



The Analysis of Viewers Reception of Toxic Relationships in *Posesif*, an Indonesian Film

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A B S T R A K

Film “Posesif” menceritakan hubungan antara dua remaja yang dimulai dengan manis dan bahagia, namun secara bertahap berubah menjadi hubungan yang tidak sehat yang melibatkan kekerasan fisik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan dan menganalisis resepsi terhadap hubungan toksik sebagaimana yang dipersepsikan oleh penonton setelah menonton film “Posesif”. Analisis resepsi digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana penonton menafsirkan dan memahami penggambaran hubungan toksik dalam film tersebut, dengan mempertimbangkan latar belakang dan perspektif mereka yang beragam. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah analisis resepsi dan komunikasi interpersonal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan analisis resepsi Stuart Hall. Teknik pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini meliputi wawancara mendalam menggunakan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan tujuh informan, observasi, dan tinjauan pustaka. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa lima informan masuk dalam kategori dominan-hegemonik, dua informan berada dalam posisi negosiasi, namun tidak ada informan yang masuk dalam kategori oposisi. Menurut para informan, film “Posesif” berhasil merepresentasikan hubungan yang tidak sehat, meskipun beberapa informan merasa bahwa akhir dari film “Posesif” tidak memuaskan.

INTRODUCTION

“Posesif” is an Indonesian film that centers on Lala and Yudhis, two high school students who fall in love. Lala is a star student and competitive diver, while Yudhis is a new student with a troubled past. They meet when Lala helps Yudhis with a problem at school, leading to a unique punishment where they have to walk around the school tied together by their shoelaces. This punishment brings them closer, and they eventually start dating. However, their relationship takes a dark turn when Yudhis becomes violently possessive. He attacks Lala’s friend, Rino, breaking his arm in a fit of jealousy. When Lala confronts Yudhis, he lashes out and chokes her. Realizing Yudhis’ obsessive nature, Lala tries to break up with him,

but he desperately apologizes and even harms himself to gain her forgiveness.

The term “toxic relationship” is commonly heard in the context of romantic or marital relationships. A toxic relationship is characterized by a lack of affection, support, happiness, and security, replaced instead by control, physical or verbal abuse, and a lack of trust. Many individuals are unaware they are in a toxic relationship, often mistaking their partner’s toxic behaviors as expressions of love and affection (Praptiningsih & Putra, n.d., 2021).

Yudhis’s actions in “Posesif” exemplify the harmful patterns found in toxic relationships. His controlling behavior, emotional manipulation, and physical abuse towards Lala mirror the tactics used by abusers. The film

effectively portrays the isolation and psychological control often present in these harmful relationships. This aligns with the broader societal issue of violence against women, as highlighted by statistics in Indonesia.

Based on DataIndonesia.id, there were 25,050 cases of violence against women in 2022, a 15.2% increase from the 21,753 cases reported in 2021. Approximately 30% of the victims were women aged 25-44, and another 30% were aged 13-17. About 58% of these incidents occurred in the household. East Java had the highest number of cases, with around 2,136 incidents. Sexual violence can occur anywhere, including in educational settings. According to the 2021 Komnas Perempuan report, universities had the highest number of sexual violence cases in the education sector from 2015 to 2021. A 2020 survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbud Ristek) across 79 campuses in 29 cities found that 63% of sexual violence cases went unreported (CATAHU, 2021). Despite the high number of reported cases in universities, data suggests violence against women is prevalent across all educational settings, including high schools.

Although universities rank highest in terms of the number of violent cases in educational settings, this does not mean that lower educational levels, such as high schools, are free from violence. A 2018 study conducted on students at SMAN 04 Bombana involved nine individuals, consisting of 7 females and two males, as subjects to investigate dating violence. The findings showed that there are several stages of dating violence at SMAN 04 Bombana. These stages include the dating stage, the dominance in the relationship, and, ultimately, the occurrence of dating violence (Evendi, 2018).

A recent case of violence has emerged involving a female student at Pelita Harapan University. The woman, identified as AS, recently reported her boyfriend, BJK, to the authorities. According to detikhealth (2023), AS reported BJK for assault and threats, which began in June 2022. AS initially shared her story on social media, gaining attention from netizens. Based on AS's account, she was forcibly dragged and assaulted after refusing to go home with BJK. The violence BJK inflicted

upon AS occurred five times during their relationship.

Figure 1
Cases of Violence Against Women



Source: Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection

According to the 2022 Annual Report from the National Commission on Women (CATAHU), dating violence (KDP) in Indonesia ranks as the third highest case of violence in the private or personal sphere. In 2022, reports to protection service agencies totaled 1,222 cases, and reports to the National Commission on Women amounted to 463 cases. Yeni Roslaini Izi, the executive director of the Women's Crisis Center (WCC), categorizes dating violence (KDP) into three types: physical violence, such as hitting, kicking, and hair-pulling; sexual violence, such as rape or abandoning a partner after impregnating them; and economic violence, where the male partner borrows money from the female partner and leaves without repaying the debt (Mardani, 2021).

According to Arnett (Girsang & Ningsih, 2015), dating violence is prevalent among teenagers. Meutia Hatta, the former Minister for Women's Empowerment in Indonesia, stated that one out of five teenagers experiences violence in a relationship. This finding came from a survey of 300 teenagers (Girsang and Ningsih, 2015). Sari (2018) found that in various studies and research, the majority of victims of dating violence are women.

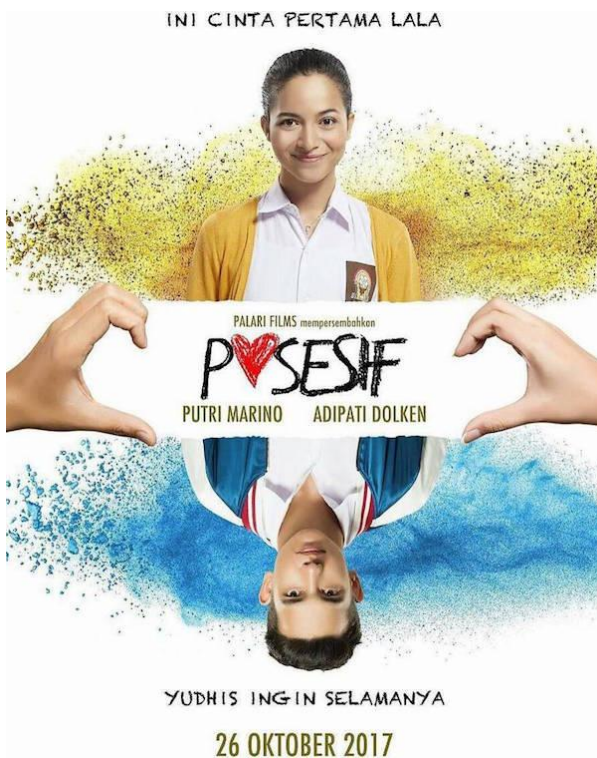
Dating violence among teenagers is also the subject of the film titled "Posesif." "Posesif" is an Indonesian psychological drama film produced by PALARI FILMS. The film broke



into the market of romantic teen films with its unique story, directed by Edwin and written by Ginatri S. Noer, who is also the writer of “Dua Garis Biru.” The film stars Adipati Dolken and Putri Marino and was released in September 2017 in theaters. However, as of 2020, “Posesif” is accessible through the streaming platform Netflix.

Picture 1

“Posesif” Film Poster



Source: IMDB (2017)

Based on the background discussed the researcher aims to delve into this topic with the study titled “Analysis of the Reception of Toxic Relationships in the Film “Posesif.” The goal is to understand how viewers perceive and interpret the concept of toxic relationships in the film. Different people might take away different meanings based on their own experiences and views on toxic relationships.

LITERATUR REVIEW

The Reception Theory

Reception analysis refers to the study of how audiences interpret messages conveyed through media. This concept involves explaining

and understanding how audiences make sense of and assign meaning to television, film, and other media content. In this context, the audience assesses and interprets these messages through television, film, or other media. Using this approach, the audience can respond to these messages either by accepting the film’s portrayal or rejecting the message (Ghassani & Nugroho, 2019).

According to Stuart Hall, encoding-decoding is a framework for understanding the audience’s adaptation of meaning from media. Encoding refers to the message sent or coded by the sender. Decoding, on the other hand, is the interpretation of the message by the audience based on their perception, which they then interpret into their lives. Stuart Hall classifies decoding positions as follows (Supriyatman & Nugroho, 2019):

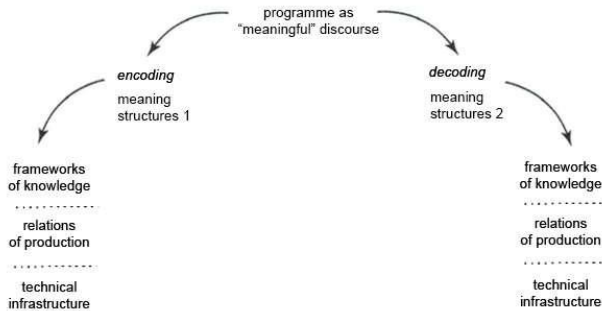
(1) Dominant Hegemonic Position: This is when the audience fully understands and agrees with the media’s message. A supporting statement for this reception analysis theory is, “The media produce the message; the masses consume it. The audience reading coincides with the preferred reading.” An example of this dominant position is when the audience aligns with a statement, such as a husband should provide for the family, and the wife should manage the household. The audience agrees that the portrayal of this societal norm is accurate.

(2) Negotiated Position: This is when the audience accepts the message or meaning conveyed by the media but may consider it more carefully before fully agreeing. Stuart Hall stated, “The audience will accept the message generally but reject applying it if there is a conflict with cultural values and beliefs.” In other words, the audience may agree with the meaning or ideology presented by the media but will analyze and question how it fits into their personal lives. For example, the audience may accept the idea that the husband should provide for the family and the wife should manage the household due to the norm in their social surroundings. However, personally, they may not fully align with this statement.

(3) Oppositional Position: This is when the audience rejects or disagrees with the

meaning conveyed by the media. In other words, the audience holds conflicting or different thoughts and refuses to accept the meaning that the media attempts to convey.

Figure 2
Encoding-Decoding (Stuart Hall)



Source: Stuart Hall's Encoding-Decoding | Media Studies

Reception analysis supports audience analysis and places the audience in an active position. In addition to supporting audience analysis, this theory is also utilized as a research subject in developing historiographical science. Meanwhile, decoding is an active mental process in which individuals assign meaning to media content. Personal factors like social background, cultural upbringing, and individual experiences influence this process. Rather than passively receiving information, audiences actively construct understanding based on their unique perspectives.

Toxic Relationship

A toxic relationship is an unhealthy or "poisonous" relationship between one individual and another (Nurifah, 2013). Lack of self-control, unstable and explosive emotions are some of the common triggers of toxic relationships in a relationship. A toxic relationship can take many forms, ranging from unsupported attitudes, forcing, and not considering the feelings of the partner to physical or verbal violence. Toxic relationships can also lead to death (Sawaswati, 2019).

A toxic relationship can appear similar to a typical healthy relationship. A toxic relationship can begin with one person or both parties involved. Quoted from the book "Toxic Relationship: A Psychological Point of View" (Zahiduzzaman, 2015), there are several signs that can help identify if you are in a toxic relationship, including: (a) Feeling exhausted

when around them; (b) Emotionally affecting those around them; (c) They cannot accept the word "no" or rejection from their partner; and (d) They will control their partner.

Examples of behavior in a toxic relationship include: (a) Physical violence (hitting, kicking, hair-pulling, and more); (b) Mental or emotional abuse (controlling, manipulative, threatening, and more); (c) Sexual violence (kissing, groping, rape, and more); and (d) Economic abuse (extorting, forcing the victim to work continuously, confiscating assets, and more).

A toxic relationship can lead both the victim and the perpetrator to experience unproductive days, lose life principles, and suffer mental health issues, ultimately resulting in explosive emotions that may lead to violence (Julianto, 2020). Unstable emotions and low self-control are key factors in triggering unhealthy communication between the teenager and their environment.

The unproductive days experienced by both the victim and the perpetrator can be seen in scenes from the film "Posesif." For instance, Lala, who is a talented diver, struggles to conduct her training as she is constantly followed by Yudhis. Similarly, Yudhis becomes less productive because he continuously interferes with Lala's activities.

Interpersonal Communication

Forms of interpersonal communication, including face-to-face interactions, telephone calls, and various other communication mediums, facilitate human connection. Nonetheless, communication among adolescents is frequently hindered by its lack of effectiveness. This is attributed to perceptual distortions, where misinterpretations or misunderstandings arise due to inaccurate perceptions. Individuals construct different perceptions based on their unique needs, beliefs, and other factors. Moreover, semantic issues, cultural differences, and the absence of feedback further contribute to ineffective communication (Radjagukguk, 2018).

Interpersonal communication among teenagers in their peer groups can significantly contribute to and reinforce their self-identity development. This type of communication also enables teenagers to identify their potential and cultivate them alongside friends with similar

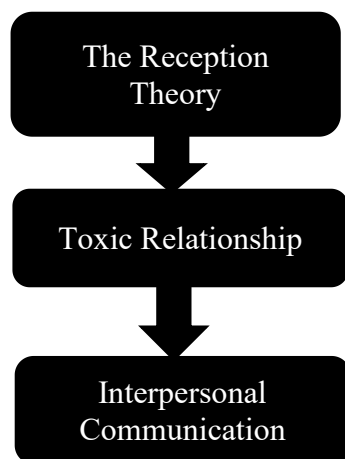
hobbies or interests. Conversely, if their environment is characterized by bullying, hate speech, or physical violence, it can lead these teenagers to become perpetrators in toxic relationships (Darmawan et al., 2019).

The theory of interpersonal communication is pertinent to the film “Posesif” because the ineffective communication between the two teenagers in the film results in a toxic relationship. If Lala and Yudhis had engaged in effective interpersonal communication, clearly conveying their intentions, it would have lessened the chances of a toxic relationship developing, with one as the perpetrator and the other as the victim.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to investigate audience perceptions of toxic relationships portrayed in the Indonesian film “Posesif”. Reception theory will be employed to understand how viewers interpret the film's content, while toxic relationship theory will provide a framework for analyzing the harmful dynamics depicted. Interpersonal communication theory will be applied to examine the communication patterns between characters that contribute to the toxic relationship.

Figure 3
The Research Framework



Source: Researcher Analysis

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method in data processing with in-depth interviews. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), qualitative research involves

the collection and analysis of information related to problem-solving, whether theoretical or practical. The aim of qualitative research, as stated by (Kriyantono, 2014), is to explain phenomena in depth by gathering as much data as possible, emphasizing depth and detail. On the other hand, (Bungin, 2017) notes that qualitative research aims to describe and summarize various conditions, situations, and phenomena in society, with the goal of bringing that reality to the surface as characteristics, features, models, signs, or representations of a particular phenomenon.

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze and understand the meaning perceived by viewers of the film “Posesif.” The subjects of the study consist of university students living in Jakarta and surrounding areas, aged between 19 and 24, who have watched the film “Posesif” and serve as the intended audience for the implicit messages in the film.

This research is conducted by analyzing the reception of toxic relationships as perceived by the audience from watching the film “Posesif.” The researcher has conducted interviews with six university students in Jakarta and psychologists from a hospital in Jakarta. Understanding how audiences create meaning from media requires a qualitative approach because this process is subjective and cannot be measured numerically. Reception analysis focuses on how audiences interact with mass media, exploring how they develop personal interpretations. Reception analysis sees meaning production as an unfolding process in which the audience negotiates and establishes categories of meaning (Jensen, 1986), in this case, the mass media being the film “Posesif.”

The researcher interviewed university students in Jakarta who have watched the film “Posesif” to understand and analyze the meanings they derived from the film. Additionally, the researcher also interviewed students who have watched “Posesif” and have experienced toxic relationships to gain different perspectives from those who have firsthand experience with toxic relationships. The interviewees are students in Jakarta aged 19-23 years old. To support the reception analysis in this research, the researcher continued with interviews with psychologists to understand the

impact of toxic relationships. The informants in this research are detailed as follows:

Table 1
Informant

Name	Age	Religion	Educational Background
Informant 1	22	Catholic	Catholic University Student
Informant 2	21	Catholic	Catholic University Student
Informant 3	23	Non-Catholic	Private University Student
Informant 4	20	Non-Catholic	Private University Student
Informant 5	22	Non-Catholic	Private University Student
Informant 6	21	Non-Catholic	Private University Student
Informant 7	31	(Religion Not Relevant)	Psychologist

We conducted interviews, participant observation, and documentation to gather data from various sources. The potential impact of participant backgrounds on their interpretation of the film is evident. Factors such as religious affiliation, education, and personal experiences shape how individuals understand and respond to media messages. For instance, participants with a Catholic background might view the film through a religious lens, while those with a psychology background could analyze it from a psychological perspective. This diversity of perspectives enriches the research by providing a comprehensive understanding of audience reception.

CONCLUSION ON DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS STAGES

Data processing and analysis are essential phases in research aimed at addressing research issues. Raw data is gathered and categorized to provide relevant insights for answering research questions and testing hypotheses (Khrisna, 2022).

(1) **Data Transcription:** In this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted and recorded with audio devices. Meetings were arranged for in-depth discussions on the research topic. Relevant questions were asked, and responses were documented. Audio recordings captured the entire conversation, allowing for detailed analysis and ensuring the accuracy of the obtained information.

(2) **Data Reduction:** During the data reduction phase, researchers selected,

summarized, and focused on key elements from the collected data. This involved condensing and selecting substantial and relevant information to facilitate the analysis process. Interview results were categorized into three groups: dominant-hegemonic position (agreeing with the film's message), negotiation position (accepting the message with some reservations), and oppositional position (disagreeing with the message).

(3) **Data Presentation:** Following data reduction, the data was presented concisely and accurately using narrative text. Data from in-depth interview transcriptions served as the primary source for illustrating and explaining research findings in detail, showcasing diverse perspectives and viewpoints. Narrative text descriptively portrayed and brought to life the experiences and views of the interviewees, providing a richer and deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon.

(4) **Conclusion Drawing and Data Verification:** In the final stage, after gathering valid data and sources, researchers drew conclusions based on data reduction and presentation. This involved re-checking and verifying findings to ensure their accuracy and validity by comparing them with the established research questions. Careful and thorough analysis of the collected data, considering various perspectives and relevant contexts, enabled researchers to provide solid conclusions and meaningful contributions to the research field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Indonesian film 'Posesif' offers a harrowing portrayal of a toxic romantic relationship. What begins as a promising young love story quickly deteriorates into a dangerous cycle of possessiveness and control. Yudhis's obsessive behavior isolates Lala and gradually erodes her self-esteem, highlighting the devastating psychological impact of such relationships. The film serves as a stark warning about the importance of recognizing the signs of a toxic partnership and prioritizing personal well-being.

The researcher employs descriptive qualitative and semi-structured interview methods in this study, involving six university students aged 20-22 and one psychologist as

informants. These students have diverse criteria and backgrounds, assisting the researcher in gathering the meaning of the message regarding toxic relationships in the film “Posesif” received by the audience. The interviews took place in July 2023. The descriptive qualitative method enables the researcher to explore and describe the phenomenon being studied, such as how the toxic relationships are the central theme of the movie, specific examples of Yudhi’s controlling action that happened in several scenes, and the impact of toxic relationships on Lala and her social life.

This approach provides insights into the context, narrative, and cinematic elements that shape the film’s message. Semi-structured interviews further delve into the views and perceptions of the audience, with open-ended questions allowing participants to offer deeper and more expansive responses regarding their understanding of the film’s portrayal of toxic relationships. Through these interviews, the data generated will yield valuable insights into the audience’s interpretation and response to the film’s message.

Some informants reported having been in toxic relationships. The experiences varied among these informants. For instance, informants 2 and 7 experienced verbal abuse without physical violence. On the other hand, informant 6 experienced indirect physical violence, such as having items thrown at them by a former partner. However, there are still healthy relationships, as mentioned by informant 3, who never experienced a toxic relationship but frequently heard stories from friends who did.

“I have indeed been in a toxic relationship, so when I watched ‘Posesif,’ I thought, oh, they’re smart because they understand the dynamics of toxic relationships. What I went through wasn’t as severe as in ‘Posesif,’ though. There wasn’t physical abuse.” (Interview with informant 7)

Knowledge About Toxic Relationships

After interviewing the seven informants from various backgrounds, it was found that toxic relationships are characterized by a lack of respect for one another, often leading to the crossing of personal boundaries, sometimes unconsciously (Kusumastuti, 2023). These relationships involve two people who lack trust, experience restrictions, and encounter physical

or verbal violence, along with other negative aspects that hinder the development of the relationship and adversely affect the psychological well-being of one or both individuals.

“In my opinion, a toxic relationship is one that is often unstable, with drastic emotional highs and lows. For example, today, there’s a fight, and tomorrow there’s PDA. It’s just not healthy. When emotions fluctuate too dramatically, it’s like the ebb and flow, and to me, that’s not healthy; it falls into the category of toxic. Additionally, physical abuse is the most severe. Usually, it’s not mutual; one person may be subjected to physical and emotional abuse while the other remains unscathed. If one suffers both emotional and physical harm, that’s really serious.” (Interview with informant 6)

“In my view, as a psychologist, a toxic relationship typically involves something off, something weird in general. People tend to use the term ‘toxic’ loosely. From a psychological perspective, I see a toxic relationship as something that isn’t meant to be but is forced. It’s not about one party poisoning the other, but more about knowing the relationship isn’t right, but pushing through anyway, resulting in mutual harm.” (Interview with informant 7)

Interpretation of the Issue of Toxic Relationships in the Film “Posesif”

Film is a form of communication in which individuals or groups communicate to send and receive messages (Alfathoni & Manesah, 2020). “Posesif” is a romance suspense film that tells the nightmare of a love drama. The film tells the story of two high school students named Yudhis and Lala. Unknowingly, they both become trapped in a toxic relationship, prompting them to reconsider their future. This film can help the public distinguish between healthy and toxic relationships. According to five informants, “Posesif” effectively portrays toxic relationships in real life.

“In my opinion, this issue really depicts unhealthy relationships out there. There are so many, especially among teenagers. I think a lot of us can relate when watching the film.” (Interview with informant 1).

“Actually, it’s relatable to teenagers in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta, hahaha. Many of my friends, from high school to college, have been or are in toxic relationships. So, I think the issue is connected and relatable to Indonesian youth. It’s a learning experience for all of us.” (Interview with informant 2).

“Eee... when I watched it in high school, I thought the topic was really fresh. Because it’s rare that people take teenage relationships seriously, normally, it’s dismissed, but I thought it was really cool.” (Interview with informant 3).

“I think it depicts it really well. Like how Putri Marino isn’t free to move and can’t make choices she wants because of the threat from Adipati Dolken.” (Interview with informant 5).

“Definitely. From the beginning, the guy’s controlling and yelling, insulting, and then he hits her. I think the film truly deals with toxic relationships from start to finish.” (Interview with informant 6).

“I think it’s really good. Especially because I see toxic relationships are very common among teenagers, but they often don’t realize they are in one. With this film, teenagers and adults can see that they shouldn’t allow themselves to be treated like that in a relationship. I also think the issue is portrayed really well because it shows the negative aspects of a relationship.” (Interview with informant 7).

On the other hand, according to one informant, they didn’t understand the meaning of “Posesif” because they’ve never been in or experienced a toxic relationship.

“Hmmm... I haven’t because, in my own real life, I don’t really know because I’ve never experienced it myself during my dating experiences. But maybe others can relate.” (Interview with informant 4).

Interpersonal Communication Ineffectiveness in Toxic Relationships in the Film “Posesif”

Interpersonal communication among teenagers is often ineffective due to perception distortions, where inaccurate perceptions or viewpoints arise, and individuals develop differing perspectives based on their needs, beliefs, and other factors. Additionally, semantic issues play a role, as semantics is the study of meaning. Another cause is cultural differences and the absence of feedback or a lack of responsive interaction. According to the seven informants, communication within a toxic relationship is often ineffective, leading to frequent conflicts.

“Definitely not. In a toxic relationship, communication is always messed up, not in the sense of not informing each other, but rather where one or both parties are unwilling to listen or accept the other’s opinion. In such relationships, one person

may be more dominant than the other, and they often fail to find a middle ground, resulting in an unhealthy relationship.” (Interview with informant 5).

“Yes, it can be said to be ineffective. If you know about the law of power relations, one party is usually more dominant than the other. In toxic relationships, one party might insist, ‘You have to stay with me, or I’ll be stressed out.’ There are always consequences for actions not preferred or carried out by the other partner. A healthy relationship should be open, where if I say I’m going out with my male friend, my partner should express discomfort and discuss how we can ensure mutual comfort and peace of mind. Instead, someone who communicates ineffectively might immediately refuse, insisting on no interaction with my male friend or face a breakup. Such conversations can be communicated properly, but they lack the appropriate communication skills.” (Interview with informant 7).

Based on the interviews with the seven informants, it was concluded that interpersonal communication between partners in toxic relationships is ineffective. According to the informants, if communication were effective, conflicts and unhealthy relationships would not arise.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Film “Posesif”

Film is a part of mass communication. Mass communication has the ability to deliver one-way messages to a broad audience. Films are an attractive medium to various segments of the public, and film producers have wide-ranging creativity and enthusiasm to engage their audience. Therefore, the filmmaking process has subjective strengths and weaknesses, as individual perceptions of a film can differ. (Romli, 2016). In this study, the strengths and weaknesses perceived by the audience are crucial, as they determine whether the message conveyed by the film is accepted positively by the audience. Below are the opinions of the seven informants regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the film “Posesif.”

According to five informants (Informant 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7), a downside to the film is the ending that does not meet the audience’s expectations. They found it hard to accept that the main character in the toxic relationship left their partner instead of the victim ending the relationship.

“The strength of the film lies in its bold approach to tackling an issue that was not widely discussed at the time. It vividly portrays what it’s like to stay in a toxic relationship and serves as a powerful lesson. A weakness for me personally is the ending, where Yudhis acts unfaithfully, leaving his partner after being the toxic one. It feels unfair and convenient.” (Interview with informant 3).

“I think the strength of this film is that it does a fantastic job of depicting toxic relationships. Perhaps due to the director’s consultation with psychologists, the film offers a nuanced understanding of these dynamics. However, a potential weakness is that the audience may misinterpret the ending. In “Posesif,” the main character, Adipati, leaves Putri Marino. In real life, most perpetrators don’t release their victims so easily. I worry that viewers who are in toxic relationships might think, ‘Oh, well, eventually he will just leave me too,’ based on the film’s portrayal.” (Interview with informant 7).

For the strengths of the film “Posesif,” all seven informants believe that it can serve as a valuable lesson and a depiction for society about unhealthy relationships. “Posesif” is seen as an important awareness tool, especially for teenagers, to highlight what is healthy and what isn’t in a relationship, helping to prevent toxic relationships from developing.

Film serves a crucial role in conveying messages and is a modern medium that has a significant impact on viewers or audiences. Naturally, each individual in the audience may have a different interpretation of a film. When receiving a message, three positions can be identified among Jakarta students when watching the film “Posesif.”

Table 2
The Reception of the Source Message Position

Informant	The Reception Position
Informant 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7	<i>Dominant-Hegemonic Position</i>
Informant 4 & 5	<i>Negotiated Position</i>
-	<i>Oppositional Position</i>

Source: Analysis Findings

There are five informants in the Dominant-Hegemonic Position, where the informants have successfully understood and accepted the hidden message in the film “Posesif.” Deep acceptance from the informants or audience is required to accurately categorize this position and not only

understand but also internalize the message presented by the film “Posesif.”

“According to me, the message I received is that if you’re in a harmful relationship, don’t hesitate to end it, don’t hesitate to leave. Look at Lala. She was the victim, bruised and wounded because Yudhis went so far as to resort to physical actions. If you continue to stay, you could ruin everything, including your future.” (Interview with informant 1).

“The message I got is that no one else can stop a toxic relationship except yourself. So, if you’re in a situation where you have to deal with a toxic relationship, try to reach out to someone and talk about it. Because if I remember correctly, Lala never confided in anyone, which is why she ended up getting involved with Yudhis.” (Interview with informant 3).

Two informants are in a Negotiated Position, having successfully accepted the message and meaning presented in the film “Posesif,” but they engage in a negotiation process. The informants selectively choose the messages that align with their views while discarding those that don’t fit. They don’t accept the messages from the film “Posesif” without critical consideration.

“I just got a glimpse of it, honestly. From watching the film, I was quite surprised to see how severe toxic relationships among teenagers could be, even to the point of violence like choking or hitting. It was quite shocking because from what I’ve heard, cases like this were only happening in my university friendships.” (Interview with informant 4).

“I understand the message being conveyed, but to be honest, it just doesn’t make sense why someone would tolerate such possessiveness from the beginning and still continue with Yudhis.” (Interview with informant 5).

Informants 4 and 5 are in a Negotiated Position because they understand the message of the film “Posesif,” but they also have their own opinions. For them, “Posesif” is considered overly dramatic and unreasonable, as they question why the victim would continue to forgive and tolerate the harsh treatment.

In the Oppositional Position, informants reject the message conveyed in the film “Posesif.” However, in this research, no informants are categorized as being in the oppositional position. All informants understand

the message of the film “Posesif” well and easily grasp the meaning expressed, which is in line with each informant’s background.

Discussion of Research Findings

In Stuart Hall’s reception analysis, several factors must be considered before entering the encoding process. These factors include frameworks of knowledge, relations of production, and technical infrastructure. These three factors can influence the interpretation or meaning-making process in the reception of the film “Posesif.”

Frameworks of knowledge: In the research process, various factors drive the interpretation of the message in “Posesif” through frameworks of knowledge. The informants’ understanding is influenced by their background, environment, age, personality, and sources of information. How they interpret the text within “Posesif” on toxic relationships is influenced by their experience of having gone through toxic relationships themselves. While informants 1 and 7 personally experienced the damaging effects of verbal abuse in past relationships, informants 2-6 gained insights into toxic relationship dynamics through a variety of sources. These included personal accounts from friends, educational seminars, and the portrayal of toxic behaviors in media like the film “Posesif”. Thus, “Posesif” acts as a medium that reflects the issue of toxic relationships.

Relations of production: The film media provides informants with insight into “Posesif.” Currently, the issue of toxic relationships is rarely addressed in Indonesian cinema. Therefore, “Posesif” plays a role in educating viewers about toxic relationships. Informants learn about the film through various sources, such as theaters, recommendations from friends, or streaming platforms. This contributes to its appeal, especially since the film’s theme resonates with their background. According to the research findings, informants consider that “Posesif” successfully portrays the issue of toxic relationships, though some mention that certain scenes were exaggerated. In the film “Posesif,” viewers perceive certain scenes as exaggerated. For example, the depiction of Yudhis’s extreme possessiveness and violent behavior towards

Lala, including his intense outbursts, may seem overly dramatized for a teenage relationship. These scenes, intended to emphasize the gravity of toxic behavior, have been critiqued for their heightened dramatic intensity, which some believe goes beyond realistic portrayals.

Technical infrastructure: Informants are motivated to understand the message conveyed by the encoder through the medium used. In this case, the media used is video-on-demand, where “Posesif” was played first in Indonesia cinema on October 26, 2017, and has been on streaming platforms since March 9, 2018. The purpose of “Posesif” is to provide an understanding of the behavior and negative impacts of toxic relationships on someone’s psychological well-being due to negative behavior stemming from a partner. The filmmakers behind “Posesif” intentionally blurred the lines between good and evil in their characters to create a more realistic portrayal of relationships. However, they were aware of the potential risks of romanticizing the abusive behavior depicted in the film. Despite creating a character who might evoke sympathy, the filmmakers maintain that Yudhis's actions are unequivocally wrong and should not be tolerated (Jakarta Post, 2017).

In the film “Posesif”, the depiction of toxic relationships is portrayed through Yudhis restricting Lala from spending time with Rino, leading Lala to lie about it. When Yudhis discovers this, he violently pulls Lala's hair in a fit of rage. Additionally, Yudhis controls Lala by forcing her to continue her education in the same city as him, indicating a lack of trust in the relationship. These scenes illustrate the nature of a toxic relationship. The film *Posesif* aims to convey and provide insight into the harmful impact of toxic relationships on one’s mental health. This film hopes to help educate the audience on the importance of trust, respecting a partner’s decisions, and other aspects contributing to a healthy relationship.

Table 3
Summary of Research Findings

Research Object	Research Findings	Supporting Quotes
Dominant-Hegemonic Position	The audience's interpretation of the message conveyed by the film "Posesif" aligns with the film's message itself, which is that toxic relationships should be abandoned. Five of the seven informants interviewed share a similar understanding and agree with the film's message regarding toxic relationships.	"In my opinion, this issue really depicts unhealthy relationships out there. There are so many, especially among teenagers. I think a lot of us can relate when watching the film" (Interview with informant 1). "Definitely. From the beginning, the guy's controlling and yelling, insulting, and then he hits her. I think the film truly deals with toxic relationships from start to finish." (Interview with informant 6).
Negotiated Position	The message conveyed in the film "Posesif" is well-received by the informants. However, the informants also bring an additional understanding that could be seen as a form of negotiation. While the message about toxic relationships is effectively presented, two of the seven informants mentioned that the film might be somewhat exaggerated and overly dramatic in depicting toxic relationships.	"I just got a glimpse of it, honestly. From watching the film, I was quite surprised to see how severe toxic relationships among teenagers could be, even to the point of violence like choking or hitting. It was quite shocking because from what I've heard, cases like this were only happening in my university friendships." (Interview with informant 4). "I understand the message being conveyed, but to be honest, it just doesn't make sense why someone would tolerate such possessiveness from the beginning and still continue with Yudhis." (Interview with informant 5).

Oppositional Position	Interpreting the message in this position indicates that the audience or informants accept the message in the film "Posesif." However, no one from the participants rejects and contradicts the message in the film, suggesting that unhealthy relationships should be abandoned.	
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Source: Analysis Findings

Table 3 outlines the classification and assessment of the informants' understanding of the film "Posesif" are outlined. Informants are grouped into three positions: dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional. In this research, there are seven informants with diverse classifications and perspectives. Five informants fall into the dominant-hegemonic position. They agree with and understand the message conveyed by "Posesif" regarding unhealthy relationships: if they cannot be improved, they should be ended. Their interpretation aligns with the values and meanings depicted in the film.

Next is the negotiated position, where two informants fit this category. In this position, the informants understand the message and meaning of the film "Posesif." However, these two informants do not entirely agree because they also have their own views and assessments of the film. Vina and Vanesa both argue that the portrayal of toxic relationships in "Posesif" is overly dramatic and exaggerated.

No informants were classified as being in the oppositional position during this interview. All informants successfully accepted the message conveyed by "Posesif," so no informants fit into the oppositional category.

CONCLUSION

A toxic relationship encompasses physical violence (e.g., hitting, hair-pulling, choking, and others), mental violence (e.g., belittling, manipulation, name-calling, and others), sexual violence (e.g., groping, rape, and others), and economic violence. The film "Posesif" has portrayed several types of toxic relationships in each scene. This has been approved by the informants, who agree that the film "Posesif"

successfully represents toxic relationships in real life. Moreover, the choice of actors and the issue presented in the film have successfully attracted the attention and curiosity of the public. Although the issue presented by “Posesif” is still rarely addressed in the Indonesian film industry, the film has successfully packaged the issue in a compelling manner and is the first Indonesian film to address the topic of toxic relationships.

The study examined how seven Jakarta students interpreted toxic relationships after watching the film “Posesif”. Five informants were classified as dominant-hegemonic, fully aligning with the film's portrayal of toxic relationships. Two informants exhibited a negotiated position, accepting the film's core message while expressing reservations about specific depictions. Notably, no informants adopted an oppositional stance, indicating unanimous agreement that “Posesif” effectively represented the issue of toxic relationships as illustrated below:

Five informants are in the dominant-hegemonic position. This is due to the informants' feeling that the message conveyed by the film “Posesif” about toxic relationships is well depicted. The four informants fully accept the message conveyed by the film.

The other two informants are in the negotiated position. In the negotiated position, informants feel they can accept the message of the film “Posesif,” but they also have their own opinions regarding the film's message. According to these informants, the depiction of toxic relationships in some scenes is considered too exaggerated.

In this study, there are no informants in the oppositional position. This is because, among the seven informants, no one from the participants rejected the message conveyed by the film “Posesif.” All seven informants agree that the film “Posesif” has successfully represented the issue of toxic relationships.

The findings revealed that a significant majority of participants (75%) demonstrated a reasonable understanding of toxic relationship characteristics, such as controlling behavior and emotional manipulation. However, a subset of participants exhibited difficulty in recognizing more subtle forms of abuse. These results align with previous research indicating a growing

awareness of toxic relationships but highlighting the persistence of knowledge gaps.

Moreover, a correlation was observed between participants' knowledge of toxic relationships and their critical stance on media portrayals of such dynamics. Those with a deeper understanding of toxic relationships were more likely to identify and critique unhealthy relationship patterns depicted in the film. This suggests that knowledge plays a pivotal role in shaping audience interpretations of media content.

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