

Faktor Penyebab *Hikonka* dalam Drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*: Analisis Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce

Factors Causing *Hikonka* in the Drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*: Charles Sanders Peirce Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract

Fenomena *hikonka* di Jepang atau kecenderungan tidak menikah bagi kaum mudanya, telah menjadi isu sosial yang krusial di Jepang sejak 1950-an, yang mana banyak dipengaruhi oleh faktor sosial-ekonomi dan sosial-budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap faktor-faktor penyebab *hikonka* melalui drama Jepang berjudul *Kekkon Aite Wa Chusen De* (2018) dengan menggunakan metode semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce. Data yang dianalisis adalah narasi utama drama guna mengidentifikasi faktor apa saja yang dapat disinyalir penyebab *hikonka*. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa di dalam drama fenomena *hikonka* di Jepang dipengaruhi oleh kebijakan perijodohan yang dipaksakan oleh pemerintah Jepang untuk mengatasi penurunan angka kelahiran. Kebijakan yang maksudnya turut berupaya mengatasi *hikonka* ini justru berdampak sebaliknya, yaitu menimbulkan ketegangan sosial karena mengabaikan kebebasan individu dalam memilih pasangan hidup. Kedua, tampilnya karakter utama Miyasaka Tatsuhiko yang memiliki gangguan obsesif-kompulsif (OCD) seperti otaku dan introvert, yang mencerminkan bahwa terjadinya *hikonka* di Jepang dipengaruhi pula oleh kesehatan mental kaum mudanya. Ketiga, *hikonka* dipengaruhi pula oleh adanya individu yang memiliki orientasi seksual beragam yang

mengakibatkan sulitnya menemukan jodoh dan terlebih memenuhi tuntutan perjodohan yang dipaksakan pemerintah.

Keywords: Charles Sanders Peirce, Drama Jepang, *Hikonka*, *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*, Semiotics

Abstract

*The phenomenon of hikonka in Japan, or the tendency of young people not to marry, has been a crucial social issue in Japan since the 1950s, which is heavily influenced by socio-economic and socio-cultural factors. This study aims to reveal the factors causing hikonka through the Japanese drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de* (2018) using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic method. The data analyzed is the main narrative of the drama to identify what factors can be signaled as the cause of hikonka. The research findings show that the hikonka phenomenon in Japan via drama is influenced by the arranged marriage policy imposed by the Japanese government to address the declining birth rate. This policy, which is intended to help overcome hikonka, has the opposite effect, causing social tension because it ignores individual freedom in choosing a life partner. Secondly, the appearance of the main character Miyasaka Tatsuhiko who has obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) such as otaku and introvert, which reflects that the occurrence of hikonka in Japan is also affected by the mental health of its youth. Thirdly, hikonka is also influenced by the existence of individuals with diverse sexual orientations, which makes it difficult to find a mate and especially to fulfill the demands of arranged marriages imposed by the government.*

Keywords: Charles Sanders Peirce, Hikonka, Japanese drama, *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*, Semiotics

INTRODUCTION

Late marriage, also known as *hikonka* is a notable demographic trend in Japan, where individuals tend to marry later in life or choose to remain unmarried. This trend is shaped by a range of social, economic, and cultural influences. This phenomenon emerged around the 1950s, along with Japan's economic growth after World War II (Nuryatmini, 2018). At that time, Japanese people were more focused on working and less on marriage.

Hikonka (非婚化) is defined as choosing not to marry. Kanji *hi* (非) means negative (-non) or not, kanji *kon* (婚) means marriage, and kanji *ka* (化) means change or anomaly. So *hikonka* is further defined as a change in society that chooses not to marry. *Hikonka* and *bankonka* are phenomena that have been studied quite extensively. Research generally aims to reveal the factors that cause it. A dominant factor is socio-economic factors. This factor is shown for example in the form of declining job quality among young men, especially men with low incomes, leading to delayed marriage. The economic burdens associated with marriage and childcare, such as the cost of childcare and the lack of adequate services, are also factors that prevent couples from getting married (Raymo & Iwasawa, 2005; Date & Shimizutani, 2007; Iijima & Yokoyama, 2018; Matsuda, Sasaki, Shin, & Bae, 2024).

The second factor is socio-cultural, for example the changes in gender roles since the late 1980s, which created different expectations between men and women, have also contributed. Many individuals, especially highly educated women, choose to live with their parents, who delay marriage due to limited domestic responsibilities and lower living costs (Raymo & Ono, 2007; Yoshida, 2010). Another example is that delaying marriage and having children is often seen as a form of resistance to patriarchal norms. Many young women are challenging traditional roles by prioritizing their career and personal goals (Tokuhiko, 2009).

This research shares similarities with previous studies, which aim to identify the factors contributing to the *hikonka* phenomenon through the Japanese drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*. The drama was produced in 2018 and directed by Ishikawa Junichi. The drama largely depicts how people in the modern era prefer to live alone, despite government intervention. What distinguishes this study from previous studies is that it tries to find the causative factors of *hikonka* through verbal and non-verbal signs or markings depicted in the drama. By revealing how *hikonka* is portrayed in the drama this research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of *hikonka* and the factors that influence the decision not to marry in modern Japanese society.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of revealing the factors that cause *hikonka* in the drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*. The research stages were carried out as follows: First, data collection. Primary data in the form of storylines and main story ideas that dominate the drama were collected through listening to the drama from episodes 1-8. These were only two primary data analyzed, namely the storyline related to the “matchmaking law via lottery” and that related to the main character's response to the law. Second, the analysis stage was carried out using the semiotic method theorized by Charles Sanders Peirce, including analysis of the three elements of the sign: representamen (marker or sign), object, and interpretant. Third, the results of the analysis are then described and discussed with the results of previous research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research borrows Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic analysis method. Semiotics is the interdisciplinary study of signs and sign processes (semiosis), which includes the creation, use, and interpretation of signs and symbols in communication. It has its roots in philosophy, logic, and linguistics, and has developed into a significant approach to analyzing contemporary culture and communication. The goal of semiotics is to explore and analyze how signs and symbols are used to convey meaning in various contexts (Hamel, 2011; Jensen, 2015; Sobur, 2019).

Peirce says that anything can be a sign—such as a word, picture, or object—as long as someone thinks it represents something else (Dahlström, D. (n.d.)). In other words, these objects only have meaning when they are interpreted as signs. Peirce emphasizes that the meaning of a sign is formed through the relationship between three elements: representamen, interpretant, and object.

- Representamen: The form or symbol of a sign that can be a word, picture, object, or other phenomenon that can be captured by the five senses that represents an object.
- Interpretant: The cognitive process performed, or the meaning produced by the interpreter (observer) based on the representamen (Hoed, 2014). A sign must be perceived and have a function as a sign so that it can represent something else (Fiske, 1990).
- Object: The thing represented by the sign, i.e. the actual thing or concept referred to by the representamen (Semetsky, 2005; Smith, 2005; Lukianova, 2020).

These three elements have a reciprocal relationship with each other. If depicted, the following chart will be obtained.

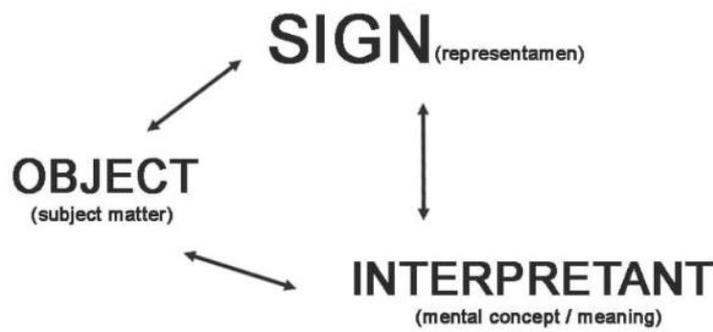


Figure 1. Triadic model of sign (Media Studies. (n.d.)).

Meanwhile, the sign or representamen itself consists of three types: icon, index, and symbol.

- An icon is a type of sign that represents an object due to its resemblance or similarity. For example, a portrait is an icon because the visual representation resembles the object being depicted. Other examples include pictures, metaphors, and so on (Farias & Queiroz, 2006).
- An index is a sign that represents an object because of a causal relationship with the object without the need to be similar (Wang, 2019). For example, an image of a “collapsed house” can represent a natural disaster.
- A symbol is a sign that represents an object through social agreement or convention, or the culture that surrounds it. This is generally no similarity between symbols and objects (Wang, 2019). For example, the word “tree” represents the object of a tree. The word “tree” has nothing in common with the real shape of a tree but is used to represent a tree because of a mutual agreement, and this is free.

An example of the application of Pierce's semiotic model in revealing a process of signification/semiosis, for example, when we hear the word “Apple”, it can be analysed as follows:

- 1) Representamen: the word “Apple”. This writing is a symbol because it does not directly represent the apple object.

- 2) object: in this case, a real apple as a physical object that can be felt, eaten, and identified (because it generally is).
- 3) interpretant: the interpretation of the representamen (the word "apple") and the object represented (apple) based on individual experience and context. Individuals may interpret when they hear the word "Apple" to no longer refer to the fruit, but rather the brand name of computers, cell phones, or various gadgets that reflect sophistication and luxury. But another individual may interpret it as a real apple. All of this is arbitrary depending on the context and cognitive structure of the individual.

In the drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*, the entire storyline in visual, verbal, and non-verbal forms can be a sign that reflects the factors that cause the *hikonka* phenomenon in Japan. When analyzed with Pierce's semiotics, the analysis process will be carried out in the form of:

- Representamen analysis, which identifies what visual, verbal and non-verbal signs appear in the drama that imply or represent *hikonka*.
- Object analysis is analyzing what objects are represented by the representamen.
- Interpretant analysis is analyzing what meanings or interpretations can be generated from the representamen.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

***Hikonka* phenomenon in Japan**

The phenomenon of *hikonka*, or refusing to marry in Japan, is one of the social issues that has received considerable attention in recent decades. This phenomenon reflects the changing attitudes and behaviours of individuals towards the institution of marriage in Japan, influenced by a variety of factors ranging from social, economic, and cultural factors. This trend is particularly noticeable among young men and women. These are several factors that cause them to delay or even reject marriage.

One of the main factors influencing the *hikonka* phenomenon is economic factors, especially in terms of employment and income (Matsuda, S., Sasaki, T., Shin, J., & Bae, J., 2024). In Japanese society, unstable employment conditions and low annual income, especially among men, have become major barriers to marriage. Men who do not work for a regular company, or as a freelancer (precarious profession), or who have a low income tend to delay marriage longer than men who have a regular job with a more stable income. In addition, higher education also plays a major role in delaying marriage. Women who have a high level of education, especially those who graduate from university, are more likely to marry later or even remain unmarried due to not finding a man with an equivalent or higher level of education (Uchikoshi, 2018).

In addition to economic factors, changing social and cultural norms have also contributed to the increase in the *hikonka* phenomenon. In the past, Japanese society culturally emphasized the importance of marrying at a young age, but now social pressure to marry at a certain age has decreased. This provides an opportunity for individuals to prioritize personal and career freedom, which in turn reduces the desire to marry (Nemoto, Fuwa, & Ishiguro, 2013). Despite this, traditional family values still have a strong influence in Japanese society. This conservative family system sometimes creates a kind of tension between the younger generation's pursuit of career and

personal freedom and the culturally-traditional demand for family building (Kobayashi, Mládek, Širocková, & Kobayashi, 2006).

Personal desire to marry also plays an important role in the *hikonka* phenomenon. Although most unmarried individuals express a desire to get married, the reality is that many of them are unable to realize it. This is due to rigid social demands on the one hand and the inability to build a romantic relationship and find a serious partner on the other. In the end, they prefer to be single because they feel no urgency to do so (Raymo, Uchikoshi, & Yoda, 2020; Yu & Hara, 2023). In addition, the culture of traditional gender division of labour, such as men working and wives doing domestic work, is still quite strong. Not everyone, male or female, wants to be bound by this social construction (Nemoto, Fuwa & Ishiguro, 2013).

Demographic changes have contributed to the rise of *hikonka*. One of them is the increase in the number of people who choose to live single throughout their lives, especially among women. This trend is partly due to changing perceptions of households and marital relationships, making individuals feel more comfortable building new relational spaces and social lives that are less tied to the traditional concept of marriage (Fukutake, 1988; Dales, 2014; Kottmann, 2022).

Synopsis of Drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*



Miyasaka
Tatsuhiko



Nana
Fuyumura

Figure 2. The Drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de* and the Main Actors
Source: (MyDramaList, (2018))

The drama *結婚相手は抽選で* / *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de* / "Life Partner Chosen by Lottery" is an adaptation of the novel by Miwa Kakutani, with 8 episodes of 55 minutes each, airing from October 6 to November 24, 2018 on Tōkai TV, part of the Fuji TV network. The story is set in a Japan that is facing a demographic crisis: a declining birthrate and an increasing number of elderly people. As a solution, the Japanese government passed a controversial law known as *抽選見合い結婚法* / *Chosen miai kekkonhou* / "Marriage by Lottery Act", which requires single men and women aged 25 to 39 to participate in blind dates organized by the government. Each person can reject their partner twice, but a third rejection will lead to a mandatory two-year stint in the Counterterrorism Activities Support Force.

The drama focuses on two main characters named: Tatsuhiko Miyasaka (Shuheji Nomura), a 26-year-old male engineer living in Tokyo who suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder due to childhood trauma, and Nana Fuyumura (Rin Takanashi), a charming woman who works at a radio station and lives with his family. Miyasaka feels alienated from women and has difficulty interacting with the opposite sex, so he becomes entangled in the government-enforced “Marriage Lottery” system. In this system, dating partners are randomly selected, and Miyasaka meets a variety of characters, including the cold and secretive Nana.

As the story progresses, Miyasaka begins to oppose the law by writing blogs and forming an opposition group called “ASBE.” The group attracts the attention of the public, especially young people, and brings about a major change in the social view of the law. Miyasaka also began interacting with Kitakaze, a gay man who teaches about LGBT issues, and Hikari, a journalist who was instrumental in revealing the facts about the law. Together, they developed a proposal to revise the law.

However, the relationship between Miyasaka and Nana remains fraught with tension. Although Miyasaka tries to overcome his obsessive-compulsive disorder, he remains reluctant to open up to Nana. Nana, who begins to open his heart, is disappointed that Miyasaka continues to avoid his. Along the way, various characters also struggle with their internal conflicts, such as Konomi, who has rejected three arranged marriages and now lives in a mountain village, and Arashi Nozomi, who is still shackled by his past feelings.

The play ends with social change depicting a positive step in the fight against the injustice of the matchmaking system, yet the characters' personal relationships still continue with challenges and self-reflection, showing that while the system may change, understanding and relationships between individuals take time to develop (Tokai TV. (n.d.)).

Pierce's Semiotic Analysis of the Drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de*

From all 1-8 episodes, there are two important story topics or events that dominate the story and can reflect the causes of *hikonka*, which are as follows:

- The emergence of the “lottery matchmaking law”.
- Tatsuhiko Miyasaka's character problems in responding to the “lottery matchmaking law”.

The emergence of the “lottery matchmaking law”

Representamen and object analysis

It is said in the drama that the Japanese government enacted the “Marriage by Lottery Law” with the main purpose of addressing the problem of declining birthrates and aging population. This law is considered controversial by the characters in the play as it forces men and women in Japan between the ages of 25 to 39 who are unmarried and have no children to be randomly paired up through a lottery.

The pair selection process is randomized with an allowable age range of ± 5 years from the participant's age. In addition, each participant has the right to reject the selected partner twice. However, if they reject the couple for the third time, they will be forced to join the Antiterrorism Activity Support Force for two years, a punishment that sounds absurd to many. The Japanese government, through the Special Minister of the

Cabinet Office, Onodera Yukiko, announced the implementation of this law with an open explanation to the public through the media.

This law represents the object, which is the reality that Japan is facing the problem of an aging society, a declining birthrate, and a declining number of young people who are interested in marriage. It is expected to encourage them to marry and have children, while improving the demographic conditions of Japan, which is filled with an aging generation. However, the existence of this law has been met with many pros and cons, creating a sharp debate among Japanese society.

Supporters of this law argue that Japan is facing a serious demographic crisis, with a very low birth rate and an aging population. They believe that by organizing arranged marriages through lotteries, more couples will be formed and the birth rate could increase, making a positive contribution to the country's social and economic conditions. In addition, for some people who have difficulty finding a partner, such as otaku or those with past traumas, this law is seen as an opportunity to find a life partner, albeit randomly. For some politicians such as Onodera Yukiko, the implementation of this law is seen as a move to boost their political careers, seeing it as a solution to a pressing social problem.

On the other hand, many people oppose this law on the grounds that personal freedom and human rights are infringed upon by having to fulfil the obligation to marry through a lottery. Many feel that marriage is a personal decision that should be based on free choice, not through a random lottery that can interfere with individual freedom. Some people, such as one of the play's protagonists named Miyasaka Tatsuhiko, who has obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), feel that the law exacerbates their psychological problems as rejecting unsuitable partners repeatedly causes emotional strain and trauma. In addition, the law is also seen as an example of a law that can hurt people, ruin their personal lives, and exacerbate existing social problems. These are also economic issues associated with the implementation of this law. The government will have to spend a large budget to deal with the increase in the number of people who have to join the Counterterrorism Activity Support Force after being refused a match three times, prompting concerns about budget waste.

After the enactment of this law, there was resistance from aggrieved groups, including Hikari, a freelance journalist, and Tatsuhiko, who started blogging to voice his disapproval of the law. They formed a resistance group called ASBE (Asupi) and used social media to gather support from the public and propose revisions to the law. Their efforts began to gain public attention, especially from young people who increasingly disagreed with policies that were considered detrimental to personal freedom.

After several months, Minister Onodera announced several changes to the policy, including exemptions for people who can find their own life partners and the termination of the matchmaking process if participants have health problems or illnesses. Nonetheless, these revisions are still considered insufficient by resistance groups who continue to fight for further changes.

Interpretive analysis

The representations of the controversial yet strange and unique lottery marriage law in the drama can be interpreted to mean that Japan is facing a serious problem. The

implementation of the “Marriage by Lottery Law” shows that Japan is frustrated and worried about the problems of declining birthrate, aging population, and declining interest in marriage among the younger generation.

In recent years, Japan has had one of the lowest birth rates in the world. This leads to the major issue of a lack of a young workforce that can support economic growth, as well as an increased burden on a social security system dominated by the elderly. This law, targeting the young unmarried generation, is expected to be a solution to the problem. Organizing random matchmaking is considered a way to speed up the marriage process and encourage more couples to have children.

However, while the aim of the law was positive, i.e. to improve the demographic situation, the means chosen led to many protests and opposition from various walks of life. One of the main issues raised by opponents was the infringement of personal freedom. Random arranged marriages imposed by the state were seen as denying the individual the right to choose his or his own life partner. The concept of marriage, which should be based on personal will and feelings of love, turns into an obligation driven by state intervention. The existence of arranged marriages through lotteries shows the existence of social control and the state's attempt to regulate the domestic territory of its population in the form of coercion in choosing a partner for marriage. A law that seeks to solve social problems in “instant” ways.

As depicted in the drama, one of the characters, Miyasaka Tatsuhiko, who has obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), felt the severe psychological impact of the lottery. Repeated rejection of unsuitable partners can worsen his mental state, causing emotional strain and trauma. This illustrates how this policy can worsen the psychological state of individuals who already have emotional or mental problems. In the real world, Japan does have a high population with mental health disorders, especially among young people who feel pressured by social demands and expectations to marry at a certain age. Enacting laws that force marriage can exacerbate social tensions and create new psychological problems, further worsening the mental health conditions of the younger generation.

In addition to issues of individual freedom and psychological impact, this law also raises economic concerns. The Japanese government will have to incur huge costs to cope with the increasing number of people who reject their spouses more than twice and are forced to join the Antiterrorism Activities Support Force. This raises questions about the wastefulness of the state budget. Is the money spent to implement this policy worth the desired result of increased birth and marriage rates? The high operational costs and the imbalance between costs and benefits are issues that are hard to ignore, especially amidst the economic difficulties faced by many young families in Japan.

Of course, the existence of this law sparked strong reactions from various groups. In the real world, Japan has many organizations and individuals who are active in fighting for individual rights and personal freedoms. In the drama, characters like Hikari and Tatsuhiko lead the fight against this law, setting up resistance groups that use social media to gain support. This reflects a very real phenomenon in Japan, where social movements and activism are gaining ground, especially among the younger generation who feel that their freedoms are being compromised by government policies that are overly interventionist in their personal lives.

The changes announced by Minister Onodera, such as exemptions for those who can find their own spouses, as well as the termination of arranged marriages for those with health problems, indicate pressure from resistance groups. Despite revisions in the policy, not all problems were solved, and tensions remained, reflecting social dissatisfaction with the policy. This can be interpreted as a society caught between the need to maintain demographic stability and the right of individuals to determine their own path in life. This polemic reflects the tension between traditional values and the modern challenges faced by young Japanese in dealing with marriage and family.

Tatsuhiko Miyasaka's character problems in responding to the "lottery matchmaking law"

Representamen and object analysis

Miyasaka Tatsuhiko is an introverted engineer with obsessive-compulsive tendencies who has trouble adapting to the lottery matchmaking law. As someone who suffers from social anxiety, he feels extremely distressed and uncomfortable with the idea of matchmaking involving strangers and based on criteria that are difficult to fulfil. When he first participated in the matchmaking process, Tatsuhiko felt very nervous and even pessimistic, as seen when he met the first potential partner who rejected him without a clear explanation.

Tatsuhiko faces some major obstacles in participating in this matchmaking process. As an *otaku*, he had great difficulty interacting with women, even in matchmaking meetings. His awkwardness and confusion often hampered his interactions, and he always felt rejected—both directly and through unreasonable excuses. For example, the first match rejected him simply because of the *anime* background image on his phone, while another match judged character incompatibility without giving a clear reason. In addition, Tatsuhiko's obsessive-compulsive habits, such as washing his hands repeatedly and carrying his own spoon and fork, further alienated him and made him awkward in social interactions.

Scepticism towards lottery matchmaking grew stronger as time went on. Tatsuhiko felt frustrated and began to doubt the effectiveness of the law, even writing a blog expressing his disappointment and doubt. The blog became a space for Tatsuhiko to voice his feelings, and soon after, he discovered that there were many others who felt the same way. Support poured in from many quarters, including a senior who regretted getting married just to avoid an arranged marriage through a lottery and a journalist named Hikari, who was also sceptical of the policy.

These feelings of anger and disappointment prompted Tatsuhiko to take further steps. He became increasingly active in writing about the "Victims of the Lottery Marriage Law" and met many people who felt burdened by the policy. With the support of his friends such as Hikari, Kitakaze, and Hirose, Tatsuhiko decided to submit a legal revision proposal to the government to protect individuals who felt forced into this arranged marriage process. During this journey, Tatsuhiko also explored the rights of sexual minorities after learning that Kitakaze was gay. This opened his eyes to the injustices experienced by LGBT people, who were also affected by this policy. As a form of resistance, they founded an organization called ASBE (Asupi), an association of opponents of the law to further promote public awareness and fight for change.

Finally, Tatsuhiko's long struggle paid off. The government announced a revision to the "Matchmaking by Lottery Act" with new rules that provide protection for individuals with impaired health or illness, by stopping the matchmaking process under those conditions. This revision was a major victory for Tatsuhiko and his friends, who had been fighting for a fairer change to the system. On the personal side, although Tatsuhiko was confused about his feelings for Nana, he eventually began to open up to the fact that lottery matchmaking was not the right way to find a life partner. Through his struggles, he managed to overcome his obsessive-compulsive anxiety, even when it came to hygiene, which had been a huge obstacle for him. Tatsuhiko's journey was one filled with uncertainty and resistance to an unfair system. However, he eventually found the awareness and courage to fight for change that benefits many.

Interpretive analysis

From what is seen in the drama, the storyline and scenes can be interpreted with certain meanings. There are several meanings that can be revealed from the representations of the main character Miyasaka Tatsuhiko's response to the Japanese government's "lottery matchmaking law".

Tatsuhiko's *otaku* and introverted character reflects a growing social phenomenon in Japan, where many young individuals prefer a world of fantasy and solitude to real social interaction, especially when it comes to relationships with the opposite sex. Tatsuhiko's obsessive-compulsive traits, such as his habit of washing his hands repeatedly or bringing his own cutlery, can be interpreted as an inability or difficulty in adapting to existing social norms. This implies a larger problem among Japan's younger generation, who are predicted to have many psychological or social disorders that make it difficult for them to interact in personal relationships, leading to the *hikonka* phenomenon.

Tatsuhiko's resistance to the government's policy of arranging arranged marriages through lotteries also reflects the younger generation's resistance to the Japanese government's rules that are considered authoritarian or incompatible with their personal wishes. This reaction implies that there is a gap between the policies made by the government and the social reality faced by individuals in Japan. The policy, which aims to find a solution to the *hikonka* phenomenon, is counterproductive and can actually exacerbate the *hikonka* problem because instead of creating legitimate relationships, it adds social pressure. The rejection of this policy shows that marriage is not an obligation or a mechanical procedure that can be imposed, but rather the result of complex human feelings and interactions. In this context, Tatsuhiko's resistance also reflects that top-down policies can be counterproductive if they do not take into account the social and psychological dynamics of society.

Tatsuhiko's decision to fight for change by founding an organization to oppose the law also carries significance. It is not just about opposing the arranged marriage policy, but also about raising awareness of the injustices and problems experienced by minority groups such as the LGBT community. Here, we can see that the issue of marriage and social relations in Japan does not only revolve around heterosexual couples, but also involves broader issues of sexual orientation. As views on sexual diversity become more open, individuals of different sexual orientations face difficulties in living a legal married life, exacerbating the social conditions that lead to *hikonka*.

Through Peircean semiotic analysis, it appears that Tatsuhiko's character not only illustrates personal challenges in establishing social relationships, but also reflects larger social dynamics in Japan, where the tendency to avoid marriage or difficulties in forming romantic relationships is influenced by many psychological factors, social policies, as well as changes in views towards sexual orientation. All of these factors contribute to the increasingly widespread phenomenon of *hikonka* among Japan's younger generation.

Causal Factors of *Hikonka* between Drama and the Previous Research

The drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de* illustrates the phenomenon of *hikonka* with several main causes, such as the forced matchmaking policy, the psychological impact on individuals with mental disorders, incompatibility in character and social life, and dissatisfaction with the impersonal matchmaking process. Meanwhile, scholarly research explains the *hikonka* phenomenon with an emphasis on economic factors, changing social and cultural norms, personal desire to marry, social construction of gender, and demographic changes.

Some of the contributing factors to *hikonka* depicted in the drama, but not explicitly addressed in scholarly research, are the policies of forced matchmaking through lotteries. In the drama, this policy exacerbates social tensions and creates individual disapproval of marriage, which clearly leads to the phenomenon of *hikonka*. However, this factor is more specific and fictionalized in the context of the drama, which is not found in broader social research on the phenomenon of marriage in Japan. The same goes for the psychological impact on individuals with mental illness. The character of Tatsuhiko who has OCD, which is further exacerbated by the forced arranged marriage policy, becomes a more emotional and psychological element. Although mental and psychological disorders can affect social relationships, the scientific research that has been done has focused more on external factors (economic, social, cultural) rather than individual psychology in the context of *hikonka*. In addition, the drama also addresses the difficulties of dealing with social injustice and sexual orientation. Issues of sexual orientation and discrimination against minority groups, such as the LGBT community, are an important part of the drama's narrative, contributing to the *hikonka* phenomenon. These issues are more related to social injustice and difficulties in finding a partner that matches sexual identity, but are not widely discussed in research on *hikonka* in Japan.

While there are some similarities between the drama and scientific research, the striking difference lies in the context and emphasis of the issue. In scientific research, economic factors such as unstable employment and low income, as well as educational issues, are among the main reasons behind the *hikonka* phenomenon. However, the drama focuses more on the impact of the forced matchmaking policy, which is more of a socio-political issue, and is more emotional as it involves the characters of individuals with psychological disorders. The scientific research did not touch directly on the arranged marriage policy or legislation system, which was heavily emphasized in the drama. In addition, research emphasizes a decrease in social pressure to marry, which leaves room for individuals to prioritize careers or personal freedom, where drama is more about dissatisfaction with policies governing marriage and an emphasis on character incompatibility. In this case, the drama depicts characters who avoid marriage

due to psychological factors such as OCD disorder and difficulties in social interaction, which may not be emphasized enough in research that focuses more on social and economic factors. Research covers the personal desire to marry and the difficulty in finding a suitable partner, but does not delve as deeply into the psychological factors that deteriorate relationships or prevent individuals from building healthy relationships, as depicted in the drama.

To what extent do the factors depicted in the play *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de* reflect Japanese reality? The phenomenon of lottery matchmaking policies or forced systems, although fictitious, reflects social tensions towards marriages that are overly directed by norms or policies. Although there is no such policy in Japan, there are realities of social tensions related to marriages that are not based on personal compatibility, such as the *omiai* (traditional arranged marriage) phenomenon that still exists in some Japanese cultural contexts. Meanwhile, the play vividly depicts how mental illness can hinder a person in a relationship, which is quite relevant to the reality in Japan.

Many young Japanese people face difficulties in social interaction, which may be caused by conditions such as *hikikomori* (social isolation) or other mental disorders. This phenomenon reflects the broader reality in Japan of difficulties in establishing social relationships due to psychological disorders. The difficulty in building relationships due to character incompatibility also reflects the reality in Japan, where many young couples face incompatibility in their relationships. Most individuals prefer to delay or not get married because they do not want to be tied down in a relationship that does not meet their expectations or compatibility.

The main difference between the causal factors of *hikonka* in drama and research lies in the emphasis on imposed social policies and psychological factors in drama, while research focuses more on broader economic, social and cultural factors. Although the drama introduces more emotional and fictionalized factors, some elements, such as psychological disorders and difficulties in social relationships, are quite reflective of the reality that existed in Japan. However, dramas provide a more dramatic and specific picture, while scientific research covers more general and broad factors.

CONCLUSION

The drama *Kekkon Aite wa Chusen de* portrays the phenomenon of *hikonka* through a variety of more specific emotional and social factors, which can be analyzed in the context of the lottery matchmaking policy imposed by the Japanese government. This policy aims to address serious demographic issues such as the declining birthrate and aging population, as well as tackle the younger generation's declining interest in marriage. However, the implementation of this randomized matchmaking system created social tensions. The policy, which attempts to control the domestic lives of its citizens, has led to a rejection of individual freedom in choosing a life partner. Although this is a fictional story, the phenomenon depicted reflects people's dissatisfaction with the state-enforced marriage system, which in turn exacerbates the *hikonka* phenomenon.

In addition, the main character, Miyasaka Tatsuhiko, who has obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), reflects the deeper psychological impact of this policy. The repeated rejection of partners that do not match his preferences worsens his mental state, leading to difficulties in forming healthy relationships. This phenomenon shows how a

forced matchmaking policy can worsen an individual's mental health, especially for those who already have emotional problems. It also reflects the existence of psychological disorders, especially among Japan's younger generation, who are increasingly pressured by social expectations to marry at a certain age.

The character of Tatsuhiko, who is an otaku and introvert, also illustrates the tendency of the younger generation of Japan to avoid social interaction, including with the opposite sex. This shows an increase in social isolation and interest in fantasy worlds, which are increasingly popular among young individuals. Tatsuhiko's obsessive-compulsive disorders, such as the habit of washing his hands repeatedly or bringing his own cutlery, further hinder his ability to adapt to social norms. This phenomenon shows that psychological disorders and difficulties adapting to social relationships can exacerbate the *hikonka* phenomenon.

Tatsuhiko's resistance to the lottery matchmaking policy reflects the younger generation's dissatisfaction with government policies that are perceived as authoritarian and incompatible with their personal values. This reaction reflects the gap between imposed government policies and the social realities faced by individuals. This policy, which aims to address the *hikonka* phenomenon, exacerbates the problem by imposing marriage as a social obligation, rather than as the result of a natural and mutually agreeable personal relationship.

Finally, Tatsuhiko's decision to found an organization to fight against the arranged marriage law also reflects the importance of social awareness of injustice, including issues of sexual orientation. The play also raises the issue of sexual diversity, showing that difficulties in finding a life partner are not only experienced by heterosexual couples, but also by the LGBT community. This injustice further exacerbates the *hikonka* phenomenon, as individuals of different sexual orientations face difficulties in forming a legal marriage.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

This study was approved by the institution.

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