

Women On Television

Nawiroh Vera

Nawiroh.vera@budiluhur.ac.id

Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Budi Luhur Jakarta

Abstract. Television as one type of mass media has special characteristics, one of which is audio visual. Many television programs such as soap operas, in Indonesian soap operas are the programs that are most in demand by viewers. Women are featured in soap operas as talkative, consumptive, weak and other negative things. The purpose of this study is to know and interpret audiences about how women are portrayed in soap opera stories. The method used is descriptive qualitative. Data collection was done by in-depth interviews with informants in this case television viewers in Jakarta were selected purposively. The results show that the audience has different interpretations and differences depending on their background. Most opinions were positive opinions about the image of women in soap operas, they argued that it was reasonable for women to look attractive and sexy, talkative and consumptive. Indeed the nature of women is that and all that cannot be called negative`

Key words: mass media, women, television, soap opera

1 Introduction

Television as one type of mass media has special characteristics, one of which is audio visual. Many television programs such as soap operas, in Indonesian soap operas are the programs that are most in demand by viewers.

The tendency of gender bias in the society including in the mass media occurs systematically. Dehumanization and the oppression systematically formed through television programs such as soap opera, talk show, reality show, and advertisements. Women in television program are always given roles as domestic and men were portrayed as serving in a public office. Women are featured in soap operas as talkative, consumptive, weak and other negative things. .

Why mass media, including television programs such as soap opera and other related program still explores women with a negative image becomes a hot topic discussion in society. Many studies conducted in several countries, yet that image remains unchanged. Many authors are interested in studying about the image of women in television programs in Indonesia in soap operas and commercials. In our observations, soap operas in Indonesian television still show the figure of a women with such a negative image. This study focuses on the interpretation and opinion of audiences, in this case women viewers, about the description of women in soap operas on Indonesian television commercial.

In accordance with the descriptions that have been mentioned in the introduction, the problems that we will try to answer in this study are: How is the interpretation and opinion of Viewers towards Woman description in Soap Operas in Indonesia television commercial? The aim of this study is to know the interpretation and the opinion of viewers about description of women in soap operas in Television.

2 Theoretical Framework

2 1 Mass media

Mass Media are those media that are created to be consumed by immense number of population worldwide and also a direct contemporary instrument of mass communication. According to Bittner in Vera 2016 “Mass communication is messages communicated through a mass medium to a large number of people” [1]. Wimmer and Dominick says; mass communication, which is any form of communication transmitted through a medium (channel) that simultaneously reaches a large number of people`. Mass media are the channel that carry mass communication [2].

Mass Media is those means of communication that reach and influence large numbers of people, especially newspapers, popular magazines, radio, television, and film. Mass Media are those media that are created to be consumed by immense number of population worldwide and also a direct contemporary instrument of mass communication [3].

Mass communication media make it possible to deliver messages to millions of people at roughly the same time. The authors of these messages are usually organizations, and the audiences are composed of individuals.

The types of mass media are print media (book, news paper, magazine) and electronic media (radio, television, film). Every type of mass media has different characteristic. Television is one of the most present and widely viewed mediums in Indonesia.

Television includes all the programs and all the entertainment we want. Through television we can receive any kind of information. Entertainment and media always go hand in hand. Mass media can be called or seen as a double-edged sword because of the positive and negative effects the mass media has on us [4].

2 2 Television Programs

According to Jonathan Bignell format is: “The blueprint for a program, including its setting, main characters, genre, form and main themes”[5]. Because of the variety of the different kinds programs and advertisements which television broadcast, television as a medium appears to offer and almost unlimited range of information and entertainment. Types of television programs for examples include; sport, films, science, drama, comedy, shopping, lifestyle. [5]

This research focuses in sub chapter of drama, specifically soap opera, this type of television program are probably the most important and influential products of television, given the fact that average adults spend hours of watching these television program.

This research focused on the image of women, or termed as the portrayal of women in television programs, especially soap operas. Representations of women in television is widely known as commodities, desperate individuals obsessed with marriage, and always in domestic roles.

2 3 Soap Opera

The definition of soap opera is “a serial drama performed originally on a daytime radio or television program and chiefly characterized by tangled interpersonal situations and melodramatic or sentimental treatment” [6].

Interpersonal violence as murder, domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, incest has been a staple feature of the soap opera landscape since at least the 1970-1992 study of US soaps, Carol Traynor Williams notes that women are almost always the victims of violence in soap stories and links soap opera representations of rape to a longer misogynist tradition of rape as entertainment [7].

Based on observations that the author did on a number of soap opera shows on Indonesian television, it can be concluded, soap operas in Indonesia have the same face as soap operas in other countries. Women displayed with characteristics tend to be negative compared to men. Women are only highlighted in terms of their sexy bodies, emotionally unstable, tempting and destroying other people's homes, and so on.



Fig 1. Cover of Indonesia's soap opera

3 Method

The study is a descriptive qualitative research; the qualitative researcher seeks to discover the meanings that participants attach to their behavior, how they interpret situations, and what their perspectives are on particular issues [8].

The main methods employed in qualitative research are observation, interviews including focus group discussion, and documentary analysis. In qualitative research, analysis frequently takes place at the same time as data collection. Many consider it a mistake to go on accumulating data without examining it from time to time to see if any major themes or patterns are emerging. If there are, these will direct future data gathering in the process known as 'progressive focusing' [9].

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through in-depth interviews. The informants from this study were women in Jakarta-Indonesia. The informants selected were ten women with different backgrounds who were selected by purposive sampling.

4 Findings and Discussion

Based on interviewed that have been done in September-October 2018, researcher will describe the interpretation and opinion of women in Jakarta, which consists of the representation women in television program focused on soap operas.

The characteristic of Indonesian female viewers is absolutely different from female in other country. Indonesia is a multicultural country, which has a variety of tribes, customs, and religions. They mostly adhere to their culture. Cultural diversity is the primary attraction for research, with regard to their description about female images in television programs.

Informants Views about Soap Operas

The interpretation of the informant towards soap operas on television is different from one another. Most informant in a positive sense to the issues raised, some interpret as negative to the issues raised.

The negative opinion of the informant is soap operas Indonesia does not educate, consumptive, and against Indonesian cultural values. The positive opinion from informant are; it is natural for soap operas displaying those things that way because the main purpose of soap opera is to entertain audiences. Basically, audiences love elegance, wealth, beauty. Then it should affect the audience with something interesting such as attractive women with glamorous lifestyle living a luxurious life.

Informants views about women in soap operas

The female interpretation about women image especially the negative image in soap operas also varies. Two respondents considered that the negative image of women in soap operas have become stereotypes. In soap operas on television, women are portrayed as being fussy, grumpy, whiny, consumptive, and always in a domestic role.

This is indeed socially constructed view in an Indonesian patriarchal society. Through mass media, especially entertainment, it is trying to maintain a patriarchal ideology. Hegemony theory of Antonio Gramsci proved, by strengthening the position of men in public roles and women in domestic roles. Most disturbing is the fact that media image of female in TV, that a large number of portray women as domestic roles like housewives or sex objects. As sexual objects she is used for the sole purpose of giving men pleasure. like the following informant statement:

“There is no harm in women's domestic roles only, because it is her nature. Women are chatty, love to be pampered, like shopping, and like to look pretty and sexy”¹

The informants argue that it is not something bad. Women like shopping because women need many things to take care of the family. Women like beauty, they need stuff to make her look beautiful. Flirty and sexy are the women's ways to win the heart of men, and according to them these are not bad things.

The opinion of other informants is:

¹ Interviewed with informant Sari Putri in Jakarta on 28 September 2018

*“What is shown in soap operas on television about the image of women is still in a reasonable way. Women's domestic role is not considered a negative thing, because women in the culture of Indonesia have always been concerned with family needs rather than personal interests, including career”.*²

Soap opera that always show sexy woman are also considered normal, because basically the entire human being love beauty, including beauty of a woman's body. If indeed it can increase sales, there is no harm in soap opera exploiting the female body. They can accept the appearance of women in soap operas in Indonesia, they even argued that a beautiful body is a gift from God. Flaunting the body does not mean degrading someone, as long as it is not against Indonesian cultural values.

Discussion

The findings of this study is, the interpretation and opinion (women viewers) about soap operas are different from one another. The differences are influenced by age, educational level, social status, ethnicity, etc.

The findings show the different types of meaning with positive and negative perception from the informants. The interpretation of Indonesian women viewers about the women in soap operas is sometimes look at the positive and negative opinion and perception. Informants that have a positive argue, see that picture or image that is deemed negative in women, such as indulgence, consumerism, and talkative, is not always bad, sometimes women have to behave that way.

Looking sexy can also be interpreted as a positive thing, it does not mean becoming a male sex object. They merely want to look nice. The women did not feel compelled to play in the domestic roles, or feel being exploited as a man's sexual objects with sexy appearance.

5. Conclusion

Interpretation of women audience in Indonesia is diverse, based on differences in their respective backgrounds. Therefore, Positive opinion is the most prominent interpretation of the informants, it can be interpreted that Indonesian female audience accept the image of women who are often featured in television shows as something that is reasonable, not excessive, and still within the limits of cultural tolerance Indonesia. These results show differences in interpretation and opinion of television's viewer, especially female viewers about women on television program.

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