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Female Voices in *Creatalks Entertainment* Youtube Channel

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Abstract. This study examines how such voices are produced, circulated, regulated, represented, and given collective identity on the Creatalks Entertainment YouTube channel, using Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture as its analytical framework. The Circuit of Culture conceives meaning-making as a continuous cycle linking five interdependent moments: production, consumption, regulation, representation, and identity. This study uses a qualitative case-study approach based on textual and thematic analysis of selected Creatalks episodes and their surrounding platform activity, this research finds that the channel's female narratives are shaped by a produsage-based production model, algorithm-sensitive platform governance, cultural and religious norms specific to the Indonesian context, dramatized modes of representation that reframe stigmatized experiences as public discourse, and a distinct audience identity built around empathy and communal acceptance. These five dimensions do not operate in isolation: production strategies invite audience participation, consumption practices generate diverse and at times conflicting interpretations, regulatory pressures negotiate between platform rules and local socio-religious values, representational choices reshape the visibility of taboo subjects, and identity formation consolidates a supportive audience community around the channel. The findings suggest that Creatalks functions less as a passive broadcaster of women's stories and more as an active cultural site where female voice, agency, and marginality are continuously negotiated among producers, platforms, and audiences. This study contributes to a broader understanding of how digital platforms in non-Western contexts mediate gender,

stigma, and empowerment, and offers a basis for future research on audience reception and the ethics of presenting sensitive personal content online.

Keywords: *Circuit of Culture; female voice; Creatalks Entertainment, YouTube, gender representation*

INTRODUCTION

The growth of participatory digital platforms has reshaped who gets to speak publicly and whose stories are considered worth telling. YouTube, in particular, has become a significant site where individuals who are rarely represented in mainstream Indonesian television and film, including women navigating infidelity, financial exploitation, nonnormative sexuality, and other stigmatized life experiences, can share their stories directly with an audience. *Creatalks Entertainment* is one such channel: an Indonesian, interviewbased YouTube channel that presents anonymized or lightly disguised personal narratives, frequently centered on women's experiences of hardship, resilience, freedom, and empowerment. Framed through dramatic narration, text-to-speech voiceovers, and podcast-style conversation, the channel has built a large and engaged following around stories that mainstream broadcast media in Indonesia would ordinarily avoid or heavily sanitize.

Female voices occupy a particularly central position within this content. Many episodes revolve around women describing their own marginalization, whether through domestic hardship, exploitation, stigmatized professions, or conflict with prevailing social and religious expectations, alongside expressions of self-determination and empowerment. Because these narratives circulate on a commercial digital platform rather than in an unmediated public sphere, understanding them requires attention not only to what is said, but also to how the content is produced, how it is consumed and interpreted, how it is regulated by platform and cultural authorities, how it is represented through visual and narrative choices, and how it contributes to a shared audience identity.

This study adopts Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture as its guiding framework, a model of cultural meaning-making that continues to be revisited and applied in contemporary media scholarship (Ni, 2024). The model proposes that the meaning of any cultural artifact, including a media text, is produced through five interlinked moments: production (how the text is made), consumption (how audiences use and interpret it), regulation (the formal and informal rules that govern it), representation (how meaning is encoded through language and imagery), and identity (how the text relates to the identities of its producers and audiences). None of these moments is treated as a fixed starting point; rather, they continuously inform and reshape one another, forming a circuit rather than a linear process (Ni, 2024).

Applying this framework to *Creatalks Entertainment* allows the present study to move beyond a purely content-based reading of female narratives and instead examine the fuller cultural circuit in which these voices are embedded. Accordingly, this research is guided by the following objective: to analyze how female voices in the *Creatalks Entertainment* YouTube channel are shaped across the five moments of production, consumption, regulation, representation, and identity within Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture. In doing so, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how digital platforms in an Indonesian context mediate gender, stigma, and empowerment, and how audiences participate in constructing meaning around marginalized women's experiences. Although channels such as *Creatalks Entertainment* have attracted a large audience by platforming women's personal narratives, academic attention to how such content is constructed and

given meaning remains limited. Existing studies of YouTube and gender tend to examine either textual representation or audience reception in isolation, without accounting for how production practices, platform and cultural regulation, representational strategies, and audience identity formation interact as a single, interdependent process. This gap is significant because a female narrator's story on a channel like *Creatalks* is not simply broadcast and received; it is shaped by editorial and algorithmic production decisions, filtered through platform rules and Indonesian socio-cultural and religious norms, packaged through specific representational choices, and ultimately reinterpreted by an audience that develops its own collective identity around the content. Without examining these moments together, an analysis risks overlooking how female voice and marginality are actively negotiated rather than simply presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent scholarship provides useful points of departure for this study. In a comparative study of Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia, Ahmad et al. (2023) found that social media have become a significant, though imperfect, tool for women's empowerment, enabling women to raise their voices, build networks, and pursue education and entrepreneurship, while cybercrime and inconsistent national policy protections continued to limit these gains. In a qualitative study conducted in Bangladesh, Tasnima et al. (2024) similarly found that although media literacy expanded women's connectivity, communication, and access to information, women's empowerment through social media remained constrained by prevailing gender norms, with many women positioned as passive recipients rather than active participants in online spaces. More directly relevant to the theoretical approach used here, Ni (2024) revisited Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model to examine how contemporary media audiences interpret representations of marginalized and stereotyped groups, showing that audiences can adopt dominant, negotiated, or oppositional readings depending on their own cultural background and identity.

Taken together, these studies suggest that digital platforms offer women meaningful, if contested, opportunities for voice and visibility, and that Hall's theoretical tradition remains a productive lens for analyzing how such voices are encoded and decoded in current media environments. However, none of these studies examines how a single platform's production practices, regulatory environment, representational strategies, and audience identity work together as an integrated cultural circuit, a gap this study addresses in the context of *Creatalks Entertainment.*

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative case-study design, with *Creatalks Entertainment* as a single, purposively selected case for in-depth analysis. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research questions concern how meaning is constructed and negotiated around female voices, which is better addressed through interpretive analysis than through quantitative measurement (Hall, 1980). Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture serves as both the theoretical lens and the analytical framework, with the five moments of production, consumption, regulation, representation, and identity used as the primary coding categories.

Data were drawn from *Creatalks* Entertainment episodes that foreground female narrators or female-centered stories addressing themes of empowerment, marginalization, freedom of expression, and personal struggle. In addition to the video content itself, contextual and platform-level material was examined, including video titles, thumbnails, descriptions, age-restriction labels, and audience engagement in the form of comments, likes, and shares. These platform-level elements provided evidence for the production, regulation, and consumption moments, while narrative content, framing, and visual style provided evidence for representation and identity.

Data analysis followed a qualitative thematic and textual analysis procedure. Each unit of data (a video, its accompanying text, or a segment of audience interaction) was read closely and coded according to which moment or moments of the Circuit of Culture it illustrated. Consistent with Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model, attention was given both to how meaning appeared to be encoded by the producers and to the range of interpretations available to audiences based on visible comment activity. Themes were then organized under the five moments and are presented in the Results and Findings section that follows. As a single-case, text-based qualitative study, the findings are intended to offer an in-depth interpretive account of *Creatalks Entertainment* rather than statistically generalizable claims about Indonesian YouTube culture as a whole.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION 1. Production

The way digital media is made today differs considerably from earlier broadcast models, in which a single organization produced content for a passive audience. As the Circuit of Culture model holds, media production is instead a continuous and often unstructured cycle shaped by producers' self-understanding, audience consumption patterns, and the regulatory rules producers must follow. For a digital brand such as *Creatalks Entertainment*, production begins with user-generated content (UGC), which blurs the boundary between those who make media and those who consume it. Recent research on the YouTube creator economy describes this hybrid dynamic as central to how creators sustain a channel: internet users are no longer simply consumers but active co-creators who supply raw material that platforms and producers convert into monetizable content (Rieder et al., 2023). *Creatalks* draws on this dynamic by collecting stories voluntarily submitted by ordinary people, with its creative team acting as gatekeepers who select and edit the most engaging and commercially viable narratives. To sustain visibility within a competitive attention economy, the channel maintains a consistent release schedule of approximately four to eight videos per month, often featuring polarizing or controversial subjects and using dramatic framing to attract viewers and convert them into subscribers.

To maximize revenue from this crowd-sourced content model, *Creatalks* employs a two-tiered distribution strategy. Free content is released widely to build audience reach and algorithmic visibility, while more exclusive or dramatic stories are placed behind paywalls, converting the most engaged viewers into a direct revenue source. This production process, however, does not occur independently of platform structures. As Duffy and Meisner (2023) argue, content creators remain dependent on the technology platforms that host their work and on the algorithms that determine their visibility, making media production a continual negotiation between creator autonomy and platform control. To ensure their videos are surfaced by recommendation systems, *Creatalks* producers invest considerable effort in crafting titles and thumbnails designed to trigger favorable algorithmic responses. As platforms increasingly rely on automated content moderation, producers also adopt orthographic alteration, deliberately misspelling sensitive or taboo terms, to avoid automated flagging and demonetization. Production at *Creatalks* is therefore best understood as a continual balancing act between platform compliance and the pursuit of audience attention.

2. Consumption

Within the Circuit of Culture, consumption refers to how audience access, watch, interpret, and respond to media content. It involves more than passive viewing; audiences actively construct meaning based on their personal experiences, cultural background, values, and beliefs (Ni, 2024). Audiences of the female-centered

content on *Creatalks Entertainment* engage with the material primarily through YouTube, where they can watch, replay, like, comment on, subscribe to, and share videos. Discussion frequently extends to other platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and WhatsApp, through which viewers become active participants rather than passive recipients of the content, echoing findings that social media allow women's voices to be shared, amplified, and discussed well beyond their platform of origin (Ahmad et al., 2023).

The female voice featured in each video plays a central role in shaping audience interpretation. Tone, language, emotional expression, and communication style all influence how viewers understand the message being conveyed. Many viewers describe the female voice as relatable, authentic, inspiring, and empowering, although interpretations vary depending on viewers' personal perspectives, cultural background, and life experience (Ni, 2024). Audience response is further shaped by demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and social background: viewers who share similar experiences with the narrator may feel a strong emotional connection to the content, while others engage with it primarily for its educational or entertainment value. This variation illustrates that media messages are decoded differently by different audience segments, consistent with the dominant, negotiated, and oppositional reading positions identified in recent applications of Hall's model (Ni, 2024). YouTube's interactive features, including likes, comments, shares, and subscriptions, further encourage active audience engagement, increasing the visibility and reach of the content.

Discussions that continue on other social media platforms extend the reach of *Creatalks* content and broaden conversations around women's voices, gender issues, and related social topics, a pattern consistent with recent findings that cross-platform sharing helps sustain and amplify women's voices online (Ahmad et al., 2023). Overall, consumption emerges as an active, interpretive process in which the impact of a video depends not only on how it was produced, but also on how audiences receive, understand, and further circulate its message within their own communities (Ni, 2024).

3. Regulation

From the perspective of the Circuit of Culture, regulation encompasses the formal and informal systems that govern the creation, distribution, and consumption of cultural products. For *Creatalks* Entertainment, regulation is shaped by YouTube's Community Guidelines, the production team's own editorial policies, and broader Indonesian socio-cultural and religious norms. As a digital platform, YouTube functions as a regulatory agency through content policies that determine whether videos are eligible for posting, age-restricted, or removed. Consistent with Duffy and Meisner's (2023) concept of platform governance at the margins, *Creatalks* adapts its production techniques to comply with platform rules while still addressing sensitive and controversial subject matter, often navigating algorithmic visibility rules that are neither fully transparent nor fully within the creator's control.

This adaptation is visible in the channel's interview-based format, which foregrounds guests' personal experiences rather than explicit depictions or endorsements of controversial behavior. The channel also exercises a form of selfregulation through editorial gatekeeping, consistent with recent accounts of how platforms and governments jointly shape content moderation practices (Gorwa, 2024), reflected in its careful selection of volunteer participants, protection of guests' identities in certain episodes, and an editing process that presents sensitive stories in an ethical and informative manner rather than a sensationalized or exploitative one. At the same time, *Creatalks* operates within the broader cultural context of Indonesia, where prevailing Eastern cultural norms and religious values often render

conversations about sexuality, fetishes, infidelity, and diverse sexual orientations taboo. The channel therefore continuously negotiates the tension between freedom of expression and social norms through a conversational, thoughtful portrayal of these subjects. This approach aligns with Hall's encoding/decoding theory, as recently reexamined by Ni (2024), which holds that audiences interpret media messages differently depending on their own cultural background, values, and experiences. Consequently, while some viewers regard *Creatalks* as an educational resource that raises social awareness and gives voice to underrepresented groups, others may view the same material as a departure from conventional moral standards. The use of 18+ or 21+ age warnings on several videos further reflects the creators' ethical awareness regarding the protection of younger viewers, consistent with contemporary calls for platforms and creators to take greater responsibility for the visibility and treatment of vulnerable audiences (Duffy & Meisner, 2023). Regulation within *Creatalks* should therefore be understood not merely as compliance with YouTube's guidelines, but as a continuous interplay between platform governance, editorial judgment, and Indonesia's socio-cultural values, one that both constrains and shapes how sensitive subjects are presented, understood, and received.

4. Signification and Representation

Creatalks Entertainment functions as a digital space in which female experiences, underground lifestyles, and heavily stigmatized personal stories are openly brought into public discussion. Within Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture, signification and representation describe the specific ways a media text constructs, packages, and conveys meaning to its audience. Rather than functioning as a neutral mirror of reality, digital media platforms act as sites of contestation where dominant, traditional, and conservative norms are continually challenged and reworked, consistent with recent findings that social media allow women to contest conventional narratives about their roles and rights (Ahmad et al., 2023). *Creatalks* achieves this through a deliberate combination of digital techniques, including dramatic narration, automated text-to-speech voices, striking thumbnail imagery, and an intimate, anonymous podcast format.

This particular mode of presentation transforms deeply personal, previously hidden confessions into a form of accessible public digital storytelling. Through provocative titles and dramatic story hooks, the channel reshapes how audiences perceive and interpret otherwise taboo topics. Consistent with recent findings on women's use of social media to voice previously silenced experiences (Ahmad et al., 2023), this kind of raw online visibility encourages audiences to reconsider established societal assumptions about morality and gender. Rather than reproducing the polished, sanitized depictions of women common in mainstream television, *Creatalks* presents a raw and unpolished space that redefines what it means for women to speak openly, claim agency, and share unfiltered accounts of their lives. By framing difficult or controversial relationship struggles through a dramatic, cinematic lens, the channel also draws in viewers who might otherwise overlook these issues. Its reliance on anonymous storytelling enables the presentation of highly sensitive topics, including financial exploitation, domestic hardship, and experiences within the adult industry, without exposing narrators to immediate legal or social repercussions. This framing repositions such stories, shifting their meaning from casual online gossip toward a broader commentary on survival and resilience. In doing so, *Creatalks* builds a distinctive archive of contemporary, alternative life experiences, demonstrating that online representation can give visible shape and voice to realities that mainstream society often prefers to conceal.

5. Identity

The channel's dramatic storytelling style contributes directly to a shared sense of identity among those who produce, share, and watch its videos. According to Putra's (2024) recent review of identity formation in online communities, identity on contemporary social media platforms is not a fixed or permanent trait, but an ongoing process shaped by how individuals interact, negotiate shared norms, and choose to present themselves online. To meaningfully belong to this digital community, viewers are expected to adopt a particular form of cultural "common sense": an openminded, non-judgmental disposition that allows them to engage with controversial personal narratives without immediately condemning the storyteller.

Through sustained engagement with these narratives, the channel's audience, commonly referred to as the "*Createams*", develops a shared identity grounded in empathy, realism, and awareness of the more hidden dimensions of modern relationships. Putra (2024) observes that online subcultures and communities sustain themselves by co-creating shared meanings and maintaining clear boundaries around community membership. *Creatalks* reinforces this dynamic by constructing a distinct division between insiders and outsiders, cultivating an accepting "Us" composed of open-minded listeners who defend storytellers' right to speak, in contrast to a judgmental "Them" associated with hypocrisy, rigid authority, and moralistic criticism.

This shared identity is further reinforced through active audience participation within the channel's digital ecosystem. When viewers post supportive comments, submit their own anonymous stories, or engage in community discussions, they shift from passive spectators to active contributors to the *Createams* identity. This collective bond creates a sense of safe community for individuals who feel marginalized by mainstream, conservative expectations in their everyday lives. By aligning themselves with the channel's worldview, audience members construct a subcultural identity centered on empathy, positioning themselves as protectors of authentic human experience within a broader society that often prefers more comfortable narratives.

CONCLUSION

The findings show that these dimensions operate not as separate stages but as a continuous, mutually reinforcing cycle. Production practices built around user-generated content and produsage invite ordinary women to share their stories, which producers then shape through dramatic narration and platform-conscious editorial choices. These choices, in turn, are constrained and enabled by regulation, as the channel negotiates YouTube's platform governance alongside Indonesia's prevailing socio-cultural and religious norms. The resulting content is decoded by audiences in varied ways during consumption, informed by viewers' own backgrounds and experiences, while the channel's specific modes of signification and representation reframe stigmatized, marginalized experiences as legitimate public discourse. Finally, sustained engagement with these narratives cultivates a distinct collective identity among the channel's audience, one built on empathy, openness, and communal belonging.

Taken together, these findings suggest that *Creatalks* Entertainment functions as more than a simple entertainment channel; it operates as an active cultural site where female voice, agency, and marginality are continuously negotiated among producers, platform structures, and audiences. For women whose experiences of freedom, empowerment, hardship, and stigma are often excluded from mainstream Indonesian media, the channel offers a visible, if imperfect, avenue for public expression, one that is simultaneously empowering and shaped by commercial and platform pressures.

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