K-drama *The World of The Married* will be reduced to the concept of stimulus and organism. Here, which acts as a stimulus is the Korean drama *The World of The Married*.

Basically, Korean shows contain messages, which if consumed can have a certain effect on the audience. Therefore, the Korean drama element in the drama series *The World of The Married* that is consumed by the audience can be used as a stimulus that will affect the occurrence of this effect. The organisms in this study are viewers of the K-drama *The World of The Married*. As previously explained, the stimulus can be accepted or rejected, which has implications for the effectiveness of the stimulus to influence the formation of a certain response. Here, the organism has a role to assess the effectiveness.

In this study, the stimulus was received because the interactions and parasocial relationships in K-drama had been consumed by the audience. Thus, it can be said that the concept of stimulus and organism in this study can be used because it is in accordance with the theoretical basis. Meanwhile, what acts as a response is the interaction and relationship that exists between the K-drama audience and their favorite figure or with fellow viewers or fans of the drama, as an effect of being exposed to watching Korean Drama *The World of The Married*.

D. CONCLUSION

The results of this study found that the parasocial relationship between the audience and one of the Korean dramas, namely the drama *The World of the Married*, is still intertwined because they are also waiting for the second season of this drama. felt by the characters in the drama.

It is evident from the parasocial characteristics that appear in this study, namely empathy towards the performer, where the audience can feel what the characters in the drama feel and experience through empathy. Then seeking companionship, where the audience is willing and ready to spend their time waiting and watching their favorite drama as they spend time with their friends, and imagined friendship, where the audience feels similar to the actors in the drama. The responses of the informants in this study were at the entertainment level of social-value and intense-personal feeling. The factors that influence parasocial interactions and relationships in the audience of this drama are motivation, identification and similarity with their favorite idol in their favorite drama.

The Parasocial relationship that is built also fosters a sense of belonging to the fans towards their idols, resulting in possessive and jealous feelings. From the results of the research, it is known that the relationship that fans build on their idol is a very deep one-way interpersonal relationship. However, this relationship can change when the informant is faced with different life situations, such as a change in status to being a housewife and a worker.

In terms of communication psychology, we can state that the better the interpersonal relationships, the more open other people and their perceptions are, the more accurate their perceptions of others and their perceptions of themselves so that the more effective the communication that takes place between the communicants. This deep one-way interpersonal relationship according to Devito (2008) can be triggered by several factors, including the frequency of media use.

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