

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The final section of this research provides both conclusions and recommendations. The conclusion summarizes the main findings obtained from the discussion, emphasizing the primary insights acquired during the research. Subsequently, the recommendations section presents multiple suggestions intended to direct future research initiatives. These recommendations aim to address any gaps highlighted in this research, providing options that could enhance and broaden the existing comprehension of the subject.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the discussion section, it was found that queer participants displayed a dynamic range of interpretations influenced by various factors when interacting with the messages presented in the series *Queer Eye: We're in Japan* (2019), Episode 2. The way these audiences made sense of the content aligns with Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding theory, which delineates three possible reading positions: Dominant-Hegemonic, Negotiated, and Oppositional. Each dominant code identified in the series was interpreted differently by the queer viewers, showcasing the diversity of reception even within a seemingly homogeneous group of participants—all of whom identified as queer. This finding corroborates Hall's argument that the interpretation of media messages is inherently affected by numerous aspects of an individual's background, including but not limited to their identity, personal experiences, cultural environment, and even academic influences.

The research identified six distinct premises from the episode that reflected different portrayals of queer individuals. These premises are: (1) queer as stylish, (2) queer as a religious leader (a monk), (3) queer as

confidence gurus, (4) queer as outsiders who feel alienated, (5) queer as caretakers or nurturers, and (6) queer as survivors of discrimination or trauma. These diverse portrayals served as central themes through which participants expressed how they interpreted the media messages, thereby illuminating the broader implications for how queer representation is internalized across various segments of the audience.

Regarding the first premise, **"queer as stylish,"** the results showed that the audience interpretations were divided into three positions, as theorized by Hall. Specifically, three participants exhibited a dominant-hegemonic reading, which means they fully embraced the portrayal without resistance, and their sex and sexual identity largely influenced their interpretation. These participants likely related to the stylish depiction and saw it as an accurate reflection of their reality or aspirations. On the other hand, two participants adopted a negotiated reading position. This means that while they generally accepted the portrayal, they also infused it with their own modifications or reservations. The negotiated interpretations were influenced by factors such as the participants' academic backgrounds and age, suggesting that their lived experiences and knowledge led to a more critical, yet partly accepting, interpretation of the premise. Finally, two participants took an oppositional stance towards the "queer as stylish" premise, rejecting the intended message. Their interpretations were shaped by sexual identity and regional context, hinting at possible disparities between the depiction of stylishness in the series and the participants' lived realities or societal norms where they reside.

For the second premise, **"queer as a religious leader (a monk),"** the findings indicated that three different reading positions were evident. A dominant-hegemonic reading was observed in five participants, where they embraced the depiction of a queer individual as a religious leader without questioning the representation. This acceptance was influenced by factors such as sex and sexual orientation, implying a comfort level with seeing queerness within the context of spirituality. However, one participant displayed a

negotiated reading, influenced by their religious beliefs and their limited viewing habits of queer-focused media. This suggests that while they recognized the depiction as valid, they still applied a layer of personal skepticism or modification. Lastly, one participant exhibited an oppositional reading position, shaped by religion and cultural background, outright rejecting the premise of a queer religious leader, likely due to a clash between the values portrayed and their personal or cultural beliefs.

In the third premise, **"queer as confidence gurus,"** there were two observed audience reading positions. Five participants fell into the dominant-hegemonic category, interpreting the representation of queer individuals as confidence gurus positively and fully, influenced by their sex and sexual orientation. Interestingly, no participants were identified under the negotiated position for this premise. This absence of a negotiated perspective implies that the portrayal was either fully embraced or fully rejected, without any nuanced interpretation. The lack of data supporting a negotiated position may suggest that participants either found the depiction highly relatable or completely detached from their reality. The absence indicates that certain inherent factors, such as deeply ingrained social beliefs or personal experiences, could have minimized participants' ability to adopt a middle-ground perspective. Additionally, two participants adopted an oppositional stance, with their interpretations influenced by sexual orientation, religion, and cultural background. This suggests that, for some individuals, the portrayal of queer individuals as confidence gurus either clashed with their beliefs or seemed irrelevant to their experiences.

The fourth premise, **"queer as outsiders who feel alienated,"** showcased a diversity of audience interpretations as well. Four participants adopted a dominant-hegemonic reading, seeing this portrayal as a direct reflection of their experiences as queer individuals, and their interpretation was influenced by their sex and sexual orientation. Two participants had a negotiated interpretation of this premise, shaped by their cultural background.

This indicates that while they resonated with certain aspects of the alienation depicted, they also applied a layer of modification to reconcile it with their personal experiences, reflecting a more balanced view. The remaining two participants took an oppositional stance, influenced by their religious beliefs and their viewing habits of queer-themed series, rejecting the notion of alienation as a universal or defining experience of queerness.

In the fifth premise, "queer as caretakers or nurturers," similar patterns of interpretation were found. Four participants were classified under the dominant-hegemonic reading position, embracing the portrayal fully, influenced by factors like sex and sexual orientation. This suggests that these participants related personally to the representation of queer individuals as caring and nurturing figures. On the other hand, two participants took a negotiated reading position, influenced largely by their frequent consumption of queer series. These participants accepted the premise in general but applied modifications based on their broader understanding and viewing experience of queer representations. Finally, one participant took an oppositional stance, rejecting the nurturing portrayal, which was influenced by their sexual orientation, indicating a disconnect between the representation and their personal lived experiences.

The final premise, "**queer as survivors of discrimination or trauma**," also showcased varied interpretations. Four participants held a dominant-hegemonic reading position, fully agreeing with the portrayal of queer individuals as survivors, which was influenced primarily by their sex. Meanwhile, three participants adopted a negotiated position, driven by shared personal experiences and the belief that not all queer individuals undergo discrimination or trauma. These participants recognized the existence of such narratives but were also keen to point out that they do not represent the entirety of the queer experience, thereby positioning their interpretation in a more balanced manner. The lack of an oppositional position in this particular premise could be explained by several nuanced factors rooted in the nature of the topic

itself and the participants' shared experiences. The premise centers on the portrayal of queer individuals as survivors of discrimination or trauma—a theme that is deeply personal and reflective of a collective experience faced by many within the LGBTQ+ community. The absence of an oppositional reading suggests that the portrayal resonated with participants on a fundamental level, making it challenging for them to reject the depiction outright.

In conclusion, the findings of this research align strongly with Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding theory, which categorizes audience interpretations into three distinct positions: Dominant-Hegemonic, Negotiated, and Oppositional. Moreover, the research supports Hall's argument that an audience's individual background—comprising factors such as sexual identity, cultural heritage, academic exposure, and personal experiences—significantly influences how they interpret media messages. The diverse readings of *Queer Eye: We're in Japan!* (2019) Episode 2 among queer audiences underline the inherent complexity and variability of media reception, emphasizing that even within seemingly homogeneous groups, interpretation is highly individualized. This reinforces the importance of recognizing the diversity within the queer community, not just in identity but in how media representations are consumed and understood. Based on these findings, future media creators and policymakers are encouraged to develop content and initiatives that reflect the diverse nature of queer experiences. This includes creating narratives that go beyond stereotypes, ensuring representation of a broader spectrum of identities, and fostering spaces for nuanced dialogue within and beyond the queer community.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations in this section are divided into three key domains of focus: enhancing the depth of encoding analysis, expanding participation from the audience, and providing more balanced representation across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum.

First, this research largely focused on the decoding element of audience interpretation, which limits the depth of the encoding analysis. A prior, comprehensive study that is dedicated to the identification of the dominant codes embedded within the text would be highly beneficial for future research that focuses on decoding using Stuart Hall's model of meaning circulation. This is particularly vital for texts when dominant codes are not overtly apparent, hence facilitating a more seamless and accurate decoding analysis.

Moreover, the participant quantity in this research was limited due to time constraints and difficulties in reaching a wider demographic. This challenge was further compounded by the social stigma of queer issues in Indonesia, which made it difficult to find willing participants. The insights obtained remain significant; nevertheless, further participation would enhance the diversity of perspectives, providing a greater understanding of this issue. Future research could attain broader impact by partnering with queer organized community or queer empowerment organizations, either domestically in Indonesia or at a global level. These collaborations may improve the selection of participants, facilitating the surpassing of cultural barriers and increasing diversity.

Lastly, while the present research included people from diverse sexual orientations, a greater proportion of individuals throughout the full LGBTQIA+ spectrum could strengthen the findings. Improved representation would provide insights that encompass a wider array of experiences and identities, resulting in more comprehensive and inclusive conclusions on the portrayal of queer individuals. This method would guarantee that all community voices have a fair platform, enhancing the depth and precision of the research results.