Social Media and Participatory Culture: Audience Participation and Its Contribution to Determining Video Blog Content on YouTube

Ananda Dwitha Yuniar[1(✉)] and Darin Rania Balqis[2]

[1] Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia
ananda.dwitha.fis@um.ac.id
[2] Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

1 Introduction

Before YouTube became the most widely used social media platform in Indonesia as it is today (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2021), people were quite satisfied with the presence of television, newspapers, and radio, as a medium for their information consumption. At that time, the communication that existed tended to be one-way, where the audience was more passive; only as listeners, consumers, recipients, or targets (McQuail, 1997). However, the emergence of the convergence era has transformed the audience role, which at first was only become the target and recipient of messages, then turned into message seekers to media users (Zhao, 2019). This is inseparable from the characteristics brought by the internet, as one of the driving factors for convergence. According to Poole & Jackson (1993), communication through the internet adapts the characteristics of face-to-face communication as well as mass media communication. The internet has also formed a multidirectional pattern, where the audience has broad opportunities to become content producers as well as consumers (prosumers).

Not only that, the audience in this era of convergence can even influence the determination of the news agenda on television. As research conducted by Jacobson (2013), which shows a positive correlation between topics or discourses discussed on the Facebook Page "The Rachel Maddow Show's (RMS)" with issues reported on the RMS TV station. This means that audience participation in the form of comments and posts on the RMS Facebook Page affects the determination of topics or issues raised by RMS TV stations.

There is also a study conducted by Garcia-Aviles (2012), which maps out the various forms of audience participation on multi-platform television in Spain. He conducted an analysis of more than a hundred audience participation activities on 20 commercial and public TV stations in Spain, including their websites. From the research results, it is known that there are at least 8 audience roles that are read from the activities on the TV stations and websites, namely; citizens (voting, complaining, and asking questions), consumers (buying or paying for products, subscribing), collaborators (producing, sending, suggesting things), fans (supporting certain idols or products), players (playing and enjoying), commentators (forming opinions and criticizing), benefactors (donating or sponsoring), and activists (boycotting, supporting, or carrying out certain campaigns).

All types of audiences are known to be useful in contributing to the quality of content and television platforms in general.

In the context of Indonesia, Valiant (N.D.) has conducted research on audience involvement in the journalistic process of online news portals Inews.id, Medcom.id, and Liputan6.com. From the observations of the three platforms, it was found that community involvement played an important role in the journalistic process. The dimensions of engagement can be grouped into human-to-human, human-to-machine, and machine-to-machine relationships. In human relations, the three media receive face-to-face contact when the public provides news information by visiting the editorial team or when the media holds an offline event. In addition to face-to-face meetings, participation is also carried out through digital media, such as telephone calls to the editorial team, correspondence, chat, e-mail, or instant messages such as WhatsApp. Meanwhile, human-to-machine and machine-to-machine relations are often carried out on the news portal's social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Tik Tok.

A number of studies mentioned above discuss audience participation in conventional media in the internet era. Then, what about the audience on YouTube? YouTube is now considered as an alternative entertainment other than television, music, and movies (Shao, 2009). YouTube also offers functional features that allow users to share and discuss content on it (Burgess & Green, 2013), thereby encouraging active user engagement (Khan, 2016).

This paper seeks to explore the form of audience participation on the YouTube platform, and how this participation affects the determination or formation of content in video blogs there. Researchers took two Indonesian YouTubers channels as objects of study. The two channels are Nihongo Mantappu (Jerome Polin) and Nessie Judge. The reason is because both of them include non-celebrity YouTubers who are in the Top 50 Indonesian YouTubers with the most subscribers in the Social Blade version (2022). Nihongo Mantappu who is ranked 40 and Nessie Judge is ranked 42 competes with other YouTubers from celebrities and mainstream media who create accounts on YouTube. In addition, both are also known for having unique content characteristics. Nihongo Mantappu with daily vlogs that often discuss unique things in Japan and Indonesia, and Nessie Judge who is consistent with his horror content. Both also have fanbases that can be easily found on social media platforms.

2 The Concept of Participatory Culture in Social Media

The development of information and communication technology has changed people's consumption patterns, lifestyles, and the way they get entertainment. In this digital era, society is becoming increasingly mediated, in line with higher levels of simultaneous media convergence and diversification (Livingstone, 2016). This phenomenon also has an impact on the transformation of the media audience which was originally passive, to become very active. Jenkins et al. (2015) calls it a "participatory culture". This culture is characterized by: 1) low barriers to expression and involvement in something, 2) strong support for someone to be creative, 3) informal mentoring process from expert to amateur, 4) feeling that member contributions are needed, and 5) feeling that there is a social relationship between members of one with other members.

Furthermore, Jenkins and colleagues (2009) also mention that a participatory culture can be achieved through 4 (four) things. The first is affiliation, which refers to formal or informal membership formation, usually done online. The second is through expression, which refers to the formation of new creativity as a result of the affiliation process with other members, for example making fan fiction. The third is through problem-solving collaboration, which can be seen from collaboration between the audience and the team to solve problems or develop new knowledge. Fourth, through circulation, which refers to the formation of a new flow of information in a particular medium with the aim of sharpening an information.

Participatory culture can also be categorized based on their goals. Rohimah et al (2021) mention that there are at least three models of participatory culture that are formed through virtual communities; 1) appreciation-based participation, for example accessing information or producing content, 2) existence-based participation, for example participating in prosumer activities to improve self-existence, 3) pleasure-based participation, for example prosumer activities carried out as a form of mere pleasure.

3   YouTube Audience and Their Participation

As a video sharing platform that has the motto "Broadcast Yourself", YouTube provides a wide space for its users to be actively involved there. This involvement can not only be seen in the form of uploading content, but also includes giving likes, dislikes, comments, and sharing to other platforms. Watching videos and reading comments are also forms of engagement (Khan, 2016).

Through the various features in it, YouTube can also be a place for multi-director interactions, including between producers and their audiences, for example through the comments column available on each video. This makes the audience have a strong role in creating and influencing the content in it. Dynel (2014) in his research, categorizes the level of "participation" in interactions that occur on YouTube. He groups three levels of communication: 1) communication between speakers and listeners in interactive videos, for example: interactions between judges and contestants in cooking contest videos, or monologues in cooking demo videos where usually the speaker (chef) communicates with the audience. 2) communication between sender and recipient in YouTube videos, for example: YouTubers reply to their fans' comments in the comments column. 3) communication between speakers and hearers, for example: conversations that occur between commentators and other commenters in the comment column, this is driven by the 'reply' feature on other people's comments on YouTube. In essence, YouTube user participation is much more complex than television audiences, because YouTube opens up opportunities for direct interaction between content creators and viewers.

The participatory culture that was formed in the YouTube era didn't just appear. Besides being driven by the ease of features in it, Khan (2016) in his research, describes a number of user motivations in participating in and consuming content from YouTube. He mapped out five forms of participation that became the focus of his research, namely: like, dislike, comment, share, and upload, while the forms of consumption included viewing and reading comments. Using survey methods and Uses & Gratifications theory, it was found that there were a number of main motivations underlying the respondents.

in participating and consuming YouTube content, including: for information seeking, providing information, seeking self-status, social interaction, and entertainment.

4   About "NIHONGo Mantappu" and "Nessie Judge"

Nihongo Mantappu's YouTube channel is owned by a 24-year-old young man named Jerome Polin Sijabat. Jerome is a native Indonesian student studying at Waseda University, Japan, majoring in Applied Mathematics (Suria, 2021). There, he started his career as a YouTuber by regularly uploading content related to education, daily vlogs, food reviews, and challenges. In the course of his YouTube career, he made friends with 3 Japanese who also studied at the same university, they were Tomohiro Yamashita, Yusuke Sakazaki, and Ryoma Otsuka, the often called as Waseda Boys. Jerome often creates content with the Waseda Boys. In fact, the three of them have visited Indonesia quite often and made trips with Jerome. As of this writing, Nihongo Mantappu already has 9.47 million subscribers.

If Nihongo Mantappu focuses on content about his daily life, it is different with Nessie Judge. The channel, which is owned by a woman whose real name is Nasreen Anisputri Judge, is known for its horror content. But apparently, before being popular with her horror content, Nessie actually started her YouTube journey with personal content and travel vlogs. It was only in 2017, Nessie released a new theme which she titled "NERROR" (Nessie Horror) (Aditya, 2020). Until now, he is also more focused on uploading content with horror stories, mysteries, or conspiracy theories. Now Nessie Judge's YouTube account has 9.36 million subscribers.

The researcher will use the concept of the forms of participation promoted by Khan (2016) in his research, which includes: likes, dislikes, comments, shares, and uploads, to analyze the forms of audience participation on the two YouTube channels above. However, the researcher does not include dislikes here, because as of last November 2021, YouTube has officially hidden the number of dislikes from viewers as an effort to create a positive space for content creators to express themselves (Kompas.com, 2021). Participation in the form of uploads is also not included, because this paper only wants to focus on the culture of audience participation on the YouTube channel. In addition to the analysis, the researcher will also use the concept of participatory culture by Jenkins and colleagues (2009) which divides it into affiliation, expression, collaboration, and circulation.

5   Audience Participation on "NIHONGo Mantappu" YouTube Channel

Khan (2016) as mentioned above, mentions the forms of audience participation or engagement on YouTube, including: likes, dislikes, comments, sharing, views, and reading comments. Based on data collected by researchers from Influencers (a YouTube video analysis site, as of June 13, 2022) the level of audience engagement on Nihongo Mantappu's YouTube channel reaches 12.47% of the total number of followers (subscribers).

Table 1. Comparison amount of *likes* and *views on the* math test video of YouTuber

Videos	Amount *likes*	Amount *views*
YouTuber math test Part 1	863 thousand	12.53 million
YouTuber math test Part 2	527 thousand	7.69 million
YouTuber math test Part 3	237 thousand	4.32 million

Source: Processed by researcher from the Influencer site

This number is included in the Good category. Engagement as measured on the Influence site, including the number of views, likes and comments.

Likes

The number of likes on this channel has reached 5.52% of the total number of views, seen from the videos for the last 30 days. This number belongs to the Extraordinary category. In almost all of his videos, Jerome also always reminds the audience not to forget to press the like button. It has become a kind of template when he closes the video.

The number of likes and views has an effect on determining content on Nihongo Mantappu. This can be seen from the videos that get the highest number of likes and views, one of which is the video entitled: TES MATEMATIKA YOUTUBER & INFLUENCER INDONESIA! (FADIL JAIDI, BINTANG EMON, GADGETIN, DLL). The video uploaded on 7 November 2021 is the first video containing content where Jerome makes a quiz containing math problems to be answered by several YouTubers and influencers. About a month later, or to be precise December 4, 2021, Jerome again uploaded similar content entitled: TES MATEMATIKA YOUTUBER & INFLUENCER INDONESIA! (JESSICA JANE, JESS NO LIMIT, WINDAH, MAK BETI, DLL). At the beginning of the video, Jerome said that the Part I math test video was trending number 1 on YouTube. That's what then prompted him to create similar content a month later.

Then, in February 2022, Jerome re-uploaded Part 3 of the YouTuber's math test video, and at the same time became the last part. Judging from the video statistics, when compared to Part 1 and Part 2 videos, this Part 3 video does get far fewer likes and views (Table 1).

From the table above, it can be seen that there is a downward trend in terms of the number of likes and views on the math test videos, which might make Jerome no longer make the next parts.

- Comment

The total number of comments on the Nihongo Mantappu channel has reached 0.20% of its total views. This figure belongs to the Extraordinary category, as shown in Fig. 1 above. At the end of every video, Jerome also always reminds his audience not to forget to comment. And based on the researcher's analysis, audience participation in the comments column apparently also influenced the determination of the content in the videos. This can be seen from the video with the highest number of comments, which is interestingly

filled with videos that are the result of collaboration with a popular YouTuber named Jessica Jane.

From the search results, Jerome's first video with Jessica was uploaded on December 24, 2020, with the title: MASAK PAKE RUMUS FISIKA & MATEMATIKA! FT. JESSICA JANE. The video opens by showing a screenshot of the audience's comments asking Jerome to collaborate with Jessica Jane. In the video description section, Jerome also confirmed the same thing, that the collab is a video that is much awaited by the audience. The total comments on the video reached 25 thousand and were dominated by positive responses, such as statements that were happy to see the interaction of the two to encouragement for the two to date.

Jerome responded to these various positive comments by re-uploading a collab video with Jessica with the title: "SEHARIAN MAKAN DARI MINIMARKET JEPANG DIATUR JESSICA JANE!" 3 days later. The video, based on Influencer analysis, is in the third position with the video with the most comments on the Nihongo Mantappu channel. It doesn't just stop there, Jerome continues to collaborate with Jessica. Some of the videos with Jessica that also received the most engagement were 1) DRIVE THRU + QNA FT. JESSICA JANE! AKHIRNYA KETEMU 😂!, 2) CHALLENGE JESSICA JANE NGERJAIN SOAL MATEMATIKA + MAKAN PEDES! TERNYATA…, 3) COBA MASAK SEBLAK PEDAS BARENG YUSUKE! (FT. JESSICA JANE), and 4) DAPET HADIAH DARI JESS NO LIMIT & JESSICA JANE! APA YA ISINYA!?.

- Share

The next form of audience participation is share. However, the researchers here did not find statistical data regarding the number of shares from Nihongo Mantappu's videos. On YouTube itself the number of shares is also not displayed. Even so, from Detik.com's interview with Jerome, it can be concluded that this share also influences the determination of content on his channel. In the interview, Jerome explained tips on how to get a lot of subscribers, one of which is to create video content that has an impact or has value. He gave an example of one of his videos about Covid-19 which was shared by many people and even the government, because it contained educational value (Kristo, 2020). Jerome always tries to include an educational element in every video, whether it's about culture, mathematics, or even about life motivation. As written in the "About" section of his channel, Jerome hopes that the audience can benefit from his content.

- Affiliation

Jenkins and colleagues (2009) state that participatory culture can be expressed through 4 aspects: affiliation, expression, problem solving, and circulation. In the Nihongo Mantappu channel, the form of affiliation can be seen from the number of subscribers, which at the time of this research has reached 9.47 million. This means that there are more than 9 million people who are members of the channel. Ayudita & Wijaya (2019) in their research conducted interviews with a number of Nihongo Mantappu subscribers. They claim to be part of the channel and participate in its sustainability.

Apart from membership obtained through subscribing, other forms of affiliation from this channel can also be seen from membership. Jerome opens opportunities for his audience to register as members of the channel by paying 9,900 rupiah per month (regular member) or 29,900 rupiah per month (VIP member). Audiences who have registered as members will get a number of benefits in the form of access to exclusive content (daily updates, behind the scenes, exclusive photos/videos that are not available on other platforms), VIP live streams, and special emojis. In the membership promo video, Jerome also said that later members who join the live stream will have the opportunity to interact more privately with Jerome or guest stars there, one of which members can also request something, including content ideas, and so on.

- Problem-Solving Collaboration

The next form of participation from the Nihongo Mantappu channel is the problem-solving collaboration between the content creator (Jerome) and the audience. In their research, Ayudita & Wijaya (2019) also conducted an interview with Jerome. As the owner of the Nihongo Mantappu channel, he admits that he accepts input and ideas from his audience in the comments column and takes them into consideration when determining content ideas. It can be said that there is a collaborative problem-solving practice between Jerome and the audience in determining the video content on the channel. Apart from the comments column, collaboration can also be seen from the collaboration that Jerome did with one of his subscribers who turned out to be the editor of his Indonesian-language videos (Ayudita & Wijaya, 2019). Because they are far apart, they both do this collaboration via e-mail.

6 Audience Participation on "NESSIE Judge" YouTube Channel

Based on data collected by researchers from Influencers (video analysis site YouTube, as of June 13, 2022) the level of audience engagement on Nessie Judge's YouTube channel reaches 7.98% of the total number of followers (subscribers). Similar to Nihongo Mantappu, this number (although lower) is still in the Good category.

- Likes

The number of likes on this channel has reached 5.66% of the total number of views, seen from the videos for the last 30 days. This number belongs to the Extraordinary category. Like Jerome, in almost all of his videos, Nessie also always reminds the audience not to forget to press the like button, as a template for closing the video.

From statistical data on Influencers, it can be said that the videos that get the most likes on the Nessie Judge channel are dominated by videos discussing cases that are currently viral, such as videos about KKN in Dancing Village, the murder of Thai artist Tangmo Nida, and viral conspiracy theories about corona virus (Table 2).

From the data above, it can be seen that the top 5 positions of Nessie's most liked videos discuss viral horror stories. Even though at the beginning of her channel, Nessie was more focused on daily vlog and travel vlog content. Then on March 17, 2017 she

Table 2. The videos of Nessie Judge with the most likes

Rank	Video title	*Likes* amount	*Views* amount
1	Kasus VIRAL KKN di DESA PENARI! (RANGKUMAN SEMUA VERSI) | #NERROR	635.59 thousand	16.89 million
2	[ENG SUB] TANGMO NIDA: RANGKUMAN KASUS MISTERI TENGGELAMNYA AKTRIS CANTIK THAILAND! | #NERROR	360.14 thousand	7.24 million
3	CORONA & Virus2 PALING MEMATIKAN di DUNIA! (+ TEORI kons.)	261 thousand	5.03 million
4	PSIKO2 terCANTIK di DUNIA!! | #NERROR ISABELLA GUZMAN	258.69 thousand	4.26 million
5	KASUS HORROR VIRAL: Kate Yup, Geprek & ILMU HITAM?! | #NERROR	255.71 thousand	5.43 million

Source: Processed by researcher from the Influencer site

uploaded the first mystery video entitled: the world's scariest chat history! | Annie96 (Fauziah, 2021). The video managed to get 5.7 million views and 127 thousand likes, a pretty big number when compared to Nessie's previous videos. Since then, Nessie decided to make a special horror segment which she named Nerror. Until now, the Nerror segment is the content that the audience has been waiting for the most. From that segment was born Nessie's fanbase which she dubbed the Nerrorist.

It can be said that the number of likes and views is quite influential in determining the content on Nessie's channel. Because of that first horror video, Nessie's subscribers skyrocketed (Fauziah, 2021).

- Comment

The total number of comments on Nessie Judge's channel has reached 0.17% of the total views. This figure belongs to the Good category, as shown in Fig. 2 above. Like likes, at the end of each video, Nessie also always reminds her audience not to forget to comment, especially regarding their opinions about the stories and cases she discusses, or ideas for future content.

Based on the researcher's observations, the form of participation in the form of comments from the audience has a significant role in determining Nessie's content ideas. It can be seen from a series of videos that discuss the scariest schools in Indonesia. On June 21, 2019, Nessie uploaded a Part 1 video entitled: "Sekolah2 ter-ANGKER di INDONESIA!! | #NERROR". Then on October 4, 2019, Nessie re-uploaded a similar video entitled: "Kampus2 ter-ANGKER di INDONESIA!! | #NERROR". In the opening section of her second video, Nessie tell that there were a lot of audiences in the comments section of her Part 1 video who asked her to make a video listing the scariest universities in Indonesia. There was even one comment that got 20 thousand likes. It turned out that this was what prompted Nessie to make her Part 2, which was then also continued with Part 3 entitled: "Kampus2 Paling ANGKER di INDONESIA!! (2) | #NERROR". Video

Part 1 and 2 above even occupy the top 5 most commented videos on the Nessie Judge channel.

In addition to the series of the scariest school videos, there is also Nessie's video about viral cases which are the result of requests from her audience. One of them is a video that discusses the case of the death of a Thai actress, Tangmo Nida. In the opening section, Nessie displays lots of screenshots of audience comments asking her to discuss the case. In another video that discusses the viral horror case of Kate Yup, Nessie even says that she always records every case that is most requested by her audience. The case of Kate Yup is also a case that has been requested by many fans.

- **Affiliation**

The form of affiliation participation according to Jenkins and colleagues (2009), refers to formal or informal membership formation, usually online. The form of affiliation in Nessie Judge's channel can be seen from the number of subscribers, which at the time of this paper has reached 9.36 million. This means that there are more than 9 million YouTube viewers who are part of the channel. In addition, it can also be seen from the Nerrorist fanbase or the audience who likes Nessie's Nerror segment. Indirectly, Nerrorist is also involved in determining Nessie's content through comments, suggestions, and requests submitted through the YouTube comment column, Nessie's other social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter), and also e-mail.

- **Problem-Solving Collaboration**

Another form of participation that can be read from Nessie Judge's channel is collaboration between Nessie and her audience in problem-solving. This can be seen from the series of videos about the Tangmo Nida case, which turned out to be 5 videos in total (Table 3).

7   Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the form of audience participation is equally visible on both channels. When referring to the concept of YouTube audience participation according to Khan (2016), the forms of participation that appear on the Nihongo Mantappu channel are likes, comments, and shares. Likes (and views) are the most influential forms of participation according to researchers in determining the content on the channel. In addition, there are other forms of participation that stand out, referring to the concept of participation according to Jenkins and colleagues (2019), namely affiliation and problem-solving collaboration. Both of them contributed to the determination and creation of Nihongo Mantappu content.

While on the Nessie Judge channel, the forms of participation found by the researcher are likes and comments. Comments are the most influential form of participation in determining content on the channel. In addition, there are other forms, namely affiliation and problem solving collaboration, which both contribute to the construction of content ideas in the Nessie Judge channel.

Table 3. Nessie's collaboration with her audience

Video title	The collaboration
[ENG SUB] TANGMO NIDA: RANGKUMAN KASUS MISTERI TENGGELAMNYA AKTRIS CANTIK THAILAND!	#NERROR	Nessie asks her audience to mention other details about Tangmo Nida case that hasn't included in the video. She also asked her audience that comes from professionals, such as doctor / investigator to comment
TANGMO NIDA: UPDATE PENEMUAN BUKTI2 TERBARU!!	#NERROR [Part 2]	The audience responded to Nessie's request in the Part 1 video, providing many interesting details, until Nessie make the Part 2. At the end of the Part 2 video, Nessie also said that she would continue to update the case and asked her audience to provide additional information if there was something she had not discussed. According to Nessie, because the Tangmo case received worldwide attention, it could further encourage the Thai government to take action on the alleged murder case against Tangmo
TANGMO NIDA: UPDATE FAKTA & KEJANGGALAN TERBARU!!	#NERROR	Nessie collects updates regarding the development of the Tangmo case for audiences who request via e-mail. She also asked the audience to update each other in the comments column and other platforms
TANGMO NIDA: UPDATE TERSANGKA BARU!	#NERROR	Nessie is still continuing to update a number of new facts related to the Tangmo case. Like in other videos, Nessie also asks her audience to comment if there is a new update
TANGMO NIDA 5: PENEMUAN AKHIR POLISI?!	#NERROR	In the last part, Nessie delivered an update regarding the Tangmo case, where the Thai police finally closed the case. Even so, Nessie still opens discussions with her audience who may still have many questions related to the case

Source: Processed by researcher

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