

## Actor Networks and Public Sentiment in the Cancel Culture Phenomenon: A Social Network Analysis of A Business Proposal Remake in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Cancel culture has become a significant influence in Indonesia's digital entertainment sphere. This study investigates how the cancel culture surrounding the Indonesian remake of A Business Proposal emerges and diffuses across social media networks. This study aims to identify network structures, central actors, and the dissemination of moral discourse among users. This study uses a social network analysis approach supported by sentiment and lexical analyses from 515 tweets, which were harvested using a Python-based script from the 1st of January until the 19th of February 2025, and visualized using Gephi. Data were cleaned (deduplication, language filtering, token cleaning), a user–interaction network was constructed, and centrality plus community detection were applied. The findings reveal five major clusters and a zero betweenness value, indicating strong interconnectedness and the absence of intermediaries. The dominant cluster, led by kdrama\_menfess, amplified evaluative narratives shaped by fandom identity and cultural expectations. Sentiment is largely neutral, with salient negative cues tied to casting and adaptation quality. Cancel culture here functions as networked moral regulation driven by fandom solidarity and enabled by Computer-Mediated Communication within Castells' Network Society. The findings clarify how audience expectations, affect, and network structure jointly shape acceptance of local adaptations, offering practical cues for casting, promotion, and community management in Indonesia's film industry.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, the advancement of communication technology has transformed how individuals and communities construct, negotiate, and contest meaning within networked spaces. One of the most visible outcomes of this transformation is cancel culture, a social practice in which online communities collectively withdraw support or call out individuals or organizations for perceived ethical violations. Cancel culture represents a form of networked digital activism, sustained by technological infrastructures that enable the rapid formation of discursive alliances and the amplification of moral judgment in public spaces (Clark, 2020; Ng, 2020).

Cancel culture has become a form of digital accountability in which online communities coordinate collective responses toward moral or ethical breaches committed by public figures or institutions (Altamira & Movementi, 2022; Clark, 2020). This phenomenon grows stronger with the participatory culture of social media, where users share opinions widely and mobilize solidarity around shared values and emotions.

This study focuses specifically on the online controversy surrounding the Indonesian remake of the film *A Business Proposal*. The debate was triggered by a statement from one of the main actors during the promotional campaign, which was perceived as dismissive toward K-drama fans. The incident sparked boycotts and online criticism, forming a cancel-culture network on social media platform X (formerly Twitter). Narrowing the scope to this case allows the research to emphasize the relational dynamics among users and the structural diffusion of discourse within the cancel-culture network.

Previous studies on cancel culture in Indonesia have mostly focused on its role as social control and public participation (Purnamasari, 2022; Yanuar, 2024). Other works have analyzed digital activism and online reputation dynamics (Kirkwood, et al., 2019; Ng, 2020) and how the fandom negotiates their positions with their idol who has cancelled (Driessen, 2024). However, these studies have not examined the structural relations among actors that shape cancel-culture discussions on social media.

This study fills that gap by mapping the actor networks and public sentiment surrounding the remake of the *A Business Proposal* film using Social Network Analysis (SNA). The novelty of this research lies in its integration of social network metrics and discourse interpretation, offering a combined computational and socio-cultural lens to understand how digital actor relations shape cancel-culture dynamics in Indonesia.

Since this research adopts a network-based approach, the problem is framed within the dynamics of digital communication networks. In online cancel culture, users form interconnected structures that determine how information, sentiment, and influence circulate among actors. This networked communication becomes the locus for understanding how opinions spread and how certain nodes (actors) gain centrality and power in shaping public sentiment. Thus, analyzing cancel culture from a social network perspective allows us to uncover the relational mechanisms behind digital moral judgment and collective action.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in Castells (2010) Network Society and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) frameworks. Castells explains that in the network society,

communication flows are decentralized and meaning is continuously constructed through the interactions of nodes within digital networks. Power, identity, and influence emerge not from hierarchy, but from the ability of actors to position themselves strategically within the network structure. This perspective helps explain how cancel culture functions as a distributed form of digital accountability, where online users collectively negotiate moral judgments and social meaning through connected networks.

In the context of Castells' (2010) theory of the Network Society, there is a concept called "ripple effect" that can be understood as a consequence of the interconnectivity of information and communication networks in the information age. Because digital networks enable the rapid and widespread dissemination of information through interconnected nodes, an event or message that originates in one part of the network can generate a chain reaction, or ripple effect that extends throughout the entire system (Castells, 2010).

For instance, an opinion or movement initiated by a small segment of social media users can rapidly spread and influence public opinion on a global scale, such as in the phenomenon of cancel culture or social protests. This occurs because communication in the network society takes the form of mass self-communication, which is produced and disseminated directly by individuals within the network without passing through centralized institutional intermediaries (Castells, 2010).

This impact simultaneously influences various social, economic, and political dimensions, often within a very short time span. Thus, the ripple effect within a network society represents a manifestation of the power of digital communication networks, which allow the influence of a single node to spread systemically to others, creating expansive and dynamic social change.

Meanwhile, the CMC framework (Baym, 2015; Walther, 1996) emphasizes that mediated communication transforms how individuals express emotions, interpret cues, and build relationships in digital spaces. Through CMC, users can simulate empathy, disagreement, and solidarity using textual and symbolic elements, creating emotional resonance that sustains online collective behavior. This framework provides insight into how digital interactions in cancel culture embody affective exchanges and relational dynamics that shape public sentiment.

Integrating both perspectives allows this study to view cancel culture as both a structural and communicative process, structural in its network formation among digital actors, and communicative in its performative and discursive construction through mediated interactions. Hence, this study aims to analyze how cancel culture unfolds within digital actor networks, revealing how public sentiment, moral framing, and online engagement are distributed across the network structure. The research contributes to both theoretical and methodological advancement in communication studies by integrating Social Network Analysis (SNA) with discourse-based interpretation, positioning the study within Indonesia's contemporary digital-culture landscape.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with a dominant quantitative orientation through Social Network Analysis (SNA) and was supported by qualitative interpretation. SNA was chosen because it enables researchers to identify the structure and dynamics of relationships among actors in digital interactions. The SNA approach is used to find out the actors/nodes involved and how the relations occur (Eriyanto, 2014), thus, the analysis focuses on understanding how communication patterns, sentiment flow, and actor relations form a cancel-culture network on social media.

Following the methodological approach of Wulandari, et al. (2025), who analyzed digital interactions on TikTok through Social Network and content analysis, this study emphasizes systematic data collection, cleaning, and visualization to ensure analytical validity.

The data were obtained from the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) using the tweet-harvest technique (Satria, 2024) using Python programming with keywords related to the Indonesian remake of *A Business Proposal* and principal actor names within a fixed time window (1 Jan–19 Feb 2025). Metadata captured included tweet text, username, language, timestamp, and interaction markers (reply/mention/retweet), representing public reactions to the dataset in an unstructured and unsupervised form, reflecting natural communication among users.

The collected tweets were cleaned by removing duplicates and non-Indonesian entries, normalized text (lowercasing; removing URLs, mentions, hashtags, punctuation), and retained a clean corpus for lexical and sentiment analysis. The final dataset was formatted in CSV and imported into Gephi for network visualization and statistical computation. The study constructed a directed actor network where nodes represent individual Twitter users and edges represent interactions (mentions, replies, or retweets).

The analysis adopted an actor-level focus, calculating key metrics including degree centrality, betweenness centrality, closeness centrality, and eigenvector centrality to determine influential users, communication flow, and connectivity within the network. After uploading the cleaned CSV into Gephi (0.10.1), centrality metrics (degree, closeness, betweenness, eigenvector) were computed via the Statistics panel, using the Fruchterman–Reingold layout algorithm to display the general network topology and relational proximity among users.

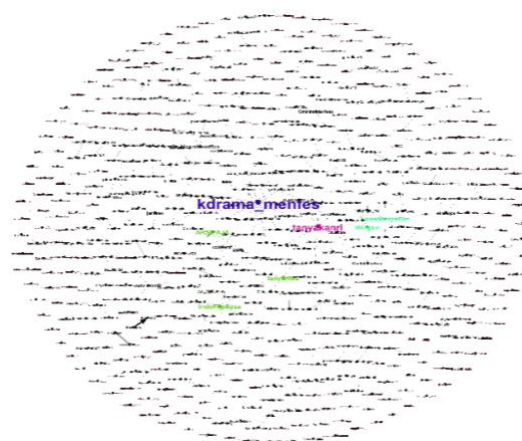
To explore local interaction groups within the network, the Yifan Hu layout algorithm was used to complement the Fruchterman–Reingold, helping to distinguish five visually coherent clusters that represented different discussion communities (fandom evaluators, general audience, persona-focused critics, adaptation-quality critics, and amplifiers). Node size was scaled according to degree and eigenvector values, while colors were manually adjusted to improve readability and emphasize thematic contrasts.

Cleaned tweets were scored with a lexicon-based Indonesian sentiment approach and summarized into negative/neutral/positive distributions; top-word frequencies informed thematic labels for each cluster and triangulated interpretations in the discussion. Sanity checks were performed to make sure the data is valid by sampling bias (keyword drift), inspected high-

degree nodes for automation/spam, and cross-validated cluster themes against word frequencies and representative tweets.

The quantitative network results were then interpreted qualitatively to uncover the discourse patterns, emotional tones, and public sentiment embedded within the network clusters. This interpretive step aligns with the discourse-based analytical lens outlined in the introduction, linking computational findings to socio-cultural meanings of digital participation and moral judgment in the cancel-culture phenomenon.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



**Figure 1 Results of Visualization of Conversation Network on Platform X Regarding Business Proposal Movie**

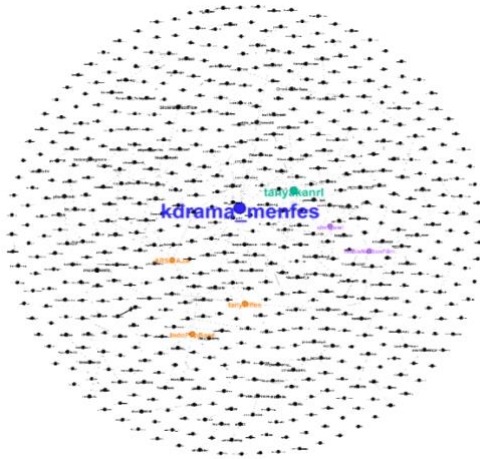
Based on the data retrieval using Python on platform X with the keyword 'Business Proposal' carried out on February 19, 2025, 515 tweets were found discussing the movie. After the data processing process using Gephi, five hundred and ninety-four nodes and one hundred and eighty-four edges were obtained in the network. The results of the visualization of the conversation network were obtained in Figure 1.

**Table 1 Degree and In-degree of the Whole Network of Business Proposal Conversations at X**

Label	Degree	In-Degree
Kdrama_menfes	19	19
tanyakanrl	10	10
tanyarlfs	5	5
ARSIPAJA	5	5
IndoPopBase	5	5
alongaiel	4	4
HabisNontonMovie	4	4

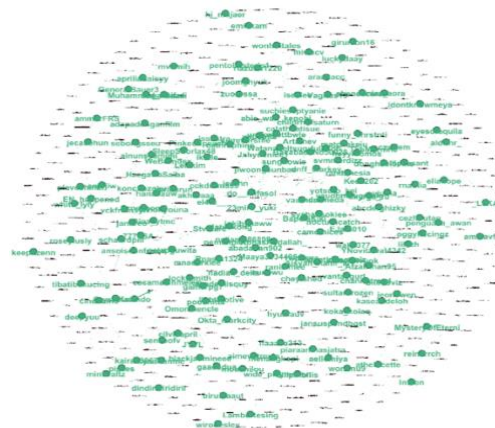
The accounts that have higher degree centrality scores are kdrama\_menfess and IndoPopBase, which play a central role in amplifying critical narratives. Hence, there is not a

single account that acts as a bridge across clusters (betweenness centrality = 0). This pattern indicates that the discourse surrounding the film is fragmented yet parallel, where different communities reproduce similar evaluative narratives without cross-cluster mediation. Consequently, cancel culture in this context operates as a distributed moral expression rather than a coordinated collective movement, diffused through multiple isolated sub-networks of users. The result of the degree centrality visualization in Figure 2.



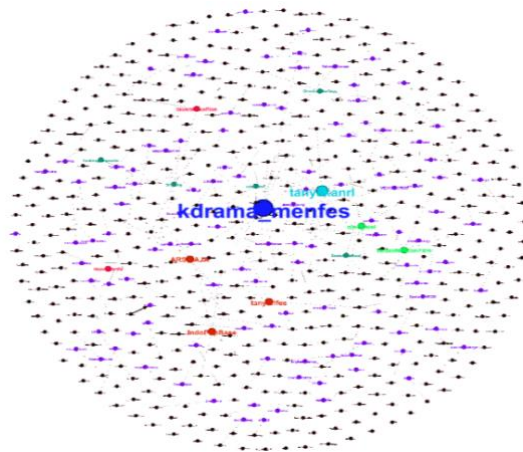
**Figure 2 Degree Centrality Visualization**

Closeness centrality describes how close an actor is to all other actors in the network. A good closeness centrality has a small value, which means that the distance between actors is very close in the network (Eriyanto, 2014). The analysis results show that this network has a perfect closeness centrality value of 1.0, which means that every actor in the network is directly connected without intermediaries. This finding suggests a high level of topical similarity and interaction density among users discussing the Indonesian remake of A Business Proposal. The perfect closeness value reflects that conversations within this network tend to circulate in highly cohesive and redundant paths, where information and sentiment spread efficiently but remain confined within tightly bonded clusters. The result of the closeness centrality visualization in Figure 3.



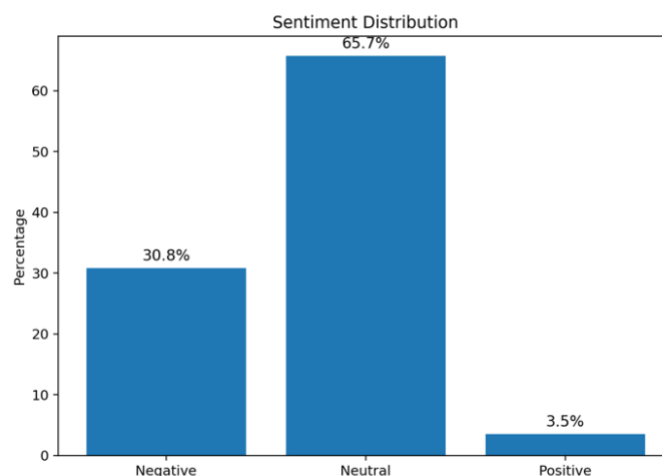
**Figure 3 Closeness Centrality Visualization**

Eigenvector Centrality describes how important the actor is to his network. The perfect value in this centrality is 1.0 (Eriyanto, 2014). The analysis shows that one actor, kdrama\_menfes, has a perfect eigenvector centrality score of 1.0, meaning that this account holds the most significant structural importance in the network. Without kdrama\_menfes, the network would lose its main hub of connection, as this node functions as the core reference point linking other influential users. This finding indicates that the kdrama\_menfes account not only drives interactions within its own cluster but also shapes the visibility and narrative flow of the overall discussion surrounding the Indonesian remake of A Business Proposal. The result of the eigenvector centrality visualization is shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4 Eigenvector Centrality Visualization**

In addition to the structural mapping, a sentiment analysis was conducted to identify the emotional orientation of user interactions in the network. The analysis shows that the discussion surrounding the A Business Proposal remake was dominated by negative and neutral sentiments. Out of the total collected tweets, approximately 65,7% contained neutral sentiments, 30,8% were negative, and only 3,5% expressed positive sentiment. The result of the sentiment distribution is shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5 Sentiment Distribution**

This distribution indicates that the discussion surrounding the film on platform X was characterized mainly by descriptive or observational comments, rather than overt emotional reactions. Nevertheless, the relatively large portion of negative sentiment demonstrates the public's critical stance toward the remake projects and the controversies surrounding the statements made by one of the main actors. The small percentage of positive expression suggests that supportive or appreciative responses were limited and often overshadowed by evaluative discourse emphasizing criticism, disappointment, and calls for boycott.

The word frequency and word cloud analysis provides a semantic overview of the dominant themes that emerge from user discussions on a platform X. Based on the dataset of 513 tweets, several keywords such as 'nonton', 'ada', 'sama', 'abidzar', 'drakor', 'adaptasi', and 'drama' appeared as the most frequent lexical items. These words reflect the evaluative and conversational tone of the discussion. The prevalence of 'nonton' (watch) and 'adaptasi' (adaptation) suggests that users primarily focused on comparing the remake to the original Korean version, questioning its faithfulness and production quality. The frequent mention of 'abidzar' shows that much of the discussion centered on the lead actor's performance and public persona, while 'drakor' and 'drama' emphasize how the debate remains embedded within fandom discourse.



**Figure 6 Word Clouds of Users' Discussion**

The resulting word cloud in Figure 6 visualizes these terms as dominant semantic anchors within the network, showing that the conversation leaned more toward commentary and comparison than collective moral judgement. This linguistic pattern complements the sentiment results, reinforcing the finding that most tweets were neutral or descriptive in nature, with evaluative nuances rather than explicit emotional polarization.

In addition to the sentiment and lexical analysis, the network visualization identified five major clusters that represent distinct yet interconnected discussion communities. These clusters reflect the structural fragmentation of the discourse, where each group maintains internal cohesion but limited cross-cluster interaction, consistent with the network's betweenness value of 0. The network visualization is shown in Figure 7.

Cluster 1 illustrates that most actors within this group express a clear preference for the original Korean version of A Business Proposal over the Indonesian adaptation. One example

comes from a user (ik\*\*\*\*) who commented, “@kdrama\_menfess Terima kasih Abidzar yang sudah membuatku rewatch Business Proposal. Tampaknya versi Indonesia dibuat untuk promo drakor aslinya”. This statement reflects an act of symbolic withdrawal of support from the Indonesian remake, aligning with Clark’s (2020) notion of cancel culture, a collective practice where audiences retract their approval or engagement due to perceived negative behaviors by media producers or actors. Such expressions of disengagement lead to a rejection of viewership, functioning as a form of cultural sanction against the local production company (Falcon Pictures).

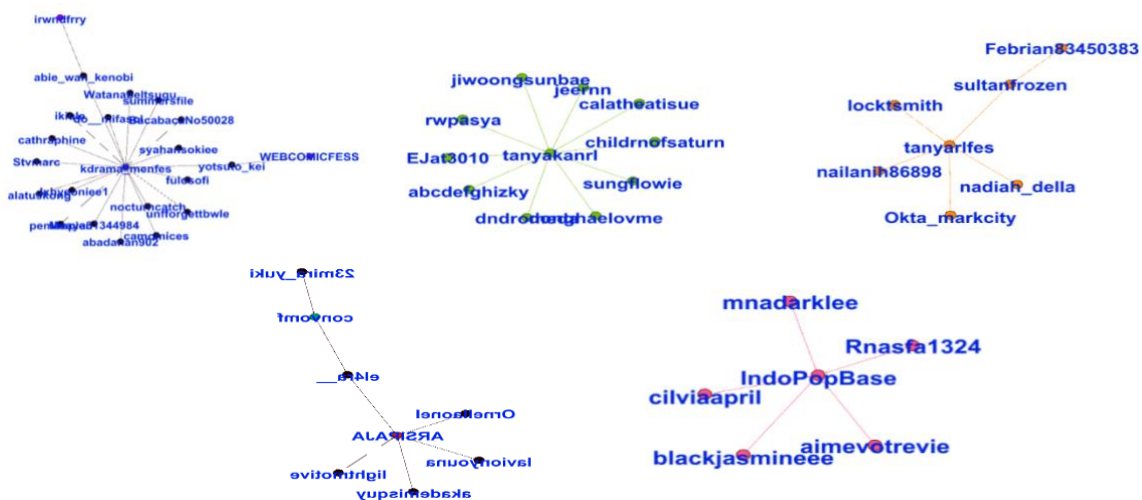


Figure 7 From left to right, Cluster 1 – kdrama\_menfes; Cluster 2 – tanyakanrl; Cluster 3 – tanyarlfe; Cluster 4 – ARSIPAJA; and Cluster 5 - IndoPopBase

However, several users within the same cluster voiced defensive or counter-discursive positions, challenging the bias embedded in these criticisms. For instance, one user replied, “@fuckingmagnolia @kdrama\_menfess logis yang sama harus diterapkan ke business proposal indo kemarin tapi ngga kan standar ganda bgt kalo adaptasi korea aja dimaafin semuanya korean supremacis’t”.

This response highlights the perception of double standards within fan communities, where Korean productions are granted leniency for adaptation liberties while local adaptations are harshly judged. As Norris (2023) notes, such inconsistencies often surface in cancel culture discourse, revealing how moral judgment is selectively applied depending on cultural hierarchies and fandom identity.

Cluster 2 is dominated by negative reactions toward the Indonesian version of A Business Proposal. Actors in this cluster mainly criticized the cast’s lack of understanding about the movie they starred in and the inappropriate casting decisions made by Falcon Pictures. This aligns with Picarella (2024), who argues that incompetent or irresponsible public figures often face collective boycotts of their work. For instance, one user tweeted,

*"@tanyakanrl gegara perdramaan dia gua jadi rewatch lagi business proposal :) DAN ANJJ GA RELA KANG TAE MOO DIPERANIN DIA COKK?!!"* demonstrating that physical appearance became a determinant of audience approval.

This resonates with Urbatsch (2018), who found that individuals with more attractive appearances tend to receive friendlier, more positive reactions, shaping a more accommodating social environment. Taken together, Cluster 2 reveals that criticism of actor competence and appearance dominates audience sentiment, reflecting aesthetic bias within Indonesia's digital fandom culture.

This interaction pattern also resonates with the fandom war phenomenon described by Letwory & Sihombing (2023), where competition and hostility between fan communities escalate through online platforms. Similar to K-pop fan conflicts, the discussions around the A Business Proposal remake show how collective identity and emotional attachment to idols or cultural products can lead to antagonistic exchanges and toxic environments within digital fandom spaces.

Cluster 3 actors also expressed disinterest in watching the Indonesian remake. Their disappointment stemmed from factual inaccuracies by the cast, such as misstating the number of episodes in the original webtoon, which signaled a lack of professionalism and preparation. Many users voiced preference for revisiting the Korean series instead, as reflected in the tweet, "@tanyarlfe gua sebagai kdrama lovers yang udah rewatch business proposal berkali kali aja ga tertarik buat nonton ini bjirlah." This illustrates one of the tangible impacts of cancel culture, in which audience disapproval translates into economic repercussions.

According to Hobbs & O'Keefe (2024), cancel culture often results in financial sanctions against those who are 'canceled'. The Indonesian version of A Business Proposal recorded only 6,900 viewers on its opening day, with its planned 1,270 screens reduced to 551, forcing the film's early withdrawal from theaters Jasmine (2025). These findings confirm that digital backlash can materially affect the success and longevity of local productions when public sentiment turns overwhelmingly negative.

Cluster 4 actors did not directly discuss the film A Business Proposal, yet the memory of previous cancel-culture events remained prominent in their discourse. The cancellation of the Indonesian version, triggered by negative perceptions of one actor's behaviour, has become a cognitive reference that resurfaces whenever users encounter comparable controversies. For example, one user wrote, "@ARSIPAJA Komennya sompral bgt udah kaya abidzar di business proposal yg ga butuh penonton. Beneran ga butuh orng2 pinter yg punya skill buat survive di luar indonesia?" The tweet responded to a statement made by ex-Deputy Minister of Labor Immanuel Ebenezer, deemed insensitive toward the #KaburAjaDulu movement.

This analogy illustrates how cancel-culture memory functions as a moral benchmark for judging new cases. As Mueller (2021) explains, individuals involved in cancel-culture practices tend to retain and relive moral experiences, invoking past examples to reinforce future moral evaluations. Thus, Cluster 4 highlights the lingering psychological and moral resonance of cancel culture incidents in digital public discourse.

Cluster 5 actors reiterated criticisms similar to those found in Cluster 2, focusing on physical appearance and casting mismatches in the Indonesian remake. Examples include tweets such as

*"@IndoPopBase Ini cast asli business proposal ya? Kmren yg kuliati si Ariel tatum foto sama tinta cumi mulu soalnya" and "@IndoPopBase dibayanganku tuh CEO tampan dan tajir untuk business proposal kayak Billy Davidson atau Jerome Kurnia bukan bentukan abang konter gitu".*

These statements reveal that several users perceived Abidzar's appearance as inconsistent with the idealized image of the original Korean character. The criticism reflects appearance-based invalidation, a form of social bias where individuals deemed less attractive are marginalized. As Allen (2021) explains, people with less conventional looks are more vulnerable to public invalidation, while Marwick & Caplan (2018) note that online media reinforce such biases by amplifying aesthetic hierarchies. Consequently, Cluster 5 demonstrates how cancel culture discourse intersects with societal beauty standards, showing that aesthetic judgment often becomes a proxy for moral or professional evaluation in digital spaces.

The results of the Social Network Analysis demonstrate how information, opinions, and boycott calls related to the Indonesian remake of *A Business Proposal* circulated through the digital network. This aligns with Castells' (2010) concept of the Network Society, where communication power is decentralized and distributed across actors who shape meaning collaboratively within networked structures. In this context, K-Drama fans function as networked publics, individuals connected by shared affective and cultural interests, who transform personal dissatisfaction into collective action through the affordances of social media.

The analysis reveals that disappointed K-Drama fans acted as initiators of cancel culture, targeting the main actor whose statements were perceived as disrespectful. The network diffusion process observed through SNA shows that these moral reactions expanded from central accounts (e.g., fan influencers) to peripheral users, illustrating the ripple effect of digital engagement. This process represents what Castells (2010) calls mass self-communication, where user-generated interactions amplify public judgment without centralized control.

The appearance of hashtags such as #BoikotBusinessProposalID and #RespectOriginalContent reflects a form of mediated moral participation (Ng, 2020). These online practices enable the public to synchronize their evaluations, reinforcing a shared moral narrative. Within the CMC framework (Baym, 2015; Walther, 1996), this demonstrates how socio-emotional cues are transmitted through textual interaction, forming parasocial communities capable of exerting social sanctions. Thus, social media functions not merely as a communication platform, but as a moral infrastructure that sustains affective economies of praise and blame.

The findings further suggest that cancel culture has measurable economic and reputational impacts, evidenced by the movie's declining viewership and screen reduction. This reflects the informational feedback loop characteristic of digital culture, where audience

sentiment, amplified through online interactions, directly influences cultural consumption. As Castells (2010) notes, networked communication allows symbolic expressions, such as memes, retweets, and commentaries, to shape social power.

Moreover, the dynamics within the five clusters confirm that cultural identity and fandom loyalty mediate digital moral reasoning. Indonesian audiences demonstrated high cultural sensitivity toward Korean entertainment norms, expecting local adaptations to maintain authenticity and respect toward their source. At the same time, debates about double standards show how users negotiate between global fandom ethics and local creative adaptation, an interaction that typifies the hybrid nature of Indonesian digital culture.

This pattern demonstrates that online discussions around the remake primarily revolved around evaluative discourse rather than polarized emotional reactions. These findings are consistent with the study by Zempi, et al. (2023), who found that social media possesses significant power in the aspects of involvement, connection, and mobilization within public participation, yet remains weak in its ability to deliver accurate and verified information.

Their study further emphasizes that users' engagement and learning depend on critical literacy and awareness in processing information. Similarly, the present research shows that digital audiences, particularly within fandom communities, exhibit strong expressive participation and moral judgment but remain selective and cautious toward mediated narratives.

In sum, the cancel culture surrounding *A Business Proposal* exemplifies the networked moral regulation of contemporary media audiences. Digital users act simultaneously as consumers, critics, and moral arbiters. The diffusion of moral narratives, supported by CMC mechanisms, highlights how Network Society enables decentralized publics to enforce accountability through collective online expression.

This study analyzes publicly available tweets and reports only aggregate results and anonymized exemplars to minimize risk to individuals. No private messages or protected accounts were included. While keyword-based harvesting ensures topical relevance, it may under-represent off-topic yet contextually important conversations (sampling bias).

The directed but unweighted network in this study captures the direction of user interactions but does not account for the varying intensity or frequency of these connections. Consequently, differences in tie strength—such as how often one user replies, mentions, or retweets another—are simplified in the visualization. Additionally, the lexicon-based sentiment approach used may overlook sarcasm, irony, or fandom-specific language that characterizes much of online discourse.

Future studies should consider employing weighted and multilayer network models, integrating conversation threads, and applying supervised sentiment models trained on Indonesian social-media corpora. Extending multimodal analysis to include visual content such as images and short videos would also provide a more comprehensive view of fandom-based digital communication.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that cancel culture on the Indonesian remake of *A Business Proposal* exemplifies the dynamics of communication within a Network Society. The analysis identified a complete network structure with five interconnected clusters dominated by K-Drama fandoms, indicating decentralized participation in moral evaluation. Actors such as *kdrama\_menfess* played central roles in shaping discourse through mass self-communication, a feature of the participatory media environment.

The application of Social Network Analysis (SNA) and sentiment mapping confirmed that moral judgments and affective reactions are distributed across tightly connected nodes without intermediary actors (betweenness = 0). This reflects the logic of digital networks, where influence flows horizontally through user interactions rather than hierarchically.

From the perspective of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), the interactions within the cancel culture network illustrate how textual and symbolic cues online can foster emotional contagion and collective identity formation. Public reactions, particularly from fandom communities, demonstrate that mediated communication can function as moral coordination, transforming individual displeasure into collective digital sanctioning.

Therefore, cancel culture in Indonesia's entertainment context is not merely a form of online backlash but a manifestation of networked moral governance, where digital users act as both communicators and regulators of cultural values. These findings contribute to the understanding of how affect, identity, and network structures intersect in shaping public accountability in the digital era.

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