

Selling Celebrities: The Intertextuality of Celebrity Scandals in The Drama Taxi Driver and Burning Sun Documentary

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Abstract

Scandal refers to news about actions or statements of individuals or groups that violate the law or moral principles. Scandals trigger public reactions, political trials, and legal investigations. This study examines the intertextuality of celebrity scandals as depicted in the South Korean drama *Taxi Driver season 2* and the documentary *Burning Sun*. Using Riffaterre's Intertextuality theory (1990), the research explores the relationship between these two media texts, focusing on how fictional and factual narratives adapt and reinterpret real-life events. The qualitative descriptive method is employed to analyze plot and setting elements, revealing both obligatory and aleatory intertextual connections. The findings highlight how *Taxi Driver* dramatizes the *Burning Sun* scandal with creative liberties, such as fictional names and exaggerated plots, while the documentary adheres to factual reporting. The study underscores the role of intertextuality in bridging fiction and reality, offering insights into how media shapes public perception of scandals involving power, exploitation, and justice.

Keywords: Burning Sun, Celebrity Scandals, Intertextuality, Taxi Driver



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Selling Celebrities: Intertekstualitas Skandal Selebriti Dalam Drama Taxi Driver dan Dokumenter Burning Sun

Abstrak

Skandal mengacu pada berita tentang tindakan atau pernyataan individu atau kelompok yang melanggar hukum atau prinsip-prinsip moral. Skandal memicu reaksi publik, pengadilan politik, dan investigasi hukum. Studi ini menganalisis intertekstualitas skandal selebriti yang digambarkan dalam drama Korea Selatan *Taxi Driver musim 2* dan dokumenter *Burning Sun*. Menggunakan Teori Intertekstualitas Riffaterre (1990), penelitian ini mengeksplorasi hubungan antara dua teks media ini, dengan fokus pada cara narasi fiksi dan faktual menyesuaikan dan menafsirkan ulang peristiwa nyata. Metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan untuk menganalisis unsur-unsur alur cerita dan setting, mengungkap hubungan intertekstual yang wajib dan acak. Temuan penelitian menyoroti bagaimana *Taxi Driver* mendramatisasi skandal *Burning Sun* dengan kebebasan kreatif, seperti penggunaan nama fiksi dan alur cerita yang dilebih-lebihkan, sementara dokumenter tersebut tetap berpegang pada pelaporan faktual. Studi ini menekankan peran intertekstualitas dalam menjembatani fiksi dan kenyataan, memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana media membentuk persepsi publik terhadap skandal yang melibatkan kekuasaan, eksploitasi, dan keadilan.

Kata kunci: Burning Sun, Skandal Selebriti, Intertekstualitas, Taxi Driver

INTRODUCTION

Scandals are a topic that attracts attention from a diverse range of people which makes the scandals are adapted into documentaries or series. News often deals with scandals, which refers to news about actions or statements of individuals or groups that violate the law or ethics. Scandal also refers to the type of news that reveals unethical behavior and the public reaction to it. Public reactions, political trials, and legal investigations are triggered by the existence of scandals. Individuals and organizations affected by scandals usually react to protect their interests, such as reputation and social status (Tumber & Waisbord, 2019).

Scandals often involve high-profile individuals or groups, such as politicians, celebrities, or public figures, and can relate to a variety of issues such as corruption, infidelity, violations of the law, or actions that are considered embarrassing. Scandals can damage the reputation of the people or organizations involved and have a major

impact on their public image. Scandal, as investigated by Kurniasari (2011) is news involving actors from elite groups, both in politics and the entertainment world, which has always been a commodity with great potential to create markets and exchange value. Scandal controversies involving celebrities carry the aroma of market law, where the higher the level of demand, the more expensive the goods. A number of scandals from the elite often surface and penetrate the living room through the mass media. If the media does not discuss a scandal intensively, then it will certainly not be a priority of attention for the audience.

The *Burning Sun* scandal is a scandal that has galvanized South Korea and even the whole world. The scandal broke out on January 28, 2019, a scandal involving several celebrities and important figures in South Korea, one of which was the director of the *Burning Sun* club, the artist Seungri ex *BIGBANG*. Criminal acts that occurred in it include sexual harassment, molka or illegal photography especially in a sexual context without the consent of the victim, police collusion, and drug use and distribution. The occurrence of this scandal was very surprising to the public because not only one crime occurred in it. The huge public attention to this case attracted the attention of many media including the SBS drama production house where the *Burning Sun* case became one of the themes raised in the series of crime dramas of the second season of *Taxi Driver*, with several pseudonyms and additional plots this case discussed in 4 episodes out of a total of 16 episodes in the drama *Taxi Driver*. On the other hand, the major South Korean news portal BSS World released a documentary based on the *Burning Sun* case. Although both the *Taxi Driver* drama and the *Burning Sun* documentary refer to the same scandal, they belong to two distinct genres: fiction and documentary films.

Fictional films are defined as narrative works that depict imaginary events, characters, or settings, diverging from factual or historical accuracy. They serve as a medium for storytelling, utilizing visual imagery to convey complex themes and emotions, much like literature does through text. The interaction between fiction and film has evolved since the early days of cinema, with films often adapting literary works while also developing their own narrative forms (Subhani, 2023). In addition to being a form of entertainment, fictional films also function as powerful tools for social commentary and can shape public perceptions of critical issues (Cortese, 2018).

In contrast, documentary films are widely recognized as factual representations of reality. According to Smith and Rock (2014), documentaries are

produced with the intention of being perceived as factual accounts, in contrast to fictional films that focus on artistic narrative. Documentaries play a significant role in investigative journalism, utilizing research, on-location filming, and archival materials to construct impactful narratives (Shyngyssova et al., 2024).

Between the drama *Taxi Driver* and the *Burning Sun* documentary, there are several different things where the drama further developed the original story due to entertainment needed and for public consumption also changed the names of the actors in the drama. Whereas, the documentary presented the original story of the scandal in accordance with the facts and featured witnesses directly related to the *Burning Sun* scandal, such as the reporter who covered and investigated the *Burning Sun* case. An example of dramatization or additional stories in the drama *Taxi Driver* is one of the abusers in the drama named Victor, a celebrity punished by Kim Do Gi (*rainbow taxi driver*) by being taken to a scrap yard. While the documentary described the original facts where the perpetrator was sentenced to prison and made a public apology.

In previous studies, objects have been raised regarding scandals committed by Korean celebrities, explained in a study of Zulfie et al., (2023), this research discusses how the media distorts or manipulates news related to celebrity scandals, focusing on BIGBANG's Seungri. Although Seungri was not directly involved in criminal acts, the media created a false narrative by linking him to the *Burning Sun* scandal. This study reveals that media manipulation is often driven by political motives and can damage an individual's reputation. Storms et al., (2021) investigated how media in South Korea frame and portray perpetrators and victims of high-status sexual abuse. This research used the case study approach of *Burning Sun*. This investigation drew worldwide attention to popular celebrities who have used their influence, power, and wealth for sex trafficking, harassment, and extortion of women from lower socioeconomic status. Research that discusses the *Burning Sun* scandal in South Korea has been conducted by Saeji (2019), this article examines the *Burning Sun* scandal that has shocked the K-pop industry and South Korean society. The main focus of the discussion is the huge impact of this scandal on public image, gender, and social justice. The *Burning Sun* scandal was not only a case of celebrity misbehavior, but also included drug abuse, sexual harassment, and corruption among law enforcement officials. The research mentioned above has the same object as the writer will do, which is to raise the *Burning Sun* scandal in South Korea. While the topics used in previous studies are different from our research.

Research that has the same topic as our research has been conducted by Nuryani (2023). She investigated the use of deixis and intertextuality in the novel and film of *Little Women*, crucial to understanding character interaction and narrative structure. Research with similar topics was also conducted by Fathoni (2014) that discusses the comparison between two documentary films about the 2008 financial crisis, *Capitalism: A Love Story* (2009) by Michael Moore and *Inside Job* (2010) by Charles Ferguson. Both films raise the same issue but with different approaches. Moore physically appears as a performer director in his film and participates in interviews, while Ferguson presents interviews from various sources without appearing on screen. Meanwhile, in this research, the author will compare the *Burning Sun* scandal documentary released by BBC News World with the Korean Drama Series of the second season of *Taxi Driver*.

In the study of intertextuality between the drama *Taxi Driver* and the *Burning Sun* documentary. It appears that although many studies have analyzed the two works separately, no study has simultaneously discussed them in the context of in-depth intertextuality. Previous research tends to focus on individual aspects without considering the mutual interactions that may occur. Moreover, in the existing literature on intertextuality theory, there is no specific analysis that explores the interrelationship between *Taxi Driver* and *Burning Sun*. This suggests that research analyzing the narrative elements, characters, and themes of the two works is essential to generate broader meanings regarding issues about violence, understanding, and bribery that are relevant in modern society. By investigating the relationship, it is hoped that this research can expand the scope of intertextuality theory and provide greater insight into the representation of differences between fictional dramas and documentary films, as well as emphasize the importance of cross-media understanding in analyzing contemporary cultural phenomena. By studying this relationship, this research is expected to expand the scope of intertextuality theory, provide a broader understanding of how the differences between fictional dramas and documentary films are represented, and emphasize how important it is to understand cross-media to study contemporary cultural phenomena. The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the intertextualities of celebrity scandals found in the drama series *Taxi Driver* and the BBC News World documentary on the *Burning Sun* scandal. Intertextuality theory is used in this study to answer the research question:

What intertextualities of celebrity scandals are found in *Taxi Driver* and the *Burning Sun* documentary?

It will uncover intertextual relationships in the drama and documentary, such as similarities in the analysis of themes, characters, and events. It will show how each media incorporates elements of the *Burning Sun* scandal into its narrative.

The documentary used a factual story with interviews and first-hand evidence, but *Taxi Driver* enhanced the drama by using creative liberties such as fictional names and exaggerating storylines. This research employed the intertextual approach to uncover specific references and reinterpretations of scandal found in both works. It demonstrates how each drama production used the same elements from the same source, but altered them differently according to their own conventions and intended format.

Intertextuality, as studied by Worton and Still (1990), is an understanding that provides an understanding of the relationship between several different texts, where one text has a relationship with other texts that can influence meaning. Intertextuality according to Kristeva (1967), is a description of how several texts interact with each other, and each text formed is the result of the influence of the previous text. She also added that the meaning of a text is the result of social conditions that influence intertextuality in building a broader meaning relationship. Reffaterre (1990) adds that intertextuality consists of texts that are needed to find out the meaning in a work of literature, he emphasizes that the relationship between the content and form of texts is the key to literary works that show the relationship with the culture and thoughts of the people of their time. Frow (1990), argues that intertextuality is the link between a literary text and a social situation, provided that the text has a strong position to represent a certain social situation. The concept of intertextuality developed by Genette (1997) explains the various relationships between texts, by including intertextuality in certain categories such as hypertextuality and metatextuality. This provides evidence that intertextuality provides a broad understanding of the relationship of a text in a broader context (Worton & Still, 1990).

Intertextuality is a scientific concept that explains the relationship between texts, where texts will always have a relationship with other texts. In this case, Riffaterre (1990) divides intertextuality into two types, namely aleatory and obligatory. Aleatory intertextuality is a concept that explains how a text can be randomly connected to various other texts, without having to be tied to one particular

reference text. It can also be concluded that aleatory texts are additional texts that can exist without any influence from certain social situations. Readers can see connections with many other texts based on their memory or knowledge, without clear rules about which texts are relevant. Obligatory Intertextuality is the relationship between a text and other texts that are specifically required to be understood by the reader in order to understand the meaning of the text being read. This intertextuality requires the reader to pay attention to the hypogrammatic origin of the text, meaning that the text contains direct or implied references to other more specific texts. The reader cannot fully understand the text without recognizing the source or reference on which the text is based. This relationship is more explicit and essential to the understanding of the text being read (Worton & Still, 1990).

In his theory of symbolism, Baudrillard in (Benjamin, 1994) stated that celebrities are defined as symbols that represent societal values and aspirations. In this context, celebrities are not merely viewed as individuals with talent or achievements; rather, they serve as symbols of the image that society seeks to cultivate for a favorable impression. Through the media, celebrities have transformed into objects of adoration, creating a new reality in which society often associates their identities with the lives of celebrities, leading to the phenomenon of “cultural consumption”. The personal lives and public images of celebrities become commodities that are marketed and consumed, positioning them as representations of the broader desires and ideals of society. This occurrence prompts contemplation on how celebrities serve as reflections of social and cultural ideals and how their impact can greatly shape societal actions and tastes. Moreover, celebrities serve as sources of inspiration and reference, exemplifying traits that make them role models. Every action taken by a celebrity is infused with a favorable image that needs to be nurtured. Their activity on social media channels like Instagram and YouTube encourages engagement between stars and their fans, generating a sense of intimacy, despite the fact that these connections are fundamentally one-sided. An analysis of intertextuality within celebrity culture offers deep understanding of how their personas are shaped and perceived by audiences. When a famous person mentions classic movies or other cultural aspects, these allusions provide context and help create emotional ties that associate values with their persona. For example, a singer mentioning iconic songs can strengthen their artistic persona and showcase their link to a wider musical heritage, thus building a connection across generations. By grasping intertextuality, we can analyze how celebrities construct intricate narratives

that entertain, educate, and impact audiences, while also prompting additional discussions about media consumption and the individuals involved.

Scandal, as a cultural and social occurrence, centers on violations that infringe upon societal standards and ethical principles, frequently involving prominent figures, like celebrities (Tumber & Waisbord, 2019). When the media magnifies these misdeeds, they become pivotal to public conversation, revealing the inconsistencies between a celebrity's public image and their private behavior. In the framework of "Selling Celebrities: the Intertextuality of Celebrity Scandals in the *Taxi Driver* and *Burning Sun*", scandals are not merely standalone incidents; they are integrated into an extensive intertextual structure that connects past and present narratives of celebrity misbehavior, societal norms, and the media's influence on public opinion. This intertextuality allows new scandals to be contextualized within a history of similar incidents, engaging the public and shaping collective memory. For example, in the South Korean scandals linked to *Taxi Driver* and the *Burning Sun*, issues of exploitation and power misuse connect with worldwide discussions on celebrity wrongdoing and systemic corruption, highlighting wider social power dynamics, while their intertwined characteristics engage with well-known cultural norms, boosting the narrative's impact and marketability.

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative design. Qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meaning given by individuals or groups to a social or humanitarian issue (Creswell, 2014). This study uses a purposive sampling approach. According to Patton (2002), the purposive sampling approach emphasizes the selection of cases and data sources that are rich in information and capable of providing deep and essential insights into the research problem. In this study, the data sources used are from a South Korean drama titled *Taxi Driver*, which consists of two seasons. Each episode addresses different scandals or events. This study specifically focuses on episodes 11 to 14 of the second season, as it is only in these episodes that the *Burning Sun* scandal is addressed and represented, making them relevant to the focus of the study. This design was employed to explore the relationship and influence between two different texts, namely the drama *Taxi Driver* as a work of fiction and the *Burning Sun* documentary as a representation of real events. The data collected in this study are both textual and visual. Textual data were the dialogues in the documentary and in the drama

while visual data were images and scenes. Analysis was conducted on the narratives, dialogues, characters, and other visual elements related to the scandal in both media. This is to identify similarities, differences, or elements that indicate intertextuality. The data were analyzed by looking at the relationship between themes, plots, characters, and messages in the drama *Taxi Driver* and the *Burning Sun* documentary. Analysis techniques by Spradley (1997) were employed. Four phases of analysis were taken namely domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme. In the domain phase, the theory of intertextuality by Rifaterre (1990) was employed to reveal the types of intertextuality that connected the documentary and drama movies. In the taxonomy phase, the types of intertextuality comprised of aleatory and obligatory were further investigated to reveal which textual and visual elements of the documentary and the drama were related and unrelated. In componential analysis, the textual and visual elements that were categorized into plot and settings were investigated to reveal how aleatory and obligatory were present in those two elements. The findings in the componential analysis were connected to reveal the cultural themes evoked from the two films. The cultural themes might revolve around how the two movies intertextually signify the source materials of the scandal.

Table 1. The Intertextuality of Celebrity Scandals in the Drama *Taxi Driver* and *Burning Sun* Documentary

	Obligatory		Aleatory	
	Plot	Setting	Plot	Setting
Taxi Driver	✓	✓	✓	✓
Burning Sun Documentary	✓	✓	✓	✓

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The drama *Taxi Driver season 2* has a social justice theme, with the main characters, the *Rainbow Taxi* team, fighting to eradicate crimes that often go unpunished by the law. This research explores how the plot and setting of episodes 11 to 14 relate to the real case in the *Burning Sun* documentary, which features a fictionalized case relating to power exploitation, sexual abuse, drugs, and corruption. The purpose of this research is to find out how elements of the real case are adapted or changed according to the context in the documentary.

Obligatory

Obligatory is an intertextual relationship that must exist and is deliberately created by the creator of a work, the full addition of a new text will be strongly influenced by the reference text, so that the two works will complement each other to create a meaning

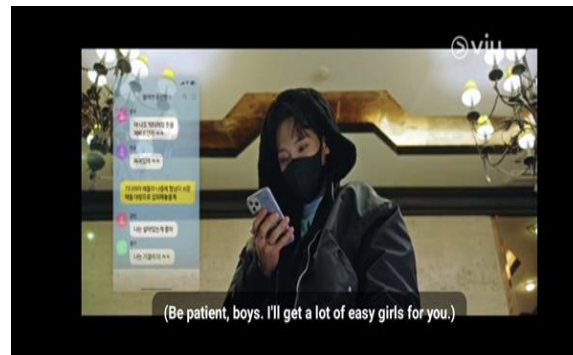


Figure 1. Planning the Exploitation of Women through Group Chat by Celebrities in the Taxi Driver Drama

Figure 1 is data found in the drama *Taxi Driver* season 2 that shows one of the characters in the drama *Taxi Driver* named Victor planning the exploitation of victims through text messages as a direct representation of the molka case that was at the center of the scandal in the *Burning Sun* documentary. In this scene, Victor's character is communicating with his colleagues in a group messaging app, expressing the intention to exploit or harass women who are considered "easy girls." This line depicts explicit sexual exploitation and reflects the same pattern of crimes revealed in the real *Burning Sun* case, where the perpetrators used text messaging as a tool to plan criminal acts and harass victims. The use of text messaging as a medium of communication in both works highlights how technology can be used for exploitation, and this makes the molka case an "obligatory" intertextual element that must be present because it represents the core part of the sexual exploitation case in the documentary. The presence of the molka case in both works shows that this element is an important basis that unites a work of fiction with social reality, reinforcing the critique of hidden sexual abuse and its profound impact on victims.

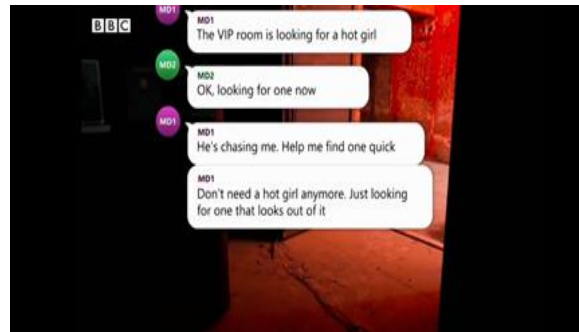


Figure 2. Planning the Exploitation of Women through Group Chat by Celebrities in the Burning Sun Documentary

Figure 2 shows what happened in the Burning Sun documentary, namely the illegal act of molka. The chat evidence above is one of the direct representations of the molka case which is at the center of the scandal in the Burning Sun documentary. Just as depicted in the drama, the perpetrators planned their crimes by joining a chat group. The discussion of women in the chat evidence is an act of exploitation of women. In the chat evidence "Don't need a hot girl anymore. Just looking for one that looks out of it", has proven the correlation between the drama Taxi Driver and the Burning Sun documentary. The sentence above describes how the perpetrator mistreated the victim and uses explicit language with the aim of exploiting the weaker party. This statement portrays women as weak objects in an unconscious state. The sentence reflects that the perpetrator seeks victims who are easy to manipulate and abuse. Overall, the sentence illustrates how the perpetrator possesses a dangerous mindset and degrades the victim's dignity as a human being.

In addition to the dialogue as evidence of sexual exploitation, the visual atmosphere in the Taxi Driver scene strengthens this intertextuality. The dark setting, with characters wearing masks in a dim room, adds to the atmosphere that implies an activity is hidden or illegal. This atmosphere is similar to the conspiratorial imagery in the Burning Sun documentary, which often shows nightclubs or private spaces as the main place where illegal activities are carried out. By presenting a similar setting, Taxi Driver provides a narrative of tension that gives a cinematic effect similar to the atmosphere revealed in the real scandal, this gives the audience a feeling of connection to a larger social event or scandal. Aside from being a plot element, the molka case in both works also functions as a social critique of sexual exploitation that targets women. In this context, women are often used as "easy targets" in a scandal, which intertextually criticizes the patriarchal culture that harms them. Thus, the molka case in the Taxi Driver and Burning Sun

documentaries is not just a narrative element, but also an embodiment of criticism of social structures and injustices that occur, its presence becomes an obligatory element that is important in building intertextual connections and emphasizing the social and moral relevance of the themes raised.



Figure 3. Using the Drug GHB on Victims through the Black Sun Club in the Taxi Driver Drama

Figure 3 above is a scene in a Taxi Driver showing one of the victims under the influence of illegal drugs, especially GHB. He is seen being carried by an officer from the Black Sun to be led to meet the VVIP guest who ordered or wanted the victim. This is a crime highlighted in the Burning sun documentary where a victim is given drugs to abuse. The same plot in both the drama and documentary shows that the data is intertextual obligatory or an event that is the same as the original event. Drug abuse is the core event raised in both works. The presence of drug abuse is highlighted in the Burning Sun documentary. Drug abuse made the scandal big as an illegal act done to harass women. This is an act that highlights illegal acts against women. This element is an important basis that combines social reality with fictional drama.



Figure 4. Former club employee recounts GHB drug use on victims in Burning Sun documentary.

Figure 4 shows the narration of a former Burning Sun club employee who stated that GHB drugs were used. The use of these drugs is to circulate and trap the

victims. This is similar to the plot in the drama *Taxi Driver* where in addition to drugs being circulated illicitly, it is also used to trap victims who are about to be harassed. The use of the same plot indicates the obligatory use of elements between the two works.

In addition to the same plot where the victim receives harassment after being given drugs. The setting used in the drama, a crowded club atmosphere, makes this the same as in the documentary. The victims who are given drugs are customers in the club. The unconsciousness of the victims depicted is a form of exploitation of women who are weak. Giving drugs to the victims to make them unconscious is an obligatory intertextual manifestation contained in the drama and documentary, emphasizing the relevance of the social deviations that occur.



Figure 5. The club reported the person who tried to expose their illegal operation in the drama *Taxi Driver*.

There is a clear relationship, especially in the representation of collusion between authorities and those with power, between the drama *Taxi Driver* and the *Burning Sun* documentary. In *Taxi Driver*, there is a scene where the police work together with the club to cover up the behavior of a VVIP visitor involved in an act of sexual harassment. The police, who are supposed to protect the rights of victims, suppress or delete evidence to protect the perpetrators who have power.



Figure 6. A reporter's voiceover reveals police collusion with the club to cover up illegal activities in the *Burning Sun* documentary.

Figure 6 is evidence in the documentary of police collusion to cover up the crimes of criminals. This mirrors the phenomenon in the Burning Sun documentary, where Burning Sun club officials engaged in collusion with the police to avoid or reduce the punishment they would have received for committing serious crimes. Both texts show how authorities can collaborate with power to cover up illegal acts and maintain a status quo that harms victims.

The intertextuality between these two works is obligatory as both reveal the impact of collusion between authorities and influential individuals in society that undermines justice and reinforces social inequality. In *Taxi Driver*, the main character seeks to expose the network of collusion between law enforcement and big clubs that cover up crimes. A similar theme is seen in *Burning Sun*, where collusion between club owners and the police allows them to escape punishment despite strong evidence of criminal acts. Both texts demonstrate the systemic injustices that enable sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as revealing the weaknesses of the legal system that the powerful can exploit.

Aleatory

Aleatory is an intertextual relationship that is coincidental, unintentional, or not necessarily present, it can also be an addition from the author in developing the text. The relationship between the texts can be found through the interpretation of the reader without direct connection to the reference text.

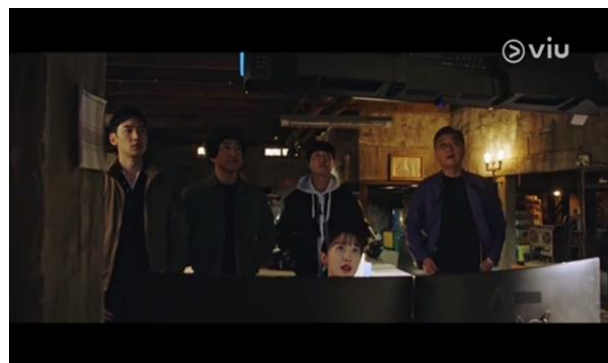


Figure 7. The Rainbow Taxi team discussing a case using modern technology in the drama *Taxi Driver*.

In the drama *Taxi Driver*, the Rainbow Taxi Team operates in a dramatic and action-packed style, using modern technology, on-the-ground investigations, and exciting battle tactics. The story follows the team's struggle to deal with complex inner conflicts as they attempt to investigate major acts of corruption, including scandals involving police, violence, and nightclub abuse. A variety of settings are used in the

drama, from the glamorous and mysterious setting of a nightclub to encounters in hidden locations that create an atmosphere filled with suspense and deep secrets.

Conversely, in the documentary regarding the Burning Sun scandal, attention focuses on a journalist who performs an in-depth investigation, gathering solid evidence from documents, recordings, and interviews with victims and witnesses. The narrative of this documentary highlights the difficult journalistic journey, encompassing threats, societal pressure, and intimidation that may be imposed by those in power. These documentaries often highlight interviews, public debates, and press briefings that depict the tension and opposition to injustice authentically. Despite their differing styles and approaches, both narratives share a common objective: to reveal the scandal of violence, *molka*, and prostitution within the entertainment industry.



Figure 8. The punishment for a celebrity Victor in Taxi Driver takes place brutally in a car dump.

There are differences in punishing criminals. In the drama Taxi Driver, figure 8 shows the perpetrator, a celebrity named Victor, proven to have been involved in sexual harassment and other crimes, being punished in an informal or unlawful way by the character Kim Do Gi who is a member of the Taxi Rainbow team. Victor is thrown into a car junkyard, reflecting the resolution of a case involving an act of justice outside of formal legal channels. This action illustrates the aleatory element of punishing non-criminals, where the perpetrator does not undergo a legitimate legal process, but instead receives retribution through means orchestrated by groups operating outside the system.



Figure 9. Police arrest Seungri ex BIGBANG in the Burning Sun documentary.

In the documentary *Burning Sun*, Seungri, a former member of the Kpop boy band BIGBANG, was convicted through a legal process in accordance with the law, despite obstacles such as delays in the investigation and allegations of collusion. He was eventually sentenced to 1 year and 6 months in prison. This representation reflects the reality of a justice system that works within the confines of legal institutions, although it still contains flaws.

This underlines the criticism of the legal system which is considered insufficient to provide a deterrent effect. The scene in *Taxi Driver* can be interpreted as an expression of society's hope that sex offenders will be punished more harshly than the formal legal system usually provides. The extrajudicial acts of revenge in the play reflect dissatisfaction with the justice system and a desire for more decisive and emotionally satisfying justice.

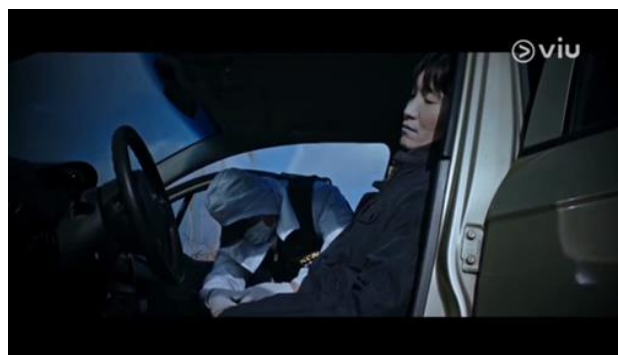


Figure 10. A policeman is found dead while investigating the Black Sun Club case in the drama *Taxi Driver*.

An intertextual study between the drama *Taxi Driver* and the documentary *Burning Sun* shows the challenges and dangers faced by truth-seekers. In *Taxi Driver*, a police officer's investigation into the Black Sun club ends with his death being fabricated as a suicide. This tactic demonstrates the powerful influence in

manipulating narratives and obstructing justice. The incident not only threatened the investigator's life, but also traumatized his colleagues and made it harder to uncover the truth. This case illustrates how power can intervene in the legal process through unexpected means.



Figure 11. Reporter's confession about the stress she faced while exposing the scandal in the Burning Sun documentary

On the other hand, the Burning Sun documentary features a journalist who tried to uncover the Burning Sun scandal, but had to face severe psychological stress due to intimidation and external pressure. The lengthy investigation process left her deeply emotionally traumatized and eventually led to severe depression that disrupted her health and led to a miscarriage. She is psychologically shaken by trying to uncover the truth of the scandal and faces emotional risks that are slowly coming her way. In the documentary, the physical risks are less apparent than in *Taxi Driver*, but the mental distress suffered and the dangers faced by those who challenge the ruling system are aleatory elements.

This difference underscores the aleatory element in both texts. In the drama *Taxi Driver*, the physical consequences of sabotage are often shown in brutal and deadly forms. The physical violence faced is due to fighting the powerful who do not hesitate to issue threats to protect their own interests. Meanwhile, in the Burning Sun documentary, the psychological risks experienced by journalists are deeply traumatizing and damaging to their mental and physical health. They investigated a huge celebrity scandal that took the K-Pop industry by storm, a bold move that not only sparked a public furor, but also jeopardized their own safety. It reveals that in the struggle to uncover the truth, one can face great risks and often get into trouble. This element of aleatory highlights how difficult it is to achieve justice when dealing with power structures that are capable of manipulating and intimidating anyone who seeks the truth.

CONCLUSION

The findings show that the drama *Taxi Driver* and documentary *Burning Sun* convey very different messages in depicting the handling of celebrity scandals. Through a fictional approach, *Taxi Driver* features aleatory, out-of-the-box actions, such as a unique mission involving a group of parents to thwart an illegal operation. This method feels freer, even creative, as if it wants to show a more emotionally satisfying form of justice. Meanwhile, *Burning Sun* as a documentary captures the real legal process, full of restrictions, complicated, and often hampered by political power and a legal system that is not entirely clean. However, *Taxi Driver* is still connected to reality through the element of intertextuality, as many of the stories are inspired by real cases such as harassment in nightclubs that are often hidden. The difference between the two is not only about the format of fiction and documentary but also about hope and reality. On the one hand, *Burning Sun* shows how difficult it is to seek justice in the real world. On the other hand, *Taxi Driver* gives room for imagination to portray a more assertive justice, as if it is an emotional outlet for people who are disappointed with the legal system. This combination shows that in the face of celebrity scandals, fiction can be a way to speak the truth that cannot always be voiced directly.

This research serves as a foundation for further studies that discuss the phenomenon of intertextuality in scandals or gossip circulating on social media, especially on famous gossip accounts. By analyzing the drama *Taxi Driver* and the documentary *Burning Sun* through the use of obligatory and aleatory elements, this research highlights how the creation of a fictional narrative often adapts real events and is popularized by the public. Through intertextuality, a work of fiction provides the audience with a critical understanding of reality or introduces additional elements that go beyond the existing facts. This finding opens opportunities for future research to examine how scandals or gossip are disseminated through social media, taking advantage of intertextuality elements similar to those in this study. Future research can also investigate whether scandals or gossip shared on social media represent credible real events or are merely adapted and amplified by fictional narratives in popular culture. This research serves as a theoretical foundation to analyze or study the intertextuality of scandals on social media, particularly in how fictional elements and reality influence each other to create scandalous discourse in the digital age that captures public attention.

This research provides practical benefits for scholars, critics, and audiences in understanding the boundaries between factual and fictional events dramatized from real-world events, such as police harassment and collusion depicted in the *Burning Sun* documentary and adapted into the drama *Taxi Driver*. Through intertextuality analysis, including obligatory and aleatory elements, this research identifies which story aspects directly relate to real events and which are fictional additions designed to enhance drama, such as the unique and creative actions of the *Taxi Rainbow* team. From these aspects, audiences can critically assess fictional works adapted from real events, while critics and scholars can explore how fictional narratives interpret and adapt real-life scandals without compromising the truth. Furthermore, this research can serve as a reference for writers and playwrights adapting real events, helping them balance factual and dramatic elements while preserving the essence of the original reality.

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