

New media audience and gender perspective: A reception analysis of millenials interpretation

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Abstract

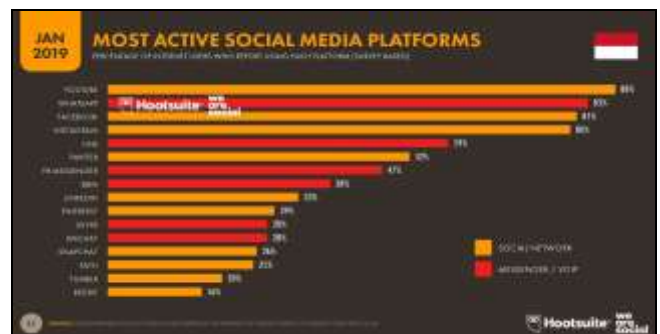
The purpose of this study is to analyze audience interpretation of gender meaning in You Tube content. Jovi Adhiguna is a beauty influencer who has a lot of beauty content on the YouTube and Instagram media. Jovi has been already well-known name among young people in big city cities. He is a man who become a beauty influencer. In fact in Indonesia, male beauty influencer is not a most welcomed profession rather than female influencer. One standard for measuring media audience uses reception analysis. This analysis tries to give meaning to the understanding of media texts (print, electronic, Internet media) by comprehending how public the media text characters read. The active role of audience in interpreting the premises of Stuart Hall's Encoding / Decoding Model is the basis of reception analysis. Reception analysis is used as methodology in this researach with focus group discussion as data collection technique. The results show that the formulation of the text meaning in the video of Jovi Adhiguna's is mostly in the dominant position. It means that the suitability of meaning between the video and audience in this case has high similarity meaning if compared to that in the negotiation and opposition.

Keywords: gender meaning, YouTube, audience, and reception analysis

1. Introduction

New media specifically refers to computer technology that emphasizes the form and cultural context that use technology, such as in art, film, commerce, science and above all Internet (Atkin, Hunt, & Lin, 2015) [2]. Digital media is a trend to the freedom of technology itself as a medium characteristic or digital technology reflection (Workman, 2014) [30]. New media development actually refers to change in media production process, distribution and use. New media cannot be separated from some key terms, i.e. digitality, interactivity, hypertextuality, dispersal and virtuality (Thomas, 2011) [28]. In the digitality concept all digital media processes are converted into numbers and therefore, the output is in a kind of online sources, digital disks or memory drives. Otherwise, these will be changed and received on a monitor screen or in the form of "hard copy". The interactivity concept refers to the opportunity when text in new media can provide users to 'write back into the text'. The concept of dispersal in new media definitely refers to the production process and media distribution becomes decentralized and highly individuated. New media limits are often equate with digital media. These should refer to the context and concept of contemporary culture than media practice and a set of technologies itself (medium) (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2016) [17]. Social media includes a variety of internet-based and virtual-interactive applications whether these are sharing media such as youtube or social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, linkedln, askfm, path, and others (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2012) [15]. The services that each application provides differ and it makes each services superiority. In general, however, services social media services cover chatting, messaging, videos and photos sharing, posting sharing, discussion forums, blogs, and others (Workman, 2014) [30]. Youtube is a website that provides a variety of

videos that range from video clips to films and videos that YouTube users make themselves (Hu, Manikonda, & hampKambati, 2014). Youtube is the only one website that provides the most complete videos of event, music, clips, news recordings and others. Youtube remains a group with Google. Therefore, when we have a Google Mail email account, we can directly log into the youtube website and use the space (place) that YouTube provide to save our video collection. Moreover, the videos that we have saved can be opened freely. Automatically other people can access, download and play these videos directly (streaming) (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014) [25]. Youtube was founded in February 2005 by 3 former Paypal employees Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jewel Karim. Youtube has been accessible from 25 countries and available in 45 languages in 2010 (Drell, 2010). With the ease of access and the spread of users, it is definitely undeniable that Youtube has a big influence in advertising activities due to its promotion media. Many users promote personal works of some production results and self-art skills, such as singing.



Source: indonesiaeconomicforum.com

Fig 1: Social Media Mostly Used in Indonesia, 2019

Vice is one of the journalistic media that focuses on young people is actively posts its content on Youtube platform. The portals the target audience is mostly for young people under 30 years of age and millennial generation. This media focuses on contents that promotes new talent, art, and hidden stories about diversity. Through its news coverage, VICE presents different news from other media. While other media present news as many as possible, VICE presents news in depth. VICE presents news objectively and it does not incorporate subjective opinions into news made with the perspective of young people.



Fig 2: Vice's Video Display Jovi Adhiguna's Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real

In July 2018, VICE's video with the title of "*Jovi Adhiguna's Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real*" was uploaded to YouTube and 357,067 viewers have watched it. There are only 207,000 VICE's subscriber. This video tells the story of Jovi's life as an Androgyny actor in his daily life and how he gets a lot of negative stigma from the community and how he overcomes the the negative stigma. Jovi Adhiguna is a beauty influencer who has a lot of beauty content on the Youtube and Instagram media. Jovi has been already well-known name among young people in big city cities. He has a unique characteristic. He is a man who become a beauty influencer. In fact in Indonesia, male beauty influencer is not a most welcomed profession rather than female influencer. Moreover, the research on relationships between media and audience is a major concern for media industry, academicians and media observers and social problems. Media can be individual stimuli to enjoy the presentation of messages or programs displayed. Media content is able to become discourse among audiences and it is interesting because viewers or audiences are able to construct meaning according to the text and context. One standard for measuring media audience uses reception analysis. This analysis tries to give meaning to the understanding of media texts (print, electronic, Internet media) by comprehending how public the media text characters read. The active role of audience in interpreting the premises of Stuart Hall's Encoding / Decoding Model is the basis of reception analysis: (1) the same events can be sent or interpreted in more than one way. (2) The message always contains more than one potential reading. The purpose of the message and the direction of the reading do exist, but it will not be able to close only into one reading: these remain polysemic (in principle it still allows variations in interpretation). (3) Understanding messages is also a problematic practice. However, it looks transparent and natural. Sending messages in one direction definitely will always be accepted or understood in a different way (Morley, 2003) [2]. The messages in the mass media are a

combination of various complex signs. In this matter, "a preferred reading" has been determined but it remain potential to be received in a way that differ from how it has been sent previously (Rashid, Rahman, & Butt, 2017) [24]. In the reception studies, the preferred reading is interpreted as the dominant meaning offered in the text. In the reception studies, as individuals analyze the media they will focus on their experience and audience (readers), and how meaning is created through the experience (Briandana & Ibrahim, 2015) [4]. The most important theoretical concepts of the reception analysis is that the media text - audience / readers or television programs - is not the meaning inherent in the media text, but the meaning is created in its interaction between the audience (readers) and the text. In other words, meaning is created by watching or reading and processing media texts. The objective of this research is to analyze audience interpretation of gender meaning in sponsored YouTube content.

2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

2.1 New Media

The existence of Internet raises the term of new media (New Media). It is a form of media communication technology and the existence appears along with the development of digital technology (Dogruel, Joeckel, & Bowman, 2015) [6]. The difference between this new media and conventional media is that new media exceeds conventional media in terms of speed, quality and performance. Bennet categorizes new media into Internet, mobile phones, streaming technology, wireless networks and information sharing capacity through the World Wide Web (WWW) (Workman, 2014) [30]. Therefore, what it is called new media is born when the media convergence is introduced (Gourlay, Hamilton, & Lea, 2014) [9]. This is in line with Lievrouw and Livingstone's thinking that distinguishes the characteristics of new media with old media into three aspects, i.e.:

1. Recombinant. New media is the results of continuous combination between existing technologies and new innovations, in a technical and institutional network that connect each other. The forms and types of new media continue to branch out, combine and develop.
2. Networked. The characteristics of new media is decentralized and two-way communication. New media users are interconnected and can function as senders and recipients of messages, or both at once. Ubiquitous. New media technology is designed as a personal tool or accessory that provides access to various individual content or communication services wherever the users, services, or resources are located.
3. Interactive. New media gives users the means to selectively select, search and share content, and to interact with other individuals and groups, on a larger scale with more practically than traditional mass media.

2.2 Reception Analysis

The most important theoretical concept of reception analysis is that the media texts of audience or readers or television programs is not the meaning attached to the media texts, but these are created in the interaction between the audience (audiences or readers) and the texts. The premise of the reception analysis is that the media texts get the meaning at the reception time, and that audiences actively produce meaning from the media when they accept and interpret the

texts according to their social and cultural positions. In other words, these are created when they watch or read and process the media texts (Pastina, 2005) ^[23]. The reception theory has the argument that contextual factors influence the way of the audiences view or read media, such as films or television programs. The contextual factors include elements of audience identity, audience perceptions of films or genres of television programs and production as well as social, historical and political issues (Silverstone, 1994) ^[27]. According to Stuart Hall, the research on audience has direct attention to analysis in the social and political context in which the media content is produced (encoding), and the consumption of the media content in the context of daily life (decoding) (Nightingale, 2003) ^[22]. "The reception analysis focuses on individual attention in the mass communication process (decoding), i.e. in the process of meaning and deep understanding of the media text, and how individuals interpret media issues." This can mean that individuals actively interpret the media texts by giving the meaning to their understanding according to what they see in their daily lives. The decoding stages occur in the process of producing meaning and sharing with others. In the social context, the media consumers tend to conceptualize media as a representation rather than as a source of information (Morley, 2003) ^[21]. The use of the reception analysis theory as the supporter in the research of audiences actually not only wants to place audiences passively but also seen as a cultural agent. It has its own power in terms of producing meaning from various discourses that media offers. The meaning in the media can be open or polysemic. Moreover, public can respond it critically.

2.3 Characteristics of Active Audience

It is considered that the audiences are active participants in constructing and interpreting the meaning of what they read, hear, and see according to the cultural context. Media content is understood as part of a process in which common sense is constructed through readings and it is obtained from images and language texts. Moreover, the meaning of media texts is not a transparent feature but the product of interpretation conducted by readers and audiences (Briandana, 2016). The active role of the audience in interpreting media texts can be seen on the premises of Stuart Hall's encoding / decoding model and it is the basis of the reception analysis. The media texts usually direct the meaning of the audiences in the desired direction. To know the dominant meaning that the media offer, we can make the internal structure analysis of the media texts (Briandana & Ibrahim, 2015) ^[4]. The audience may make alternative readings and these can differ from the meanings that the media has offered. Usually, differences in meaning arise due to differences in social position and / or cultural experience between readers and media producers. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch describe five basic elements or assumptions of the uses and gravity theory approach (Morley, 2003) ^[21]. The approach explains a frame of mind about when and how different audiences of the media become more active or less active and what consequences will arise and can increase or decrease audience involvement in media content.

2.4 Gender and Androgyny

According to Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, the definition of gender is the difference between men and women in roles, functions, rights,

responsibilities, and behaviors formed by social, cultural and customary values of social groups that can change according to time and local condition (Melhern, Morrell, & Tandon, 2009) ^[20]. Gender is something that is done and displayed (Hafkin, 2002; Kang, 2012; Schafer & Thierry, 2015) ^[26]. According to Gauntlett (2003) ^[7], the concept of gender is a trait inherent in men and women who are socially and culturally constructed. The formation of differences in gender roles is because it is formed, socialized, strengthened and constructed socially or culturally through religious and state teachings. Although male gender relates to masculine gender and female gender with feminine gender, the link between sex and gender is not an absolute correlation (Vehviläinen & Brunila, 2007) ^[29]. Differences in roles between men and women are the causes of socio-cultural factors. Therefore, the gender roles are the results of social formation and these can change in different times, conditions and places and allow the roles of men and women to be exchanged (Hafkin, 2002) ^[11]. The viewpoint on how the role of the relationship between a man and a woman should be associated with cultural culture and it is called gender role ideology (Alvares, Krijnen, & Van Bauwel, 2011) ^[1]. Ghadially believes that understanding sex and gender gets influence from culture and language (Ghadially, 2007) ^[8]. Therefore, gender can be defined as a belief in the individual self in choosing and living the role of feminine and masculine roles conditioned by the social world (Melhern *et al.*, 2009) ^[20]. The concept of androgyny is the development of gender roles (Guastello & Guastello, 2003) ^[10]. In this matter, the concept shows that masculine self is integrated into feminine characteristics (Kark, Waismel-Manor, & Shamir, 2012) ^[16]. Block argues that there is no feminine and masculine polarization because both factors are independent and two separate dimensions. This allows individuals to have a score that is equally high in two individual characteristics, i.e. androgyny. An androgynous individuals are those who have high masculine and affective score in dealing with or overcoming different situations (McGregor & Tweed, 2001) ^[19]. Androgyny can be recognized through psychological characteristics and style or appearance (Kark *et al.*, 2012). Psychological androgyny allows a person to be able to have two strong gender roles of masculine and feminine and these can emerge simultaneously. According to McGregor & Tweed (2001) ^[19], the androgyny style occurs when a man appears in a way like a woman.

3. Methodology

This research uses qualitative approach with the reception analysis method. The reception analysis is a special section for audience studies that make the in-depth examination of the actual process in which media discourse is assimilated through the practice of discourse and the culture of its audience. To analyze audience reception, the researchers used Stuart Hall's Encoding / Decoding Theory. In this theory Stuart Hall states that the intended meanings and meanings in a message can be different. The coding or encoding and decoding we use is not always symmetrical in the degree of symmetry in this theory. It is intended as a degree of understanding and misunderstanding in the exchange of messages in the communication process and it depends on the equivalent relationship (whether it is symmetric or not) and it is formed between the encoder and decoder. Moreover, the position of the encoder and decoder

if it is personified becomes message makers and message recipients (Livingstone, 1998) ^[18].

3.1 Primary Data

Primary data is data obtained from the first data source or the first hand in the field. The way to get the primary data is to use the collection method as follows: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) FGD can be simply defined as a discussion conducted systematically and directed to a particular issue or problem. The FGD is a process of systematically collecting data and information on a particular problem through group discussions (Jankowski & Jensen, 2002).

4. Findings and Discussion

Based on the research results that the researchers had carried out, the formulation of the text meaning in the video of *Jovi Adhiguna's Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real* is mostly in the dominant position. It means that the suitability of meaning between the video and audience in this case has high similarity meaning if compared to that in the negotiation and opposition. Based on the research that the researchers had conducted, most of the readings are different. It is because there is any differences in the code value delivered. The informants involved in this research come from different semester levels in the university and have psychology, social and cultural difference (Briandana, Sofian, & Azmawati, 2018) ^[5]. It is intended to have differences in a way of reading the video meaning. It is likely that the difference in the reading position occurs because each informant has a lot of knowledge and experience. Subsequently these have an impact on differences in the values they believe in. From the interview results that the researchers have had from the in-depth interviews these show that the audience's reception on the video of *Jovi Adhiguna's Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real* interestingly interpreted by each informant. In the research, the meaning that researchers have captured from the informants when watching the video of *Jovi Adhiguna's Guide To Look Fabulous and Being Real* is in three categories, i.e.:

4.1 Dominant – Hegemonic Reading

The first reading position, i.e. the dominant-hegemonic reading, is a position where the readers are in line with the program codes that contain values, attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions. These totally accept the meaning offered and desired by the program makers. Therefore, audiences in this position have the same belief in the message or meaning created by the text producers. In the first category, the informants' meaning to jovi's figure is divided into four informants in the dominant position, and the informants 2 and the informant 6 are in the opposite positions. The informants who are in the hegemonic dominant position are the informant 1, the informant 3, the informant 4 and the informant 5. Here it can be seen that there is only one male informant in the hegemonic dominant position. They have interpreted the video of *Jovi Adhiguna's Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real* as real as possible. It does not input negative considerations about the video and does not feel disturbed about the video. Moreover, the informants consider that what jovi's figure have carried out as a beauty vlogger is a fabulous thing and deserves appreciation. The informants also believe that the achievement is difficult for

others to get. According to the informants, intimidation such as labels and negative stigma still occurs in social environment for the conditions experienced by the figure. The informants see that jovi's physical condition is not a disturbance or a negative thing in the social environment. The informant also gives freedom to people surrounding him. The researchers see that the informants are more open minded to new things in the social environment. The informants see that the negotiations that jove has carried out are a kind of adaptation to social environment that cannot yet accept new things openly, such as differences in gender expression. Moreover, according to the informants, the rejection of gender expression is common previously. However, according to the informants as well, right now many Indonesian people have considered that the conditions experienced by the figure such as stigma and negative labels is something common in the social environment. In the second category, the informants' meaning on gender expression, according to the informants, family is considered to be an important role in the success of jovi's figure. The informants see that jovi's family provides full support for jovi's figure. According to the informants, it remains rare for a family to accept the conditions experienced by the figure. The informants believe that if the condition occurs in the informants' family, they will do what jovi's family has done right now. Here it can be shown that the informants who are in the dominant position have accepted and have open minded to new things particularly gender expression. The informants agree with the opinion of jovi's figure in the video about who he is, and he does what he wants, and he does not seek approval or attention from social environment. According to the informants, it occurs because it merely expresses himself and it does not seek sensation or become an attention seeker. The researchers see from the results of the FGD and in-depth interviews with the informants that in this program the women informants have a more open and tolerant viewpoint on gender issues if compared to the men informants. This is shown from the results of the dominant number in Table 4.2. The table shows that all women informants agree with jovi's figure and gender expressions contained in the video. Furthermore, in the third category, i.e. the informants' meaning on the use of original products, there are four informants who are in the dominant hegemonic position, i.e. Ananda Alifa, Livia Galuh, M Ikbal and Hasan. The informants agree that the original products are the best product without any consideration. The informants have the viewpoint that using original informant products is free from all the bad risks. They believe that the original products have advantages in all aspects, both in terms of durability and product quality. However, all informants agree to use the original products if the products are a kind of beauty or health products. The researchers see that all informants receive the video message if the use of fake beauty products could endanger health and have a negative impact on users. However, there are also some informants who consider that using original products are a form of prestige in society. It can be concluded that the messages conveyed by this video is delivered well enough so that all informants can accept and are in line with the program codes. These contain values, attitudes, beliefs and assumptions that fully accept the meanings offered and desired by the program makers in the use of original products. Therefore, audiences in this position have the same belief in the messages or meaning in

the uses of original products made by the producers.

5. Negotiated Reading

The second reading position, i.e. negotiated reading, is a position where the readers within certain limits is in line with the program codes and basically accepts the meaning offered by the program's producers. However, they modify the codes in such a way and these reflect their personal position and interests. Decoding in the negotiated version contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements in various aspects of ideology, beliefs, and religion they adhere. In the first category, informants' meaning on jovi's figure, the informant Hasan Rosul includes the negotiating position. In the video show of *Jovi Adhiguna's Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real*, the informant Hasan assumes that for a man who becomes a beauty vlogger as a legitimate figure to do as long as it does not harm others. However, there is an ambiguous statement because the informant also thinks that it is not in accordance with religious law and conservative thinking. Here it can be seen that there are certain considerations such as the religious viewpoint so that the informant cannot only accept the entire messages conveyed by the video, and the researchers see that the informant is in the negotiating position. In the second category, it is about the informants' meaning on gender expression. According to the informant, jovi's family give very good support to jovi's figure. According to informants, it is unusual that a family accept the condition that the figure undergoes. Family is considered to be an important role in the success of the current figure. However, according to the informant, the figure is wrong if it is viewed from a religious viewpoint. Therefore, the informant supports on the importance of family, but different and uncommon gender expressions should be straightened out like a man in general. And it is what a family should do. It can be concluded that the informants support what Jovi have done all this time as long as it does not harm anyone particularly the informants' family. The informants cannot make any tolerance if similar things occur between the informants' family. Moreover, in the third category, i.e. the informants' meaning on the use of original products, there are two informants who are in this position, i.e. Alfian and Sarah. Both informants consider that it is important to use the original products but only for certain types of products. There are factors that the informants to use original products. If according to the informants the type of products have a bad and self-destructive effect when the non-original ones are used. Therefore, the informants will choose to use the original products. For example, the informants believe in using original products for their beauty products.

5.1 Oppositional Reading

The last reading position, i.e. the oppositional reading, is the position where the readers are not in line with the program codes and they reject the meaning or reading offered, and then they determine the alternative frame themselves in interpreting the messages or meanings in the program. In this reading position, the audience rejects all the codes and meanings created by the text producers and then they make interpretations with their own thinking patterns. In the first category, the informants' meaning to Jovi's figure, the informant Alfian is in the oppositional position. In this matter, the informant sees the physical condition of the jovi

as a disturbance or negative thing in social environment. He believes that gender is limited to only two categories and based on birth, i.e. man and woman. Therefore, the informant believes that a man should dress and behave as in general. The process of the oppositional meaning in gender issues raised in the video of *Jovi Adhiguna's Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real* mostly comes from the informant Alfian. Many opinions and viewpoints disagree with the messages conveyed in the video contents. The informant still considers a kind of difference in gender expression such as genderless or genderqueer issues. It is unnatural and cannot accept new things, particularly gender expression. He considers that the figure's appearance in the video disturbs the audience because according to the informant, the figure in the video is an unnatural behavior and normal people in general should not do it. According to the informant, normal people are people who behave according to their gender identity and long-standing limits. The informant believes that what jovi's figure have done is a kind of sensation and seeking attention from the surrounding environment. The informant's opinion differs from the video's messages. Here it can see the informant's consideration on gender expression. The informant states that it is not a natural thing but a deliberate thing to do to seek attention from the surrounding environment. In the second category, the informant's meaning on gender expression has a viewpoint that disagrees with the video contents. The informant disagrees with the figure's statement and he assumes that the androgynous meaning is inherent in him. However, it is only a kind of unlimited fashion sense. The informant believes that the androgynous identity attached to his body is a form of abnormality and it is not normal. Moreover, the informant sees that it affects the psychology of the figure or changes his sexual orientation. The informant Alfian has opinion and it is similar to the opinion of the informant Livia. Livia does not believe that the opinion of jovi's figure in the video content. According to the informant, the appearance can influence the users or reflect the contents of the wearer. Finally, the informant Alfian occupies the opposition position when the researchers ask his viewpoint on how social reactions and responses to gender expression preferences which are generally stigma and negative labels. The informant considers that the stigma and negative labels are usually obtained as jovi's figure. It is common due to the differences the figure has made. According to the informant, the things that the figure has carried out are contrary to our eastern culture. Therefore, the informant considers that negative labels and stigma that jovi's figure get are natural. The researchers see from the informant's viewpoint that do not agree with the video contents, it can be said that the informant Alfian is a person who still maintains the eastern and conservative culture with new things.

6. Conclusion

This research has important points in interpreting the media text messages to public. Audience can understand the messages presented by the text producers differently. This research aims at knowing the selected meaning of the informants on interpersonal communication in *Jovi Adhiguna's Video Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real*. Based on the research results it can be concluded that:

1. The interpretation process of Jovi Adhiguna's Video Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real that the

audience conducted closely relates to the gender values they have. For this reason, there are two main categories in their interpretation process, i.e. the men's group and the women's group.

2. Female audience is more receptive to main messages in *Jovi Adhiguna's Guide to Looking Fabulous and Being Real*. It relates to (1) the physical condition of the figure, (2) gender expression, (3) the importance of using original products. Otherwise, male audience is more likely to reject and negotiate.
3. The rejection / opposition process is carried out among male audience on the messages of the beauty vlogger profession and the gender expression contained in the video. And the audience carries out the negotiation process towards the messages of gender expression and the use of original products.
4. There are several factors that influence the different viewpoint / interpretation of gender expression, i.e. the education level, psychology, culture, experience, and social environment.

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