

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the audience reception of Indonesia's Independence Day celebrations as depicted by virtual YouTubers from Hololive Indonesia in Gelora Holo ID 2023. It addresses the research question: How do local audiences of Hololive Indonesia perceive the meaning of Indonesia's Independence Day celebration through virtual contents of mini games, song covers, fashion heritage, and independence messages dispersed by virtual YouTubers in Gelora Holo ID? Using Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model and considering the implications of social media, the research incorporates parasocial relationships to analyze interpretations through in-depth interviews with four informants. The findings indicate that the introduction of Indonesia's traditions, including Independence Day mini games, songs, and fashion heritage, alongside the celebration of the unity of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, had varied receptions among different demographics. Younger informants tend to develop parasocial relationships with the virtual YouTubers, influencing their interpretations and leading them to adopt dominant-hegemonic reading positions. In contrast, older informants tend to be more critical of Hololive Indonesia's approach, resulting in oppositional reading positions. The overall negotiated reading position found in this research suggests that Hololive Indonesia needs to improve its audience engagement and authentic connection with local audiences to enhance its appeal and increase its selling points to this demographic. This study contributes to the evolving field of audience reception theory, reflecting advancements in communication technology and exploring the reception of virtual content utilizing avatars, motion capture, and live streaming.

Keywords: *Audience Reception, Parasocial Relationships, Virtual Youtubers, Encoding/Decoding Model, Indonesian Independence Day.*