



## “Catfishing” : Exposing Teen Reception on MTV Catfish Online Dating

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### ABSTRACT

Advanced technology has made meeting new people less conventional than it used to be. The Internet has taken romance into a whole different world and created a whole different threat with the idea of online dating. Internet users are faced with many threats every day, but online dating has caused a threat with a form of online identity deception called catfishing. Catfishing itself is the theme of an MTV reality show named Catfish: The TV Show. This study aims to find out about the reaction of adolescent online daters on catfishing on the program. This descriptive qualitative study uses Stuart Hall's Reception Analysis method and its three hypothetical positions, such as Dominant-Hegemonic position, Negotiated position, and Oppositional position. Results show different readings on each of the six pieces of information given in the chosen episode. Four pieces of information such as when the client first reached out to Catfish: The TV Show team, the team investigated the catfish, the team to arrange a meeting with the catfish, and the meeting with the catfish are dominated by the Dominant-Hegemonic Position. Meanwhile, the rest of the two pieces of information are dominated by the Negotiated position and the Oppositional position. However, the complete study result is dominated by the Oppositional position.

## INTRODUCTION

Catfishing is a form of identity fraud that appears on the Internet due to advances in technology (Lauckner et al., 2019; Winters & Jeglic, 2022). Internet users have the freedom to build their image as best they

can and even fake things about themselves to look good through catfishing (Paat & Markham, 2020). The catfish use this freedom to construct the digital identity they will use (Magdy et al., 2017). The term catfish itself is used to describe someone



who commits self-identity fraud against others, especially their partners who have never met before (Adam, 2017).

In this case, the development of identity fraud, catfishing (Kaar & Nakanishi, 2017), is also supported by the use of fictional narratives to describe oneself and present it to the audience (other users) (Knafo, 2021). The fictitious narrative in question is fake names, avatars, display pictures, profile pictures, etc. Everyone can hide, disguise, or imitate other people on the Internet (Long & Tim, 2012). Interaction on the Internet that does not require face-to-face makes it a comfortable hiding place. Internet users also have hidden areas where they close themselves to reveal things they do not want other users to know (A. P. Dewi & Delliana, 2020).

The phenomenon of Catfishing is a form of online fraud carried out by individuals with false identities and pretending to show interest, usually through social media by inviting online dating and many factors cause people to do catfishing (Kementerian KOMINFO, 2020). In general, motives are needs, wants, and drives. A person's motivation also depends on the strength of his motives (Nurhadi, 2017). The motives of someone doing catfishing include lack of confidence, fun, revenge, and committing fraud for evil purposes (Kompas.com, 2021). Catfish is a new threat because the identity on SNS (Social Networking Sites) is in the gray area, making it difficult to verify. This phenomenon is also influenced by how easy accessing information on the Internet is and internet users who tend to ignore and not question the information on the Internet (N. S. P. S. Dewi, 2021).

Today, a catfish is a form of violation in SNS (Social Networking Sites). The violations committed were in the form of identity fraud, the majority of which disguised themselves as virtual lovers in

online dating (N. S. P. S. Dewi, 2021). According to Psychology Today, in a study conducted by Hallam, De Backer, Fisher, and Walvare in 2018, it was stated that all of the 254 people studied used online dating sites and applications to meet people (Tempo.co, 2018). However, online dating does not mean that it only occurs through matchmaking applications or sites, but also on social media. Also, based on research on fraud in online romantic relationships conducted by the Australian government, 246 reports of financial losses reached AUD 3,884,529 in May 2021. So it can be estimated that online dating paved the way for catfish to carry out their actions.

It is sporadic for TV programs to specialize in highlighting catfishing these days, but there is one called Catfish (Simmons & Lee, 2020): The TV Show. In the program, the hosts will help clients with the suspicion that they may be catfished by people they think they have unique relationships with on the Internet. Catfish: The Tv Show specifically discusses and solves catfishing cases on the MTV channel. In episode 23 of season eight with the title "Jake and Taylor," which aired on November 11, 2020, it was told that the client in this episode was an 18-year-old teenager who is quite famous on Tik Tok and met a girl via Instagram direct message named Taylor Holland. After Jake contacted the Catfish: The TV Show team, he explained his initial meeting with Taylor's chronology and told all the red flags he experienced during his interaction with Taylor. The team then investigated and arranged a meeting with Taylor until it was discovered that Taylor turned out to be Amanda. Amanda is a girl who is obese and has problems socializing because she has felt insecure about her appearance since high school. She was a victim of bullying at her school, so she had to be homeschooled. Meanwhile, she is used to giving money or



goods to people because she thought people would want to be friends with her. That is why in the first five minutes of her conversation with Jake on Instagram, she immediately asked for Jake's account details so she could send money.

Information published to the mass media will be interpreted differently by each audience exposed to it because they have different backgrounds such as education and experience. Audiences who have watched *Catfish: The TV Show* can see that online daters are likely to run into a catfish. Based on a survey conducted by We Are Social as of early 2021, the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 202.6 million, or 73.7% of the total population of 274.9 million in January 2021. From there, there were 195.3 million people, or 96.4% accessing the Internet via gadgets (Kompas.com, 2021). Active users of social media will undoubtedly continue to increase. With this program, the audience who does not know about catfishing and how to avoid becoming victims will gain more insight into online dating, especially teenagers who have thought about meeting the affection needs of the opposite sex, adolescent online daters.

Late teens (i.e., adolescents) were chosen because they develop skills in romantic relationships, which then encourage them to do online dating. Then to the fact that the biggest temptation from social media is the ability to make teenagers "someone" in cyberspace (Soedarsono & Wulan, 2017). In the sense that they can build a persona as desired in online dating. In the adolescence phase (ages 18-24 years), according to research conducted by the State Adolescent Health Resource Center, serious intimate relationships develop. They also regard love, loyalty, and long-term commitment as essential to a successful relationship (Teipel, n.d.).

According to Hall, the position of Dominant-Hegemonic is when the encoder (i.e., media) conveys messages using the dominant cultural code that exists in society. The Negotiated Position is when society generally accepts the dominant ideology but refuses to implement it because it conforms to cultural rules. Finally, the oppositional position is where the audience rejects the meaning of the message conveyed by the media and replaces it with what they believe (Lobodally & Candrasari, 2019; Morissan, 2014). The author used the encoding-decoding theory because the author wanted to know how adolescent online daters interpret various media texts during sending and receiving messages (reception). The background of each audience member will, of course, influence this process.

To find out how audiences can have different receptions, Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory is in reception analysis. Stuart Hall's theory states that encoding/decoding encourages various interpretations of media texts during the production and reception (reception) process (Ida, 2014). For example, Stuart Hall developed the Class Inequality and Social Order by Frank Parkin in 1971 by producing three hypotheses: The Dominant-Hegemonic Position, The Negotiated Position, and The Oppositional Position. The formulation of the problem in this study is: "How is the reception of adolescent online daters towards catfishing on MTV Catfish?". For this research to be more focused and not spread to other contexts, the author limited it to adolescent online daters (age 19-24) who are domiciled in DKI Jakarta as they have easy access to technology via the Internet. They also deal with other online daters directly through the platforms they use. Therefore, the author chose episode 23, "Jake & Taylor," which aired on November 11, 2020. The purpose of this study was to find out the receptions of adolescent online daters



on catfishing on MTV Catfish by using three categories of reading/ interpretation, the Dominant-Hegemonic position, the Negotiated position, and the Oppositional position.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative approach, which is research that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of human and social problems, not to describe the surface of a reality as that meaning influences their behavior. Research is conducted in a naturalistic setting, not the treatment or variable manipulation involved (Czapla & Laursen, 2022). This is also a descriptive study. Descriptive research aims to make a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the facts and characteristics of a particular population or object.

The author used audience reception analysis, which is when the audience understands the meaning-making process carried out by the audience when consuming cinema shows or television series programs and is used to see and understand the responses, acceptances, attitudes, and meanings formed by the audience (Ida, 2014). When the audience receives the message and interprets it, this process is called encoding and decoding. The encoding process is defined as an activity carried out by the source to translate the thoughts and ideas into a form that can be accepted by the recipient's senses (Morissan, 2014). In this case, the decoding (meaning of messages) is carried out by adolescent online daters. The encoding in this study is sending messages through the Catfish: The TV Show Jake & Taylor episode. Therefore, the audience of adolescent online daters will be seen on how they interpret the message sent by that episode in the program.

The author determined several research subjects based on specific criteria. The informants (i.e., research subjects) are teenagers aged 19-24, active in the world of online dating, and have watched the Catfish: The TV Show Jake and Taylor episode. The object of research in this study is 18 pieces of information grouped into six categories of scenes. In this study, the data collection technique used is in-depth interviews with six adolescent online daters who have watched episode 23 of season eight program entitled "Jake & Taylor." Interviews were conducted to find out about the readings of the informants after watching the episode by asking questions.

Patton asserts that the purpose of the interview is to get to know and find out what is in the minds of others (Gunawan, 2015). This research was carried out in stages: data collection, comparing data with theory, triangulating data, and drawing conclusions. In conducting in-depth interviews, the author used an interview guide consisting of general questions about catfishing and specific questions about 18 information in the episode. The types of data sources used by the author are primary data obtained from interviews and secondary data obtained from books, journals, and online media articles that are relevant to the research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the scene category of the client who contacted the Catfish: The TV Show team, all informants are in the position of Dominant Hegemony. According to the first informant, what happened to Jake is a lesson for online daters related to getting acquainted with just chatting without actually meeting face to face. The second informant said that what happened to Jake could happen to anyone. According to her, if one has been communicating with someone for a long time, even the president's son





could be in Jake's position. The third informant said celebrities are also human. According to him, when humans have a point that people can take advantage of, it will be used by people with bad intentions. According to the fourth informant, catfishing can happen to anyone, anytime, and any type of person. According to him, precisely because Jake is famous, other people have effortless access to him, so that his carelessness then makes him a victim. The fifth informant said the same thing. According to him, his fame can make him a target for people, especially if it has reached the stage of exchanging inappropriate photos. Finally, according to the sixth informant, Jake did not think it through, but the fact that he was famous and should have made Jake more careful.

The client's scenario categorization explained the initial interaction. It contains five pieces of data. Initially, the catfish claimed to have met a client at an event. Six informants are in Opposition. The first informant stated she would trust a random DM claiming they had met.

About Taylor approaching Jake, the first informant said she would remember a handsome face she encountered at an event. The first informant argues with Jake since he admits not meeting Taylor but still believes her. The second informant agreed with Jake. She would check with her memory if someone claimed to have met her. The third source concurred with Jake. He stated it's natural for males to be drawn to beautiful women, but he'll still doubt the truth and dismiss her if it's not verified. The fourth informant agreed with Jake. He will ensure the truth. He won't believe it if they haven't met again or video called. The fifth informant offered another reason for Jake. A stranger at an event would be remembered if they interacted with them, regardless of

whether they agreed with Jake's actions. So if a lovely lady DMs him, he'll be suspicious. The last informant agreed with Jake. She claimed she didn't need to respond if she didn't remember meeting them.

The client's scenario categorization explained the initial interaction. It contains five pieces of data. Second, the catfish asked for Jake's bank account so the culprit could pay him money. Six informants are in Opposition. The first informant assumed the account belonged to her. The second informant concurred with Jake. A personal note, she said. The third source thought Jake's actions were out of the ordinary. He could understand a man wanting to donate money, but a woman? The fourth source disagreed with Jake. He regarded it a form of shame when money was sent to his account. He'd be offended since he doesn't think that's how to meet people. The fifth informant agreed with Jake. He admitted he would be suspicious if someone requested for his bank account to send money. The sixth informant denied Jake's claim. When asked for her bank account number, she chooses to give the number of her digital wallet account rather than her actual bank account number.

The client's scenario categorization explained the initial interaction. It contains five pieces of data. Thirdly, Jake was contacted by Taylor, who was older than him. Taylor was 24 and Jake was 18. So there are two Dominant-Hegemonic informants, two Negotiated informants, and two Oppositional informants. The first informant is Oppositional because she believes she would desire to experience what Jake was going through. Unlike Jake, who was fine with being approached by Taylor, who was six years older. Unlike the first source, the second did not object. Dominant Hegemonic Position: She prefers



older ones. According to the third informant, he is opposed. But he said he would be wary about approaching a woman older than him. The fourth informant, unlike the third, is Dominant-Hegemonic. He claimed many older women approached him, so if they had a frequency, there was a potential. The fifth informant claimed he could accept a one to two year difference, but a six year difference between Jake and Taylor put him in the Negotiated position. Another person replied that if someone older was handsome and had a decent history, age didn't matter. She opposed Jake since Taylor had a mysterious past, so she is in Opposition.

The client's scenario categorization explained the initial interaction. It contains five pieces of data. Fourth, Jake and Taylor have shifted to more personal contacts. There are two Oppositional informants and four Negotiated informants. Unlike Jake, the first informant opted to give her Instagram rather than her phone number. This made her Dominant-Hegemonic. The second source agreed. She explained obtaining a WhatsApp number is a process. In the Negotiated position. The third source said he wouldn't offer his number to Jake, but he felt secure in himself and his abilities. So he's in negotiations.

He wouldn't give his number till he was sure. He only opened his DM if someone he met on social media wanted to be more personal. So he's in a negotiated situation. He refused to share his number if he had only met someone. After a long period of communication, he must have confirmed that the individual is not a catfish. So I'm the Negotiated. So the sixth informant didn't reveal his number. Because she and the person she met online both recognized that phone numbers are secret, they just moved to another social media. This put her in Opposition.

The client's scenario categorization explained the initial interaction. It contains five pieces of data. Jake told Taylor his home address, which was known because Taylor claimed to have driven past his house. Two informants represent the Negotiated position and four represent the Opposition. In opposition, she prefers to meet in public rather than at home. So she disagreed with Jake. The second source objected to Jake providing Taylor with his address. Her viewpoint is that she would not divulge any private information until they have known each other for a long period. The third informant opposes Jake's conduct. He boldly stated he would not reveal his address. The fourth informant said he only gave his address to his internet girlfriend. This puts him in a Negotiated situation because he made an exception for his app-meeting lover.

Furthermore, the fifth informant is in the Oppositional position. He said he would instead give his phone number then give his home address because he thought it would give criminals a chance. Finally, the last informant said that she never addressed the people she met. This put her in the Oppositional position.

The customer has five red flags in the scene category. In the first information, Taylor merely exhibited a black screen when video contacting Jake. Five informants oppose, and one informant negotiates. A person's behavior rendered them untrustworthy, therefore the first informant was in opposition. The second informant is similarly in Opposition because she thought Taylor's actions were odd and distrusted the catfish. If he were Jake, the third informant would be injured. He claimed this action demonstrated no regard for the partnership, putting him in Opposition.



A fourth informant had a different idea. He claimed a black screen may mean several things, as his companion was unsure. So he's in the negotiation. The fifth informant says he opposes what Taylor did. He also observed that Taylor did not want her true identity revealed. Taylor was also suspected of being a catfish by the sixth informant, who knows that video calling entails showing faces. This places the sixth informant in Opposition.

There are five pieces of information in the scene category of red flags experienced by the client. In the second piece of information, Jake explained that he always failed every time he wanted to meet Taylor. He and Taylor often planned to meet, but when the day came, Taylor ghosted him, did not reply to Jake's messages. The first informant was in the Oppositional position. She admitted that she would be annoyed if her plan went bust. She would give a second chance, but if that also failed, she would try to meet again, unlike Jake, who kept trying even though he had failed many times. The second informant admitted that she understood how Jake felt because she had been in that position, but she did not want to keep trying to chase someone who was not after her too. This put the second informant in the Oppositional position. The third informant is also in the Oppositional position. He admitted that he would end a relationship without such certainty because if he met someone online and asked to meet in person, they did not want to. That was a sign of ending it. Unlike the other informants, the fourth informant is in the Negotiated position. He said that if he had never met virtually face-to-face, it might indicate catfishing. He argued that if they were in the same city but still failed, something probably happened to that person. According to him, Jake kept trying because he already had an emotional bond

with Taylor.

Furthermore, the fifth informant said that everyone has their own level of distrust and must decide whether they want to meet. However, if the relationship was intense, he admitted that he would not think twice about the meeting. He also admitted he did not expect much to meet up with people he knew online, which put him in the Oppositional position. The last informant was in the Oppositional position. She said that she felt sorry for Jake for expecting so much from Taylor, but because Taylor was a catfish, she was also annoyed.

There are five pieces of information in the scene category of red flags experienced by the client. In the third piece of information, Jake explained that after two days of not communicating, Taylor called drunk, screaming and threatening to destroy Jake's career. Five informants are in the Oppositional position, and one informant is in the Negotiated position. The first informant was in the Oppositional position. He said she would be scared and would not communicate anymore, even reporting it to his father, a police officer. The second informant is also in the Oppositional position. She also preferred to report accounts and block if she was in Jake's position. According to her, it is impossible to want to be good friends if there is a threat. The third informant is in the Oppositional position. He answered briefly, concisely, and clearly regarding this threat. He said that he would block and get the problem solved. Based on the answer, informant four is in the Negotiated position. He said that he understood if someone drunk would threaten. However, if one were sober, he would completely stop communicating. The fifth informant is in the Oppositional position. He saw this as a weapon to fight lawfully, so he was not afraid. The last



informant said that she would feel depressed in Jake's position. Being threatened by someone she had never met would confuse her. This put her in the Oppositional position.

There are five pieces of information in the scene category of red flags experienced by the client. In the fourth information, Jake said that when one of his "meet up" plans failed, Taylor ignored the message Jake sent but later Taylor said that she had driven past Jake's house even though in the end it was discovered that Taylor was only looking for Jake's house through Google. All informants are in Oppositional positions. The first informant admitted that she would be afraid if she were in that position. She chose to report it to the police to track them down. The second informant admitted that she was afraid that the worst-case scenario would occur. If something has put her in danger, it is better to report it to the police immediately.

Furthermore, the third informant considered someone who carried out such stalking as a criminal. The fourth informant said that he would see how far this would go. He calmly said that a phone number makes it easy to track someone after being reported. Furthermore, the fifth informant said that precisely because he met online, he would not quickly provide personal information. He admitted that he disagreed with what Jake did (i.e., giving his home address) so that it led to such a thing as stalking. The last informant admitted that it would be a scary thing if she experienced it, but she would follow what they wanted first, but if it got worse, of course, she would ask for help from her parents or the authorities.

There are five pieces of information in the scene category of red flags experienced by the client. In the last information, the next

red flag was when a friend of Jake on Tik Tok named Emily told him that Taylor was a catfish. Jake claimed to have met Emily in person, so she was not just an online friend. All informants are in a Negotiated position. The first informant admitted that they would not immediately believe it unless the warning was followed by other red flags and supporting evidence. The second informant said that she would be surprised but would not believe it right away unless a close friend told her and followed by some evidence to confirm the chances of it. The third informant admitted that he would consider it because this is an online relationship, although there is a possibility that he would not believe it. After all, he was already too deep in the relationship. The fourth informant said he would not immediately believe it, but he would take it as a warning to be careful. He would make sure that he was sure that the person he met online was a catfish. Furthermore, the fifth informant said that he would find out himself, plus if indeed he had experienced red flags that supported this warning, then there was no reason not to believe the friend who warned him. Finally, the last informant said she'd still not be sure until she found out herself because she knew that his friend did not just say that the person he met online was a catfish.

In the scene category of Catfish: The TV Show Team Conducting an Investigation, there are three pieces of information. At first, it was discovered that Nev and Kamie traced Taylor's number after Jake gave all his information about Taylor. When Taylor's number was entered into the phone number search program, three identities emerged as possible people behind Taylor's number, and all three were not registered under Taylor's name. Nev and Kamie then searched for Taylor Holland's name on Facebook and found many accounts under Taylor Holland's name,





especially without photos. Nev and Kamie also tried to track down photos of Taylor from her fake Instagram and found no results. Therefore, five informants are in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic, and one informant is in the Oppositional position. The first informant is in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic. She said that Nev and Kamie's efforts immensely helped the investigation, even though these efforts were pretty much in vain. The second informant is in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic. She said that searching for numbers helped reduce the population, but the Facebook search was less accurate because Taylor Holland's name was widely used, and photo searches were unsuccessful.

Furthermore, the third informant is also in the position of Dominant Hegemony. He said that Nev and Kamie's efforts were the natural thing to do in this situation. He had done similar searches himself. He also understood that tracking photos is not as easy as it used to be, and a name search on Facebook ends up finding many inactive accounts. The fourth informant had a different opinion. According to him, what they did violated the privacy of the person being sought because, according to him, the perpetrator did not seriously harm Jake. He also preferred Jake to find out independently, not on American national TV. This put him in the Oppositional position. Then the fifth informant said that he agreed with Kamie's reaction because the tracked photo did not appear, so it could be true that Taylor was the girl in the photo. Therefore, he is in a position of Dominant Hegemony. The last informant is in the position of Dominant Hegemony. This can be seen from the fact that he is familiar with the efforts of the Catfish: The TV Show team in investigations and admits that he is excited when he gets clues.

In the scene category of Catfish: The TV Show Team Conducting an Investigation, there are three pieces of information. First, Kamie and Nev turned to their social media to get a lead on the second piece of information. Nev uploaded Taylor's photo to Twitter and Kamie to Instagram to ask if anyone knew the girl in this photo. Then a hint came from Kamie's Instagram, which was responded to by one of her followers who told her the Instagram account of the girl in the photo, Jenny. Five informants are in the position of Dominant Hegemonic, and one informant is in the position of Negotiation. The first informant is in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic. She said that this effort was constructive. Rather than previous deadlocked attempts, she preferred this because it was quicker to get an answer. The second informant is also in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic. She said she was surprised that it was confirmed that Taylor was finally proven to be a catfish through Kamie's efforts. The third informant was in a Negotiated position by saying that Kamie did proof of having resources since Kamie is famous.

Moreover, even though what was being done was unethical, he said it is common to do so in social media (i.e., seeking help). The fifth informant is in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic. He was delighted when the scene finally proved that Taylor was a catfish because previously, he had also been confused about tracking photos to no avail. Finally, the sixth informant said she was surprised by what Kamie did, which finally paid off so the team could directly communicate with Jenny, the photo owner that Taylor used for catfishing.

In the scene category of Catfish: The TV Show Team Conducting an Investigation, there are three pieces of



information. In the final information, it is known that Kamie and Nev finally managed to communicate directly with Jenny, the owner of the photo that Taylor used. Here it has proven that Jenny never had any contact with Jake, and it is known that many people told her that many girls stole her pictures to create fake identities. Three informants are in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic, and three other informants are in the Oppositional position. The first informant is in the Oppositional position. She said that Jenny should have done something after finding out that her photo had been stolen. She should have asked people to report the fake accounts. The second informant is in the Oppositional position. She said that she would close the account to prevent photo stealing if she was in this situation. The third informant said that what happened to Jenny was the risk of being on the Internet. This put him in a position of Dominant Hegemony. A fourth informant was in the Opposition, saying that Jenny could have sued as the natural person of the stolen photos, but she chose not to. The fifth informant said that it made sense for many to use Jenny's photo and steal because Jenny did not prevent this from happening, so that is Jenny's risk. This put him in a position of Dominant-Hegemonic. The last informant also had the same opinion. She considered that what happened was a risk for Jenny as a beautiful woman, even though she would feel depressed if she was in Jenny's position. Based on the answer, the sixth informant belongs to the position of Dominant-Hegemonic

In the scene category of calling the catfish to try arranging a meeting, Nev called Taylor on Jake's cell phone, and Taylor picked up. When Nev asked if Taylor wanted to meet to explain what happened, Taylor asked if she could take some time to consider whether she would like to meet. All

informants are in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic in this regard. The first informant said that Taylor's response showed signs indicating lying. The second informant said she questioned whether Taylor cared about Jake with a response that did not immediately say yes. She also said that Taylor responded that way because she was a catfish. The third informant also knew that Taylor would panic because her lie would soon be exposed. The fourth informant said that Taylor was not the wrong person. She just panicked because the fourth informant had felt that way when he was a catfish. The fifth informant said that he became more convinced that Taylor was a catfish the more it became apparent that she was lying. Finally, the sixth informant said that Taylor was nervous because she would soon be exposed. She also said that Taylor finally agreed to meet him because she felt bad for Jake.

There are three pieces of information in the category of meeting with the catfish. In the first information, Amanda (i.e., the catfish) said that she thought Jake would not want to talk to her because of her physical appearance, so she used a fake identity to communicate with Jake. Two informants are in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic, while the other four are in the Negotiated position. The first informant is in the Negotiated position. She said that what Amanda said was true, maybe Jake would refuse to talk to her because of her physical appearance, but Amanda should have tried first. The second informant said that Amanda should not think negatively and try first, but not for romantic purposes. The second informant said there must be a certain standard to be romantically attracted to people regarding their physical appearance. This puts her in the Negotiated position. The third informant is in the Dominant-Hegemonic position. He said that



he understood Amanda's feelings when she said that because he had experienced something similar. He also said he understood why Jake was following the flow of the conversation. The fourth informant was in the Negotiated position because he said that he saw Jake could be friends with anyone, not as Amanda thought. However, the fourth informant thought maybe it was because Amanda did that based on her previous experience, making her think that she would not be accepted using her real identity. The fifth informant said that he agreed with Amanda because he also knew he wouldn't be confident if he were in that position.

Nevertheless, he said that Amanda should not think that other people will always look at the physical because people are more concerned with personality and communication compatibility than just a person's physicality. This puts him in the Negotiated position. The last informant is in the Dominant-Hegemonic position. Although she said that Jake's response to Amanda's statement was a lie, she was sure that Jake would look at Amanda's physique, especially because Jake is Tik Tok famous.

There are three pieces of information in the category of meeting with the catfish. The second information shows that Amanda has been catfishing for five years because she was bullied in high school and had to be homeschooled because of that, so she had no friends. The six informants are in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic. The first informant said that being bullied made Amanda do that to find friends. The first informant thought that bullying harms its victims. The second informant said that indeed bullying could cause trauma to its victims so that in Amanda's case, she has low self-confidence. According to her, Amanda should be able to love herself, and

if she was after a romantic relationship, maybe Jake just was not the one. The third informant said that bullying is a social issue that cannot expect its victims to change just like that. There must be support from the surrounding environment. The fourth informant said that Amanda could not socialize well due to being bullied in high school and studying from home. According to him, Amanda has instilled the mindset that people won't accept her, but if only she had stayed at her old school, she could interact with people better. The fifth informant said that he understood what Amanda did due to being bullied in high school and eventually having to study from home. The sixth informant said that Amanda thought that people did not want to be friends with her because of her physical appearance, which eventually made her even more insecure, so she did catfishing.

There are three pieces of information in the category of meeting with the catfish. In the final information, Jake said that he did not understand what Amanda hoped for in the future in their relationship, which was based on the lies that Amanda did by pretending to be someone she was not. All informants are in the position of Dominant-Hegemonic. The first informant said that what Jake said was true. According to her, honesty and acceptance of each other must exist in a relationship, and a lie that started at the beginning sure will end up with another lie. The second informant said that she strongly agreed with Jake. She thought she would be just as disappointed as Jake if she were in that position. She also said that the beginning of a relationship started with lies wouldn't make any difference in the future. The third informant said that Jake said something very true. He also said that he had questioned relationships based on lies and said if two people could not agree on a contract, which is a relationship, then the



contract would not work out. The fourth informant said that a relationship based on lies would not be good. He said that a relationship that started with a lie would not have anything good in the future. According to the fifth informant, honesty is the first thing needed in a relationship, so she agreed with Jake. According to him, it is crucial to know someone deeply. He said that honesty, communication, loyalty, and trust are needed in a relationship. The last informant said that what Jake said was true. According to her, Amanda just wanted to interact with men like what women, in general, would be wanted.

Table 1. Informants grouped by positions

Informant	Dominant-Hegemonic	Negotiated	Oppositional
Client Reaching Out to Catfish: The TV Show Team			
1	Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6		
Client Explaining The Chronology of Meeting The Catfish			
2			Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
3			Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4	Informant 2, 4	Informant 5, 6	Informant 1, 3
5		Informant 2, 3, 4, 5	Informant 1, 6
6		Informant 2, 4	Informant 1, 3, 5, 6
Red Flags Experienced by Client			

7	Informant 4	Informant 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
8	Informant 4	Informant 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
9	Informant 4	Informant 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
10		Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
11		Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Catfish: The TV Show Team Conducting an Investigation		
12	Informant 1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Informant 4
13	Informant 1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Informant 3
14	Informant 3, 5, 6	Informant 1, 2, 4
Calling The Catfish to Try Arranging a Meeting		
15		Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Meeting with The Catfish		
16	Informant 3, 6	Informant 1, 2, 4, 5
17		Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
18		Informant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6





## CONCLUSION

The research results obtained from in-depth interviews with informants indicate their position in each of the 18 pieces of information presented, whether in the position of Dominant Hegemony, Negotiation, or Opposition. Each informant had various interpretations of the information conveyed by Catfish: The TV Show. This can be proven by the answers of the six informants whose answers are based on their experiences and beliefs about catfishing presented in the episode "Jake & Taylor." The audience analysis positions dominated by the Dominant Hegemonic position are the scene categories of Jake reaching out to Catfish: The TV Show team, Catfish: The TV Show team conducted an investigation, calling the catfish to try to arrange a meeting, and meeting with the catfish. The author determined this position based on the informants' experience while in the online world. They judged that the information presented in the scene category followed the reality they experienced.

There are several recommendations that the author can make. Research on media effects that uses a quantitative approach can use the theory of Uses and Satisfaction (Uses and Gratification). Meanwhile, using a qualitative approach, further research can use different methods such as case studies. Further research can also use Social Penetration theory and Self-Disclosure theory if the focus is on interpersonal relationships built online. Finally, the next author can explore Human and Posthuman regarding the catfishing phenomenon.

Television stations that plan to broadcast educational programs on catfishing can create talk shows that invite experts and select the target audience of teenagers and the technology literate community. This program must also include education regarding avoiding catfish, self-

love, and self-acceptance so that you don't end up catfishing.

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## DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organizations related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

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