

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Indonesian people like to watch television. In 2012, television is the most favorite media in Indonesia, with the viewer reached 94% of Indonesian citizen according to Nielsen Television Audience Measurement (Aria). Some watch TV serials, some watch news program, some watch reality shows, and so on. People watch television to relax, get entertained and search for information. When people turn their television on, there are plenty of programs to watch and they choose their favorite one or the programs that they need to watch. Still from Nielsen Television Measurement, in 2012 the two most-watched television programs in Indonesia are TV serial and talent show (*Ibid*). If we look at the history, talent show program is considered as new kind of popular television program in Indonesia. The first talent shows broadcasted in Indonesian television are Popstars and Audisi Pelawak TPI (API) in 2003, long latest than TV serials which first emerged in 1980s.

As the new kind of television program in Indonesia, talent shows have significant developments in terms of viewers. It can be seen in the emergence of Akademi Fantasi Indosiar (AFI) in the late 2003 which was successful in gaining much attention from the viewers. People who first only had TV serials as entertainment were then given a new option: talent show.

The impact was outstanding, and the condition is more or less still the same until today. Some popular talent shows in Indonesia are AFI, KDI (Kontes Dangdut Indonesia), Indonesia's Got Talent, IMB (Indonesia Mencari Bakat), X Factor Indonesia, The Master, Master Chef Indonesia, and Indonesian Idol which are broadcasted by leading television channels in Indonesia. Those programs are initiated to seek for best skills of Indonesian people, such as singing, dancing, cooking, magic show, and other special skills.

However, most of the talent shows we have in Indonesia are singing competition, either for pop singer or *dangdut* singer. It is because singing competition has been a phenomenon in Indonesia with its atmosphere of competition, audition, skill-showing, the music show, the euphoria and also the drama. Looking at the output, Indonesian Idol has produced most of those successful singers and some of them even work in other field in TV entertainment. They are, for example, Gisel and Winda who played in FTVs, sinetron and comedy sites. This information shows that Indonesian Idol has given important contribution to Indonesian entertainment industry.

Indonesian Idol is a singing competition broadcasted by RCTI which is a franchise or an adaptation of Pop Idol created by Simon Fuller and produced by Fremantle Media. Pop Idol is a solo pop singer quest in the United Kingdom airing from 2001 to 2003. That program is the prospective form of *Idol* franchise whose format has been bought by television producers in many countries including United States, Canada, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The format has been widely known due to its success in the global

trade. In Indonesia, the show is held every week, usually on Fridays or Saturdays, with the elimination of one contestant in every show. Since its first season in 2004, Indonesian Idol singing competition has been successful in gaining most people's attention. This singing competition has finished eight seasons in ten years (2004-2014), therefore considered the best achievement in television industry in terms of productivity, compared to the other talent shows like AFI which has only completed six seasons within the same range of time. More than any other singing competition in Indonesia, Indonesian Idol itself has been a phenomenon in each season. The popularity is high and people always wait for the next show every week. The topic of Indonesian Idol and its contestants often reaches *Trending Topic* in Twitter while the program is airing in television.

1.1.1. The Trend of Talent Show in Indonesia

The popularity of Indonesian Idol gives fundamental contribution to the phenomenon of talent shows in Indonesian television. After Indonesian Idol there were plenty of other talent shows emerging in various television channels such as Indonesia Mencari Bakat (all talents competition), Kontes Dangdut TPI (dangdut competition), MasterChef Indonesia (cooking competition), The Master (magic show competition), and several other singing competitions such as The Voice, Mama Mia, and X Factor Indonesia. The number and the variation are many, and it is still counting. Even now, there are new singing competitions airing in television named Rising Star Indonesia, Indonesian Idol Junior and some other talent shows. This condition

indicates that the phenomenon of talent shows in Indonesian television is still happening and will continue to happen in the future.

Indonesian Idol's ten years of existence in Indonesian television has certainly left certain image to the audience. Even though it is unlikely to be another season in the future, this program must have been in people's mind and every individual must have their own views of this program. It can be positive, negative, or anything people can say about the program. Research on audience is important because it allows us to learn the use of media for society, to know the impact and influences of media, and also to identify what people like and do not like from media (Stokes 130–131). Another reason of doing audience research comes from the popularity of Indonesian Idol and the impressions it made to the audience. Indonesian Idol has been nominated five times in Panasonic Gobel Awards and won the three of them in 2005, 2006, and 2013 (Panasonic Gobel Indonesia). Penelope Coutas in her article also points out that Indonesian Idol has its key attraction to the audiences because it is categorized as a reality show—when the audience are presented the real 'journey' of ordinary people into a celebrity, so that the relationship between audience and program become closer and more intimate (qtd. in Heryanto 111).

Audience's views and opinions about the phenomenon of talent show, especially Indonesian Idol is needed in order to see this phenomenon from the point of view that has not been given as much attention as the other point of view such as the text's point of view. Through their opinions we can

see the other side of this phenomenon than what we usually see in the text itself, namely in the television only. People's responses toward the phenomenon, especially of Indonesian Idol, do not always the same as we see it in television that certainly only shows the positive responses from people to elevate their rating. If we only see it from television, we will only have one point of view, but if we look through the audience's experiences we will have more various views since every individual has their own opinions and experiences. Through the various points of view we can see this phenomenon in a more comprehensive way. That is the grand purpose of this paper and that is why the writer chooses Indonesian Idol to reach the goal.

Therefore, the researcher here intends to examine how people respond to Indonesian Idol talent show on television. This study concerns on how people see Indonesian Idol talent show as a popular television program in Indonesia, how they like or dislike or both and why. Their opinions are analyzed and the result could be useful to give some references and suggestion of how people see the phenomenon of talent show in Indonesian television. It is assumed that most of the audiences give negative response to Indonesian Idol because of the heavy commercialization embedded in the program. It shows that audiences in Indonesia are 'passive audience' while media owners and producers are ones taking control of them in the culture industry that operates in Indonesian television.

1.2. Problem Statements

- How do Indonesian audiences respond to Indonesian Idol talent show?
- What are the meanings of such responses?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

- The purpose of this study is to learn how audiences respond to Indonesian Idol talent show on television. The writer then wants to identify how people see the phenomenon of talent show in Indonesian television.
- The responses are then analyzed to find the meaning in order to see the phenomenon of singing competition in Indonesia from the audience point of view.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Indonesian Idol is a form of reality show. In this program, audiences are offered more than just a performance. According to Penelope Coutas, reality show offers the audience to 'see for themselves' (qtd. in Heryanto 111), meaning that the viewers are able to witness the 'journey' to become a star or an idol through the audition, the quarantine and the background stories of the contestants. This study will try to learn audience's attitude toward this new things being offered to them on television. Their attitude will reveal the impact of the phenomenon of talent show to Indonesian society, whether it is bad or good or anything.

People's opinion on the talent show phenomenon is also potential to be an assessment to Indonesian television industry concerning the programs they present to the audience, whether they really meet Indonesian people's need or not. Many scholars have also proven that watching television contributes to the mindset building of children and teenagers. Indonesian people are mostly easily influenced by television content and therefore it is important to make sure that television presents only useful programs to watch. It is expected that this audience study would contribute to the development of the quality of Indonesian television content.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This study puts its concern on how audiences make meaning and give their attitude to Indonesian Idol talent show on television. Indonesian Idol here refers to the whole seasons of Indonesian Idol (eight seasons). The target audience in this study is limited to audiences in Surabaya, especially Universitas Airlangga's students and their parents.

1.6. Organization of the Study

This study begins with Introduction in the first chapter which provides the overview of this study. In chapter two, review of previous studies related to the topic of the study is delivered in details. Chapter three covers the method used in this study, including the technique of data collection and technique of data analysis with the steps elaborated. The findings of this study and also the analysis are presented in chapter four. The closing chapter, the

fifth, provides summary of the study followed with the conclusions and recommendation.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Audience study : a research in which the audience—a group of individuals who are directly connected with the media they view (qtd. in Livingstone 6)—become the subject of the study. Audience here is positioned as the primary source of the study.

Culture industry : a condition where mass media become seriously distracted by the culture that is being reduced into a form of industrial products (qtd. in Gauntlett 23).

Indonesian Idol : a singing competition broadcasted by RCTI which is an adaptation of Pop Idol created by Simon Fuller and produced by Fremantle Media.

Symptomatic reading: an approach that seeks to unwrap the wrapped things in a text. It believes that a text can give information about under what situation it was written, and also under what situation it was read by the readers (Althusser 13).