



Decoding Student Voices: Exploring Cultural Perspectives of the Kanjuruhan Tragedy through Podcasts

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Abstract. The Kanjuruhan tragedy resulted in hundreds of casualties. Media has reported on this event from various perspectives. The audience attempts to view the incident through the lens of several parties involved, including the football players, fans, security guards, and committees behind the scenes. What intrigues the audience is the decision by the president to renovate the Kanjuruhan football field in accordance with FIFA standards. This study applies a combined approach of reader's response method and thematic analysis. Reader's response theory guides the analysis of podcasts by Universitas Negeri Surabaya's English Literature students. These podcasts discuss the Kanjuruhan Tragedy using Stuart Hall's circuit of culture (production, representation, identity). Utilizing the Circuit of Culture theory by Stuart Hall, the study finds that media plays a significant role in producing and representing information about the Kanjuruhan tragedy. Media consciously positions itself and repeats the news, resulting in the notion of surveillance culture. Therefore, the decision to renovate the Kanjuruhan football field is seen as a reflection of temporal negotiation to divert the issue away from focusing on the victims.

Keywords: Kanjuruhan Tragedy, Students, Hall, Circuit of Culture, Podcast.

1 Introduction

The Kanjuruhan Tragedy, which took place on October 1, 2022 left a dark stain on the history of Indonesian football. With a death toll exceedingly more than 100 people, it ranks second only to the 1964 Estadio Nacional disaster in Peru, which killed around 300 people. This tragedy highlights the need for further analysis on the causes and effects of such devastating events. Several studies have discussed the Kanjuruhan Tragedy from various perspectives, including legal [1][2][3], linguistics [4][5], and management [6][7][8]. However, there remains a gap in understanding how such tragedy affects the younger generation. This study aims to analyze the event using Stuart Hall's circuit of culture in order to find out how students perceive Kanjuruhan Tragedy in relation to cultural aspects such as representation, regulation, production, consumption, and identity. The circuit of culture is a comprehensive framework which discusses how culture is created and circulated through five processes – production, consumption, regulation, identity, and representation [9][10][11][12][13].

These processes are essential in understanding how cultural meanings are generated and transmitted through media and other cultural channels.

This study focuses on the perceptions of English Literature students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya as expressed through students-produced podcasts discussing the Kanjuruhan Tragedy. The podcasts, aired in POPCAST channel (<https://open.spotify.com/show/489vslzVR9ABQt2ht6cVhG>) on Spotify, provides a valuable data source for this study. By analyzing the podcast, researchers can identify how students represent the Kanjuruhan Tragedy in their own words, how they produce meaning around it, and how they act in response to the tragedy. In addition, this study can explore how students consume and engage with the information about the tragedy and how it affects their sense of belonging.

Hall [14] states that cultural practices and meanings are shaped by “the interactions between individuals, institutions, and broader cultural contexts.” University students hold a unique position within society. They are heavily influenced by evolving cultural norms, educational background, and social interactions. These factors undoubtedly play a major role in shaping how they see a tragic event like Kanjuruhan Tragedy. The death match between Arema and Persebaya FC has resulted in a tragic event that none expected. This study will contribute to a wider understanding of how young people are shaped by major events and cultural contexts. By focusing on Kanjuruhan Tragedy, the researchers aim to discover how such tragedies can impact the next generation of Indonesian.

2 Methods

There are currently five episodes on the POPCAST channel focusing on Kanjuruhan Tragedy and the circuit of culture. This study employs thematic analysis in identifying key themes and patterns in the students' discussions on POPCAST. The first step is familiarization, which involves transcribing the podcasts verbatim in order to get the grasp of students' discussions and recognize potential points of interest. Then, the second step is assigning codes to segments representing significant points or experiences related to the tragedy. After the initial coding, the next step is to search for patterns, grouping those with similar content or meaning. These groups form the base for identifying themes in the students' discussions. Each theme will be described and supported by evidence from the transcript. After themes and patterns are identified, the researchers will then interpret the findings, considering how they connect to the tragedy and students' understanding of it. The final step involves looking at the connections between the themes and Stuart Hall's circuit of culture. It will help the researchers understand how the students' interpretations and understanding are shaped by cultural factors like media, representation, and identity. By analyzing the podcasts, the study will provide insight into how young Indonesians process and respond to the events.

3 Results and Discussion

Based on the findings, this study uses five elements of the circuit of culture [9] as the basis of cultural processes, concerning, Production, Consumption, Regulation, Representation, and Identity. Firstly, the data will be analyzed and elaborated precisely on how the emergence of Kanjuruhan tragedy revolves to those five circular elements and how it is manifested in either media or society responded by the students in the podcast. The analysis begins with identifying the Production of Kanjuruhan tragedy. Then, it is essential to find out how this incident is produced and how the discourse is being consumed.

In this case, students had already conveyed their thoughts and how the Kanjuruhan tragedy emerged based on those five elements mentioned. The first finding is seen through the first episode of the POPCAST, with the caption “Media Representation of Kanjuruhan Tragedy”. The caption implies that media is the production of how this Kanjuruhan tragedy was informed. It indeed contributes to shaping the students’ perception in viewing the Kanjuruhan tragedy. The transcript is seen as follows.

[00:01:53,180 --> 00:02:14,327] Alright, in this case, we will talk about Twitter as the social media. It uses certain hashtags like in [INTELLIGIBLE], in Peace, and Korban. Do you guys know about this hashtag inside Twitter? Yes, from this hashtag, actually represents the incident that happened in Kanjuruhan itself. And by using a certain hashtag, it will be a trending topic since a lot of people use that hashtag to be discussed or clarified the issues (Student 1).

The script emphasizes the significant influence of social media, specifically Twitter, in spreading awareness about a serious incident involving hundreds of casualties. It also highlights the media’s ability to influence people’s beliefs and ideologies. Media serves as the intermediary that connects people, society, and the government. These elements are closely tied to the dominant ideology of a certain cultural context. This creates an interpretation that is fluid and can change over time. Hall [16] states that language, photographs, words, and gestures are fundamental in conveying meaning, representing both differences and similarities. This implies that language is socially constructed and constantly evolving [15].

During the process of representation, any textual and visual symbols, for instance, captions and images are the productions to be decoded by the audience. The crucial aspects, such as symbols, pictures, words, and even languages, play an essential role. They become collective items which carry multiple subjectivities resulting a strong determination, and it eventually becomes dominant ideology that belongs to a particular cultural context. It implies that the interpretation tends to be relative. In other words, media is an adjustable production to shape people’s thoughts in responding to Kanjuruhan tragedy. The more the news spreads, the more people obtain the exposure.

Another finding was, media also positions itself in a particular stance. It depends on how the media frames the information. This statement is supported by the transcript below.

[00:05:10,232 --> 00:05:58,411] However, there are also others who are biased towards one side. So, there is an Instagram post from a news account. So, for instance, said that "Tembakan gas air mata itu membuat para supporter panik, berlarian, dan terinjak-injak." So, the author appears to stand on the supporter side, which is indirectly stated in the sentence. It suggests that the security forces or police use of tear gas was what initially caused fear and led to widespread fatalities. So, additionally, the writer here attempts to position himself or herself as a supporter by expressing how the supporter feels (Student 2).

It is often assumed that the media is a neutral source, but our perception is actually shaped by how information is framed. As the student's statement suggests, the media often takes a position on the supporter's side, influencing the public's or reader's assumptions. The fact that security guards suddenly fired tear gas at the crowd towards the tribune, it did not yet provide any sensible reason. It is important to remember that accurate proof is crucial in validating this information. In the case of the Kanjuruhan tragedy, the lack of such proof has led to the portrayal of an unsolved issue, contributing to the government's black record. Therefore, media strikes the strongest control to carry several cultural symbols that enable to influence people's subjectivity. Since the news has spread widely, this subjectivity turns into collective subjectivity. Hall [16] explains that representation holds the impact to conceptualize homogenous culture. The information carries certain cultural codes that construct people and society. Representation contains fundamental aspects of reality, and culture also exists within this spectrum which becomes the key factor to form people or any other social subjects more than just a reflection [16].

The next cycle that correlates with representation is Identity. Representation and Identity are interconnected. When the socio-cultural context is represented, the identity reflects the persons involved. The podcast identifies two parties, indicating two football supporters. The first one is Bonek as the Persebaya (an Indonesian professional football club in Surabaya, East Java) supporters. The second is Aremania, which belongs to supporters of Arema (an Indonesian professional football club in Malang, East Java), as shown throughout the transcript below.

[00:00:35,411 --> 00:00:52,924] And here, we are going to specify it into the Kanjuruhan incident. So, we can take it to the perspective of the supporters of the football clubs, which are Bonek as the supporters of Persebaya and Arema as the supporters of Arema (Student 3).

Commonly, Bonek and Aremania have a thick historical supporter rivalry in Indonesian football. The historical rivalry between Bonek and Aremania is immensely intense as a metaphor for oil and water. Each party holds a strong loyalty and fanaticism for their respective teams [17]. From this explanation, it can be reflected that this rivalry potentially contributes the cause of this chaotic incident. Tracing back through their fanaticism, each supporter shows similar identity. Aremania became very denial due to the Arema's loss. It was being discussed through the students' podcast.

[00:03:39,375 --> 00:03:50,984] it's because some of the supporters, jump? Not jump! Trespass! Yeah! Go in to the middle of the stadium to take a photo and keep emotional support to the player of the football club (Student 4).

[00:03:53,246 --> 00:04:42,900] Which one? The Aremania one! Alright, and I believe that if someone is very, if someone is very loved with their beloved football club, they will do anything, for example, like this in the very first time, Persebaya win over 23 years, in the opposite, opposition team hometown, Arema. So, I believed that Aremania feel upset. And like, because their beloved team has lost. This also really brings, make them really violent, and they I believe they proceeded to throw objects and even damage the police vehicle, and even forcing Persebaya players to rush inside the locker room until the police arrive to help (Student 5).

From the conversation above, which was a discussion among students about the recent football match between Arema and Persebaya, the students said that Aremania was rejecting the fact that Arema had lost against Persebaya and showed their disappointment by jumping out towards the stadium and giving emotional support to the football players. They then became anarchic, causing much damage. In addition to socio-cultural context, acts of violence are defined as gaining recognition in a particular community. It represents the embodiment of subversive culture, a protest against social injustice and alienation. To some extent, Bonek and Aremania are a widespread community located in Surabaya and Malang. It infers that they have earned social legitimation. This is one of the reflections of popular cultures that position one's social class or status to a societal recognition.

Violent acts are committed with the aim of getting approval from the group. Acts of violence are often committed to gain approval from a group. We have previously discussed violent acts as a demonstration of social injustice and protests. Additionally, a sense of social and economic alienation has arisen due to a changing environment. The people Surabaya and Malang have developed into a multicultural society, villagers that struggled to adopt modern customs. In a primitive society, legitimate violent acts were used to enforce laws and were a traditional part of the social process. Over time, these laws have become the norm, establishing the current social order [18].

Nevertheless, alluding to only Bonek and Aremania as the perpetrators of Kanjuruhan tragedy is not yet sufficient. Another involved party was the security guards. The previous conversation of the podcast explained that one of the reasons triggering the audience to get out of the stadium was the police guards fired the tear gas towards the stadium. There was no relevance explaining why it occurred. Psychologically, the police guards have the assumption that supporters are a threat and able to resort to violence. Firing the tear gas was the defense mechanism to avoid conflicts.

It was also stated by Clifford and Steve [19] when they studied about 'hooligan' fans' behavior in terms of why conflicts escalate during crowd at the world cup year 1990 in Italia. They challenged the focus indicating that violence was related to the participants' or fans' behavior. Referring to the interactions between England

supporters and Italian Carabinieri as a result of group norms and conflicts, the study found out that it is also important to include police at the arena. Due to the background of conflicts and community, the police unconsciously assume that fans' behaviors are considered dangerous and leads to conflicts. Even though, at first, they did not intend to conduct violence [19].

From all of the above explanations, the media, as the production which spreads the information related to Kanjuruhan tragedy holds the important role to form the audience's perceptions. The perceptions will be based on how this issue is represented and framed through media. It also carries a social manifestation that belongs to respective identities. The representation of Kanjuruhan tragedy in media exhibits a group of identities with dynamic relationship. Both Aremania and Bonek have a lot in common representing their identities as the football team fans. Football becomes their free space to express their fanaticism throughout violence as a manifestation of their existence in society. The acts of violence also denote the resistant culture in deconstructing dominant societal norms. Due to their massive impact in society, they eventually have earned legitimation and placed themselves in a particular social stratification. The security guards are also included in this notion. In terms of the incident, the security guards cannot be neglected within the surveillance.

Barker explained that the relationship between production, consumption, regulation, representation, and identity will be shifted and undertaken temporarily based on the social surroundings. Identity is the inherent attribute that entails and becomes the individual's signifiers [20].

In viewing Kanjuruhan tragedy, there is a common thread which leads to the complex social narrative and will be always evolving as long as the discourse is being produced. The interpretations or manifestations vary depending on which perspective stands, and the result will be somehow shifted. Media becomes the platform of production for the audience or the students in this case, to deliver their visual or textual perceptions regarding Kanjuruhan issue. The process in decoding Kanjuruhan issue involves some social subjects, such as, the audience consisting of the two football team fans (Aremania and Bonek) and the security guards (police). In decoding this issue, it needs further process cultural circulation which does not only involve the media, the issue, and the persons or parties involved. After finding out the correlation among production, representation, and identity, the next cultural phase is consumption. It is essential to look up how this issue is being consumed. The subject that can be adhered is the news.

The perceptions denote that it is not only about to finding out which party should be put the blame on, yet, it attempts to find the connected trajectory to elaborate how this case is tracked back in the past and develops in the future.

4 Conclusion

This study explored how university students perceive the Kanjuruhan Tragedy through the lens of Stuart Hall's circuit of culture. Thematic analysis of student-

produced podcasts revealed that media production, representation, and identity are crucial factors shaping these perceptions.

Social media's role in framing the event emerged as a significant theme. Students highlighted the use of hashtags and trending topics, which can potentially shape public opinion. The analysis also identified a connection between media representation and audience identity. The students referenced the historical rivalry between supporter groups, suggesting that cultural factors influence how the tragedy is understood.

These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how young Indonesians process such events. The study highlights the importance of considering cultural contexts, particularly media representations and social identities, when examining youth perceptions of major tragedies.

Further research on the Kanjuruhan Tragedy could delve deeper into the concept of "surveillance culture." The student podcasts referenced the security guards' use of tear gas, hinting at how assumptions about fan behavior might have influenced their actions. Future studies could investigate how surveillance practices and crowd control assumptions contribute to such tragedies. This would involve examining the role of security forces and how their training and procedures might shape their responses in such situations.

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