Between Humor And Hostility: A Reception Analysis Of Verbal Aggression In Windah Basudara's Schoolboy Runaway Game Livestreams

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Abstract
This study examines how viewers of Windah Basudara interpret his verbal agression in Schoolboy Runaway game live-stream by applying Stuart Hall's Reception Theory and McQuail's Uses and Gratification Theory. Using qualitative methods with semi-structured in-depth interviews of nin informants and thematic analysis supported via Nvivo15, this research reveal that the viewers intrepretation are are vary and included in all three major interpretive positions. The negotiated positioned with the most informant reveal that viewers accept verbal aggression by Windah as humour within contextual limits, influenced by entertainment gratifications and community interactions while rejecting his vulgar toxicity. Few informants in dominant-hegemonic positioned where viewers fully normalize aggressive language as authentic performance within the gaming culture, driven by their enjoyment of aggressive expression and familiarity with Windah persona. Small informant in oppositional position revealing that viewers reject Windah verbal aggression based on their parental, religious and moral values, prioritizing gameplay interaction over aggressive commentary. This research findings demonstrate that viewers interpretation is co-constructed through their moral framework, cultural knowledge, viewing motivations, and participatory live-stream environment and particularly live-chat dynamics. This study also extends Reception Theory by revealing how technical infrastructure intensifies collective meaning-making in digital spaces, while reinforcing the role of gratification dimension in shaping tolerance toward verbal aggression act in Indonesia gaming culture.

Keywords: Reception Analysis, Verbal Aggression, Gaming Live-stream, Uses and Gratification Theory, Digital Communication

Abstrak
Penelitian ini menganalisis cara penonton Windah Basudara menafsirkan agresi verbalnya dalam siaran langsung permainan Schoolboy Runaway dengan menerapkan Teori Penerimaan Stuart Hall dan Teori Penggunaan dan Kepuasan McQuail. Menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur terhadap sembilan informan dan analisis tematik yang didukung oleh Nvivo15, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa penafsiran penonton bervariasi dan mencakup ketiga posisi interpretatif utama. Posisi dinegosiasikan yang paling banyak diungkapkan oleh informan menunjukkan bahwa penonton menerima agresi verbal Windah sebagai humor dalam batas-batas kontekstual, dipengaruhi oleh kepuasan hiburan dan interaksi komunitas, sambil menolak toksisitas vulgarnya. Beberapa informan dalam posisi dominan-hegemonik di mana penonton sepenuhnya menormalisasi bahasa agresif sebagai kinerja autentik dalam budaya gaming, didorong oleh kesenangan mereka terhadap ekspresi agresif dan familiaritas dengan persona Windah. Informan dalam posisi oposisi menunjukkan bahwa penonton menolak agresi verbal Windah berdasarkan nilai-nilai orang tua, agama, dan moral mereka, memprioritaskan interaksi gameplay daripada komentar agresif. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa interpretasi penonton dibangun bersama melalui kerangka moral, pengetahuan budaya, motivasi menonton, dan lingkungan siaran langsung partisipatif, terutama dinamika obrolan langsung. Studi ini juga memperluas Teori Penerimaan dengan mengungkapkan bagaimana infrastruktur teknis memperkuat pembentukan makna kolektif di ruang digital, sambil memperkuat peran dimensi kepuasan dalam membentuk toleransi terhadap tindakan agresi verbal dalam budaya gaming Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Resepsi, Agresi Verbal, Streaming Langsung Permainan, Teori Penggunaan dan Kepuasan, Komunikasi Digital

I. INTRODUCTION

The cause of normalization of verbal aggression usage by the gaming streamer such as Bang Windah, rise a problem around its viewers, where the exposure of verbal agression gaming live-stream content itself could encourages bad habbits for both young people and adults such as used for verbal violence and abusive language, especially the young people one which there is negativly change their behavior, where they tended to immitate and use the coarse language by the game streamers, and this potentially lead to conflict between peers (Ningrum et al., 2024). This problem reflects a broader social consequence where exposure to verbal aggression in gaming live-streams influences audience communication patterns. Over time, this can contribute to the culture that tolerates verbal abuse, sexism, and discrimination towards other, eroding or destroying the empathy and civility within Indonesia's digital landscape (Fazal, 2025).

The urgency of why this research is need to be conduct is to understand and reveal the Gen Z interpretation or position about verbal aggression toward Windah content using reception analysis, where this understanding could provide an insight whether the use of verbal aggression by Bang Windah Basudara are interpreted as a humor and jokes that game streamers can still use it for their future content, as for example for to attract and amuse the audience (Robbani et al., 2023), by addressing the verbal aggression usage by viewers, especially Gen Z, it will able to contribute on for future gaming creator or Windah Basudara itself, to be more cautious on what the negative effect that it will cause if they use verbal aggression towards their viewers, and provide awareness or insight for both the Youtube company as the provider of live-stream platform and Ministry of Communication and Information (komdigi) to establish new regulation on the restriction use of verbal aggression speech in live-stream feature

Previous studies about verbal agression in digital communication such as live-stream and media behavior has largely focused on the production of agressive discourse or it's psychologial impact. For instance, a studies have shown that exposure to aggressive game live stream cotent can negatively affect the audience psychology, which it reduce emphaty among student as the viewers of the content (Mayrita et al., 2025). Other research revealed how game streamers employ various technique including the use of verbal agression to build loyalty and foster sense of community among viewers (Tatok & Sari, 2025).

The research problem of this research centered on seeking to explore how Gen-Z audiences interpret verbal agression in Windah Basudara's *Schoolboy Runaway* game live-streams, while also examining how their viewing motivations (Uses and Gratifications) influence those interpretations. By employing Stuart Hall's Reception Theory (1980) in conjunction with Uses and Gratifications Theory (1970) by Denis McQuail's, this study contributes a novelty analytical framework that not only decodes audience positions (dominant, negotiated, oppositional) but also examines the underlying motivations that shape these interpretations. This study aims to contribute to the development of communication studies by providing a more profound comprehension of audience interpretations and reception to verbal aggression in game live-streaming spaces such as Audience Reception Theory, ilustrating how viewers construct meaning, normalize, or challenge the communicative agression in digital entertaiment. Also practically, this study provides support in digital literacry education, guide ethical communication practices for future content creators, and enhance understanding of audience behavior in the context of Gen Z's evolving digital culture.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Mass Communication

Mass communication is one of communication study which the interdisciplinary study that contribute with the development of the reception study or audience study, where according from (Baran & Davis, 2014) the book *'Mass Communication Theory Foundation, Ferment, and Future'* it refers to the process of which information or ideas are transmitted to the large audiences through various media channels. Thus, this shift laid the foundation for reception analysis study, which was deeply influence by the intellectual traditions of reader-response criticism and hermeneutics (Baran & Davis, 2014). The works of Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser, and Hans-Georg Gadamer became the central in developing this new understanding, as their theories highlighted the dynamic relationship between text and audience, where meaning is not fixed by the producer but constructed through interpretation.

2.2 Reception Analysis Studies

Reception analysis study by (Giovanni & Gambier, 2018) in the book Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation, sees the audience as active participants in the communication process who engage with media messages based on their social, cultural, and individual experiences in addition to receiving information, which is the those concept are base from the three scholar earlier theoretical approach. Therefore, extremely pertinent to the study of how audiences relate media messages to their personal realities, which differ from one individual to another.

2.3 Stuart Hall Reception Theory

Hall suggests that meaning is created through an active process of interpretation rather than being just conveyed from the producer to the audience, challenging the conventional idea of audiences as passive consumers of media messages (Hall et al., 1980). According to this paradigm, media creators "encode" communications with particular meanings, values, and ideological goals influenced by institutional and cultural settings. Audiences, however, "decode" these messages according to their particular interpretive frameworks, experiences, and social backgrounds (Bengtsson et al., 2024). Hall (Morissan, 2015) the three different ways on how viewers can interpret media messages which are as follows:

1. Dominant hegemonic position: defined by Hall as a situation in which "the masses consume the message that the media produce." The chosen reading by the media and the viewer's reading are both align (the audience receives the message and the media delivers it). The audience's preferences match or similar with what the media portrays. In this instance, the media uses the dominating cultural code in the community to deliver its message.
2. Negotiated position: Hall stated that "the audience adopts the leading ideology in general but opposes its application in specific cases." This position basically is when the audience generally accepts the dominant ideology but rejects its application in certain cases. The audience in this instance is prepared to accept the dominant ideology in general, but they will make some exceptions from it in certain ways to conform to local cultural standards.
3. Oppositional position: The last position used by the public to decode media messages is through “opposition,” which occurs when a critical audience replaces or alters the messages or codes conveyed by the media with alternative messages or codes. The audience rejects the meaning of the message intended or preferred by the media and replaces it with their own way of thinking about the topic conveyed by the media.

2.4 Uses & Gratification Theory

The theory was initially developed by Herzog, who investigated the reasons why audiences listened to particular radio soap operas. Subsequently, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch expanded the hypothesis into a more comprehensive theoretical model (Baran & Davis, 2014). Denis McQuail improved this method by providing four basic categories of gratification that show how people actively look for meaning and fulfillment through media participation or consumption (Mcquail & Windahl, 2013), which are as follows:

1. Entertainment Need
   This position has the ability to provide people with an escape from the challenges that they face on a daily basis and the opportunity to seek emotional release. Media is utilized as a tool to relax, gain pleasure from within, and release emotions.
2. Information Need
   This position relates to the utilization of various forms of media, such as news, guides, or facts, in order to obtain knowledge, insight, and comprehension regarding the environment that surrounds one. Users are able to have a better understanding of the world around them through the usage of media as a source of knowledge.
3. Personal Identity Need
   The third gratification is when people (in this context is viewers) utilize the media to learn more about themselves, finding out who they are, or simply they use the media to help identify themselves with other people (influencer/streamer) who are similar to them that are shown in the online media (live-stream platform/social media).
4. Social Interaction or Processes of Integration Need
   The last gratification is when people/viewers use the media to create or enchance their social bonds, which this mean that people use the media to help them building a meaningful relationship with others. For example, in the

live-stream spaces, the viewers could use it to find information about gaming, talk to another viewers, or feel like they understand one another.

2.5 Verbal Agression & Humor Online

The definition of verbal aggression could be defined as any communication, whether or not violence is actually caused or occurred, that is intended to cause harm to another person through words, tone, or manner. Verbal aggression includes in a variety of forms such as verbal threats of violence, mockery, overtly aggressive statements, unfair, unrelenting criticism, yelling or shouting insults, and more subtle behaviors like spreading damaging rumours (McLaughlin et al., 2010).

Verbal aggression is also categorized into six types by Kesworo (Utoro et al., 2020), which are described as follows:

1. Cursing: This refers to the use of harsh or offensive language intended to insult, scold, or demean someone.
2. Hyperbole: This involves making exaggerated statements or expressions that are not consistent with reality.
3. Euphemism: This kind of verbal violence makes fun of or criticizes someone in a way that appears rude or sarcastic by using mild or indirect language.
4. Dysphemism: This occurs when someone intentionally distorts or amplifies facts through speech so that the conveyed meaning deviates from the truth.
5. Stigmatization: This kind of act refers to labeling or assigning negative stereotypes to an individual or group of people within a certain context, either it's explicitly or implicitly, it purpose is to shape public perception or judgment for the benefit of the speaker that give the lable.
6. Association: This kind of verbal aggression compares or equates humans with animals as a way to demean or insult them.

2.6 Youtube Live-stream & Gaming Community

The two of Youtube live stream main features are live chat, which lets viewers of the stream respond directly to the stream, and super chat which lets viewers donate their money while highlighting their message or chat during the stream (Jia et al., 2020). Those live stream feature allow content creators and their viewers to interact with one another in more direct and participatory way that are different than the traditional media (Hamilton et al., 2014). This interactivity between streamer and viewers encourages co-presence and engagement, allowing audiences to both consume and co-create entertainment (Wohn et al., 2018). The chat feature of live stream on the other hand, is a social area where viewers can talk about meaning, make rules for their community, and encourage other good behaviour or language usage (Gandini, 2016).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is going to apply the qualitative research method, enable for the researcher to explore subjective perspective, emotions, and interpretation, making them valuable especially, for the investigations of viewers reception and media effects (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Also, applying the constructivism paradigm in this study is to examine the differences or similarities in meaning among viewers of the Windah Basudara YouTube channel, particularly regarding their interpretations of the School Runaway gameplay live stream content that conveys messages of verbal aggression.

This method apply purposive sampling, which enables researchers to concentrate on people who have the skills, background, or traits required to supply rich and significant data (Sugiyono, 2013). Purposive sampling prioritizes quality above quantity when choosing participants for qualitative research, ensuring the breadth and significance of the data gathered rather than its representativeness. The subject of this research is Windah viewers in the age (18-30) years old, both male and female, and have already watched Windah 'Schoolboy Runaway live-stream'.

Table 1 Informant research data Table

No.	Initials of Informant's name	Age	Gender	Domicile
1	Adi Satria Kurniawan (ASK)	25	Male	Surakarta

2	Elsa Ronatama Bakara (ERB)	23	Female	Jakarta
3	Davina Putri Felisha (DPF)	23	Female	Karawang
4	Rizqi Robbani (RR)	22	Female	Jakarta
5	Nizar Juni Rizki (NJR)	22	Male	Bekasi
6	Naiya Putrfi Afifah (NPA)	21	Female	Bogor
7	Elisabeth Ronauli Bakara (EB)	21	Female	Bogor
8	Najwa Agustin Azahra (NAA)	19	Female	Bandung
9	Zaki Muhammad Indra (ZMI)	23	Male	Bandung

The object of this research is the verbal aggression in the *"Schoolboy Runaway"* game livestream of Windah Basudara's. The content was chosen because it reflects the intersection of humour and hostility that are often found in gaming livestreams, making it relevant to the study's focus on audience reception. In this research, the researcher will employ three methodologies namely interviews (semi-structure in-depth interview), observation, and documentation to gather data related to the audience's acceptance of verbal aggression in the Schoolboy.

The data obtained from these methods will then be proceed and analysed using Nvivo 15, which is a qualitative data analysis software that assist researcher in managing, coding, and interpreting large volumes of textual and visual data systematically. NVivo 15 facilitates the organization of interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation materials into categorized themes aligned with the research focus (Brandão, 2015).

This research are going to apply thematic analysis as the researcher data analysis method, where the thematic analysis can be defined as a qualitative method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (categorize in themes) within dataset, because thematic analysis enables the researcher to analyze intricate social phenomena and acquire deep understanding into informant viewpoint (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The research is applying triangulation (Moleong, 2020) as data validity in this research is playing a crucial role for verifying the reliability of viewer reception patterns and for deepening the understanding of how diverse audiences perceive verbal aggression within the same media content, specifically Windah Basudara live-stream content.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

The result of this reseach is revealing the positioned of Windah Basudara verbal aggression towards its viewers, where researcher is visualized project map from NVIVO15 tools indicating which of the informant that are falls in the three reception positioned. The findings of this result of the Windah Basudara viewers reading positioned, then translate into several main themes that this research provide namely, Negotiated Acceptance of Verbal Aggression in Entertainment Context, Normalization of Verbal Aggression as Entertainment, Moral and Value-Based Resistance Toward Verbal Aggression.

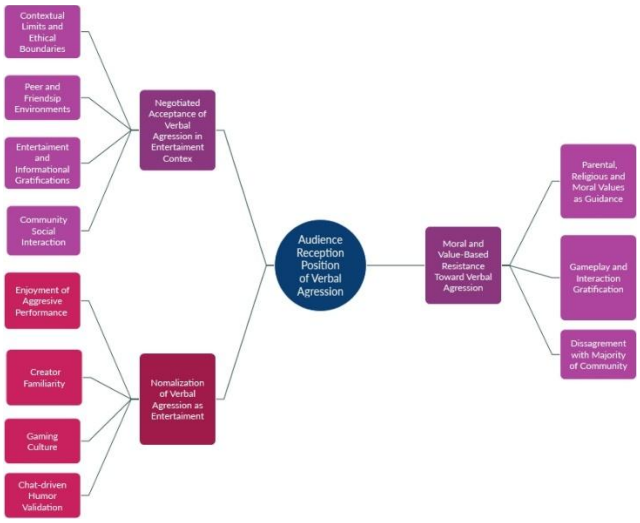


Figure 1 Theme and Sub-theme Visualization
(Source: Author NVIVO15 Processed Data (2025)

Negotiated Acceptance of Verbal Aggression in Entertainment Contex, this theme of viewers receptions is predomanintly by the Windah Basudara viewers, with 5 informants. Their interpretation on accepting the verbal agressive in Windah Basudara Schoolboy Runaway Live-stream is based on their motivation which is on seeking Entertaiment and Informantion about the game that played on the stream. Also, community social interaction influences their acceptance when it comes towards verbal agression as jokes. However, there are factors that negotiated certain aspect as limitation when accepting verbal agression as humor or jokes. As they interpret Bang Windah humorous performance and gaming image, viewers are aware of his verbal agression. However, they set a limitation on tolerancing the verbal agression as humor with certain contextual limit and ethical boundaries, and influence of peer and friend environment.

Normalization of Verbal Aggression as Entertainment, this describing how the informant as viewers are nomalize to verbal agression in Windah Basudara usage as a form of entertaiment for them, they accepting that Windah Basudara verbal agression as humor. their interpretation is acceptance when Windah Basudara use verbal agression as humor or jokes, it came from several factor such as their motivation when watching the stream which is most of them stated on seeking entertaiment and several from their background and history with Windah Basudara, also their knowledge of gaming culture.

Moral and Value-Based Resistance Toward Verbal Aggression, is main theme where unlike most participant who perceived Windah Basudara's verbal aggression as humorous or entertaining but with few exceptions, one informant positioned themselves in an oppositional reading position, rejecting the encoded meaning of verbal aggression as total humour which align with one of the sub-theme Disagreement with Majority of Community. This participant viewed Windah's use of harsh or 'toxic' language as unnecessary and disrespectful form of expression, particularly when performed in a public setting like Youtube Live. Their interpretation is based from parents, religions and self-moral. Also, it aligns with their motivations on watching Windah Basudara Schoolboy Runaway Live-streams, where participants seeking for entertainment by joined to help Bang Windah solve the game, but not enjoying the toxict and agressive commentary.

4.2 Discussion

The sub-chapter begins by interpreting each theme of the Windah Basudara viewers reading positioned toward his verbal agression in Schoolboy Runaway live-stream, where the first theme Negotiated Acceptance of Verbal Aggression in Entertaiment contex is Negotiated positioned, Normalization of Verbal Agression as Entertainment is dominat hegemonic-positioned, and Moral and Value-Based Resistance Toward Verbal Agression is Oppositional positioned.

4.2.1 Negotiating Entertainment, Community, and Ethical Boundaries

Windah viwers in this position reveal a negotiated reading position, where they accept his verbal agression as humorous but within ethical limits. Viewers see his anger and toxic speech as part of the entertainment that relieves stress and satisfies their need for excitement purposes, align with McQuail's *Uses and Gratification Theory* (2010). However, they also draw certain boundaries such as rejecting vulgar expression due to moral and contextual considerations. These negotiated interpretations are influenced by community dynamics, as seen through live-chat interactions that reinforce shared humor and belonging, reflecting with Hall's (1980) decoding *relations of production*. Peer environment also normalize such language, echoing findings that digital communities co-create meaning of "funny agression" (Tatok & Sari, 2025). Thus, this position mix both amusement with selective moral negotiation.

4.2.2 The Normalization of Verbal Aggression as Humorous Expression

Some viewers adopt this dominant-hegemonic reading, which they fully accepting Windah's verbal aggression as a performative aspect of his streamer persona. Both anger and toxicity are perceived as spontaneous and authentic expression that enhance entertainment value, resonating with Hall's (1980) *encoding/decoding model*. Viewers familiarity with Windah's long-standing style and the gaming culture normalize this behavior, viewing it as part of streaming authenticity (Beres et al., 2021). Furthermore, the *chat-driven humor* within the live-chat reinforces collective laughter, turning aggression into shared enjoyment and validating its acceptability. This aligns with prior studies on communal gratification in live streaming (Jia et al., 2020) and demonstrates how viewers decoding is shaped by both cultural familiarity and technical affordances of the medium.

4.2.3 Moral, Religious, and Value-Based Resistance

A minor of viewers adopts this oppositional reading, rejecting verbal aggression based on moral, religious, and their parental values. These viewers interpret verbal aggression as inappropriate, especially for younger audiences, framing their interpretation through Hall's (1980) *framework of knowledge*. While they still engage with the live-stream for Windah gameplay interaction and community engagement, they resist normalizing vulgar language as humor. Their stance reflects an ethical counterpoint to the dominant culture, emphasizing moral discomfort and selective consumption. This resistance aligns with (Ni, 2024), who showcase that cultural and religious values shape media decoding and challenges findings by (He et al., 2023)., suggesting that not all audiences conform to community norms

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGESSTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined how viewers interpret verbal agression in Windah Basudara's *Schoolboy Runaway* live-stream through Stuart Hall's Reception Theory and McQuail's Uses and Gratification framework. The findings reveal that viewers are active meaning makers who interpret Windah's verbal aggression through personal morals, cultural familiarity, and social interaction within live-chat environemtns. Three interpretive positions emerged: dominant-hegemonic, viewers normalized agression as humorous and authentic within gaming culture, negotiated positioned which many viewers are in this position, as they accepted it contextually as entertainment yet imposed ethical limits on vulgarity, and the oppositional viewers resisted it on moral and religious grounds but still engaged for gameplay enjoyment. These variations positions demonstrate that meaning is co-constructed between streamer, viewers, and technological infrastructure rather than fixed within the content itself. The study extends Hall' theory by highlighting how live-chat interactivity amplifies collective decoding, while McQuail's framework explains how entertainment and social gratification underpin the acceptance of aggressive humor. Overall, these findings deepen understanding of moral negotiation in participatory digital culture, especially among Indonesia Gen Z gaming viewers.

5.2 Suggestion

This findings of this research include both scholarly and pragmatic significance. Future research should expand comparative analyses across other streamer and platforms to investigate the influence of cultural context, gender, and platform algorithm on moral interpretation and humor reception. Mixed-method or longitudinal approaches could improve theoretical generalization and uncover in live-stream gaming culture. In real life, content creator and platforms should find a balance between being real and being responsible by using comedy in a responsible way and

makng moral lines clearer, especially for younger viewers. Youtuber and other platforms should make moderation system and support digital literacy programs that teach people how to be kind and courteous online.

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