



Cancel Culture in South Korea's Entertainment Industry: Media Framing through the Lens of Deviance

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Abstract

The media has the power to carry out media framing and the public has the power to believe or not and participate in spreading the results of the media framing or not, which will eventually lead to whether or not a cancel culture happens. The author wants to analyze how Kumparan news articles apply framing to actor Kim Seon Ho's scandalous news which caused him to be exposed to cancel culture, through journalistic analysis with The Sphere of Deviance theory by Daniel Hallin. The author conducted a thematic analysis of 9 articles regarding the actor Kim Seon Ho scandal published by Kumparan in the period of 19 October 2021-22 October 2021 and resulted in 3 divisions of categories: positive (not supporting cancel culture), negative (supporting cancel culture), and neutral. From the 9 news articles that were sampled, after the analysis, the writer produced the following data: 2 articles in the positive category, 1 article in the negative category, and 6 articles in the neutral category. Even though there is no dominant framing in the article published by Kumparan regarding the Kim Seon Ho scandal, it can still be concluded that indeed the media has power through media framing, as well as the public who have power over the information obtained from the media (whether it is the result of media framing or not).

Introduction

Currently, the selection of news topics can be done more practically and also the perspectives are more diverse. Everyone who has internet access with search engine facilities can directly determine what topics they want to read and can also be involved in reconstructing events published in citizen journalism (Bowman & Willis, 2008). On the other hand, a journalist can also do framing of an event or issue, like "as a painter chooses what to put in the frame of painting". Journalists will decide what will be included according to their point of view of an event and which parts will be sorted out or even left out. Journalists can also decide how the concept of point of view in presenting facts in the news text, and how to interpret these facts (Straubhaar & LaRose, 2001; Bachmann et al., 2022; Rodrigo-Ginés et al., 2024). Thus, mass media news not only represents reality but can also produce and even change the values hidden behind it. The media has power with significant effects in terms of framing.

In the perspective of media organizations, previously the process of a news story was purely done by the editor, while now the public can be involved (Nasrullah, 2014; Opgenhaffen & Hendrickx, 2024). Not just involved because of citizen journalism, the public also has the power to determine the success of a media framing. In the perspective of cyber culture, the internet is a space where culture is produced, distributed, and consumed. As the nature of this perspective that blurs the boundaries of space (space), geography (place), and demographics (entities). Cyber space provides a kind of resistance from an establishment of social structuration, including the relationship between media and audiences (Haerul et al., 2021;

Saidin & Azrun, 2024). The media provides a symbolic space as a basis for carrying out the process of achieving citizenship rights more freely which of course through or mediated by technology and information (Cardoso, 2006). Citizen journalism media provides an opportunity for audiences to produce news freely and without the conflict of interest that usually occurs in traditional media institutions (Bowman & Willis, 2008; Khan et al., 2022; Turner & Harte, 2022; Togtarbay et al., 2024; Luo & Fang, 2025). One example of a culture formed from the power held by the media and also society is cancel culture.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word "cancel" has a new usage. Previously, "cancelling" referred to an object, now "cancelling" and cancel culture mean the removal of support for a public figure in response to their unpleasant behavior or opinions. In the new usage of the word, someone can "cancel" anyone, especially celebrities, politicians, or anyone who is known in the public eye. To "cancel" someone means to stop supporting that person. The reasons someone does this can vary, but usually it is because the person has expressed an inappropriate opinion, or has acted in a way that is unacceptable, so to continue to see the work or work of the person concerned feels "wrong" (Dershowitz, 2020). Based on what is written on VOA's official website Indonesia, Google Trends analysis engine records show that the term cancel culture has been popular in Indonesia since August 2019 and is concentrated on Java Island.

Cancel culture, which initially emerged in the United States since the 2017 #MeToo movement (a movement against sexual harassment and sexual violence), is now rampant in Indonesia, especially among social media users. Based on what is written on VOA Indonesia's official website, records of the Google Trends analysis engine show that the term cancel culture has become popular in Indonesia since August 2019 and is concentrated in Java Island. However, until now there are still many users of social media in Indonesia who do not know enough about what cancel culture is and know whether this culture is something that tends to be positive or negative. Currently, social media users in Indonesia still tend to "follow along" regarding this cancel culture, not finding out in advance and educating themselves so as not to behave inappropriately on social media, especially if it harms others with false accusations or so on.

Quoted from VOA Indonesia's official website, according to a social and cultural communication researcher from University of Indonesia, Devie Rahmawati, "The operation of cancel culture is by photographing, showing, labeling and humiliating people in public through the medium of technology social media." According to social media researcher from Drone Emprit, Ismail Fahmi, in Indonesia, the existence of social media helps spread the practice of cancel culture.

Apart from being rife in Indonesia, the cancel culture phenomenon has been closely with South Korea and its entertainment industry (Anjarini, 2020; Yaqinah & Antok, 2024; Cancel culture is a very common thing in the South Korean entertainment industry. This is because celebrities in South Korea must have a clean life record both before debut and after debut. When the life record is tarnished, there will be consequences that must be borne by these celebrities, namely they will feel the effects of cancel culture by South Korean society. Quoted from Korea JoongAng Daily, cancel culture in South Korea arises due to the expectations of the South Korean people who think that the task of these celebrities is not only to entertain the public but also to set an example of being good for the people there. This assumption is then a boomerang for celebrities in South Korea in maintaining their careers which require them to always be "perfect" humans both in front and behind the scenes. Then, if they make a mistake they will be canceled by the public and in an instant the career that has been built will collapse. In addition there are also local cultural factors. The lives of South Koreans are heavily influenced by the philosophy of Confucianism. This principle emphasizes a person to behave well, be fair,

and live filled with virtue. Rooted in Confucianism, South Koreans also recognize the term "kibun", a concept that permeates every aspect of Korean life that is reflected in faces, moods, thoughts, and feelings. With this concept, society expects everyone, especially celebrities, to adhere to social norms.

Cancel culture in South Korea also includes other cases outside the entertainment industry, such as politicians, religious figures, or famous individuals in other fields. However, it should be noted that the public's response to these cases is not always uniform. There are support groups and groups that disagree with cancel culture, and sometimes debates occur in the media and society about whether or not the cancelation is worth it. This happened to South Korean actor Kim Seon Ho. While at the peak of his career, on October 18, 2021 Kim Seon Ho's name was dragged into a scandal that shocked the South Korean entertainment industry. This thing started with a woman with the initials A who anonymously wrote about her experience of forced abortion by an actor with the initials "K" on the Nate Pann website. Before there was an official confession, netizen opinions had been led to the name Kim Seon Ho after one of the local South Korean media included a blurry photo of Kim Seon Ho's alleged figure. Also afterward, one of the reporters as well as a YouTuber named Lee Jin Ho openly said actor K was Kim Seon Ho. On October 26, 2021, Dispatch media revealed the truth about this scandal and proved that the allegations from Kim Seon Ho's ex-girlfriend were not true. But unfortunately, Kim Seon Ho has borne the effects of cancel culture ranging from being hated, canceling work contracts, canceling advertising contracts, movies, and others (Bangun & Kumaralalita, 2022).

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One of the media in Indonesia, Kumparan, seems to be quite aggressively updating the audience about the Kim Seon Ho actor scandal with news articles on its website, from the beginning of this scandal appeared until the truth was finally revealed. There are a total of 22 news articles published by Kumparan on its website regarding the Kim Seon Ho actor scandal with a time span from October 19 2021 to November 5, 2021. Kumparan is a collaborative media platform in Indonesia for reading, creating, and sharing news and other information. Kumparan was launched in January 2017 with the support of senior online journalists in Indonesia and Hugo Diba as CEO. Kumparan runs with a mission to correct online media in Indonesia. Kumparan has values and principles as follows: excellent in journalism, excellent in storytelling & excellent in technology. In 2018, all 158 journalists at Kumparan have passed the competency test and officially certified by the Press Council (Swastika & Esther, 2020).

Framing is carried out by the media by selecting certain issues and ignoring other issues, and emphasizing aspects of the issue by using various strategies. Framing can cause the same event to produce different news if each writer has a different frame when looking at the event and writing their views in the form of news / writing. The concept of framing by Robert N. Entman is used to describe the process of selection and emphasis/protrusion of certain aspects of media reality. The journalist's perspective will determine the facts he chooses, highlights, and discards (Wahidar & Yozani, 2020).

Daniel Hallin created a picture that explains how a story is placed in an ideological map. Hallin uses media framing to describe how people receive information by dividing public opinion into three spheres, namely the sphere of deviance, the sphere of legitimate controversy, and the

sphere of consensus. These spheres explain how events are understood and placed by the media. The Sphere of Deviance is an area that excludes or derides people who are considered too radical, irresponsible, or even dangerous to be tried fairly. A certain event, idea or behavior will be excluded and seen as deviant by the people of various communities. In this field, reality is still debated or seen as something controversial. This Sphere of Deviance theory really describes how the media treats someone who is entangled in cancel culture. This theory also explains how an ideology that exists in a mass media can influence how an event is framed by the media (Latif, 2020; Zhang et al., 2023).

From the background above, it can be seen that the media and society both have power over the occurrence of cancel culture. The media has the power to do media framing and the public has the power to believe or not believe and participate in spreading or not participating in spreading the results of the media framing, which will lead to the occurrence or not of cancel culture. The author wants to analyze how the news media Kumparan applies framing to the news of actor Kim Seon Ho's scandal that caused him to be hit by cancel culture, through journalistic analysis with the theory of The Sphere of Deviance by Daniel Hallin.

Methods

This research uses qualitative methods. The heuristic used to conceptualize this phenomenon is journalistic analysis. The author wants to analyze how news media Kumparan applies framing to the news of actor Kim Seon Ho's scandal that caused him to be hit by cancel culture, through journalistic analysis with the theory of The Sphere of Deviance by Daniel Hallin. In response to the scandalous case of South Korean actor Kim Seon Ho, many news articles were published in the Indonesian media. The author reads sample articles from several media and finds out which media dominantly raise a lot of articles regarding the scandal in the time span from the beginning of the scandal (October 18 2021) to the next few days.

One of the media in Indonesia, Kumparan, seems to be quite aggressively updating the audience about the Kim Seon Ho actor scandal with news articles on its website, from the beginning of this scandal appeared until the truth was finally revealed. Through observations made by the author on the Kumparan website using the searching tool and sorting feature in date order from the latest, there are a total of 22 news articles published by Kumparan on its website regarding the scandal of actor Kim Seon Ho with a time span from October 19, 2021 to November 5, 2021. From 22 articles, the author reduced the sample of news articles to 9 articles, which are articles published by Kumparan regarding the Kim Seon Ho scandal from October 19, 2021 to October 22, 2021.

Of the 9 articles, 8 of them are articles published on the K coil channel- POP and 1 article from the HITS coil. The author conducts thematic analysis and groups the articles in several themes. By using Hallin's scope of deviation, in the end the sample articles will be thematically divided into several categories, namely: tend to oppose cancel culture, tend to approve cancel culture, and neutral parties.

Results and Discussion

From 9 articles published by Kumparan regarding the Kim Seon Ho actor scandal from October 18, 2021 to October 22, 2021, the author conducted a thematic analysis and found that the 9 articles can be divided into 3 categories, namely articles that tend to oppose *cancel culture* (positive), tend to approve *cancel culture* (negative), and neutral parties. After conducting thematic analysis, the 9 articles are divided into 2 articles with *framing* that tends to be positive (against *cancel culture*), 1 article with *framing* that tends to be negative (approving *cancel culture*), and 6 articles with *framing* that tends to be neutral.

Table 1. Categories of Kim Seon Ho Scandal News Articles Published by Kumparan in the Period of October 19, 2021 - October 22, 2021

No	Title	Time	Category
1	Kim Seon Ho Dragged in K Actor Rumors, Agency Gives Official Response	October 19, 2021	Neutral
2	'K is not Kim Seon Ho' comment appears on online forum, this is the reporter's response	October 19, 2021	Positive
3	Kim Seon Ho Confesses and Apologizes Regarding K Actor Abortion Scandal	October 20, 2021	Neutral
4	Involved in Scandal, Kim Seon Ho Withdraws from 2 Days & 1 Night	October 20, 2021	Negative
5	Ex-Girlfriend Forgives Kim Seon Ho, Mentions There was a Misunderstanding	October 21, 2021	Neutral
6	Assaulted and Threatened with Murder, Kim Seon Ho's Ex-Girlfriend Takes Legal Action	October 21, 2021	Neutral
7	Kim Seon Ho Canceled Movie Debut Due to Abortion Scandal	October 21, 2021	Neutral
8	7 Important Facts of Kim Seon Ho Scandal: Started from K Actor to Apologize	October 21, 2021	Neutral
9	Prilly Latuconsina Fears Kim Seon Ho Retiring After Being Involved in Abortion Scandal	October 21, 2021	Positive

The first article was published on October 19, 2021 at 08:43 with the title "Kim Seon Ho Dragged in K Actor Rumors, Agency Gives Official Response". The author of this article put in the neutral category because the author of this article included a statement from the agency that reminded that nothing has been confirmed from this rumor. Coupled with the closing statement from this article which reads "On the other hand, *brands* that are working with actor K hope that this rumor is false. Because, actor K has a positive image".

The second article was still published on the same date, October 19, 2021, at 17.10, with the title "Comments 'K is not Kim Seon Ho' appear on Online Forums, This is the Response of Reporters". This article is included in the positive category because the author of this article includes the *point of view* of Kim Seon Ho's *fanbase* who said they were ready to take legal action for spreading unfounded rumors. In addition, they also do not tolerate things that can damage a person's reputation (*cancel culture*).

The third article was published on October 20, 2021 at 08.47 with the title "Kim Seon Ho Confesses and Apologizes Regarding Actor K's Abortion Scandal". Although at first glance the title seems to point to the negative, this article is categorized as neutral because it does not contain elements of positive or negative *framing*. The entire narrative is written objectively without any apparent favoritism.

The fourth article was still published on October 20, 2021, at 11:14, with the title "Involved in Scandal, Kim Seon Ho Withdraws from 2 Days 1 Night". In this article, which is much shorter than the other articles, at first glance from the beginning of the article there is no narrative that looks like *negative* or positive *framing*, but at the end of the article it includes a quote from a statement from the 2 Days 1 Night production team,

"we will do our best to edit it, so that it can reduce the discomfort felt by viewers"

The statement seemed to approve of *cancel culture* and even gave validation to it, therefore the author put this fourth article in the negative category.

The fifth article was published on October 21, 2021 at 08.54 with the title "Former Girlfriend Forgives Kim Seon Ho, Says There Was a Misunderstanding". This article is categorized as neutral because it does not contain any elements of positive or negative *framing*. The entire narrative is written objectively without any visible favoritism.

The sixth article was still published on the same date, October 21, 2021, at 09.22, with the title "*Attacked and Threatened with Murder, Kim Seon Ho's Ex-Girlfriend Takes Legal Steps*". This article is categorized as neutral because in terms of the content of the article there is no narrative that shows that this article is written with positive or negative *framing*. However, judging from the selection of the title is a little impressed *miss leading* because when reading the title people do not know who attacked and threatened so it could be that people who read so speculate that the one referred to is Kim Seon Ho. Moreover, it is also supported by the photo of Kim Seon Ho in this article just below the title.

The seventh article was also published on October 21, 2021, at 09.55, with the title "Kim Seon Ho Canceled Movie Debut Due to Abortion Scandal". This article also falls into the neutral category because it does not contain any elements of positive or negative *framing*. The entire narrative is written objectively without any apparent favoritism.

The eighth article was published on October 21, 2021 at 10:39 with the title "*7 Important Facts of Kim Seon Ho Scandal: Starting from Actor K to Apologize*". The content and narrative of this article is more about explaining the chronology of the Kim Seon Ho scandal until the latest *update* through 7 important points. There is no narrative that looks like positive or negative *framing*, by therefore the author categorizes this article into the neutral category.

The ninth article was published on October 21, 2021 at 11.45 with the title "*Prilly Latuconsina Afraid Kim Seon Ho Retired After Being Involved in an Abortion Scandal*". Unlike the previous articles, this article was not published in the K-POP coil channel, but the HITS coil channel. The content is quite different from the previous articles. This article contains an opinion about the Kim Seon Ho scandal from a *public figure* who is also a fan of actor Kim Seon Ho, namely Prilly Latuconsina. This article is categorized as positive because in this article, it can be seen that Prilly does not approve of *cancel culture*. This can be seen from her statements quoted in this article, such as:

"I'm sad because I can't watch the movie. I'm also afraid he won't work anymore. That's what I'm afraid of as a fan" and "Hopefully his career doesn't end here".

Framing is carried out by the media by selecting certain issues and ignoring other issues, and emphasizing aspects of the issue by using various strategies. *Framing* can cause the same event to produce different news if each writer has a different *frame* when looking at the event and writing their views in the form of news / writing. The concept of *framing* by Robert N. Entman is used to describe the process of selection and emphasis/protrusion of certain aspects of media reality. The journalist's perspective will determine the facts he chooses, highlights, and discards. Daniel Hallin created a picture that explains how a story is placed in an ideological map. Hallin uses media *framing* to describe how people receive information by dividing public opinion into three *spheres*, namely *the sphere of deviance*, *the sphere of legitimate controversy*, and *the sphere of consensus*. These spheres explain how events are understood and placed by the media. *The Sphere of Deviance* is an area that excludes or derides people who are considered too radical, irresponsible, or even dangerous to be tried fairly. A certain event, idea or behavior will be excluded and seen as deviant by the people of various communities. In this field, reality is still debated or seen as something controversial. This *Sphere of Deviance* theory

really describes how the media treats someone who is entangled in *cancel culture*. This theory also explains how an ideology that exists in a mass media can influence how an event is framed by the media.

Looking at the results of the analysis of the articles published by Kumparan regarding the scandalous issue of South Korean actor Kim Seon Ho in the period October 19, 2021 - October 22, 2021, through the aspects that are highlighted in each article, results in 3 category divisions, namely positive (not supporting *cancel culture*), negative (supporting *cancel culture*), and neutral. Of the 9 news articles that were sampled, after being analyzed, the data were as follows: 2 articles categorized as positive, 1 article categorized as *negative*, and 6 articles categorized as neutral.

Conclusion

Judging from the perspective of Daniel Hallin's scope of deviation theory, the author conducted thematic analysis on 9 articles about the Kim Seon Ho actor scandal published by Kumparan in the period October 19, 2021 - October 22, 2021 (3 days), and produced 3 divisions of categories, namely positive (not supporting cancel culture), negative (supporting cancel culture), and neutral. Of the 9 news articles that were sampled, after being analyzed, the data were as follows: 2 articles categorized as positive, 1 article categorized as negative, and 6 articles categorized as neutral. Although there is no dominant framing in the articles published by Kumparan regarding the Kim Seon Ho scandal, it can still be concluded that it is true that the media has power through media framing. Similarly, the public has power over the information obtained from the media (whether it is the result of media framing or not), the public has the power to choose to accept or not to accept information from the media, and to disseminate or not to disseminate information obtained from the media. These two things are very influential and determine whether there will be a cancel culture towards someone or not. Therefore, this brief analysis ends by recommending further exploration of cancel culture, media framing, power in the media and society, and also the scope of deviance.

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