

Audience Reception of Medical Authority in the Ice Cold Documentary

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Submitted: 7 May 2026

Revised: 7 July 2026

Accepted: 24 July 2026

Abstrak

Tokoh Dokter Djaja Surya Atmadja merupakan saksi ahli dari pihak terdakwa yang muncul dalam dokumenter “Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso”. Namun, penjelasan tokoh Dokter Djaja terkait fakta medis kematian Mirna Salihin tidak diterima sepenuhnya oleh khalayak, karena adanya mispersepsi terhadap posisi kehadiran tokoh Dokter Djaja di pengadilan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjabarkan bagaimana penonton memaknai representasi tokoh Dokter Djaja sebagai otoritas medis dalam dokumenter Ice Cold. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan paradigma konstruktivis. Analisis resepsi khalayak Stuart Hall, dan wawancara mendalam bersama enam informan dengan teknik pengumpulan purposive sampling. Berdasarkan teori Resepsi Khalayak Stuart Hall, hasil penelitian menggambarkan bahwa lima informan berada di posisi hegemoni dominan, karena menerima dan mengakui bahwa dokumenter merepresentasikan tokoh Dokter Djaja sebagai otoritas medis. Sedangkan satu informan berada di posisi oposisi, karena menganggap bahwa dokumenter hanya berfokus pada penjelasan tokoh Dokter Djaja yang kontroversial di mata publik.

Kata Kunci: Analisis resepsi khalayak, Dokter Djaja, dokumenter Ice Cold

Abstract

Doctor Djaja Surya Atmadja is an expert witness for the defendant who appears in the documentary “Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso.” However, Doctor Djaja's explanation of the medical facts surrounding Mirna Salihin's death was not fully accepted by viewers due to a misperception of Doctor Djaja's position. Therefore, this study aims to describe how viewers interpret Doctor Djaja's representation as a medical authority in the documentary Ice Cold. The research methods used are descriptive qualitative, Stuart Hall's audience reception analysis, and in-depth interviews with six informants using purposive sampling techniques. The results of the study describe that five informants were in the position of dominant hegemonic, because they accepted and acknowledged that the documentary represented Doctor Djaja as a medical authority. Meanwhile, one informant was in the position of opposition, because he considered that the documentary only focused on explaining Doctor Djaja's controversial character in the public eye.

Keywords: Audience reception analysis, Doctor Djaja, Ice Cold documentary

INTRODUCTION

The presence of Dr. Djaja as a forensic expert for the defense in the Netflix documentary “Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso” sparked various interpretations from viewers. Doctor Djaja Surya Atmadja was an expert witness presented by Jessica Kumala Wongso's

defense team in the trial of the murder of Wayan Mirna Salihin. Doctor Djaja is a forensic pathologist at Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital (RSCM) and the first DNA doctor in Indonesia.

Doctor Djaja Surya Atmadja was featured as a medical authority in the documentary titled “Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso” (Sixsmith, 2023). Netflix released the documentary on September 28, 2023, with Beach House Picture as the production house. This 1 hour 26 minute documentary reviews unanswered questions surrounding Mirna's murder case. Jessica Kumala Wongso, the defendant in Mirna's murder case, was accused of poisoning Mirna by putting cyanide in her Vietnamese coffee. The documentary Ice Cold provides a summary of the murder case and Jessica's trial. Rob Sixsmith, the director of Ice Cold, felt that there were many strange and suspicious things about Mirna's murder case, which attracted international attention. Therefore, Rob Sixsmith featured Dr. Djaja Surya Atmadja in the documentary as a forensic expert representing Mirna's side. Dr. Djaja himself appeared nine times in the middle of the documentary.

Documentary films are one of the products of mass communication. Mass communication refers to communication that utilizes mass media, whether printed or electronic, and is transmitted quickly, simultaneously, and fleetingly (Mulyana, 2015). Although documentaries recount real events as they happened, documentary makers also have an interest in packaging certain messages narratively and cinematically. The audio-visual elements and narrative presented by Dr. Djaja can support the representation of medical authority in the documentary. The appearance of Dr. Djaja as a medical expert in the documentary serves to explain the peculiarities of Mirna's case with scientific evidence.

As a forensic pathologist and medical academic, Dr. Djaja character played an important role in providing medical explanations regarding the allegations of cyanide use in the murder case, the condition of Mirna's body, and the cause of Mirna Salihin's death. Doctor Djaja's explanation of cyanide provided a medical perspective that had previously received little public attention. However, the message of medical authority representation was not fully accepted by the public due to misunderstandings. The presence of Dr. Djaja, who was associated with the defendant, raised various suspicions about certain interests behind his testimony. As a doctor with experience in forensics, his medical explanations were ignored or perceived as having certain political interests. The presence of Dr. Djaja can be interpreted as hidden medical authority and scientific facts. However, his role as an expert witness for Jessica's team can also be interpreted as a duty to defend Jessica in Mirna's murder case.

In addition, Dr. Djaja revealed that everyone named in the investigation report was summoned to court, except for himself (Frida, 2023). Doctor Djaja was not summoned by the Public Prosecutor to testify in court, even though he was the doctor who examined Mirna's body. Doctor. Djaja's testimony is also included in Mirna's case file. This contradiction also caused viewers of the documentary "Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso" to interpret Dr. Djaja's character in the documentary differently.

These differences in interpretation show that the meaning of Dr. Djaja's representation as a medical authority is not singular, but is shaped by knowledge, background, culture, and life experience. Although director Rob Sixsmith has established Dr. Djaja's medical authority, the audience will interpret it differently. Documentary viewers may interpret the messages regarding the presence of Doctor Djaja as a medical authority in different ways. Some viewers agree with Dr. Djaja's medical explanation, but others disagree.

Therefore, this research is important because it has social and academic urgency. The representation of medical authority in documentaries is not always interpreted uniformly by the audience. Doctor Djaja, a character in the documentary who is supposed to function as a medical authority, is prone to misperception by the audience. Academically, this research contributes to communication studies in audience reception analysis. Socially, this research is expected to provide viewers with an understanding of the need to always be critical and active in interpreting documentaries.

According to Stuart Hall, audiences do not engage with media products as passive recipients, but as readers of media texts who engage critically (Dixon, 2020). In audience reception theory, Stuart Hall introduced the concepts of encoding and decoding. The media conveys dominant messages in the encoding stage. The dominant messages constructed by the media are not simply accepted by the audience, but are processed in the decoding stage. Because the audience is an active audience that is capable of interpreting the messages constructed by the media (Dixon, 2020).

Researchers refer to relevant previous studies as references, examine novelty, and demonstrate the state of the art. One relevant previous study is Analysis of Online News Framing of the Film "Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso," conducted by (Fitraeni & Febriana, 2024). The results of the analysis show that the framing carried out by the domestic media contained responses from people related to Mirna's case after the screening of the film Ice Cold. Meanwhile, the framing carried out by foreign media focused on what happened in the film Ice Cold because they did not have proximity.

Furthermore, a study titled Analysis of Public Reception of the Hyperreality of Edi Darmawan Salihin's Narcissistic Concept in the Documentary Film "Ice Cold," conducted by (Clarisa & Duva Dama, 2024), shows that the use of contemporary technology and audio-visual manipulation in this documentary strongly reflects hyperreality. In this documentary film, Edi Darmawan Salihin becomes a symbol of narcissism with his self-image behavior and focus on himself.

There are also several studies on public reception of films and television show that are relevant to this research, namely Analysis of Gen Z Audience Reception in Interpreting the Representation of the Generation Gap in the Digital Communication Era in the IM3 Promotional Video "Bridge the Gap, Foster Connections" by (Wiriadinata, 2025), Analysis of Audience Reception of the Courtroom Proceedings in the Film Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso by (Firzatullah, 2024), The Reception of the Film "Ice Cold: Murder Coffee and Jessica Wongso": Interpretations That Shape Audience Understanding by (Sabila & Jati, 2024), Analysis of Audience Reception of Dr. Louis Owien's Statements Regarding COVID-19 (A Study of Audience Reception of the "Hotman Paris Show" in Perceiving the Content of Dr. Louis's Statements Regarding COVID-19) by (Auditama, 2023), and Receiving Messages of Technological Determinism in the Documentary Film 'The Social Dilemma': Analysis of Reception Among Teenagers by (Diniasti & Haqu, 2022).

Previous international research on audience reception has also been used as a reference in deepening reception analysis. The study entitled Methodological Approaches to Reception Analysis Research in Ghanaian Media Studies by (Adjotey et al., 2021) explains that qualitative interviews and content analysis of interview transcripts are appropriate modalities for reception analysis. This is because the nature of the meaning-making process cannot be quantified and requires a qualitative approach.

The next relevant study is titled Analysis of Jessica Wongso's Self-Image Reception in the Documentary Film "Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso" by (Nirmala & Jokhanan Kristiyono, 2024). The results of the study describe how the documentary Ice Cold effectively presents various perspectives on Jessica's case. It is very important to understand how the media shapes and influences the public's perception of Jessica Wongso, as well as perspectives on the judicial system and justice. Previous research on the documentary "Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso" only examined the framing of Mirna's case in the news, the hyperreality of Edi Salihin's narcissistic concept, and Jessica Wongso's self-image.

There has been no audience reception research examining the character of Dr. Djaja in the documentary *Ice Cold*.

Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on the audience's interpretation of the representation of Dr. Djaja Surya Atmadja as a medical authority in a documentary film. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined media framing, courtroom representation, or Jessica Wongso's public image, this research explores how audiences negotiate the meaning of scientific and medical authority through documentary narratives. By applying Stuart Hall's audience reception theory, this study extends audience reception research to the context of medical authority representation in Indonesian documentary films, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how expert credibility is interpreted by audiences with diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This study aims to understand the audience's interpretation of the representation of Dr. Djaja Surya Atmadja as a medical authority in the documentary *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso*. This research also provides an overview of the audience as an active group in interpreting Dr. Djaja's representation based on their knowledge, background, culture, and life experiences.

In order for the research to be conducted with a clear focus and not stray from the topic, there are defined limitations to the issues in this study, namely: (1) Visual representation, (2) Verbal narration, (3) Editing, (4) Background music, (5) Doctor Djaja's presence rate, (6) Discourse representation. This study aims to explain that skeptical and critical attitudes, as well as differences in background, lead to differences in audience interpretation of the characters portrayed by documentary filmmakers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research to be conducted is descriptive qualitative research with a constructivist paradigm. Researchers with this paradigm intend to understand or interpret the meanings that other people have about the world. Individuals develop subjective meanings from their experiences, meanings that are directed at objects or specific things (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This type of research is descriptive qualitative, which is an approach in which researchers remain close to the data, use a limited framework and interpretation to explain the data, and categorize information into themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Qualitative research was used because the data obtained from informants would be described descriptively in narrative form. Furthermore, the results of this study cannot be quantified due to the nature of the research topic, which involves the informants' interpretations.

The researcher will explore information about the meaning of Dr. Djaja's representation in the documentary *Ice Cold* from six informants as research subjects. The six informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The criteria for informants in this study were: (1) Informants had watched the entire documentary film “*Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso*”; (2) They had knowledge related to the Mirna murder case so that they were able to provide in-depth perspectives; (3) They were active Law students, because they had knowledge about the judicial system; (4) Active students of Medicine or interns, as they have basic knowledge of medicine and forensics, which are Dr. Djaja's areas of expertise, (5) Active students of Communication Studies, as they have knowledge related to media representation and audio-visual elements in films. Each informant met the established criteria. The details regarding the informants' descriptions are provided in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Research Subject Description

Informant Code	Initials of Informant	Background	Reasons for Watching Ice Cold Documentary
H1	SSP	Education: Bachelor of Law student, specializing in women's and children's criminal law, UPNVJ Other activities: Currently interning at a legal NGO called Transparency International Indonesia Age: 21 years old Gender: Female	The assignment for the Criminology course in the fourth semester, which discusses the case study of Mirna's murder. Therefore, she watched the documentary <i>Ice Cold</i> in order to analyze the verdict of Mirna's case in the context of the criminology course.
H2	SNF	Education: Bachelor of Law student at the Open University Other activities: Has worked for four years as a Personal Assistant Advocate at the law firm Devi Selvana & Partners Age: 26 years old, the oldest informant in this study Gender: Female	To understand the legal aspects and judicial process in the viral and controversial Mirna case.

K1	QAN	Education: Completed a bachelor's degree in medicine at the University of Lampung Other activities: Junior doctor or co-assistant for six months at Abdul Moeloek Hospital Age: 22 years old Gender: Female	Because Mirna's case went viral when she was still in junior high or high school. So when the documentary Ice Cold was released, she immediately watched it to understand why the case was still being talked about even though it had happened more than five years ago. K1 also likes to watch movies in her spare time.
K2	MAP	Education: Undergraduate student in Medicine at UPNVJ Other activities: Busy preparing for thesis defense, active in the Faculty of Medicine Student Senate Age: 21 years old Gender: Male	Because he is interested in forensics and investigation. He also wants to know more about Mirna's murder case.
IK1	AJA	Education: Bachelor's degree student in Communication Studies at UPNVJ Other activities: Busy with college activities and currently writing a thesis Age: 22 years old Gender: Female	Because Mirna's death case was widely discussed when she was in junior high school. Then IK1 was also curious about the topic of Mirna's murder, which had resurfaced and become a topic of discussion on the X app.
IK2	ARS	Education: Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies at UPNVJ. Other activities: Active in the FIVE TV student organization and works as a freelancer at the Brighton Hub Depok property agency. Age: 21 years old.	She considered Mirna's case to be unusual and full of ambiguities. She felt that the judge was unable to prove conclusively that Jessica had actually put cyanide in the coffee. IK2 also enjoyed watching YouTube and films in the social, reality, mystery, and documentary genres.

		Gender: Female.	
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Source: Research Results, 2026

Researchers collected data through in-depth interviews, which is a one-to-one data collection method involving an interviewer and a respondent to discuss specific topics in depth (Hennink et al., 2020). The interview questions will begin with a greeting and six general, open-ended questions. This will be followed by thirteen core questions in accordance with the research limitations. The interview will then conclude with five closing questions and a thank you. In-depth interviews will be conducted using a semi-structured guide, either face-to-face or online via Google Meeting.

The data analysis technique used by researchers is Stuart Hall's reception analysis, which focuses on the active interpretation of documenter's messages by audiences. Audience reception analysis involves the encoding process carried out by the documentary maker, as well as the decoding process carried out by the audience receiving the message, who are the viewers of the documentary *Ice Cold*. After the viewers carry out the decoding process, their positions can be categorized into three positions, namely dominant-hegemonic readings, negotiated readings, and oppositional readings.

The researcher conducted three stages as described by (Jensen & Jankowski, 2002) in the reception analysis technique process, namely: (1) The collection, which involves gathering data from the audience through in-depth interviews, (2) Analysis, which is the stage of processing the results of in-depth interview recordings by open, axial, and selective coding (Creswell & Poth, 2021), (3) Interpretation of reception data, which involves grouping the results of audience decoding into dominant hegemonic readings, negotiated readings, or oppositional readings. The three stages of reception analysis are the same as those shown in Figure 1 below

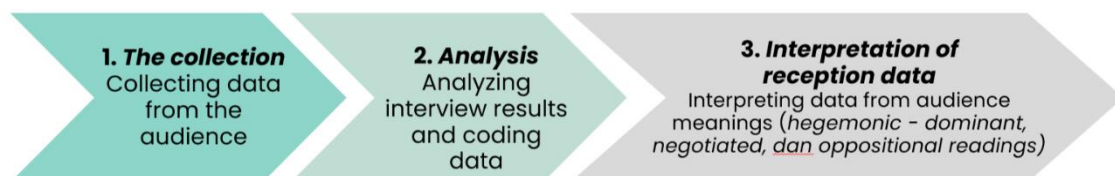


Figure 1. Data Analysis Stage

In this study, the researcher used data source triangulation techniques to test validity. The researcher examined evidence from different data sources, including informants with

relevant scientific backgrounds, news reports on Mirna's murder case, and previous research results. This allowed the researcher to build data evidence that was coherent with the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Encoding of Ice Cold Documentary

Stuart Hall, in his concept of audience reception theory, describes encoding as the process of producing messages and dominant meanings based on the idealism and views of the encoder (During, 2001). It is hoped that these dominant meanings will then be fully accepted by the audience. Director Rob Sixsmith, as the encoder, encodes the representation of medical authority in the character of Dr. Djaja. This representation of medical authority has a dominant meaning that is packaged through the narrative elements of the film (characters) and the cinematography (lighting, cinematography, and sound) in the documentary Ice Cold.

Researchers identified several audiovisual elements that carry specific dominant meanings, both denotative and connotative. These dominant meanings have the potential to be interpreted differently by viewers. The dominant meaning are shown in Table 2 below.

Tabel 2. The Dominant Meaning of the Representation of Medical Authority by Dr. Djaja

Audio Visual Description	Dominant Denotative Meaning	Dominant Connotative Meaning	Reception Position Potential
Dr. Djaja's first appearance when he was introduced by the narrator as a forensic pathologist.	Dr. Djaja was introduced to the audience as a medical expert.	Documentaries establish medical authority and scientific credibility from the outset.	Dominant: The audience interprets the message in its entirety according to the dominant meaning.
Dr. Djaja's unassuming dress and appearance, without any doctor's attributes.	Dr. Djaja is portrayed as a simple person.	The documentary shows that Dr. Djaja is a genuine and honest forensic expert.	Negotiated: The audience interprets part of the message according to the dominant meaning, but is suspicious and rejects certain aspects.
Dr. Djaja's firm and straightforward expressions and tone of voice.	Dr. Djaja testified based on the medical facts that were discovered.	Dr. Djaja's words convinced the audience.	
The audience reacted with excitement after hearing Dr. Djaja's forensic testimony.	The surprising and differing forensic evidence regarding Dr. Djaja.	Dr. Djaja is portrayed as a doctor who reveals hidden truths based on forensic science.	Oppositional: The audience does not interpret the message according to the dominant meaning, because they have a very different interpretation.
Dr. Djaja's explanation regarding the color of the cyanide victim's body in an interview.	Dr. Djaja explained the condition of the cyanide victim's body based on forensic science.	Dr. Djaja's explanation gives a valid impression based on medical facts.	
Juxtaposition of Dr. Djaja arguing before the judge about changes to	Debate naturally arose because Dr. Djaja was adamant in his belief	The truth according to Dr. Djaja, a forensic expert, was compared with that of the judge,	

the color photograph of Mirna's face.	based on the autopsy results.	who presided over the trial.	
Dr. Djaja was shocked when he saw that there was a photo of Mirna's face, which was red.	Dr. Djaja's disbelief regarding the photo of Mirna's face, which differed from his testimony.	The documentary establishes the view that Dr. Djaja was a forensic expert who was cheated in court.	
Mysterious background music plays as Dr. Djaja explains the bluish color of Mirna's corpse.	The background music supports the tense impression and atmosphere.	The audience is invited to think about the hidden and suspicious aspects behind Mirna's murder case.	
Montage of Dr. Djaja's side profile and negative comments about him.	Dr. Djaja knows that many do not believe him.	This documentary depicts Dr. Djaja steadfastly revealing the truth even though many disagree.	
Interview with Dr. Djaja in his office with warm lighting.	Focusing on Dr. Djaja's explanation clearly.	The visuals reinforce the image of serious and neutral forensic experts.	
An old clip in the form of news archives showing Dr. Djaja at the trial.	Medical professionals who appear in court.	The documentary links forensic experts as medical authorities with state law.	
Dr. Djaja appeared in the middle of the documentary.	Dr. Djaja is one of the important figures in the documentary.	Dr. Djaja's presence played a significant role in providing medical and scientific explanations.	
There are nine scenes featuring Dr. Djaja in the documentary.	Dr. Djaja offered a new and different perspective.	The presence of Dr. Djaja as a medical authority influenced the audience's view of Mirna's case.	

Source: Research Results, 2026

The documentary maker wanted to convey that Dr. Djaja's presence was not merely as a source, but also as a forensic expert with medical authority. Dr. Djaja's presence was able to uncover hidden facts related to the forensic results, Mirna's autopsy, and the cyanide poison. Dr. Djaja's representation in the documentary builds his image as a medical authority who provides explanations based on forensic science, autopsy reports, and the results of half-body autopsies or corpse sampling. From the outset, Dr. Djaja was introduced through verbal narration as a forensic pathologist. This introduction instilled the dominant meaning that Dr. Djaja was a credible figure with scientific legitimacy in explaining the cause of Mirna's death.

The Decoding of Ice Cold Documentary

After collecting data through interviews, researchers conducted analysis by manually coding the data. Data coding resulted in a total of 5 themes and 12 dimensions. However, in the discussion section, only 4 themes and 11 dimensions will be discussed. This is because these themes and dimensions are closely related to the audience's reception of the representation of Dr. Djaja's medical authority in the documentary. The researcher interpreted the reception data by categorizing the informants into three reading positions according to Stuart Hall: dominant hegemonic readings (D); negotiated readings (N); and oppositional readings (O). This grouping was based on the informants' interpretations of the representation of medical authority in the character of Dr. Djaja. Table 3 below outlines the 4 themes identified through selective coding, the 11 dimensions identified through axial coding, and the reading positions of the six informants. The informant's interpretation of the portrayal of Dr. Djaja as a medical authority is determined based on Stuart Hall's theory of public reception.

Tabel 3. The Dominant Meaning of the Representation of Medical Authority by Dr. Djaja

Theme (<i>Selective Code</i>)	Dimension (<i>Axial Code</i>)	Informant Reading Position					
		H1	H2	K1	K2	IK1	IK2
Audience perception of Dr. Djaja in the documentary Ice Cold	Audience impressions of the documentary Ice Cold	N	D	D	D	D	D
	Professional impressions of Dr. Djaja	D	D	D	D	D	D
	Dr. Djaja remains steadfast in his convictions	D	D	D	D	D	D
	Changes in audience perspectives as a result of the documentary Ice Cold	D	N	N	D	D	D
The construction of audio-visual elements in the documentary Ice Cold	Creating atmosphere through music and visuals	D	D	D	D	D	D
	Creating the image of Doctor Djaja through nonverbal communication	D	D	D	D	N	D
The scientific relevance of the audience in interpreting the documentary Ice Cold	Legal proceedings and trials	D	N	N	N	N	N
	Forensic results and medical examinations	N	N	D	D	N	N
	Interests of documentary filmmakers	O	O	N	O	D	D
The representation of Dr. Djaja as a medical authority in the documentary Ice Cold	Dr. Djaja's knowledge of forensic science	D	D	D	D	D	D
	Dr. Djaja as a medical authority	D	D	D	D	D	O

Source: Research Results, 2026

In the dominant hegemonic reading position, the informant is in the dominant perspective. This means that the informant interprets the message and accepts the dimension that the documentary *Ice Cold* represents medical authority through the character of Dr. Djaja. In this position, the informant consciously agrees with the hegemonic messages constructed by the documentary maker.

Meanwhile, in the negotiated readings position, informants generally accepted the dominant documentary message, but questioned or rejected certain aspects of the dominant documentary message that contradicted their experiences and beliefs. Thus, informants consciously agreed with certain representations of Dr. Djaja as a medical authority, but could still reject others based on their own views.

Furthermore, oppositional readings indicate that informants see other meanings not intended in the dominant message. This means that informants reject the dominant message conveyed by the documentary. Informants use their personal thoughts and experiences to oppose the documentary's representation of Dr. Djaja as a medical authority.

In the context of Stuart Hall's reception theory, the representation of Dr. Djaja is not interpreted in a single way by the audience, but rather interpreted in various ways according to their field of knowledge, background, culture, and life experiences. The informants created their own interpretations by giving their views on the documentary *Ice Cold*, the character of Dr. Djaja, and matters related to Mirna's murder case.

Audience Impressions of Dr. Djaja in the Documentary *Ice Cold*

The interpretations of informants H1, H2, K1, K2, IK1, and IK2 show that the presence of Dr. Djaja in the documentary *Ice Cold* encourages the audience to assess Mirna's murder case from a more objective scientific point of view. Thus, viewers do not only see the negative stigma surrounding Jessica, but are also invited to consider whether Jessica is truly guilty. However, informant H1 has a different view from the majority of informants. He disagrees with the release of the documentary *Ice Cold* and considers that the narrative of the documentary is more biased towards Mirna.

From the beginning, the press has highlighted the alleged use of cyanide and judged Jessica as a suspect. Although Dr. Djaja's forensic explanation refuted the assumption of cyanide use, the court ignored this. This could have happened because the trial process did not always reflect substantive truth. Informants H1 and H2 explained that the trial was dominated by arguments between the prosecutor and the defense attorney, which were reinforced by the media's role from the beginning in directing blame to one party.

One reason why all informants believed Dr. Djaja's forensic explanation was because he came across as a professional and credible doctor. The findings show that all informants agreed that Dr. Djaja's arguments were credible, valid, neutral, competent, convincing, professional, and consistent. Dr. Djaja's position as an expert witness for the defendant did not affect his credibility in presenting medical explanations objectively. This is because the credibility of a doctor is judged by the way he treats and serves patients, whether they are alive or deceased.

Dr. Djaja's expertise and credibility establish his ethos as a medical authority. Dr. Djaja's calm and non-reactive attitude towards negative comments demonstrates pathos. This attitude is interpreted as a representation of Dr. Djaja's belief in the medical truth he conveys. Thus, public accusations are not considered a threat to his professionalism. The audience saw Dr. Djaja not only as a forensic doctor, but also as a figure who dared to reveal the truth amid public pressure. The delivery of medical information based on forensic results demonstrates logos. Dr. Djaja's explanation of Mirna's condition provides the audience with logical reasoning. Thus, the aspects of ethos, pathos, and logos in Dr. Djaja make him a persuasive medical figure in influencing the audience's view of Mirna's case.

Dr. Djaja influenced the audience's view of Jessica's conviction. There were even allegations of sabotage against Dr. Djaja and allegations of bribery of the prosecutor. The audience changed their minds after watching Dr. Djaja in the documentary *Ice Cold*. As explained in the research results, although the media cannot persuade the audience to change their attitudes, media construction can have a significant impact on their thinking (Nirmala & Jokhanan Kristiyono, 2024). However, informants H2 and K1 did not find any allegations of sabotage against the character of Dr. Djaja.

The Construction of Audio-Visual Elements in the Documentary *Ice Cold*

Visual elements, audio, scene composition, and editing not only serve as complementary information, but also contribute to building impressions, emotions, and emphasizing certain meanings that are then perceived in various ways by informants. According to Stuart Hall, there are two systems in representation, namely language and mental. Language representation not only includes written and spoken forms, but also expressions, clothing, body movements, and music. In the interview session with Dr. Djaja, the documentary *Ice Cold* uses mysterious background music and dim lighting to create an emotional and suspicious atmosphere. The audio-visual elements used are not excessive or overly hyperbolic, so that the audience is carried away by these elements.

The music prompts informants to rethink and stimulates suspicion. The findings from informant K1 show that the background music influenced their way of thinking by 180 degrees. Meanwhile, informants IK1 and IK2 felt that the background music added to the impression of watching a mystery that had to be solved. This is because when watching a documentary, we not only see moving images, but also hear sounds in the form of conversations and background music. Although the visual element of lighting does not always produce an absolute meaning, this element consistently makes informants more focused. The dim lighting focused on Dr. Djaja gives a serious, tense, and somber impression. This visual lighting also frames Dr. Djaja as a medical authority under risky public pressure.

The documentary *Ice Cold* also builds a positive image of Dr. Djaja through nonverbal communication in the form of his style of dress, manner of speaking, and intonation. Based on the explanations of informants H1 and H2, expert witnesses are required to dress formally and not wear any institutional attributes when attending hearings. Dr. Djaja's style of dress reflects this rule; he wears a shirt, trousers, and a watch that are not flashy. His appearance is simple but neat and authoritative. Dr. Djaja's style of dress is interpreted as compliance with the dress code. This adds to Dr. Djaja's credibility and sincerity in defending the truth. However, informant IK1 believes that dress style is not the main factor in determining a person's credibility.

Dr. Djaja in the documentary has a clear, calm, and firm tone and style of speech. Dr. Djaja is able to explain the forensic results in language that is easily understood by the general public. Although there are many clinical terms in the medical field, Dr. Djaja is able to put himself in the audience's shoes when explaining the forensic results. Thus, the documentary not only presents Dr. Djaja as a credible medical authority, but also as a humble doctor who is skilled at explaining forensic results.

The Relevance of Audience Knowledge in Interpreting the Documentary *Ice Cold*

Differences in fields of study influence the focus of attention, the level of acceptance of documentary narratives, and understanding of medicine and the judicial system. These findings indicate that the process of decoding messages in documentaries cannot be separated from the frameworks of knowledge possessed by each informant.

Both legal informants explained their assessment of the evidence from the services, the autopsy report, the validity of the evidence of Mirna's reddened corpse, the process of collecting evidence, and the procedure for summoning expert witnesses in the legal process.

Informants H1 and H2 explained that Dr. Djaja should have been summoned by the Public Prosecutor because his name was on the investigation report list.

Although informants H1 and H2 were in the same field of education, they had some differences in opinion. Informant H2 considered that the evidence provided by the Public Prosecutor in the form of CCTV footage and a coffee cup was strong evidence proving Jessica's guilt. Meanwhile, informant H1 considered that the two pieces of evidence from the Public Prosecutor were not concrete and were only allegations. Informant H2 also considers the photo of Mirna's reddened corpse to be valid evidence, as it was accepted by the judge and is indeed an authentic photo of Mirna's corpse. Informant H1, on the other hand, considers the photo to be invalid evidence due to the time gap between the incident and when the photo appeared.

Both medical informants and the medical intern provided their views on the medical explanation of cyanide poisoning and its effects, autopsies in medical science, and the doctor's oath in detail. They agreed with Dr. Djaja's explanation. Informant K1, who is currently undergoing co-assignment, confirmed the inconsistency between the forensic examination results of Dr. Djaja and the court's decision. Specifically, regarding the sudden appearance of cyanide in Mirna's stomach. Both informants believe that Dr. Djaja performed a half-body autopsy by taking samples from Mirna's stomach properly.

Both communication science informants shared the same interpretation regarding the interests of the documentary maker. They believed that there were media interests and messages constructed by the documentary maker. Informants IK1 and IK2 assessed that the documentary maker had an interest in uncovering the medical truth in Mirna's case by constructing a message through Dr. Djaja's explanation.

This differs from the views of informants H2 and K2, who stated that the documentary *Ice Cold* was made based on the original case and without any interests. Informant H1 also has a meaning that is contrary to the encoding of the documentary maker. Meanwhile, informant K2 seems to agree with the message construction carried out by the encoder, but he does not state it directly. Instead, through nonverbal language, informant K1 appears enthusiastic and excited when discussing the medical truth constructed by the encoder.

The representation of Dr. Djaja as a medical authority in the documentary *Ice Cold*

Medical authority refers to the authority possessed by experts in the field of medicine due to their knowledge, skills, and scientific credibility in the medical field. The medical

profession enjoys a special status in society because it holds a monopoly on knowledge and technical skills that the general public does not possess (Freidson, 1970).

Informants H1, H2, K1, K2, and IK1 agreed that the documentary *Ice Cold* portrayed Dr. Djaja as a medical authority. Dr. Djaja has a medical degree, is a forensic pathologist, and is a lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine. These qualifications fulfill the requirements for medical authority. Dr. Djaja also possesses ethos, pathos, and logos, which can be seen in the documentary. Furthermore, from the beginning, the narrator of the documentary has established Dr. Djaja's position as a medical authority by introducing him as a forensic expert from RSCM.

In the documentary *Ice Cold*, Dr. Djaja provides information about the condition of the cyanide victim's body based on his forensic knowledge. Dr. Djaja explains his findings in the autopsy room to the audience. Thus, his presence in the documentary *Ice Cold* represents medical authority.

On the other hand, informant IK2 believes that Dr. Djaja does not really represent medical authority. The documentary only presents a brief interview with Dr. Djaja, rather than an in-depth and detailed medical explanation. Excerpts from Dr. Djaja's statements are considered more controversial. Thus, the forensic expert's explanation is able to sway public opinion. This is consistent with research findings indicating that audiences are more diverse and contradictory, as reception is complex and multi-layered (Ademolu, 2022).

Although the documentary introduced Dr. Djaja as an expert with medical authority, the message was interpreted differently by the audience as an active audience. This is also in line with the constructionist approach, where the position of meaning is the result of a social process between the media text and the audience. It is not a reflection of reality or a single expression of the makers of the documentary *Ice Cold*.

Research Implication

Although *Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso* documents a case that is no longer recent, the issue addressed in this study remains both current and significant. In the digital media era, documentary films distributed through global streaming platforms continue to shape public understanding of legal, scientific, and medical issues. Public trust in expert testimony has become increasingly important as audiences are frequently exposed to competing narratives and misinformation across digital media. Therefore, understanding how audiences interpret the representation of medical authority remains highly relevant beyond the context of the Jessica Wongso case.

Academically, the findings extend the application of Stuart Hall's audience reception theory by demonstrating how viewers actively negotiate the credibility of expert figures presented in documentary media. The study enriches the literature on audience reception, media representation, and documentary communication by highlighting that the interpretation of medical authority is influenced not only by the documentary narrative but also by viewers' social, cultural, and experiential backgrounds.

Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for documentary filmmakers, journalists, science communicators, and health professionals in presenting expert testimony to the public. The study suggests that the credibility of experts in documentary media depends not only on scientific expertise but also on how that expertise is communicated and interpreted by diverse audiences. These findings are particularly relevant in an era where public confidence in scientific and medical expertise continues to influence responses to health, legal, and other public issues.

These findings remain relevant in the contemporary media environment, where documentary films on digital streaming platforms increasingly influence public understanding of legal, scientific, and medical issues. The study demonstrates that audiences do not evaluate expert credibility solely on the basis of professional qualifications but also through media narratives and their own social and cultural backgrounds. Academically, the findings extend the application of Stuart Hall's Audience Reception Theory to the representation of medical authority in documentary films. Practically, they provide insights for documentary filmmakers, journalists, and science communicators on presenting expert testimony in ways that foster public understanding and trust.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the representation of Dr. Djaja as a medical authority in the documentary "Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee and Jessica Wongso" is interpreted differently by viewers as an audience. Viewers with backgrounds in law, medicine, and communication studies interpret the representation of Dr. Djaja as a medical authority differently. There were five informants who interpreted Dr. Djaja as a figure representing medical authority. These five informants viewed Dr. Djaja as a forensic expert who provided medical explanations related to cyanide, the condition of Mirna's body, and the cause of Mirna's death. Meanwhile, one informant interpreted Dr. Djaja as a controversial figure who was able to sway public opinion because of his credibility. The diversity of

educational backgrounds and life experiences among the informants provided additional interesting information about autopsies, forensic science, law, and the media. However, the number of informants in this study was not very large.

Future research is advised to combine Stuart Hall's reception theory with a critical discourse analysis approach in order to deepen the understanding of the relationship between power, ideology, and media interests in constructing experts as sources of legitimacy for truth. This study is expected to bring novelty to audience reception research, particularly in relation to the documentary *Ice Cold*. This study is also expected to serve as material for evaluating the importance of clear, accurate, and responsible public communication when providing expert commentary in the media.

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