



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/ijam.v4i4>
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Trump's Policy of Increasing Import Tax Rates: Reception Analysis

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Abstract: This study discusses the reception of lecturers regarding the latest policy news from the President of the United States (US) Donald Trump which was published in the national media in April 2025. Trump issued a policy of increasing import tax rates for foreign countries importing goods into the US. Even though the global situation is not conducive with a series of conflicts between countries, Trump insisted on raising it. The problem is how lecturers accept Trump's policy of increasing import tax rates. This research aims to explain their reception of Trump's new trade tax policy. This research uses a qualitative-descriptive method through an analytical study of Stuart Hall's reception with three elements; domination, negotiation, and opposition. As the subject of the study, interviews were conducted with informants consisting of lecturers in Jakarta. The results of this study show that most private lecturers in Jakarta are in opposition to Trump's economic policies rather than negotiation and domination. The significance of this research is that there is a spirit of nationalism for every citizen.

Keyword: News, Media, Trump's Policy, Reception Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The President of the United States (US) Donald Trump released a new policy in the economic sector in April 2025. Trump announced an increase in import tariffs of at least 10% for all imported goods entering his country's market. The increase in tax rates applies to imported goods for every country that has trade relations with the US (Purwanto, 2025).

Trump stated that the new policy aims to create "trade balance" between the US and countries with which it has unfair trade relations. He also stated that this policy was a form of retaliation against countries deemed to be burdening US trade through higher import tariffs. Various countries are also affected by the plan to implement the policy of increasing tax rates. Trump realized it but no choice for US economic progress.

According to Rasyid et al., (2025), the US government's policy has been to increase import tariffs as a form of trade war between the US and China since 2018. Trump wants to

reduce the US trade deficit with China by increasing the obligation to import Chinese products. Apart from several countries, Indonesia also had an impact with an increase of up to 32%. Data from Nurmamurti et al., (2016) shows that in 2017 China's export value reached USD 236 trillion while beating the US with an achievement of USD 1550 billion, thus supporting Trump to increase import tariffs.

Trump's trade policy attracted the attention of the mass media through global news because it has high news value. News is Harcup & O'Neill (2017) said that high news value encourages mass media to present news such as magnitude, prominence, effect, progress, conflict and so on. The mainstream media presents this policy in various news programs, interviews, discussions and talk shows. The media invites related parties to respond to Trump's trade policies. They provide views and assessments of the impacts caused by the policy.

Mainstream media in Indonesia also reported on the latest US government policies. Every time the public reads or watches news broadcast on television, media portals, newspapers, radio or other media platforms. Since its release in April 2025 until now, news about Trump's policies continues to appear in the media. In fact, it has become a topic of discussion for various parties in the country. The public and the wider community want to know more about the developments and impacts caused by this policy. Ramli (2024:6) said that information disruption encourages the public to express opinions on social media.

One group considered still critical of Trump's policies is university lecturers. They are educated people who find it important and interesting the influence of Trump's policies on the world. They have a critical and analytical view of the policy for the first quarter of 2025. Moreover, Indonesia was also affected by Trump's ambition to win the US's global economic competition with China.

As an element of communication, lecturers are active audiences who respond to the stimuli around them. Receiving messages from news broadcast by the media is called a reception. For audiences, the ability to receive these messages varies. Reception analysis views people as being able to produce their own meaning of messages from the texts and videos they watch (Shaw, 2017) context of this research, lecturers are not a passive group when interpreting a message in the news but actively respond.

Reception analysis uses an encoding or decoding model to explain that the same message can be formed and interpreted in various ways. The main focus of this model is that readers have different responses according to their respective religion, ethnicity, age, education, gender, occupation and abilities (Abrar et al., 2022). Utami & Lestari (2017:29) said that analysis reception is a study which focusing on production, meaning, and readers experience during their interaction with the media to get interpretation, conformity, and allegiance.

Readers are aware that media has the ability to create reality. Field realities can be different and change from media realities. Burger and Luckam (in Eriyanto, 2012) state social construction through mass media. An event can be constructed by mass media so that it presents a social media reality. Reality does not just happen but is also shaped by the media.

Media readers are considered as victims on the one hand, and on the other hand as owners of rights. They have the right to make choices regarding the news they receive. Hall (1997) said there are three types of readers that can be used in reception analysis of media messages. First, dominant-hegemonic position, namely the news reader receives the message and agrees with the text of the media message. Second, negotiated position is related to the reader receiving the message but not yet agreeing or rejecting the text message. Third, oppositional position is the opinion of readers who do not accept the message text and reject the message.

Research on the policy of increasing US import tariffs for other countries was carried out by Rasyid et al., (2025). The study questioned the impact of US policy on Indonesian

exports to the US as well as recommendations for steps that Indonesia should take. So far, Indonesia and the US have built good trade relations. The US is Indonesia's export destination, especially textiles, footwear, furniture, processed rubber and electronic products. This trade relationship is running stable and contributing to the economic progress of both countries. However, since the "trade war" between the US and China occurred in 2018, Indonesia has also been affected. Indonesian goods entering the US market are subject to a 32% tax.

The data approach uses qualitative-descriptive with literature study methods. The aim is to describe the current situation with this policy. The type of data used is secondary data through library materials related to research. The object is to discuss the factors that caused President Donald Trump to release a policy of increasing import tariffs and the impact this had on Indonesia's exports and trade balance.

As a result, Trump's policies had a serious impact on the collapse of the Indonesian economy. Then Indonesian products were unable to compete with other products in the US market. Meanwhile, the steps taken by the Indonesian government are diplomatic engagement with the US, trade concessions, regulatory reform, economic deregulation and economic impact assessment.

Megawati & Daspar (2025) also discussed the impact of an increase in US import tax rates on fisheries between Indonesia and US. Trump's policy is a serious threat because export costs to the US are increasing, product competitiveness in the US market is decreasing, and access to the US market is limited. This study focuses on opportunities and threats after this policy, especially in the Indonesian fisheries sector in international trade. The results show that the threat that arises is accusations of antidumping and imbalanced import tax. Other threats are reciprocal tariffs and US protectionism and social and legal issues related to Indonesian migrant fishermen. Besides it, competition between other countries. It concludes that Trump's policy has had a very significant impact on Indonesia. Trump's policy automatically reduces export volumes and

Ariestyani & Ramadhanty (2022) studied social media audiences' reception of young people's sexual health. By using Stuart Hall's theory of reception analysis, this study questions how young audiences respond to the content of the @tabu.id Instagram account? The aim is to determine the audience's reception through the elements of dominant hegemonic position, negotiated position and oppositional position towards sexual education messages on the Instagram account @tabu.id. The methodology was designed with a qualitative-descriptive data approach through in-depth interview techniques. The study subjects were informants who were selected based on the researcher's criteria and research objectives. They are followers of the Instagram account @tabu.id who are active on social media. They responded when they were active on social media in the period May to July 2022.

This research concluded that most informants responded positively to the content presented on the Instagram@tabu.id account. This is caused by informants adapting media messages to their culture, viewpoints and experiences. Furthermore, the informant also agreed with the content of the message broadcast even though there were still parts of the message that were not in line with the informant's opinion. As viewers of the Instagram account @tabu.id, they consider that the content statements that appear are not in line with Indonesia. Meanwhile, negative responses also stated that there was no impact caused by the content. They just watch it as an ordinary spectacle.

Siregar et al., (2022) discuss student receptions in response to news about Anies Baswedan as a presidential candidate (capres) in the 2024 Presidential Election. This study questions the public's political views through media that carry political messages. The aim is to analyze students' reception of news about Anies Baswedan as a presidential candidate in the 2004 presidential election. Using a qualitative data approach and reception analysis methods,

the results of this research show that students have different opinions in responding to political news in the media.

In accordance with Hall's three elements, students who take a dominant-hegemonic position argue that Anies Baswedan is the best presidential candidate in Indonesia. Students who have a negotiated position attitude do not want to be careless in determining the future leader of Indonesia. They are being extra careful in selecting the 2024 presidential candidate. Meanwhile, students who take an oppositional position firmly reject Anies Baswedan because he is considered incapable of being President of the Republic of Indonesia. The conclusion of this study is that student receptions are divided into three choices regarding news about Anies Baswedan in the 2024 presidential election.

This study concludes that student references have a big influence on the reporting of Anies Baswedan as the 2024 presidential candidate. The references in question are background, level of education, religion, ethnicity and culture. Students consider the mass media to be an interested party so that the editorial staff will adjust the news according to the media's agenda. Therefore, they are careful in absorbing information sourced from the mass media.

Abrar et al., (2022) studied the reception of religious values through the film "Tanya Questions" using a qualitative data approach. To reveal the constructivist paradigm of the film "Tanda Tanya", this study using Stuart Hall's reception conducted an in-depth interview with director Hanung Bramantyo. Then, to find out audience acceptance, researchers also interviewed three viewers of the film. Data analysis techniques: collection, analysis and interpretation of data. The conclusion of this research shows that in general there is the same reception between the director and the audience regarding the value of religious tolerance. However, there are also values that are not in accordance with the norms regulated in religious life. This film is a reference in building the value of tolerance. Differences do not reduce respect and mutual respect between each other.

Based on this description, this research will examine the reception of lecturers regarding Trump's policy of increasing import tax rates. Meanwhile, the objective is to explain the lecturers' reception of Trump's new import trade tax policy for Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative data approach. Creswell (2015) stated that qualitative research design presents data in a natural and complete manner that comes from the field. The subjects of this study are private lecturers in Jakarta. Meanwhile, the object is news about the policy of increasing import tax rates in the US which is published on various media platforms.

Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with private lecturers in Jakarta. Structured interviews are important to be focused (Ramli, 2025:42). Widyaningrum & Yumarnamto (2020:54) said informants are a group who are free to interpret media messages. As informants, they are not passive objects who simply receive information. Instead they are active objects that select every piece of information they receive. They sort out which information is useful and which is not useful for them. Informants were selected and carried out using a purposive sampling technique, namely selecting them based on criteria created by the researcher according to the research objectives (Rachmat, 2022). Researchers chose lecturers who were considered to know and understand Trump's policies. They follow developments in global information, especially those related to Indonesian affairs.

Table 1. Interview Informants

No	Name	University
1.	Gunawan Baharuddin, Ph.D	Universitas Pancasila, Jakarta
2.	Nasrullah Nara, M.Si	Universitas Multimedia Nusantara Jakarta
3.	Mustaqim, M.Si	Universitas Ibnu Chaldun Jakarta
4.	Dr. Artyastyo Jatisidi	Universitas Budi Luhur Jakarta
5.	Dr. Muhammad Nuh	Stikom Interstudi Jakarta
6.	Dr. Yuri Alfrin Alladin	Universitas Nasional Jakarta

Source: researcher data

There are three stages in analyzing research data, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming data that appears in interview transcripts, field notes, documents, and other empirical materials. Reception analysis examines how lecturers construct meaning out of the news presented by the media. News presents meaning through reception after the texts have been read, seen or heard, listened to and then analyzed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was carried out using a qualitative-descriptive method by explaining the reception of university lecturers regarding news about US President Donald Trump's economic policies. Trump raised import tariffs on foreign goods entering the US trade market. Using interviews, researchers explored private lecturers' reception of news about Trump's policies in the media. The researcher chose by purposive sampling the lecturers according to the researcher's criteria. Following are the results of the study.

Trump's policy has sparked global tension because many countries are affected by the US President's decision. Trump's policy resulted in world organizations starting to consider anticipatory attitudes that would occur in the future. This view was explained by Gunawan Baharuddin, a lecturer at Pancasila University, Jakarta, in the following quote:

"President Trump's aggressive import tariff policy is known as the "Liberation Day Tariffs". These tariffs include increases of up to 145% on goods from China and universal tariffs of 10% on all imports to the US. This has fueled global trade tensions. In response, many countries, including APEC members, the European Union, and Southeast Asian countries, are strengthening multilateral cooperation and seeking trade alternatives to reduce dependence on the US." (14 May 2025)

Meanwhile, Yuri Alfrin Alladin, a lecturer at Fikom at the National University of Jakarta, said that Trump's import tariff policy of various percentages would disrupt global supply chains as well as reduce the volume of international trade. Prices of imported goods in the US increased, triggering inflation and suppressing the purchasing power of US consumers.

"Developing countries, including Indonesia, certainly face the risk of high inflation and currency weakening. This policy triggers a retaliatory response from other countries, and will even worsen trade tensions between China and the US. China has increased import tariffs from the US to 84%, while the US is 125% from China." (15 May 2025)

Meanwhile, Mustaqim, a lecturer at Ibnu Chaldun University, Jakarta, stated the following:

"Trump has accused countries like China of unfair trade practices, including intellectual property theft and subsidies for their industries. By imposing high tariffs, he hopes to force these countries to change their policies and create fairer trading conditions for the US." (19 May 2025)

Artyastyo Jatisidi, a lecturer at Budi Luhur University, said that US policy is also related to the US and China trade war, as in the following quote.

"Trump wants to protect US national industry and reduce the trade deficit, especially with China. This is a domestic political strategy as part of the US fight stance" (22 May 2025)

Meanwhile, Nasrullah Nara, a lecturer at Multimedia Nusantara University also expressed a similar view as in the following excerpt.

"Protect the US from unfair trade practices that are influenced by political motives of aggressive negotiation strategies as per the principles implemented by the US, namely The Art of the Deal." (16 May 2025)

Reception of Lecturers

In the reception aspect, based on interviews with university lecturers in Jakarta, the following is an explanation of Hall's (1997) theory with its three elements.

Dominant Hegemonic Position

The policy of increasing import tax rates in the US is seen as President Trump's tactical step in the interests of his country. The uncertain global trade situation prompted Trump to take important decisions. The lecturers assessed that Trump's steps had a reason because the US wanted to protect its country's market from open market attacks. Pancasila University Jakarta lecturer, Gunawan Baharuddin stated the following:

"Trump's main motive is to reduce the US trade deficit, protect domestic industry, and suppress China's increasingly strong power in global trade. The US considers China's trade practices unfair, such as intellectual property theft and forced technology transfer." (16 May 2025)

Meanwhile, Mustaqim, a lecturer at Ibnu Chaldun University, Jakarta, stated the following:

"Reducing the trade deficit and encouraging domestic production. Trump argues that the United States has been harmed by the unfair trade practices of partner countries, leading to large trade deficits. By imposing high tariffs, he hopes to reduce that deficit and encourage companies to produce goods domestically, creating jobs, and reducing dependence on imports." (19 May 2025)

The lecturers' statements show that Trump's policy is a logical effort carried out for the US economic mission. They believe that Trump took this policy for the reason of saving US trade from the global economic situation. Trump significantly increased import tariffs to improve and stabilize US trade.

Negotiated Position

Hall stated that the negotiated position element is a "compromise" to receive information broadcast by the media. Some lecturers

Lecturer at Multimedia Nusantara University, Jakarta, Nasrullah Nara as follows:

"Conduct negotiations with the US Government to find mutually beneficial solutions and reduce tariffs. Expand trading partners and accelerate the downstreaming of natural resources to increase the added value of export products. Strengthen domestic consumption and increase domestic investment to reduce dependence on export markets. The government needs to accelerate alliances with non-US markets and take advantage of regulatory loopholes in international trade agreements to maintain national economic stability." (16 May 2025)

Furthermore, a similar view was expressed by Muhammad Nuh, lecturer at Stikom Interstudi Jakarta as follows:

"What the Indonesian government must do, in this situation, is to open up space to carry out strategic repositioning, as has been done by Vietnam and Thailand. The strategic repositioning carried out by Indonesia includes Indonesia being able to attract investment from companies that want to avoid high US tariffs by improving logistics infrastructure and increasing ease of doing business. Indonesia can open new markets in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East to reduce dependence on American and Chinese markets. Indonesia can

increase the competitiveness of national industry by investing in technology and developing human resources." (17 May 2025)

Similar to other lecturers, Mustaqim, a lecturer at Ibnu Chaldun University, Jakarta, said that a bargaining policy is needed as in the following excerpt:

"The Indonesian government certainly needs to renegotiate to create healthy international trade competition, as well as reduce the rate of inflation in the country due to Trump's policies. However, Indonesia also needs to take another strategy through diversification. It is important to expand export markets to other countries to reduce dependence on one market. This diversification effort is also to maintain the survival of Indonesia's domestic industry." (19 May 2025)

Apart from renegotiation, Mustaqim, a lecturer at Ibnu Chaldun University in Jakarta, also encouraged innovation in production that will be marketed abroad, as quoted below:

"We must continue to innovate in the products we market so that we can have strong competitiveness with products from other countries. Improving product quality and adopting environmentally friendly technology can increase competitiveness in the global market." (19 May 2025)

Oppositional Position

Most lecturers admitted that Trump's policies had a big impact on Indonesia through policy adjustments. This was conveyed by a lecturer at Multimedia Nusantara University, Jakarta, Nasrullah Nara as follows:

"The US's imposition of a 32% tariff on Indonesian products has had a significant impact on sectors such as automotive, electronics, textiles and footwear. The Indonesian Footwear Association (Aprisindo) is concerned about the cancellation of orders and a decline in exports of up to 50%, which could lead to a wave of layoffs." (16 May 2025)

Pancasila University Jakarta lecturer Gunawan Baharuddin added:

"Even though it is not the main target of the US tariff strategy, Indonesia still feels the impact through global supply chain disruption and market uncertainty. The 32 percent increase in tariffs by the US on several countries, including Indonesia, affected the competitiveness of Indonesia's exports, especially in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors." (16 May 2025)

Artyastyo Jatisidi expressed a similar view. Lecturer at Budi Luhur University Jakarta with the following quote:

"For Indonesia, the impact is quite pronounced. Some of our export products are more expensive in the US because they are subject to tariffs, so they are less competitive. But on the other hand, there is also an opportunity: we can fill the empty market because Chinese products are restricted from entering there. Regarding the 32% tariff, it makes our exporters think hard. Many are starting to shift their export destinations to other countries such as India, the Middle East, or even focus on the ASEAN market. But the challenge also comes from Chinese goods which cannot enter the US and in the end many are diverted to Asian markets, including Indonesia. This could be a challenge for our domestic industry." (22 May 2025)

Meanwhile Mustaqim, Lecturer at Ibnu Chaldun University Jakarta stated the following:

"President Trump's 32% reciprocal tariff has had a negative impact on Indonesian exports to the US, especially in sectors that are highly dependent on the American market. This policy creates challenges in Indonesia's international trade, encourages market diversification, and opens up space for diplomacy and trade negotiations." (19 May 2025)

Muhammad Nuh, lecturer at Stikom Interstudi Jakarta, expressed a similar opinion as follows:

"The impact of Trump's import tariffs on Indonesia is quite significant, especially in the aspect of decreasing exports of automotive, electronic, textile and clothing products which can reduce the competitiveness of Indonesian products in the United States market. Apart from that

there will be a slowdown in national economic growth, this will result in labor-intensive sectors such as textiles and clothing may experience a decline in demand, thereby increasing the risk of mass layoffs." (17 May 2025)

Meanwhile, Yuri Alfrin Alladin, a lecturer at Fikom at the National University of Jakarta, admitted that Trump's policies sparked retaliation, negotiations and trade strategies. The quote is as follows:

"The big motive is economic protectionism with the geopolitical goals of the United States." (15 May 2025)

In general, the reception of private lecturers in Jakarta is a response to the news presented by the mass media, especially at the beginning of the news in the April 2025 edition. Based on Hall's theory of reception through its three elements, namely dominant hegemonic position, negotiation position and oppositional position, news of US President Donald Trump's policy of increasing import tax rates is received by lecturers as a policy that is more inclined towards an oppositional or opposite position. They consider this policy problematic because it has a greater negative impact on many countries than the US.

Especially for developing countries, they will have difficulty penetrating the US market because of these strict policies. They are reconsidering their export policy to the US due to the inability to pay the new US tax rates. Instead of spending money on taxes, they bring in money from taxes. Rusiyati et al., (2025) said that developing countries focus on taxes as a source of state income

For them, US partner countries are a hassle because they have difficulty trading with the US. Imported goods from manufacturers that will enter the US market are hampered, which has an impact on the country's foreign exchange. Whereas previously, it was not difficult for these exported goods to penetrate the US. The requirements given by the US government were fulfilled according to regulations established by previous US leaders.

However, several private lecturers in Jakarta also tend towards dominant hegemonic position elements. They consider Trump's policy to be taken as a mere step to save the US. Currently, the US national economic situation is difficult, forcing Trump to adopt unpopulist policies for his trading partners. In accordance with his political jargon "Make US great again" during the last presidential election campaign, Trump bravely went against the grain on global trade policy. For Trump, the main interests of the US must take precedence over the interests of other countries.

Among other lecturers, the element of negotiation is also another option. They suspect Trump is playing politics because the reaction of his trading partners will be ambivalent. There are those who strongly reject this policy, but there are also those who accept it. In the end, leaders of other countries will negotiate with the US government to find a solution to this policy. In this position, Trump politically and economically has the upper hand because he is the party who benefits.

Among Hall's elements, this research describes that private lecturers in Jakarta tend to be oppositional rather than supportive and negotiating. The reason is, they consider the nationalism factor above all else. For them, the interests of the country must take priority over other interests. US President Donald Trump chose to prioritize his country's interests as a form of his nationalism as a US citizen. His policies are for the American people. Moreover, Ginting (2025:498) said Trump is a US president with any various controversial policies.

On the other hand, the large opposition of university lecturers in Jakarta to Trump's policies shows the side of their nationalism towards their country. Their reception "against" Trump's policies is proof of nationalism towards Indonesia. Thus, the news about Trump's policy of increasing import tax rates is a representation of nationalism.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that university lecturers are more likely to reject (oppositional position) the news about US President Donald Trump's policy of increasing import tax rates. They have the common sense to analyze media reports with a background in the academic world. Even though the media raises polemics over this trade policy, they act as part of Indonesia. There are those who accept (dominant position) because they understand that Trump's decision is aimed at protecting the US economy. Trump must show his commitment to US prosperity as he promised in the election. Meanwhile, the compromise (negotiation position) shows Indonesia's attitude not to remain silent on this policy but rather to take a stand. The negotiations are in the form of diversifying export markets, encouraging domestic investment, and increasing the competitiveness of national industry.

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